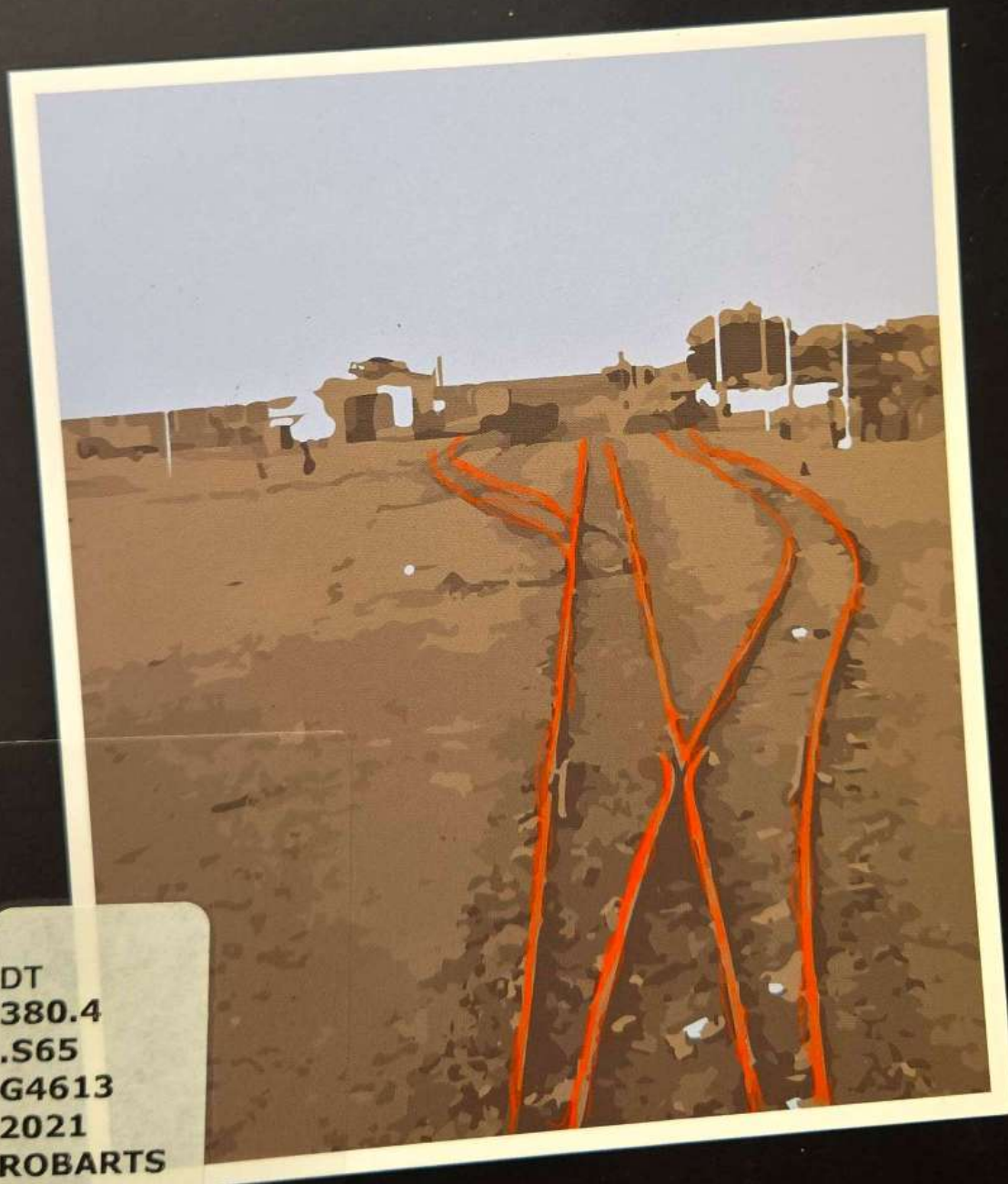




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THE AYSHA'A GENOCIDE OF 1960

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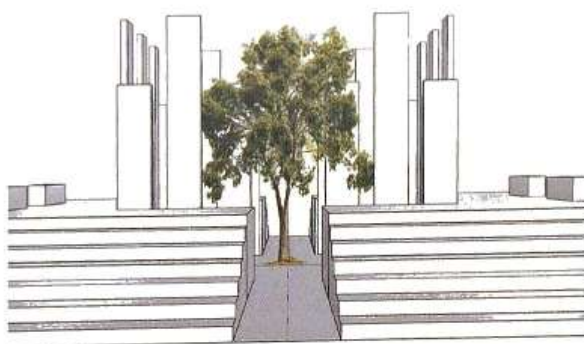
THE AYSHA'A GENOCIDE OF 1960

*Shedding light
on a Hidden Tragedy*

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on a Hidden Tragedy*

Editor
Ali Moussa Iye



IRICA

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WARNING

Due to the diversity of the historical documents quoted and the differences between the transcriptions of proper names adopted by the different authors, we have decided to follow the following rules :

In the French and English versions of the book, we will keep the transcriptions of names of persons and places as they are used in those languages, in order to facilitate their identification. For instance, the name Cabdulqaadir Jaamac (in the Somali language) is transcribed Abdoulkader Djama in French and Abdulkader Jama in English.

For the Somali version of this work, we use the Latin transcription adopted since 1972 for this language. It should be noted that the orthographic transcription of Somali language has the following differences with French or English languages :

- The letter x is used to transcribe the voiceless pharyngeal fricative [ħ],
- The letter c for the voiced pharyngeal fricative [ʕ],
- The letter dh for the voiced retroflex occlusive [ɖ], and
- The letter kh for the voiceless velar occlusive [x].

Besides, the doubled vowel in Somali means that the vowel is long.

The name of the city where the massacre took place is transcribed in the three languages as follows :

- In Somali : Ayshaca
- In English : Aysha'a
- In French : Aycha'a

For the names of the places which are not well known, we use the Somali transcription and give into bracket their transcription in the other languages.

In our quotations of archival documents, we have decided to keep the names of people and places as they are transcribed in those documents.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This book is the culmination of a collective work carried out, under the direction of Ali Moussa Iye, by an Independent Committee for the Memory of Aysha'a composed of researchers, descendants of victims and ordinary citizens motivated by the sole search for the truth about the Aysha'a massacre.

This committee, which benefited from the kind assistance of the IRICA (Independent Research Institute of the Horn of Africa) was composed of the following members (in alphabetical order) :

- Abdirachid Mohamed Ismael
- Aden Osman Darar
- Ali Moussa Iye
- Amina Said Chire
- Djaffar Guedi Hersi
- Hibo Osman Ahmed
- Ibrahim Soubaneh Rayaleh
- Mohamed Ali Omar
- Oubah Ahmed Malow

We would like to thank the volunteers who helped us read and revise the texts respectively in English and in French : Ismaël Goulal Boudine and Rachid Houssein Atteye.

We express our deep gratitude to the direct and indirect witnesses who agreed to share their testimonies with us and guide us in our research, despite the painful memory of what they experienced and despite their old age. Without their valuable contributions, this work could not have described the horror of the massacre and its consequences. Some of their testimonies are now documented in this book.

We would like to thank those who have made financial contribution to the achievement of this work and to the publication of this book. Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to Omar Youssef Ali for all his infographics and layout of this book, but also for his patience in taking into account our corrections and modifications.

INTRODUCTION

On 12 August 1960, in the small town of Aysha'a, Ethiopia, one of the biggest massacres committed by the Ethiopian army against Somali populations occurred. It was a planned massacre carried out in cold blood by soldiers of the Ethiopian Empire which, in a few days, wiped out a large part of the population of the city and the nomadic settlements in the area. The survivors had no choice but to flee to seek refuge in Somalia, a country which had just gained its independence, and in Djibouti, still under the shock provoked by the results of the self-determination referendum of 1958. The inhabitants of Aysha'a never recovered from the trauma and many of them did not return to their homes and hence they begun rebuilding their lives in other places.

Although this massacre left a deep scar on the collective memory of the Somali people in the region, it has not been documented or told by writing. Therefore, it was not recognized by those who perpetuated it. More than 61 years later, the denial of the responsible authorities and the concealment of this tragedy remains unaddressed. The profound trauma that this massacre caused in the victims and their descendants has also, in a way, facilitated the silence that has surrounded it so far.

In order to accomplish the duty to remember and break such long silence on this tragedy that we formed at the

end of 2019 an "Independent Committee for the Memory of Aysha'a" composed of researchers, descendants of victims and ordinary citizens motivated by the only search for the truth. The main objective of this voluntary and civic action was to reconstruct in the most rigorous and objective way possible what really happened in Aysha'a and its surroundings during the month of August 1960.

The committee launched a call for witnesses to solicit all those who could have information, photos or documents on this event. We also carried out research in the national archives of certain countries concerned (France, Great Britain, Ethiopia, Somalia, Egypt) to find documents attesting this massacre. We conducted interviews with direct and indirect witnesses in various towns and villages in the region (Djibouti, Dikhil, Ali Sabieh, Dire Dawa, Jigjiga, Aysha'a, Hadagalla,) to collect their testimonies and their versions of the facts. We cross-referenced these different sources to understand the causes, process and consequences of this massacre.

As no book or article has been yet published on this historical event, the information we are offering in this publication is therefore first-hand information directly drawn from the Archival documents and from witnesses who have lived the horrors.

This book is published in different languages to share with the general public the results of our research which brings evidence on the reality and scale of Aysha'a massacre.

In this publication we start by providing a brief description of the major milestone events in the world and in the Horn of Africa that have impacted the local context.

We then highlight the sequence of events that occurred during the crucial years between 1956 and 1960 and have led to the planning of the massacre in Aysha'a and other Somali towns and villages. We explain why what happened in this city and its surroundings can be qualified as genocide, according to the definition and criteria established by the United Nations Organization in particular its Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Genocide crime.

Finally, we let the eyewitnesses tell us in their own words the horrors and violence that they experienced and/or observed during the massacre and in the weeks that followed.

This work of history and remembrance is undertaken to honor the victims, to facilitate the recognition of the Aysha'a massacre as a genocide and, finally, to alert and prevent other crimes of this kind in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa.

This document also aims to lay the groundwork for further research to be undertaken by the young generation of historians in the region. It could also serve as an example of independent academic initiatives to elucidate other genocides in Ethiopia and the region.

Part 1 : **HISTORICAL CONTEXT**



Aysha'a train station 1950 - Photo Yves Billion

A | Aysha'a : A City with a Tragic Destiny

Located at 140 kilometres, on the well-known 784 km Ethio-Djiboutian Railway, Aysha'a was the largest city on the rail trunk from Djibouti to Dire Dawa.

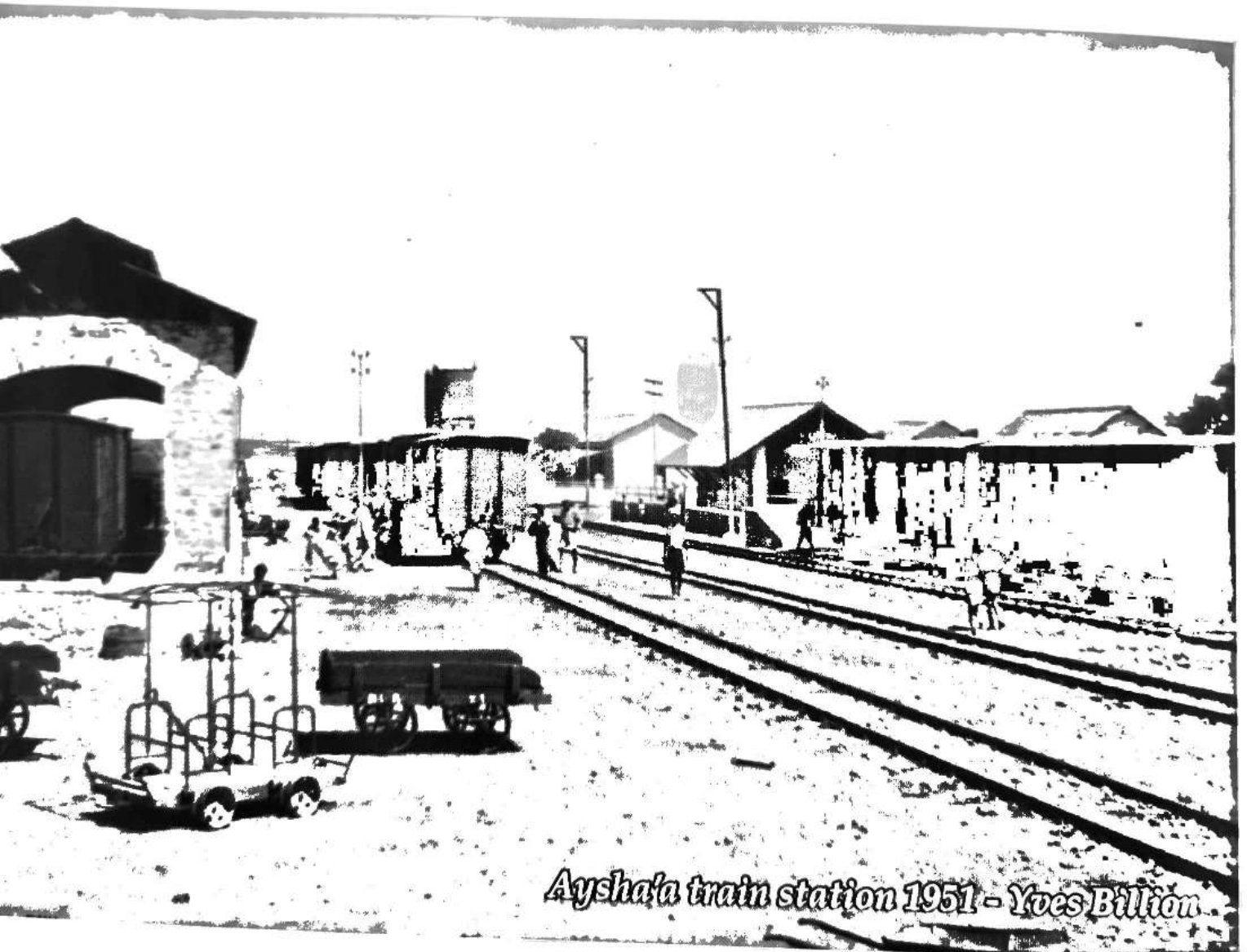
Situated in the plain of Caylo Weyn of Sitti Zone, Aysha'a was an important stopover of railway traffic and as such, it housed one of the technical workshops of the railway company. It was also a trading center at the crossroads of the caravan routes between the Somali and Djiboutian coastlines and the Ethiopian highlands.

Finally, Aysha'a was at the cross lines situated in the busy transhumance trials of pastoral communities in search of pasture between the Awash Valley, the Great Plains of Dhuunyar, the Coastlands of the Awdal and the foothills of the Cali Xaydh Plateau.

Aysha'a emerged with the opening of the railway line, in June 1917, between Djibouti and Addis Ababa. It hosted some of the populations from the historic town of Zeila and other localities in Somalia and Ethiopia that had fallen into decline as a result of the upheaval brought about by the railway.

The small town rapidly developed attracting more and more caravans of nomads who came to trade or to settle there. The

town was divided into two large sections : Aysha'a Weyn in the South and Awra Eeg, in the North. The number of the inhabitants of the town was estimated in 1960 to be between 15,000 and 20,000 without including the great number of nomads who used to come in daily with their caravans, and of visitors who used to stay there for some time during the pilgrimages to the religious and ancestral remembrance sites.



Aysha'a train station 1951 - Yoes Billion

Aysha'a was an example of the dynamic interactions between the city and the bush. The pastoralists used to bring the typical products of their environment (animals, firewood, milk, butter and cream) as well as their ethical codes, customary laws,

traditional dances and sport games. In exchange, the city was providing them with products that they needed the most such as mainly grains, clothing, cooking oil, sugar, battery, etc. Moreover, they were exposed to new ways of life, ethics and political ideas. The open air markets and bazars were quite busy and the major regional currencies (Ethiopian dollar, Djiboutian Franc, Somali Shilling) were used in the commercial exchanges.

It was a town where nomads slowly urbanized while at the same time, they conserved the essential features of their cultural heritage. In addition to football matches, which were very popular in the town, the locals also organized traditional sport tournaments such as Go'os and Rubo'o. One of the greatest football players deemed the best striker in the sixties of the Ethiopian Soccer Team, Ismael Garille, was a son of Aysha'a. At nightfall, the inhabitants used also to get together in public spaces to perform nomadic dances especially folk dances and songs inherited from the historic city of Zeila.

Another social attraction was the arrivals and departures of the train which accentuated the life of the town and brought together hundreds of people to the station and along the railway tracks.

A cosmopolitan place at the time, Aysha'a, was proud to assert its Somali cultural identity and its socio-economic dynamism. Because of its position, its cultural specificity and the day-to-day activity of its population, it was able to escape the Amharian enterprise undertaken by the Ethiopian imperial power in the conquered territories and the French assimilation policy towards colonized populations. In fact, Emperor Haile Selassie who had good relations with France had tried to accord it a

certain autonomy to the French-led Railway Company, which, for instance, was allowed to hire among the Somali population living along the railway corridor. France on its part was trying to respect the sovereignty of the Ethiopian State by avoiding to apply its assimilation policies on the people living beyond the territory it occupied. Even the Amharic speaking community in the city, composed mainly of Ethiopian civil servants and police officials, had to integrate into the local culture and learn the Somali language.

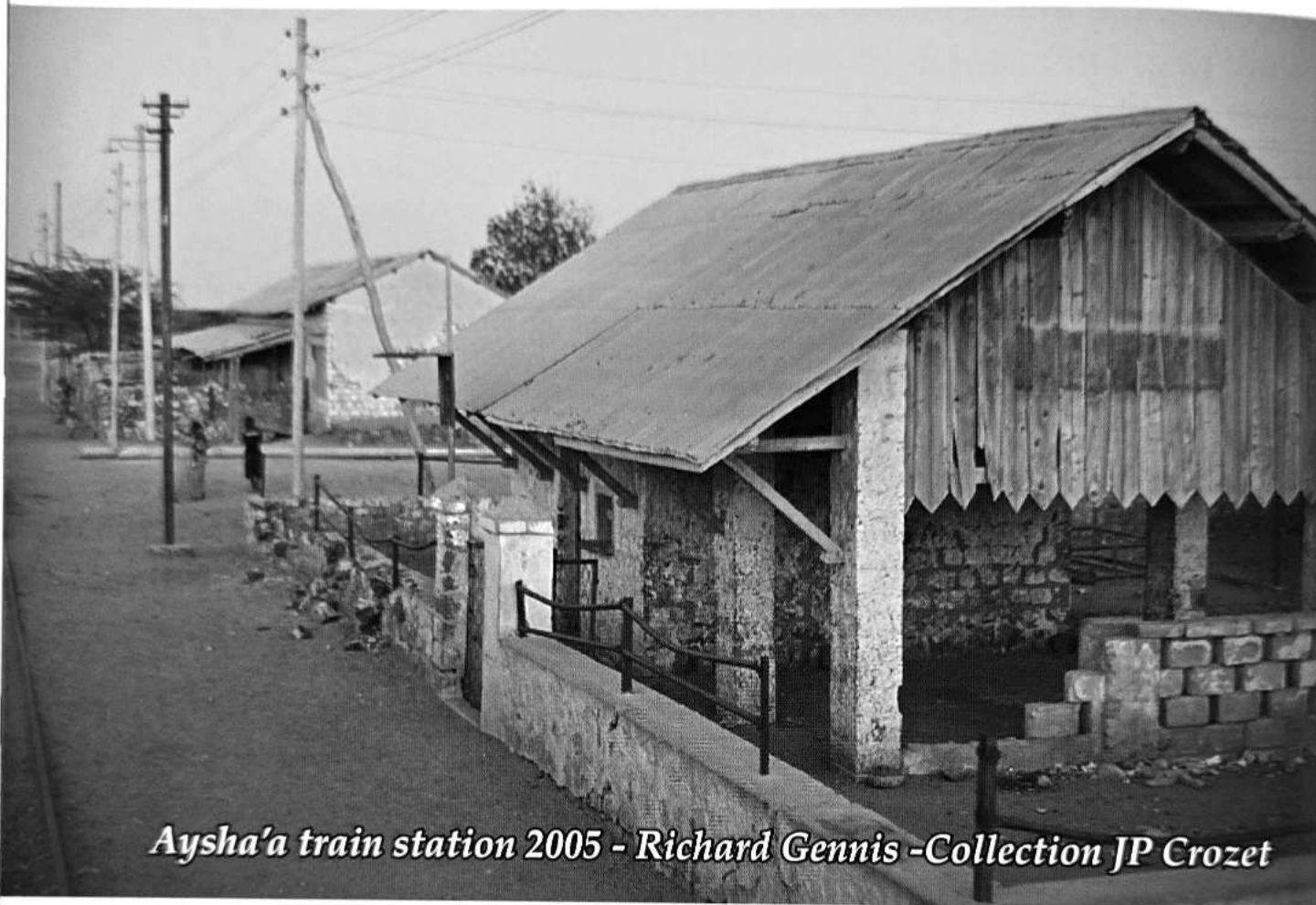
This combination of historical circumstances placed the inhabitants of Aysha'a in a kind of a blind spot that allowed them to enjoy relative room for maneuver to develop commercial, educational, religious and political activities that the representatives of the Ethiopian and French administrations had difficulty to curb.

Aysha'a was, therefore, a vibrant town where a relatively affluent class of merchants, entrepreneurs and railway officials had emerged. At a time when pilgrimage to Mecca was complicated and expensive, there were many traders who had gained the title of "Hadji". Some of its members had become respected notables and patrons who financed social programs such as schools, mosques, cultural and humanitarian activities. They used to help the population during drought, floods, and in time of other natural calamities. The city was also home to the mausoleums or "Maqams" of esteemed Sheikhs and Saints of Islamic Sufi i.e. Sheikh Muse Ismail (Muse Rijaal), Sheikh Abdulkader Jilani, Sheikh Batuun, etc. These Maqams attracted a large number of disciples dedicated to preserve their memories and teachings. These people were particularly targeted by the soldiers because of the tradition of putting

banners in the mausoleums some of which were blue like the Somali flag. This custom had already attracted the attention of the local authorities who considered it as a provocation.



Aysha'a was therefore, a city open to the influences of outside world thanks to its central position on the transportation and communication lines i.e. railway, caravan trails and its cultural and religious significance. Due to these attributes, it was also a place where the ideas of emancipation and self-determination that circulated in the Horn of Africa and in the world at large, were followed and debated over through regional and international radio stations that were widely listened to such as Cairo Radio "The Voice of Arabs" ; Radio Hargeisa and Radio Mogadishu and the BBC Somali Service.



Aysha'a train station 2005 - Richard Gennis -Collection JP Crozet

The city's elites, the merchants, teachers, and religious leaders were following the political debates sparked by the Bandung Conference, the Suez Canal Crisis, the Liberation war of Algeria and Indochina and Independence Movements in Africa and especially in Somalia and Djibouti.

B | International Context

The international context in the 1950s was marked by four major events, i.e. the Bandung Conference ; the Suez Canal Crisis ; the Algerian War of Liberation ; and the African Independence in 1960, which had strongly impacted the events in the Horn of Africa and in particular, in Ethiopia.

1. The Bandung Conference

The Bandung Conference took place in the Island of Jakarta, Indonesia, from April 18 to 24, 1955, in the middle of the Cold War. It brought together, for the first time, twenty-nine countries of Asia and Africa, that represented more than half of humanity. The conference marked the will of young States which emerged from decolonization process and grouped themselves under the name of "Third World Countries" to make their voices heard on the international scene. The six independent African countries that participated in the Bandung Conference were Ethiopia, Egypt, Ghana, Libya, Liberia, and Sudan.

The participants unanimously adopted a series of resolutions that condemned all forms of colonialism and racism supporting countries under colonial domination and proclaiming the rights of peoples to self-determination. Recalling their adherence to the principles of the United Nations, they called for peacekeeping and a more just and balanced world order. Re-

garding the cultural front, they agreed on the urgency of valuing their own cultures which had for too long, been denied by colonialism.

The decisions adopted in Bandung had a great symbolic significance and impact on the people of the Third World. The conference facilitated the birth of the Afro-Asian Movement based on the painful common experience of colonization and the aspirations of the peoples of Asia and Africa for a greater justice in international relations.

It was at this conference that the Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, who aspired to recover the full sovereignty of his country gained a certain influence on the international scene. This fame reinforced the distrust and hostility of the Western powers, especially France and the United Kingdom that Nasser had to face during the Suez Canal Crisis.

Despite its conflict with Egypt over the control of the waters of the Nile and its concerns about the aspirations for auto-



*Some of the leaders who have participated in the Bandung Conference.
From left to right: Nehru, Nkrumah, Nasser, Sukarno, Tito.
AP wire photo. 1960.*

nomies of the peoples of Eritrea and the Somali region, Ethiopia participated in the Bandung Conference where the rights to emancipation and self-determination of the peoples had been strongly proclaimed. Therefore, It could have taken the measure of the advancement of these ideas and the risks they would pose to its imperial policy regarding the annexation of the territories under its trusteeship.

2. The Suez Canal Crisis

The origin of this crisis could be traced back to the 1952 overthrow of the Kingdom of Egypt, under the reign of King Farouk I, by the Free Officers' Movement of the Egyptian Army. The Egyptian Revolution, both social and national, led by Mohammed Naguib and Gamal Abdel Nasser abolished monarchism, ended the British tutelage, and undertook a series of nationalization programmes. In the summer of 1956, Nasser, who succeeded to Naguib as President in 1954, decided to nationalize the Suez Canal, thus calling into question the privileges held by the United Kingdom and France that co-managed it. The Canal Company retaliated by withdrawing its British and French technicians who were immediately replaced by others offered by the Non-aligned countries, mostly, India.

The crisis culminated in the outbreak of a war on 29 October 1956, by the Tripartite Secret Alliance formed by France, the United Kingdom and the State of Israel against Egypt. It occurred in the midst of the Cold War and paradoxically, it led to a certain agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union, the two countries at the head of two conflicting blocs, which opposed the military aggression against Egypt. They imposed an end to the conflict and the withdrawal of foreign forces notably British and French.

The Suez Canal Crisis brought about a series of major changes in the international relations that had a significant impact on the Horn of Africa and particularly, Ethiopia whose Emperor was trying to legitimize the appropriation of Somali territories and to consolidate an alliance with Western countries, notably by playing on religious feelings.

The United Kingdom and France lost their prestige of power in this war, while the United States and the USSR became indispensable players in the Middle East. This crisis has somehow, heralded the beginning of the colonial empires' decline. It allowed Egypt to strengthen its anti-colonial, third-world, socialist and pan-Arab positions.

Egypt increased its political support and material assistance to the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) which was headquartered in Cairo. It also hosted other liberation movements, in particular, the Somali Youth League (SYL) which was fighting for Somalia's independence. A Somali Language Service was opened in 1953 within Cairo Radio, long before the BBC.

Egypt also accelerated the preparations of the construction of the great Aswan Dam to protect its agricultural lands from flooding and to generate electricity despite the suspension of funds by Western countries that accused Cairo of receiving weapons from the Eastern Bloc.

Moreover, Sudan, an Anglo-Egyptian condominium, gained independence in 1956, while the Hashemite power in Iraq which was vassal of the West also experienced a revolution in 1958 and passed into the hands of the Pro-Nasserites. Lebanon was rocked in 1958 by a mini civil war between Western-oriented Christians and Muslims looking towards the Arab world.

This development in Egypt and the rest of the Arab-Muslim world raised great concerns on the part of the Ethiopian government, which strengthened its rapprochement with the West and took action to counter the aspirations of self-determination of its rebellious regions.

3. The Algerian Liberation War

The Algerian War was part of the protest movement that has shaken up colonial empires after World War II. It illustrated, the fierce struggle that colonized peoples were forced to engage during 1950's for their dignity, freedom and self-determination.

It began in March 1954, nine years after the massacres in Sétif, Guelma and Kherrata committed in Algeria by the French colonial forces in May 1945 against Algerian civilians demanding their autonomy.

On 1st November, 1954, the FLN unleashed attacks in various parts of Algeria against military installations, police stations, warehouses, communications infrastructure, and public buildings.

The war that mainly pitted the National Liberation Front against the French Army and its Algerian surrogates lasted from 1954 to 1962. It was, without doubt, one of the deadliest conflicts of decolonization. It did cause hundreds of thousands of deaths, the forced displacement of millions of peasants fleeing their lands and the disintegration of the Algerian society and economy.

The war ended up with the recognition of Algeria's Independence on July 3, 1962, following a referendum on self-determination, and the birth of the People's Democratic Republic

of Algeria on 25 September. It also led to the exodus to France of about one million "Pied Noir" (French settlers of European decent in Algeria) and 42,000 "Harkis" (local auxiliaries in the French Army during the Algerian War).

This conflict had a profound impact on France's foreign and colonial policy. It first justified the decision to militarily retaliate to the nationalization of the Suez Canal by Egypt, in 1956, which hosted the headquarters of the FLN's foreign delegation.

The conflict also accelerated the French government's decision in 1958 to hold referendums in its colonies to choose their status with France. Finally, it precipitated its granting of independence to the countries in West and Central Africa under its colonial rule in 1960.



Celebration of the cease fire in 1962 in Alger. Alamy Stock Photo

The Algerian war also echoed in the Horn of Africa, mainly, through Cairo Radio and the BBC both broadcasting in Somali language. As the headquarters of the FLN was based in Cairo and that a member of the Central Committee of the Somali Youth League, Mohamed Hadji Hussein, headed the Somali section of Cairo Radio, it was possible that contacts had occurred between Algerian and Somali independence militants.

4. African Independences

The year of 1960 was a pivotal year for Africa. Seventeen African countries, including Somalia, gained independence. It was the culmination of a long political as well as cultural struggle for the emancipation of African peoples that began in the 19th century with the resistance of Emir Abdelkader in Algeria and Sayed Abdullah Hassan in Somalia.

Weakened by the Second World War and by the Crisis of the Suez Canal, challenged by the emerging superpowers, the United States and USSR, and fought by liberation movements, the United Kingdom and France were forced to dismantle their colonial empires. In Africa, it was between the years 1958 and 1963 that most of the colonies gained their independence through negotiation, referendum, or war. This wave of independence also affected the Spanish and Portuguese colonies, i.e. Equatorial Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Angola, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, and the Islands of Cabo Verde in 1968 and 1975.

For the Somali populations of the Horn of Africa i.e. Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya this era of independence gave rise to great hopes. A movement, the Somali Youth League (SYL), Ururka Dhalinyarada Soomaaliyeed, emerged in the 1940's to carry on the aspirations for independence and for

the unity of the Somali people in the region. SYL contributed to the independence of the British protectorate of Somaliland on 26th June 1960 and the unification on 1st July 1960 with the Italian administered part of Somalia to form the Republic of Somalia. The SYL with its program of reunification of Somali territories and promotion of the Somali language and culture soon became a common threat to the colonial powers operating in the region, i.e. France, United Kingdom and Italy as well as to Ethiopia, which received from the British the trusteeship of the Somali region of Haud and Reserved Areas.



As we will see in the following pages, the Aysha'a Massacre was a violent response to the threat raised by the aspirations for unification of Somali people and by the birth of the Somali Republic in 1960.

C | Regional Context

The events that took place in the Horn of Africa in the 1950's interacted with what was happening in the rest of the world. The region was in the midst of upheaval as with the strengthening of the Ethiopian imperial state ; the independence of the British protectorate of Somalia and the Somali territory administered by Italy ; the negotiations on the future of the "Haud" and "Reserved Areas" ; the referendum organized by France in Djibouti to choose its new status, and Ethiopia's gradual control over Eritrea. It was a time when the various protagonists, engaged in a race against time, were developing all-out political, military and communication strategies to advance their interests. Ethiopia, which was trying to take advantage of the dismantling of the colonial empires, developed a policy of aggressive conquest of Somali territories that led to the massacres of civilian populations, as it was the case in Aysha'a.

The Partition of Somali Territories, Pan-Somalism and Independence

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, the European powers, headed by Great Britain, then France and Italy, came to the Somali coasts for various reasons and signed separate treaties with different Somali groups. In this context of fierce competition between the colonial powers for the conquest of

Africa territories, the main aspiration of the Somali people who had signed agreements with them was to obtain some protection of the territorial integrity of their lands, especially against encroachments by Abyssinian imperial power. Despite being into contact with the Somalis, the European colonial powers came to be confronted with the ambitions of the Abyssinian Empire. Treaties, often kept secret, were signed with the latter at the expense, mostly, of the Somali populations. This is the case with the treaties concluded secretly in 1897 between the three European powers and Emperor Menelik, which called into question certain clauses of the agreements previously signed with the Somali groups. France, for example, signed an agreement renewing and supplementing the earlier treaties of 1843 and 1894, granting portions of the Somali-Issa territory to Menelik.

But the most scandalous betrayal was that committed by Britain, which in 1897 signed a treaty delimiting the border between British Somaliland and Ethiopia and ceding some 40,000 square kilometres of Somali territory to the latter.

This treaty concluded by the British representative, Mr. JR Rodd, had even been criticized, at the time, by British Parliamentarians and the Minister of Colonies who declared that "the Treaty of 1897 was regrettable, it suffered from our limited knowledge of Somaliland" The decision of the British was motivated by their desire to obtain Menelik's help in the war against the Mahdist movement in Sudan and in their confrontation with France around the sources of the Nile. The treaty was kept secret until its date of execution in 1948.

Italy had resisted Menelik's land claims, but after its defeat at Adowa in 1896, it signed a provisional border agreement favourable to Ethiopia. But when Italy joined the Axis i.e. Germany and Japan, during the Second World War and had in-

vaded Ethiopia in 1935-1936, it incorporated Ethiopia into a large Italian colony with Eritrea and Somali territories, including British Somaliland, in 1940. But in 1941, the British counter attacked with the help of Commonwealth Forces to defeat the Italians and put under its administration all the territories of the Horn of Africa (Eritrea, Ethiopia, the French Somali Coast occupied by the isolated forces of Vichy, British Somaliland, Italian Somalia and Kenya).

In 1942, the British still retained control of the railway line to Addis Ababa, the town of Dire-Dawa as well as the north-eastern part of the Somali territories, including the areas bordering British Somaliland, known as Haud but also the main trading town of Jigjiga, located in the "Reserved Areas". The border regions of the South-East consisting of the vast plains known as the Ogaden Desert which the Italians had previously attached to their possessions and were administered from Mogadishu were also placed under a separate British control. During that period, Haile Selassie undertook several actions towards the different Somali groups by distributing a lot of money and favors to their traditional leaders, to persuade them not to adhere to the plan of the British Foreign Minister, known as the "Bevin Plan".

This Plan proposed the unification of all Somali territories into a "Greater Somalia" under a single administration, preferably British and under the tutelage of the United Nations. However, the Bevin Plan was rejected by the United States, the Soviet Union and France. After the plan failed, the British returned in 1946 the control of Dire-Dawa and the railway to Ethiopia and retained the Reserved Areas of Jigjiga, and the Haud region, under their military administration. The Ogaden area, meanwhile, continued to be administered with the territory under Italian domination.

In 1948 the British, yielding to the incessant requests of Ethiopia, unilaterally abandoned the Reserved Areas and the Ogaden Region to Ethiopia, but kept the Haud Region.

In 1949, the United Nations entrusted Italy with the tutelage of the former Somali Italian colony for a period of ten years, while Britain and France retained the administration of their former possessions.

It was only in 1954 that Great Britain handed over the Haud region to Ethiopia against the wishes of the Somali people who were not consulted. This decision caused a great deal of discontent and uprisings among the peoples of the concerned regions. For example, members of the Somali Youth League (SYL) strongly protested in Harar and sent a delegation to the UN to call for the attachment of the Somali Territories (now Sitti Zone, Harar and the Haud Region) to the future "Greater Somalia/Somali Republic". To punish this action, the Abyssinian power reacted brutally, and its troops committed a bloody repression in Harar.

Thus, Britain, through its acts of treachery and erratic policy, played a crucial role in the fragmentation of the Somali territory and left behind a time bomb, as it did in the Middle East and Asia. And there lies the origin of the quagmire and disastrous hangover of the nowadays Horn of Africa.

In the French Somali Coast, a territory inhabited mainly by the Somali-Issa and Afar, France had also engaged in territorial negotiations with Ethiopia to the detriment of these populations, particularly with the signing of the Franco-Ethiopian Treaty of 1897. Here, too, the implementation of these arrangements were followed by vehement and vigorous protests by the local people but were, equally, subjected to violent re-

pression by the French colonial forces. Djibouti's nationalists were severely oppressed, imprisoned and deported from the territory.

One of the leaders of this movement was Mr. Mohamoud Harbi Farah who campaigned for the independence of the territory during a referendum organized in September 1958 by France in its African colonies to choose their status.

In Kenya, the Somali people of the Northern Frontier District (NFD), annexed to Kenya, also expressed their wishes to join a future Greater Somalia/" Somali Republic ", but Kenyan political leaders, such as Jomo Kenyatta, the leader of the Mau Mau movement, opposed the pan-Somali nationalism and Britain acquiesced and, once again, betrayed the Somali people and dashed their wishes to be protected and united.

Resistance and Pan Somali Movement

The Somali resistance against the lusts of colonial powers began as early as 1899 under the leadership of the religious leader, Mr. Mohamed Abdille Hassan, nicknamed - The "Mad Mullah" by the British. Joining the Salihya Brotherhood, he created the Dervish Movement (Daraawiish in Somali) and waged a 20-year war against the British, Italian and Ethiopian empires. He claimed the unification of the Somali people of all the Horn of Africa and used poetry to convey his political messages that had a great echo. He is considered to be the first Somali nationalist and one of the greatest poets in the Somali language. His resistance movement was heavily weakened only after the most powerful colonial empire of the time had for the first time in history of liberation wars, resorted to aircraft to combat that freedom fighter and his followers. Sayyid Mohamed Abdille Hassan, died in December 1920 of flu.

After his death and the defeat of the Dervish movement, the Somali territories were subjected to all kinds of negotiations and partitions between the European powers (Great Britain, France, and Italy) and the Ethiopian Empire.

Most of the agreements signed between the various Somali groups and the colonialists were betrayed by the latter in compliance to their interests. The populations led daily cultural resistance and sometimes organized uprisings that were invariably and brutally suppressed.

Ethiopia, which had benefited greatly from these negotiations, conducted numerous military expeditions to occupy the Somali territories that had been ceded to it. Their transfer to Abyssinians had led to several massacres, humiliation and marginalization of the Somali people who refused the occupation of their lands. Although the Somalis were divided into different clan groups, often in competition and rivalry with each others, sometimes in open conflict, colonial domination and Ethiopian repression had given rise to their awakenings on the absolute necessity to unify as a nation. Nurtured by the example of Sayid Abdille Hassan's struggle for the emancipation and unification of the Somali people and inspired by his political messages in the form of poetry, the idea of Pan-Somalism began to prevail first in the minds of intellectuals, teachers, religious leaders, traders, soldiers who participated in the two World Wars and adventurers who visited other countries abroad.

The Pan-Somalism was structured around a few strong arguments : Somalis, who form a single group, practice the same religion, speak the same language and live in a vast territory defined as a geographical unit, must be united under the same political and administrative entity to defend their interests and ensure their security and development. These are

the same arguments that the Sultans, Ugases, Garads, , and religious leaders of the various Somali groups living in the different Somali territories used in the petitions they had sent to the Commission of Inquiry of the Four Powers who went to Mogadishu, in 1948.

However, in their campaign to raise the awareness of the population, the Pan-Somalism activists had to confront the powerful clan organization and tribal atavism of the Somali populations, which did not encourage the idea of political unity. They were also confronted with the interests of some clan leaders who feared losing their status and influence in this unity. But the idea aroused the enthusiasm of the younger urbanized generations.

The demands for self-determination and unification of the Somali Territories were more clearly articulated after the Second World War, as did other independence movements in Africa. In 1943, the Somali Youth Club was established in Mogadishu and took its definitive name as the Somali Youth League (SYL) in 1948. Other political parties emerged such as the Somali National League (SNL), the United Somali Party (USP). These political parties, which reproduced the tribal affiliations of the Somali society, even though proclaimed that they were seeking the same common objectives : the self-determination of all the Somali Territories and their unification into the same entity capable of safeguarding cultural identity and undertaking a program of socio-economic development.

The dream of a Great Somalia bringing together all Somali populations and working for their cultural and socio-economic self-determination could only confront the expansionist project of the Ethiopian Empire, based on a narrow ethnic, cultural and religious identity that excluded conquered peoples and offered them nothing else than submission.

It is this fundamental confrontation between two opposing ambitions that had fuelled the historical antagonism between the Somali and Ethiopian leaders and led them to the wars between the two countries.

The March towards Independence

Following the failure of the Bevin Plan and the decision of the United Nations to grant Italy the tutelage of Somalia for 10 years, the Somali territories experienced a great political ef-



Signature on the date of Somaliland's independence. Somali delegation: Mohamed H.L. Egal, Ahmed H. Duale, Ali Garad Jama & Ibrahim Nur. London May 1960. British Archives.

ferescence around the issues of the coming independence. In 1947, the SYL established itself, beyond Italian and British Somalia, as far as Harrar and the railway towns of Dire-Dawa and Aysha'a, becoming very popular among the Somali and Harari populations. The Somali aspirations for self-determi-

nation and unification influenced even other peoples of Ethiopia, which were previously subjugated by the Abyssinian Empire such as the Oromos and Afars. This but only increased Ethiopia's concerns.

Elections were held in 1956 in the former Italian Somalia and the SYL won the majority of seats. In the British Somaliland, the 1959 elections were won by the SNL and USP.

After the transfer of the Haud and the Reserved Areas to Ethiopia and the annexation of the NFD to Kenya, the march towards independence of the British and Italian territories was inevitable. It was at the end of these various events punctuated by the betrayals and the manipulations by the colonial powers and by the Ethiopian occupations of the Somali territories, that British Somaliland gained independence on 26 June 1960 and merged 5 days later with the territory under Italian tutelage to form the Republic of Somalia, on 1 July 1960.



1. Abdelkader Sheikh Sagawadin - 2. Mohamed Hersi Nur - 3. Yacin Haji Isman Charmarke - 4. Haji Mohamed Husain Mohamed - 5. Isman Gedi Rage - 6. Dere Haji Dere - 7. Dahir Haji Isman - 8. Ali Hassan Maslah - 9. Mohamed Ali Nur - 10. Mohamed farah Hilowle - 11. Haji Mohamed Abdullahi - 12. Hudow Maalin Abdulle - 13. Mohamed Usman Barbe.

Timelines of the Partition of Somali Territories

- **1884 to 1886** : Great Britain established the British protectorate of Somaliland and signed very similar separate treaties with different Somali clan groups.
- **1885** : France signed a treaty with the Somali-Issa which, according to a confidential report, would offer them the territory extending to the height of Harar.
- **1886** : Additional treaties were signed between the Great Britain and the Somali-Ogaden.
- **1887** : Following the defeat of Amir Abdullahi Ali of Harar by Menelik, Harar was annexed by Ethiopia and Ras Makonnen became Governor of the region.
- **1888** : Signing of an agreement between France and Great Britain that defined the boundaries between the possessions of the Somali territories by the two countries.
- **1889** : Italy established a protectorate in central Somalia.
- **1897** : Signing of the Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty which will remain secret and only revealed in 1948 through which Great Britain ceded Somali territories to Ethiopia challenging certain clauses of earlier treaties signed with Somali groups between 1884 and 1886.
- **1897** : France signed an agreement with Menelik renewing and completing an agreement delimiting the borders of its possessions with Ethiopia, ceding portions of Somali territory to it.
- **1925-1930** : Italy completed its occupation of the Somali territories and signed a 20-year friendship treaty with Ethiopia. Ras Tafari took control of Ethiopia and later be-

came an Emperor under the name of Haile Selassie 1st in 1930.

- **1936** : Italy occupied Ethiopia and merged it with its large colony of "Italian East Africa".
- **1940** : During the Second World War, Italy allied with Germany, occupied the British Somalia and all the Somali territories that were under its control.
- **1942-1943** : The Great Britain counter-attacked and put under its administration all the territories of the Horn of Africa occupied by Italy.
- **1943** : The Somali Youth League (SYL) was established in Mogadishu.
- **1946** : The British proposed the Bevin Plan for the creation of "Greater Somalia" under British tutelage but the Plan was rejected by the Americans, the Soviets and the French.
- **1948** : Ethiopia took over the administration of Jigjiga and many other cities. The SYL and the Somali National League (SNL) jointly calls upon the United Nations and request for the reunification of the Somali territories.
- **1950** : The United Kingdom returned to Italy the part of Somalia under its administration which was placed under the tutelage of the United Nations until its independence in 1960.
- **1954** : The United Kingdom ceded the Ogaden and the Haud regions to Ethiopia.
- **1960** : The Somali territories under British administration became independent and merge with the territory under Italian tutelage to form the Republic of Somalia.

2. The 1958 Referendum on Djibouti self-determination.

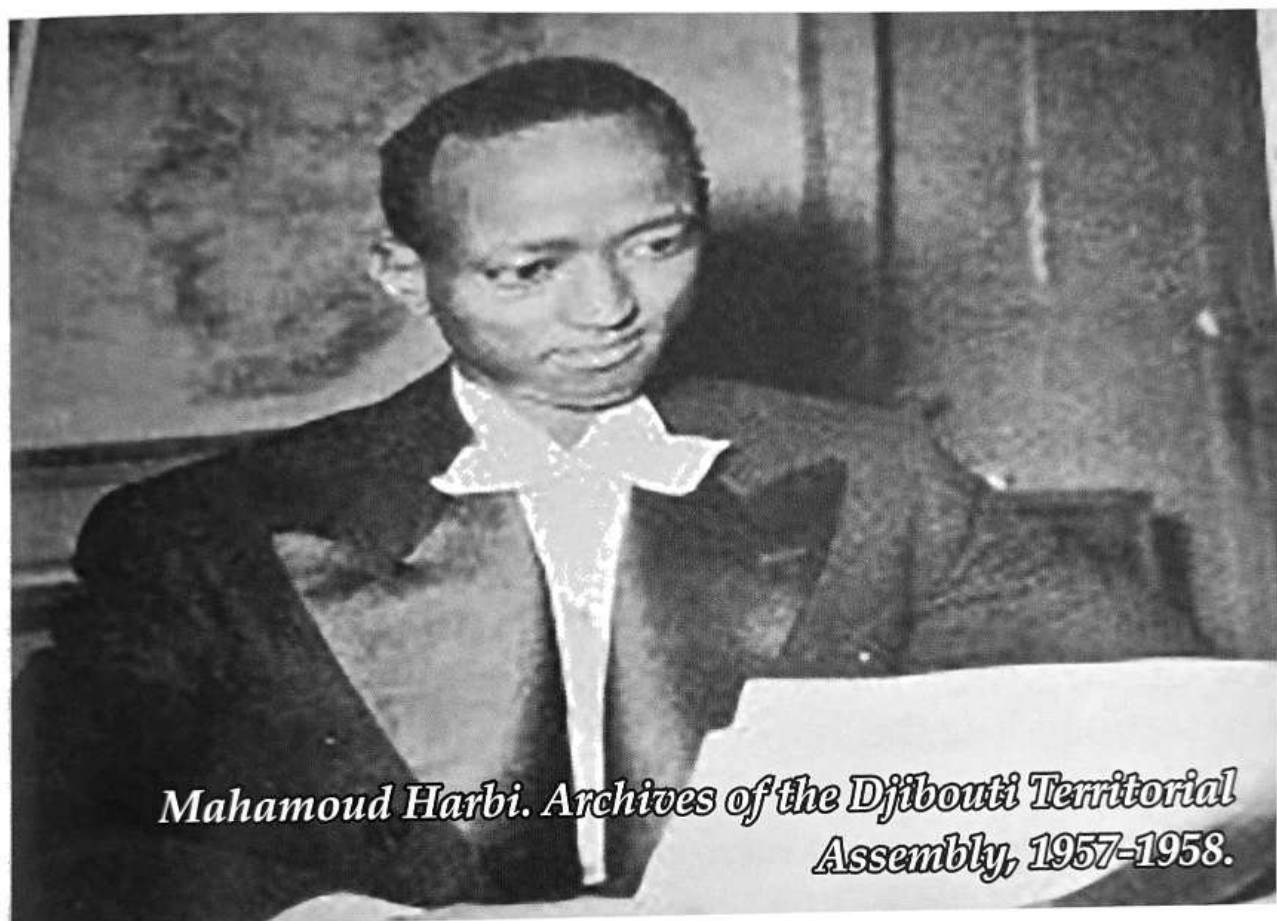
In 1958, France, discredited by the Suez Canal crisis and the Indochina War and involved in a new colonial war in Algeria, was forced to grant a greater autonomy to its colonies in Africa.

After returning to power, General de Gaulle decided to build on the path initiated by the Law of June 1956, known as the "Loi Cadre Defferre" (Defferre Framework Law), which created in all the French colonies Councils of Local Governments elected by universal suffrage, which was supposed to offer more autonomy. General De Gaulle submitted to the French people a new draft Constitution to be adopted by referendum. Independence or entry into the French Community, such was the choice proposed by the referendum organized by de Gaulle on 28 September 1958 in all the French colonies of Africa including Djibouti.

In the French Somali Coast (CFS), a new political figure of Somali origin, Mohamoud Harbi, emerged. In July 1956, he became a member of the French National Assembly in Paris. After the enactment of the Defferre Framework Law, which established universal suffrage, Mahamoud Harbi founded the "Republican Union Movement" party, which won the June 1957 elections and the vast majority of seats in the Territorial Assembly.

Mahamoud Harbi was designated as the first Vice-President of the CFS's Council of Government. After his participation in the Congress of Cotonou held in July 1958 where the main political leaders of the French colonies from Black Africa had debated the referendum proposed by France, Mahamoud

Harbi, much to everyone's surprise, decided to campaign for the "NO" to the association with the French Community in the 1958 referendum.



Mahamoud Harbi. Archives of the Djibouti Territorial Assembly, 1957-1958.

But Harbi's aspirations for independence were shattered against the harsh reality of geopolitical interests. The results of the referendum presented by the French authorities appeared as a big surprise : 75.24% of voters for the association with the French Community and 24.76% for independence. The French Somali Coast , thus, missed the opportunity to join Guinea, which was the only country in Africa under French rule to snatch its independence by vote. The French authorities were accused of electoral fraud and ballot box stuffing, because France could not afford, according to some analysts, to lose Djibouti given its geostrategic position and, especially, at this very moment in the history of the world marked by the Cold War.

Moreover, according to Maurice Meker, Governor of the CFS at the time, Ethiopia would have been ready to intervene militarily if the inhabitants of the territory opted for independence as he revealed in his book *"Le temps colonial : itinéraire africain d'un naïf du colonialisme à la coopération (1931-1960)"* (Colonial Time : African Itinerary of a naïve of colonialism to cooperation 1931-1960)

"During an audience he had granted me in June, together with our Ambassador in Addis Ababa, Jean Sauvegnargues, H.M. Hailé Selassie made it clear to us that Ethiopia, remembering the strangulation of Pierre Laval's blockade on arms in 1936, would not tolerate for very long an exclusively Somali presence in Djibouti. As a matter of fact, on the eve the election, the Ethiopian Government discreetly informed me, through its General Consulate in Djibouti, that an Ethiopian division was stationed at the border town of Dire-Dawa. In case the "No" had won, leading to independence, it is undeniable that Ethiopian forces would have reacted."

Mahamoud Harbi suffered a brutal dismissal and quite severe reprisals for "betraying" the trust that France had placed in him. He had to go into exile abroad to continue the struggle for independence. On 7 September 1959, the Djibouti Correctional Court sentenced him in absentia to ten years in prison and a 20-year ban on residence for endangering the external security of the State. He became one of the emblematic leaders of the Pan-Somali movement. This stature turned him into a permanent threat not only to France but also to Ethiopia, which attributed to him certain destabilizing actions i.e. attacks, arms trafficking, etc.

Mahamoud Harbi was killed on 29 September 1960 in a plane crash on flight 738 Geneva-Rome of Egyptian Airline Company, Misrair, with 22 passengers and 6 crew members. The

cause of this accident and even his presence in the plane still raises questions that need to be clarified by historians. The message of condolence that Gamal Abdel Nasser sent to the Somali people, demonstrated the importance of this figure in the geo-political landscape of the Horn of Africa. Among other, he was the founder of the Somali Cultural Center in Cairo, which still exists until now.

3. The annexation of Eritrea

It was after the so called Italian “purchase” of the Assab Bay from the local sultan in 1869, and their occupation of Masawa in 1885 that Eritrea was formed in 1890 as a particular territory. Following the Italian defeat in World War II, the British administered Eritrea at the time. As early as 1944, the United Nations and the United States proposed the incorporation of Eritrea into Ethiopia, which was claiming an access to the Red Sea.

International conferences were held in Potsdam, London and Paris to discuss the future of Eritrea (partition, independence, attachment to Ethiopia, etc.), without a solution being found. In the absence of agreement between the powers, the matter was referred to the United Nations in September 1948. The United States, which wished to retain its military bases in Masawa and Asmara, strongly supported the attachment to Ethiopia. Finally, a resolution was adopted by the United Nations on 2 December 1950 which gave Eritrea the status of “an autonomous unit, federated with Ethiopia under the sovereignty of the Ethiopian Crown.” This resolution provided that the final Federal Act had to be ratified by the future Eritrean National Assembly at the proclamation of the future Eritrean Constitution.

The first parliamentary elections were held in March 1952 under the supervision of a United Nations Commission and a 68-member representative Assembly was elected by the Eritreans, who approved the draft Constitution on 10 July 1952. Emperor Haile Selassie ratified the Constitution on 11 September 1952.

The federal structure adopted was quite flexible because Eritrea had to keep its own administrative and judicial organization, its own flag and autonomy over its internal affairs, including the police, local administration and taxation. But this arrangement did not suit an absolutist imperial regime that was unable to tolerate any signs of autonomy that could serve as "bad examples" for the other provinces of the Empire, and, especially the Somali region claimed by Ethiopia. In 1954, Haile Selassie banned Eritrean political parties, as well as the independent press. In 1955, Arabic and Tigrinya, the most commonly used languages on Eritrean territory, were dropped in favour of Amharic, and in 1959 the Eritrean flag was forbidden.

In 1962, the imperial pressure pushed the Eritrean Assembly to abolish the federation and to accept its annexation by Ethiopia. The Ethiopian takeover provoked a nationalist reaction. Against the first peaceful demonstrations, the regime responded with a bloody repression. This brutal response convinced Eritrean patriots that only armed struggle could restore their lost autonomy. The first Eritrean separatists who created the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) were influenced by the Nasserism and Algerian liberation movement.

On 1st September 1961, the ELF fired its first shots at the police. It was the start of a merciless armed struggle that lasted

30 years and led to Eritrea's independence on 28 May 1993, following a popular referendum.

4. The Mahdist War in Sudan

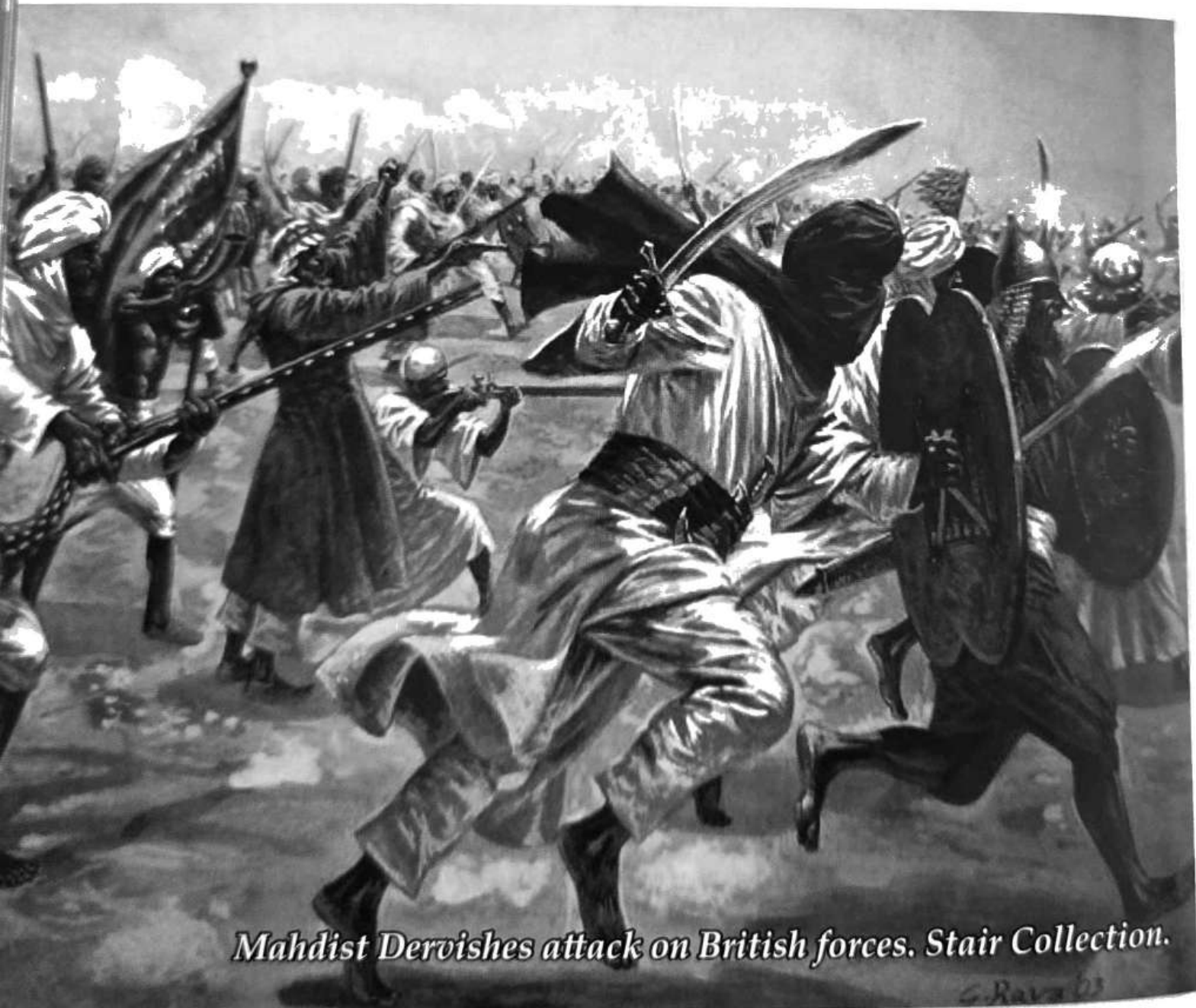
The Mahdist War was a very violent conflict in Sudan for more than 18 years (1881 to 1899) that pitted the Sudanese insurgents, also known as "the Darvish" and Anglo-Egyptian troops. This conflict also involved Italy and France and affected Southern Egypt and the border areas of Eritrea and Ethiopia.

The Mahdist movement was led by Mohammad Ahmad, a Sudanese cleric, who had proclaimed himself "Mahdi", the Redeemer, and who wanted to liberate Sudan from foreign occupation, notably Egyptian and British. Quickly, the rebels, supported by the population, managed to control the south of the country and to isolate several Anglo-Egyptian garrisons on the border with Ethiopia. The British then negotiated the possibility of evacuating the encircled troops through the Abyssinian territory. Discussions culminated in the Treaty of Adowa signed on 3 June 1884 between Ethiopia, Great Britain and Egypt.

By this agreement, Yohannes IV, then Negusse Negest of Abyssinia, began war with the Mahdists. A series of deadly battles took place between the latter and the Abyssinians. At the end of 1888, Yohannes IV, struck by the rampage in the town of Gondar by the Mahdists, raised a large army of nearly 100,000 men and engaged in a ultimate battle. The combat took place in March 1889 in Metemma, a town on the border with Sudan. The battle ended up with the death of Yohannes IV and the collapse of the Ethiopian army. A period of political turmoil ensued in Ethiopia, from which Emperor Menelik,

who imposed himself later as the new Emperor of Ethiopia, emerged. He also worked to strengthen the alliance with the British and received many modern weapons to continue the fight against the Mahdists.

The British who had a revenge to take on the Mahdists also had an interest in allying with the Abyssinians. Indeed, they had suffered a crushing defeat in January, 1885 and lost Khartoum, which fell to the Mahdist forces. It was a real shock and a humiliation for Great Britain, which at the time was conside-



Mahdist Dervishes attack on British forces. Stair Collection.

red to be the superpower of the world. Therefore, the British signed a new agreement with Menelik on 14 May 1897. As the main concern of the British at that time was the destruction of the Mahdist movement, they made concessions to Abyssinia in the agreement and called into question certain clauses of the Treaties that they had signed in 1884 with various Somali groups. The Somali territories under the British colonial rule therefore have borne the brunt of this Ethio-British alliance. Instructions will be given by the British government to its representatives who negotiated with Menelik in 1897 as Louis Fitzgibbon reports in his book "The Betrayal of the Somalis" published in 1981. One of these instructions was "You are authorized, if absolutely necessary, to make concessions with regard to the borders of the Somaliland protectorate as defined in the Anglo-Italian Protocol of 1894".

This "betrayal" of the British treaties had tragic consequences for the region and had led to the cession of Somali territories including the Haud and the Reserved Areas to Ethiopia.

PART 2

THE AYSHA'A MASSACRE



Well in Aysha'a. Photo Said Ali Diksie 2021

A | THE ARCHIVES

The Aysha'a massacre is today largely attested by written documents found in the French, British, Ethiopian, Somali and Egyptian Archives. These documents inform about the circumstance, the scale and the impact of this event in the region. They show that the Aysha'a massacre was neither a blunder of Ethiopian forces stationed in the Somali region of Sitti, nor an isolated act due to a decision taken by a zealous troop commander against the advice of his hierarchy as had been explained at the time. It was part of a strategy followed by Ethiopian imperial State following its secular tradition of repression as response to the resistance of the conquered peoples aspiring for self determination.

In fact, since, at least, the second half of the 19th century, the Abyssinian regime embodied successively by the Neguse Negest Tewodros II (1855 - 1868), Yohannes IV (1872-1889), Mene-lik II (1889-1913) and Haile Selassie (1930-1974) used to resort to the "scorched earth" policy consisting of maiming, killing and looting civilian population in order to terrorize the people who have refused their domination.

Ethiopia's history is punctuated with many genocidal crimes, perpetrated by an absolutist and expansionist monarchy, which could only offer the conquered people the choice between sub-

mission or terrible repression. We may cite, as examples, the pogrom of Oromo people at Anoole (1860-1865), the genocidal campaign against the Walayta people in 1887, the massacres of Kafficho and Gimira communities in 1889.

This tradition was well documented by the Ethiopian sociologist, Mekuria Bulcha, in his article published in 2005 in the *African Sociological Review*. Based on a qualitative historical sociological investigation of mass-killings that have been registered during the last one hundred and fifty years, he concluded that "Both the unification of the Abyssinian State between 1850s and 1870s and the creation of the Ethiopian empire State during the last quarter of the nineteenth century were accomplished through wars that were clearly genocidal"

During the 20th century, the Somalis were among the peoples who suffered this tradition of collective punishment which continued until recently despite the different regime changes in Ethiopia. The massacres of Aysha'a, Danood and Dhagabur are the ones that have strongly marked the collective memory and are waiting to be brought to light.

1. The Early warnings : Tension and Unrest in Errer Region

According to various reports, the events leading up to the Aysha'a Massacre started in early 1956, with the deadly intervention of Ethiopian troops, against Somali nomads around Errer area, meant to punish them for claiming their Somali identity and their status as "Protected Persons" by agreements signed with the British.

Faced with resistance from the nomads, the army used tanks and planes, as the British Governor of Hargeisa stated in a let-

ter sent on 23 June 1956 to his Foreign Office : “..in February last an Ethiopian punitive force in armoured cars and supported by planes of the Ethiopian Air Force entered Esa country and after a five-day running battle defeated the men and drove them away from their women and children who the Ethiopian soldier then butchered in the most revolting manner, cutting off the breasts of some women, before killing them. The livestock were then slaughtered, the houses were burnt, and the Esa were left destitute except for a few camels. They were seen by the Chief Secretary and I attached herewith a record of the meeting... The bald fact is that as a result of the latest Ethiopian measures the Esa as a tribe are practically broken, not only physically but also morally. What has this achieved is not their loss of manpower but the cold-blooded extermination of women and children by Ethiopian troops armed with the most modern weapons. The emissaries have produced the details, which are attached at Appendix A, of the women and children who have been deliberately killed, both the Ethiopian subjects and British Protected persons”. (Annex 1)

This massacre was also described in the English newspaper Sunday Times of 24 June 1956 in an article by its correspondent J.B Slade-Baker entitled « Somalis Appeal to Britain : Tribesmen tell of massacre by Ethiopians”.

The events of February 1956 and those that occurred in July of the same year were documented by Lieutenant-Colonel T.P Luckock, who was on a mission to Errer area from 21 to 22 July 1956. In the report on his visit addressed to his hierarchy, he drew a fairly precise counting of the victims and their clan affiliation, resulting in a total of 418 people killed, including 113 women and 116 children. (Annex 2)

SOMALIS APPEAL TO BRITAIN

Tribesmen Tell of Massacre by Ethiopians

By J. B. SLADE-BAKER,
Special Representative of The Sunday Times

HARGEISA (British Somaliland), Saturday.
THIS week a delegation from a Somali nomad tribe, The Esa, arrived here to seek British protection against the Ethiopian Government, whose forces, they allege, have massacred more than 400 of their men, women and children and driven them from their grazing grounds because they would not accept Ethiopian sovereignty.

Rumours of trouble between the tribe and the Ethiopian authorities have been coming into Hargeisa for some time, but it was only on the arrival of the delegation that a detailed account became available. A preliminary report is now on its way to London.

According to the tribal spokesmen they were approached last January by officials on their grazing grounds in Ethiopia, and were asked if they considered themselves Ethiopians. They replied that they did not, that they were Somalis and were under the protection of the British Government, by a treaty concluded in 1885.

"They then told us," said the Esa leader, "that if we persisted in calling ourselves Somalis and in saying that we were protected by the English they would either expel us from the country or exterminate us. We replied that we had occupied our grazing grounds for generations, long before they had ever come there.

"In the first week of February we were attacked by an Ethiopian force of infantry in 20 lorries, six light tanks and two or three planes. We had only our spears and our knives, and we were helpless against these iron machines."

After a battle lasting five days, in

which 189 Esa men, 111 women and 118 children were killed, the survivors retreated into hilly country where the tanks could not follow them. The delay in appealing to Britain, the Esa say, was because they could not hold a tribal meeting before the rains, and it took time to arrange their affairs.

The leader of the delegation went on, "We have had clashes with the Ethiopians before and we know that men are killed in battle—we are accustomed to that. But we have never heard before of women and children being killed. The women were mutilated before being killed, and the children—one of them four days old—were murdered in cold blood.

"We have lost everything. The Ethiopians have slaughtered our cows and sheep and goats, and have burned our huts and possessions. We only ask that our plight shall be made known to the British Government and the world, that we shall be given protection against Ethiopia, and that our rights shall be restored."

The Esa are a tough, hard-bitten people, with a reputation for turbulence, but they are also recognised as trustworthy. As I sat among them and listened to their story, it was impossible to remain unmoved by their faith in our ability to give them the protection to which they believe they are entitled.

[WORLD COPYRIGHT]

In a report written on his meeting in Hargeisa on 20 June 1956 by survivors of the massacre, the British Secretary in Chief, Mr. J.R. Stebbing transcribed the explications given by the latter about the reasons that might have led the Ethiopian forces to commit these crimes. A witness named Wais Mohamed told him that « Sometime ago, the Ethiopian Government sent officials to inquire what nationality we claimed to have. We answered we are Esa. Then we were asked again who we were and we said we were Somalis. They told us not to say that we are Somalis ; they told us to remain Esa, but Ethiopian subjects. We replied that we were Esa and Somalis, but we were not Ethiopians. Then they asked us to what Government we were subject to ; we told them that Somalis claimed to be British Protected Persons. We, Esa, replied that from the time of our grand-fathers and our fathers, we have been told that we have agreements with Great Britain. Then Ethiopians said that if we said we have agreements with Great Britain, we must leave their territory. Then we were at a place called Tolo. We were born in that place. We had nowhere else to go. Then the Ethiopians said that if this is true, we must stop making assertions that we had agreements with the British Government and were Somalis. We said we could not give up these things which were traditions handed down to us from our forefathers. Then the Ethiopians said we should be compelled to move. We had neither force nor might to resist but we were born in that place, so we had to stay there. The next thing that happened was that Ethiopian military attacked us. It was on Friday in Rejab (1st week of February approximately). The fighting continued for 5 days and nights. We were forced back across seven river beds until we were driven to the last river bed at Errer. We had not the ability to resist this force. We were driven away from our women and children,

but this did not greatly worry us as they had always been left untouched before. On this occasion, however, the Ethiopians killed all they could find. We were attacked by armoured cars ; we have always had fighting and troubles in our lands, but we had never been attacked by armoured cars before. We were used to fighting soldiers with bayonets and rifles but not armoured cars. I do not know how many armoured cars were there, but this is what defeated us. .."(Annex 3)

This testimony collected by the British authorities in Somaliland is revealing in many respects. First of all, it highlights the great misunderstanding that has always existed between the Somali people and the Ethiopian imperial State on the issues of identity, nationality and right to land. The feudal and rigid conception of belonging to the Ethiopian nation, articulated around Amhara Identity and the Coptic Christian religion never made sense for the Somalis of Ethiopia, who circulated in a territory transcending the colonial boundaries, and had a more flexible interpretation of the concept of citizenship. The great contradiction of the Ethiopian state had been to demand the loyalty of the conquered peoples without offering them in exchange opportunities to identify themselves with an Ethiopian nation built exclusively on its Amhara and Coptic Christian component. This contradiction persists to this day in Ethiopia, as illustrated by the current debates between the proponents of federalism and believers of unionism.

This testimony also highlights the change in armaments and behavior on the part of the Ethiopian forces, which begun to use armoured vehicles and planes against civilians and massively violate the basic rules of war by killing also women and children.

Although the collective memory did not keep track back of them, the events that occurred in Errer in 1956 have created a tense situation in the region on either side of the railway, marked by sporadic clashes between pastoralists and soldiers. Similar serious incidents were reported in the same region in July 1960, this time by representatives of France, the other colonial power present in the Horn of Africa.

In a confidential letter dated 5 July 1960, the French Consul in Harrar, based in Dire Dawa, Jean Merrien, informed his Ambassador in Addis Ababa of the worsening situation in the Errer region, following serious clashes between the Issas and the Afars near Jaedorra (Aydorra). He wrote « ... Given the magnitude of the events, the Governor of Harar reportedly decided to involve the troops. The latter, I am told, was mainly acting against the Issas, who had been confiscated of several hundreds of animals. During the operation the army itself would have suffered losses of manpower and equipment ... » (Annex 4)

It is interesting to point out here the statements reported in his letter by the Consul of France, who could not be suspected of being hostile to Ethiopia, concerning the attitude of the Ethiopian authorities in this conflict « ... It is also said that at first the local authorities were not dissatisfied with the struggle that pitted the two tribes against each other, which offered the army the opportunity to intervene against the Issas and recover the weapons they would receive from the « Somali Youth League » (SYL). The proportions taken by the case would now worry the very people who may have created it. » (Annex 4)

This tactic of pitting communities against each other and then intervening and imposing its dictates is indeed an old habit of colonial power. The Ethiopian government had used it in

many occasions, including very recently in the grazing conflict between Afars and Issas, during the TPLF-led regime.

The mention of the weapons that were supposed to be received from the Somali Youth League (SYL) was also another tactic that the Ethiopian government used frequently to justify its abuses against the Somali population, including the Aysha'a massacre, as it will be seen later.

The Consul of France sent a series of letters and telegrams to his hierarchy on what he called "The troubles in the region of Errer" including a letter dated 28 July in which he informed that "the clashes between the police and members of the tribe of Issa are multiplying in the region of Errer. Losses would be more severe on both sides. Some 40 wounded police and soldiers were evacuated to hospitals in Diré-Daoua and Harrar earlier this week. About 100 police officers from Addis Ababa set up camp at the entrance to the provincial capital. These events further widened the gap between Somalis and Ethiopians". » (Annex 5)

The Consul of France in Harrar sent to his hierarchy (French Embassy in Addis Ababa, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Governor of CFS) at least two telegrams to inform them of the movements of weapons. In his telegram of 20 July 1960, he wrote, "The Governor General of Harrar informs me that French-made weapons were found in the Ethiopian territory in the possession of members of Issa tribes. Ethiopian authorities believe they know that these weapons come from Dhikil.... » (Annex 6)

His telegram of 22 July 1960 is more explicit « The Governor General of Harrar, with whom I spoke last night, told me that, according to the information received, Lebel rifles and ammu-

...
nition in the possession of the members of the Issa tribes were removed from our stores by a certain Wais Bouca, assistant to the Commander of Dikhil District. Colonel Kefle asked the Governor of Aysha'a to send him some samples of these weapons to facilitate the investigation ... I would like to be able to give, as soon as possible, to Colonel Kefle the necessary reassurance concerning this issue " (Annex 7)

Thus, the city of Aysha'a was suspected by the Ethiopian authorities of being involved in this case. Further incidents were reported by the Consul in the Awash region between the armed forces and the Somali population in late July 1960 and in other Somali settlements in early August 1960.

In a letter of 3 August, he underlines the seriousness of the situation "It comes back to me that there would be a certain state of ferment in the Ogaden. The hundred policemen who, a few days ago, were camping at the gates of Harrar, were reportedly directed to this area. On the other hand, it would become impossible to travel at night on the roads that connect Jigjiga to the provincial capital (Harrar)... (Annex 8)

An Egyptian newspaper, "The Republic of Cairo", also mentioned in its number 26899, published on 5 August 1960, the events that were taking place in the region a few weeks before the Aysha'a massacre and reported "Violent clashes between Somalis and Ethiopian army units reportedly lasted for weeks." According to the Journal, these events were due to the accession of Somalia to independence.

2. Djibouti-Dire-Dawa Train Assault

It was in this tense situation that the attack on the passenger train No. 211 travelling between Djibouti and Dire Dawa took place. It happened on 9 August 1960 at 4 a.m. at the Harr Pass,

six kilometers from Hadhagala and about 60 kilometers from Aysha'a. Stones were placed on the track and thus the train derailed.



Train derailment 1960: Photo Collection Edmond Davanier

Three people were killed, including the Chief of the department of the traction who was acting as the director in Dire-Dawa as well as a policeman and a fire fighter from the railway company. Seven minor injuries, including a French nun, were also reported. The freight cars and passengers were looted by the attackers and the nomads of the surrounding area who had flocked to the place.

Several interpretations circulated about this attack, some of which were reported by the Consul of France in his letter to

his ambassador based in Addis Ababa dated 12 August 1960. "Yesterday we may have had the impression that this could only be an isolated act of banditry. Indeed, according to the information gathered the case was set up by the Abane of the Adhagala sector who thus wanted to revenge for the confiscation by the local authorities of a certain quantity of goods belonging to him...It appears certain that the coup was the work of members of the Issa tribe. According to some reports, these are the same ones who for almost two months already have been in the grip of the police forces of the Errer region. The Issa circles here seem to disapprove the conduct of their "brothers" but, nevertheless, argue that the responsibilities lie with the government, which they believe had massacred women and children and their herds" (Annex 9).

This information perfectly matches up with the testimony of Abdi Okie, who was part of the Somali region Liberation Front in the process of constitution at that period (see Section on testimonies). During the interview we had with him, he confirmed to us that the attack on the train was by no means an action initiated or even encouraged by any Liberation Front but rather a personal initiative of a trader named Husain Lahdil (Laxdil), who had wanted revenge for the injustice he suffered from the Ethiopian authorities. It is likewise quite possible that the trader was able to easily mobilize in this operation people who have been victims of the abuses of Ethiopian Authorities, especially, in the Errer, as indicated in the letter of the Consul. In a telegram dated 12 August, 1960, he wrote, « The number of assailants is estimated by the Ethiopian services at 600 men. They would have few rifles and, it seems, no weapons of war (among the shots fired there were buckshot). The majority had

only the daggers usually carried by Somalis in the region. The attackers looted the train but did not try to systematically massacre the passengers, whether white or Ethiopian... »

The Consul reiterated this analysis in a letter of 12 August 1960 to his Ambassador :

“... It should also be noted that the assailants, whose behavior towards travelers was abhorrent, did not, as they had the possibility, carry out a general massacre. The victims themselves do not seem to have been chosen- The murderer of our compatriot would have even expressed some regret for having killed “an European... » (Annex 10)

The Ethiopian government was quick to see it as an act of Pan-Somali Movement as noted by the Consul « The Ethiopian authorities are now convinced that some of the attackers came from Somalia. On the other hand, they are increasingly inclined to attribute responsibility for the incident to the actions of the Pan-Somalis and, especially, to Mahamoud Harbi and Goumane.»

The Consul was echoing the Ethiopian government's affirmation that more than 600 men were involved in the operation against the train and that large weapons had been brought into the area to launch attacks against the Ethiopian armed forces. These allegations seemed to be intended to prepare the ground for a possible intervention of the army in Aysha'a and its surroundings. They were confirmed neither by documents we found in the Archives nor by the witnesses we have interviewed. The attack on the train accelerated the sending of large troops to Aysha'a, facilitating the requisition of trains to transport the soldiers and their equipment.

3. Aysha'a martyred

The massacre is today largely attested by written documents that were found in the French, British, Egyptian and the Somali archives. In the pages that follow, we will try to reconstruct this historical event.

Encirclement, bombing and atrocities

On the 9 August, large troops estimated to 500 soldiers were sent to Aysha'a and its surroundings to prepare for the intervention. The Consul of France in a telegram of 10 August reported that "The general commander of the region told me that strong measures would be taken against the rebels" Two days later, he sent another telegram on 12 August in which he indicated that "The Governor General of Harrar summoned me today at 4 p.m. to say that those responsible for the death of Mr. Malevays, (the French killed in the train attack) were punished. Asked by me if the persons involved had been captured, Colonel Kefle replied, We have cleaned up the area between Adhagalla and Aysha'a". He also told me that the operation was continuing". (Annex 11)

Since 11 August, the town of Aysha'a was encircled by the Ethiopian forces preventing the population from leaving and kept the many nomads who entered with theirs caravans into the mouse trap.

The killing began on the day of 12 August 1960. According to some testimonies, the soldiers seemed to have a list of people to eliminate as they, first, started by choosing the houses to search. They entered in houses and asked for the heads of the family whom they murdered in front of their wives and children. Then, they searched the houses and courtyards for cash

and valuable, threatening men and women to tell them the hiding places. Unfortunately, even when they obeyed, they were not spared.

It was an ethnic cleansing because it targeted only people perceived as Somalis. While the massacre was taking place in the city planes bombarded the nomadic camps, livestock and everything that moved within an 80-kilometre operating radius, a space where there was a large concentration of nomadic encampments. These bombings were all the more deadly because the nomads who lived in this open plain had no protection place, i.e. forests, rocks or caves, to hide and shelter their families and their herds. The pilots appeared to have been trained for this operation. They flew very low and swirled around the herds to scare them and push them to cluster to single area before dropping their bombs on the crowd to do maximum damage.

In a letter dated 13 August 1960, the Chief Engineer for Public Works in charge of local control of the Railway reported on the situation as follows :

"On the 11 August at 4 A.M. : Departure of a railcar with the crew to carry out, supposedly, the first work of clearing the track ; the Director-General and I accompanied the railcar. The Ethiopian inspector general who was invited by us did not show up. Stones were on the track between Hadhagala and Aysha'a. In the evening it was announced that Aysha'a was encircled and gunfires around the town were heard. A huge stir was observed at Diré-Daoua station. The Governor General of the Province came to the news through phone after that one of the Ethiopian station masters who had called the Palace had the Emperor on the phone to inform him about the new event.

Two hours later, one death and the end of the shooting were announced. The case had been exaggerated (perhaps not without a reason by Aysha'a), but there was great concern both in the station and among the Ethiopian Authorities.

12 August : Departure of a new troop train. The number of military personnel in Hadagala was expected to be around 500. On the same day, Ethiopian Air Force bombed on both side of the railway line between Hadagala and the French Somali Coast (CFS) border and troops were trucked to the bombed site. The Governor General told the Consul of France that the culprits had been punished. In fact, they were not captured but the planes bombed everything that lived in the area. A first Dire-Daoua-Djibouti train passed at the 196 km point mark at around 3 P.M...." (Annex 12)

According to eyewitnesses, the massacre in Aysha'a lasted for several days. After killing the listed notables, traders, teachers and religious leaders, the soldiers continued the massacre by committing all sorts of horrors including women's rape.

At the exception of some radio stations and newspapers which reported the event at that time, almost no documented account has been published on the Aysha'a Massacre to our knowledge. However, we have found four books which briefly mentioned this tragic event.

The first is a book titled "Colonialism, Hatred and Greed" by the Egyptian Sheikh Muhammad Al Ghazali (4th edition in 2005), which refers to an interview with an eyewitness and attests that the indigenous peoples of Aysha'a and its surroundings had suffered a crime against humanity perpetrated by the Ethiopian armed forces. The book also states that more than 500 survivors had crossed the borders of Somalia and the French Somali Coast.

The second one is a booklet entitled "The Danot Incidents" published in 1961 by the Somali government, which recalls events that led to the killings of Aysha'a in its annex B "During the night of the 11th August Ethiopian troops surrounded the village of Aysha'a. A curfew was imposed on the village but the nomads arriving unaware of this order were fired on without any preliminary warning. During the following morning shops and dwellings were broken into by troops and property looted. "Those who attempted to resist or protest were shot. Order was not restored until the 15th August ... Hundreds of refugees came into the Republic and the Government was obliged to open a camp for their relief. Generous assistance was forthcoming from the people whilst nation-wide demonstrations were made against this indiscriminate slaughter of defenseless and innocent men, women and children".

The third one is a book written by a Somali by the name of Ali Ghalib Girre entitled "Ethiopia, From a Century of Obscurity to Dawn of Democracy", published in 2006, in Addis-Abeba, in which he wrote "The Colenel Kifle Edgetu, the Governor of Aysha'a began his barbarism at five o'clock when people came out of their houses to pray the morning prayer. He massacred all the people who came for the prayer inside the mosque, nobody rested from those who went for prayer early in the morning at six o'clock when the people come out of their houses for their business, owners of restaurants, and as well as those who run for their bread wondering... After massacring all the people they began to plunder the properties of the victims, many shops, the furniture of the houses. After all that they began to destroy and demolish the houses which until now rested destroyed ... "(Pages 80 and 81)

The fourth book entitled "Evil Days : Thirty Years of War and Famine in Ethiopia" is authored by Alexander De Waal who in page 80 wrote « ... The inhabitants of the Ogaden received little from the Ethiopian government during the first decades of the occupation except raiding parties. Following Independence in 1960, the Somali government set up the WSLF and there was increasing agitation for the Ogaden to secede from Ethiopia. The Ethiopian army immediately moved to set up military bases in the area. Up to 500 civilians were killed when the village of Aysha'a was destroyed to make way for a military post in August 1960 »

According to the various cross-checks that we have undertaken, the number of victims of the Aysha'a genocide is between 2,500 and 3,000. This estimate is based on the following facts :

- The size of Aysha'a's population which was estimated between 15,000 and 20,000 inhabitants ;
- The city's vocation as a commercial hub which attracted hundreds of non-residents visitors ;
- The preparation, at the time of the massacre, of a great religious ceremony in memory of Sheikh Moussa Rijaal which used to bring together each year, thousands of disciples ;
- The orders given to the Ethiopian imperial forces to exterminate all Somali men over 16 years of age in and around the city ;
- The encirclement and closure of the city which limited the possibilities of escape
- The massacres, carried out by hundreds of soldiers, which lasted for several days ;

- Aerial bombardments of camps established within a radius of 40 to 80 km around Aysha'a ;
- The killings perpetrated by the armored vehicles and the troops on foot posted on either side of the rails.



Aysha'a cemetery: Photo Committee 2021

Cadavers, Stench and Desolation

Through out the time of the massacre and long after, the corpses were left to rot in the street and in the houses. Even ten days after the tragedy, witnesses who had travelled to the town by train were astounded by an unbearable stench of death which was emanating from the rotten corpses long before they reached the city and saw its desolation.

This situation is confirmed by the Consul of France in a telegram of 15 September 1960 "I had an interview on 5 September with Colonel Tessama Izineh who had just taken up his duties as Governor of Dire Daoua. My interlocutor spoke at length

about the clean-up operations that the Ethiopian army had just been carrying out in the region since the 9th of August ... In Aysha'a, the colonel told me, the repression has been swift and severe ; many corpses are still in the houses. Teams have been sent to the town to take the necessary health care needs ... (Annex 13)



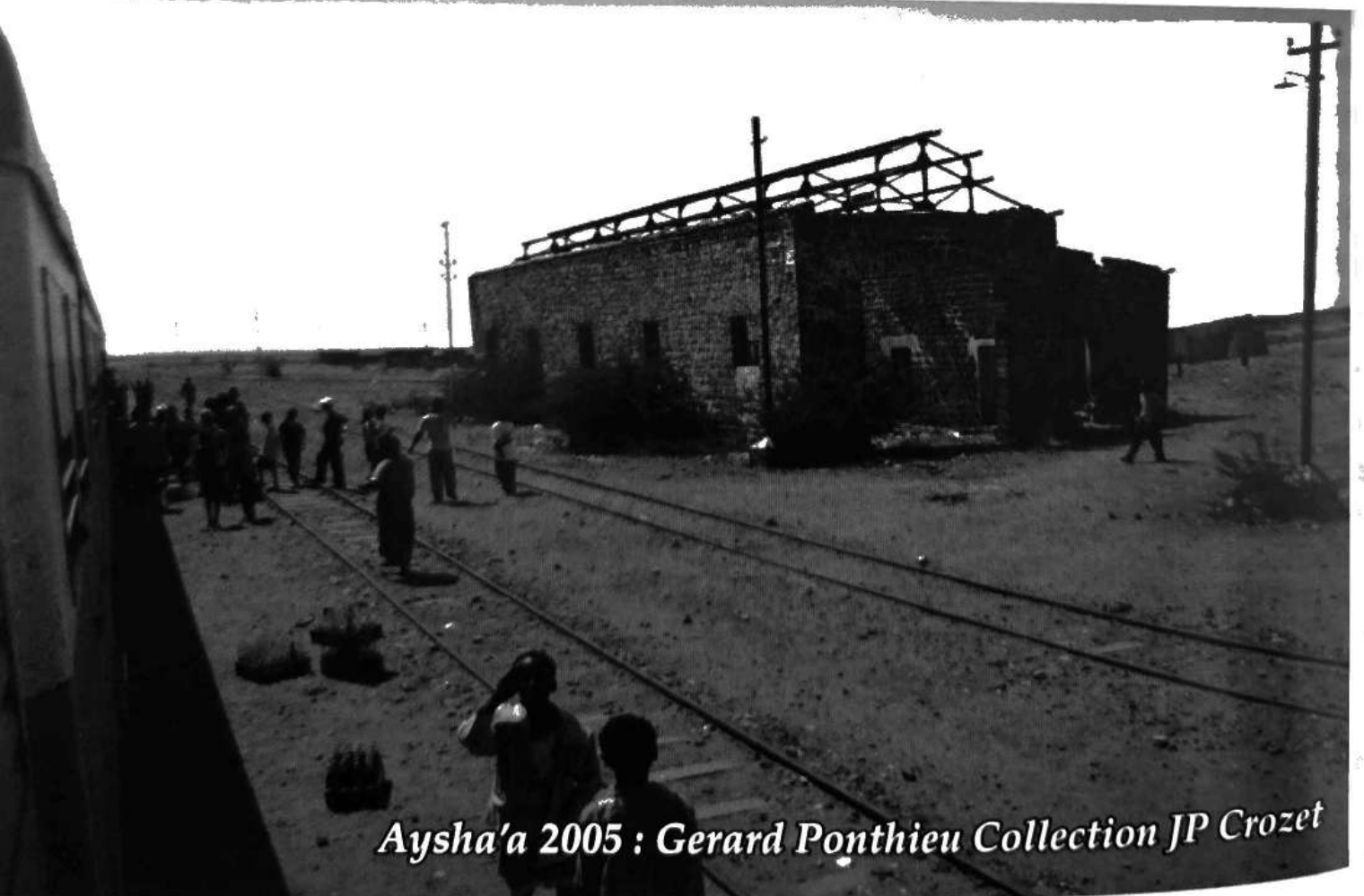
More than two weeks after the massacre, the city had remained frozen in horror. In his letter to his ambassador dated 28 October 1960, the Consul of France wrote, "One of our compatriots who just spent two days in Aysha'a told me that the city is still deserted by its Somali inhabitants. Only some Ethiopians and railway employees go about their business. The houses are still in the state where they were put by the massacres. My informant counted a dozen skulls littering the deserted streets of the town. It also comes back to me that the efforts under-

taken by the authorities and in particular the Emperor himself to bring the Bedouins back to their camp have had little effects ... » (Annex 14)

All the steps taken by the authorities to bring the Somali population back to Aysha'a including the ordering of Dire Dawa's traders to open shops in the abandoned city have failed.

The Exodus of the Population

The massacre led to a major exodus of the survivors to French-occupied territory i.e. Ali Sabieh, Dikhil, Djibouti and to Somalia i.e. Abdulkader, Sheikh, Hargeisa and Borama. The Somali government's relief to the refugees who had escaped and gone to seek refuge in Somalia was all the more exemplary considering the fact that the country had just ac-



Aysha'a 2005 : Gerard Ponthieu Collection JP Crozet

quired its independent barely a month and a half before the Aysha'a Massacre. According to the testimonies gathered, the Prime Minister, Abdurachid Ali Charmarke, himself had gone with a strong delegation to visit the camps to ensure the care of the wounded and the schooling of the children.

In the French Somali Coast (CFS), it was the Djiboutian population that provided relief to the survivors who had fled to Djibouti. In a telegram to his Government dated 16 August, the Governor of CFS acknowledged that "The Refugees, especially women and children, had already arrived in Ali-Sabieh and Dikhil. Given the lack of resources, it is feared that we will soon find ourselves facing a real refugee problem." (Annex 15)

The killings of the Ethiopian forces also affected Djiboutian Somalis who happened to be on the other side of the border during the tragedy. In a telegram of 17 August 1960, the French Consul of Diré Dawa alerted his hierarchy about the fate of Djiboutians of Somali origin in Aysha'a "It is indeed possible that nationals of the French Somali Coast who were in Aysha'a were victims of the ruthless repressive measures taken by the army and the police since the 10th of August. The news which reaches me from this locality is still confusing. However, it is confirmed that all the men in the village who were unable to flee were shot. Only the employees of the station seem to have escaped the massacre. ..On the other hand, security services on 14 August threw down all Somali travelers on the Dire-Dawa-Djibouti train at Aysha'a station. It is probable that these were shot. It is not excluded that there were CFS nationals among them. The railroad services are partly disorganized. Indeed, most of the Somalis who worked there have disappeared (dead or on the run) and the others are asking to

join Dire Dawa. The Somalis in this city are themselves terrorized by fear of reprisals" (Annex 16)

These abuses have led some members of the local CFS government to express solidarity with the victims and criticize the complicit silence of the French colonial administration.

In this regard, the Governor of CFS alerted in the same telegram its hierarchy, "Following the repressive measures of Ethiopians allegedly suffered by the Issas from the CFS, the emotion is very strong in the Issa community of Djibouti who already consider that we agreed with Ethiopian exactions. (Annex 14)

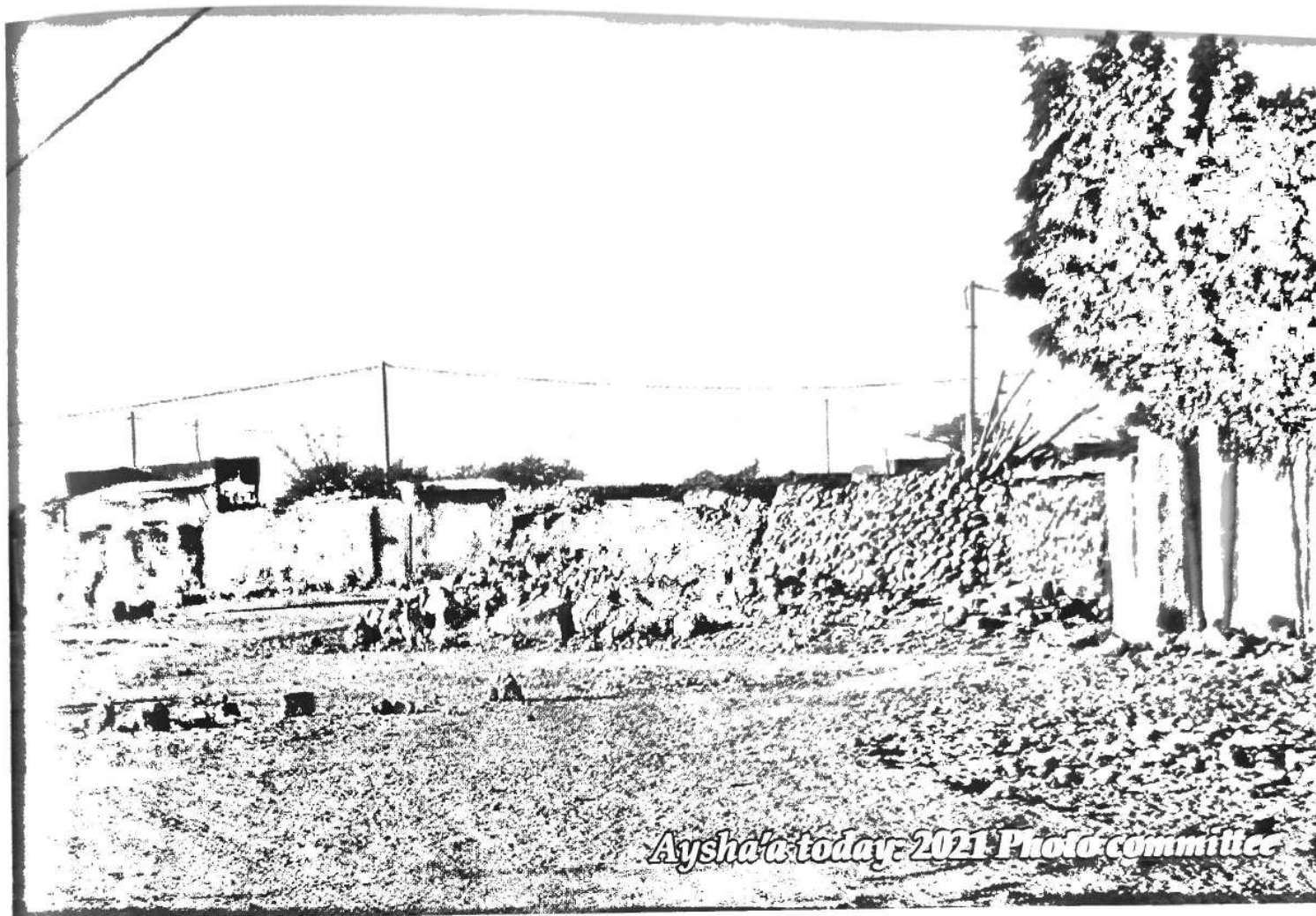
In another telegram of the same date, he stated that "The territory is calm, but the Somalis and the Vice-President of the Territory are outraged by the methods used, which affected some subjects of CFS. It is feared that the Member of Parliament, whose upcoming arrival is being talked about, will take advantage of the current climate to create unrest. »

The MP in question was probably Mahamoud Harbi, who had been removed from office and had gone abroad to continue the struggle for the territory's independence.

The vain attempts of compensation

The massacre of Aysha'a caused such a fear among the Somali population that commercial exchanges in the region and especially along the railway took a long time to resume. The instability thus created affected the country's economy and led to a reduction of the Ethiopian revenues from Customs.

The Ethiopian government tried to respond to the disastrous consequences of its repression against the population by an-



nouncing that those responsible for the massacre would be arrested and brought to trial. This propaganda announcement was reported by the French Consul to Dire Dawa in a telegram of 2nd September 1960 "It comes back to me that the Ethiopian government has decided to arrest those responsible for the massacre against the people of Aysha'a. It would be the District Chief and police officers.... This decision is thought, to be likely to calm Somali circles. It was allegedly taken mainly for the purpose of depriving the Mogadishu Government of bringing the case before an international body... (Annex 17)

To appease the Somali population, Emperor Haile Selassie had also promised to offer some compensation, as the Consul of France pointed out in his letter of 10 October 1960 «At the hea-

ring he granted the Issa Chiefs during his visit to Diré-Daoua, the Emperor told them that he had ordered measures to be taken in favor of the victims of the repression against Aysha'a. The Monarch, in particular, indicated that he intended to take care of the orphans, of this locality who will be grouped in Diré-Daoua. This measure had not received the favor of all the Issa leaders. Some saw it as a maneuver by the Ethiopian Government to remove those young people from their environment so that they can be given a purely Ethiopian education." (Annex 18)

Despite the attempts of Haile Selassie and the local authorities, most of the Somali inhabitants of the city did not return. For a long time, Aysha'a remained as a dead city and had not regained its former dynamism. The abandoned houses that escaped administrative or savage expropriation had fallen into ruins. However, in recent decades, thanks to the autonomy acquired with the institution of Federalism in Ethiopia and the construction of new infrastructure, Aysha'a has started to re-emerge, benefitting from the increase of socioeconomic activities in various domains.

4. A premeditated State crime

The massacre of Aysha'a was planned and decided in high places by the Ethiopian government of that time as showed by the following facts :

The train attack on 9 August took place near Hadagalla, some 60 kilometers from Aysha'a, but it was the latter city that suffered the massacre. As noted above, Aysha'a was already designated as the target of the upcoming repression of the Ethiopian forces ;

The Ethiopian government, which had issued an ultimatum to the Ogaas to hand over those responsible for the attack, did not wait for the result of the efforts it engaged. Barely three days after the train was attacked, the town of Aysha'a was decimated ;

In order to execute its sinister plan of mass killings against an innocent and unaware civilian population, the Ethiopian government had spread before hand rumors of the existence of an illegal arms trafficking from Dikhil to Aysha'a and of attacks by rebels of Pan-Somali Movement. These rumors could not but only worry the French authorities who controlled the Railway and as such facilitate their silence and complicity ;

The deployment of troops to Aysha'a and other Somali locations had begun long before the train attack, which served pretext to start the repressive operations. In addition, the Ethiopian soldiers were ordered to target only the Somalis. Even Djiboutian nationals of Somali origin but of French nationality who were in Aysha'a or traveling by train at the time of the massacre were not spared, as the authorities of the French Somali Coast (CFS) had highlighted.

The massacre in Aysha'a was followed by the one at Danood on 28 December 1960 and Dhagahbur on 27 March 1961, which seemed to demonstrate the policy of collective punishment used by the Ethiopian government against the Somali population because of their support to Pan somalism. In its edition N° 56 of the 3rd September 1960, the Somali newspaper "Horn of Africa" reported on the extension of the crimes by the Ethiopian forces all over the Somali region as follows : "After invading the Somali towns and villages located on the

West of the country, they (Abyssinians) had carried out widespread, indiscriminate atrocities against the Somalis. Houses and businesses were looted, and no category of the society was spared including children, women, and elderly. The Ethiopian air force itself participated in the implementation of the genocide. In Dhagaxbuur, the Emperor's envoy summoned all the Somali tribal leaders to inform them bluntly that "the Emperor's government had decided to deport all Somali Republic's citizens out of the Empire's land and deny them their grazing rights. In Qabridahar, the inhabitants had distributed leaflets through which they were demanding the evacuation of the armed forces out of their region and also declared their intention to get rid of colonialism and foreign subjugation when they came to know the arrests by the Ethiopian authorities of 25 persons accused of inciting the population to rise against the Empire."

5. A Hidden Genocide

More than 61 years after the massacre it is quite legitimate today to ask question about the nature and the impact of the Aysha'a massacre, in the light of the debates developed in recent decades on the crimes against humanity.

Therefore, given the deliberate intention to target only the Somali population and the scale of the atrocities committed against innocent civilians, what happened in Aysha'a in August 1960 can easily be characterized as genocide according to the criteria defined by the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted by the United Nations on 9 December 1948 in New York. In this Convention, genocide is defined as "any of the following acts committed

with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such :

- (a) Killing members of the group ;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group ; -
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part ;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group ;
- (e) Forcibly transferring the children of the group to another group.

The Convention condemns such a crime, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, and specifies that the sentences provided for are imprescriptible and are not subject to time and place limitations.

In his article "Genocidal Violence in the Making of Nation and State in Ethiopia", published in *African Sociological Review*, (9, 2005, pages 1-54), Mekuria Bulcha wrote "There are three general conditions under which a genocidal process can take place. These are colonial conquest and occupation ; formation of a new social order based on a particular ideology and shifts of power under conditions of deep social cleavage. These conditions can overlap in some situations. This, for example, is the case of the history of genocidal violence in Ethiopia... While genocides committed in Africa are associated with colonialism or explained as a consequence of consolidating the post-colonial African state, Ethiopia, which according to most



Well where bodies were thrown during the massacre. Committee's photo 2012

writers had avoided European colonial rule, is mentioned along with Rwanda and other African countries as a 'genocidal state' in the works of many scholars (Rittner, Roth & Smith, 2002, Hendricks, 2002, Harff, 2002). For the last thirteen years, thousands of officials and functionaries of the former regime (DERG regime put in place by Mengistu Haile Mariam) have been in prison accused of genocide and crimes against humanity».

PART 3

WITNESSES' NARRATIVES



A | Witnesses' narratives

The silence organized around this tragic event has not prevented the Somalis to transmit this painful memory through oral tradition, notably storytelling and poetry. Some Survivors and eyewitnesses have tried to tell this tragedy through yet unpublished writings. While there have been no published documents on this event so far, there are witnesses's accounts that have circulated by word of mouth to preserve the memory of the atrocities experienced by the victims.

It is some of these poignant testimonies that are presented in this part. The persons we have interviewed provided us with valuable details about the impact of the killings, the savagery of the forces involved and the victims's attempts for survival.

Certainly, as with any painful memories collected long after the fact, there may be confusion or inaccuracies about dates, names and the course of the crime. But what matters in these testimonies is that they give a voice to the victims themselves and unfold their own interpretations of this tragic history.

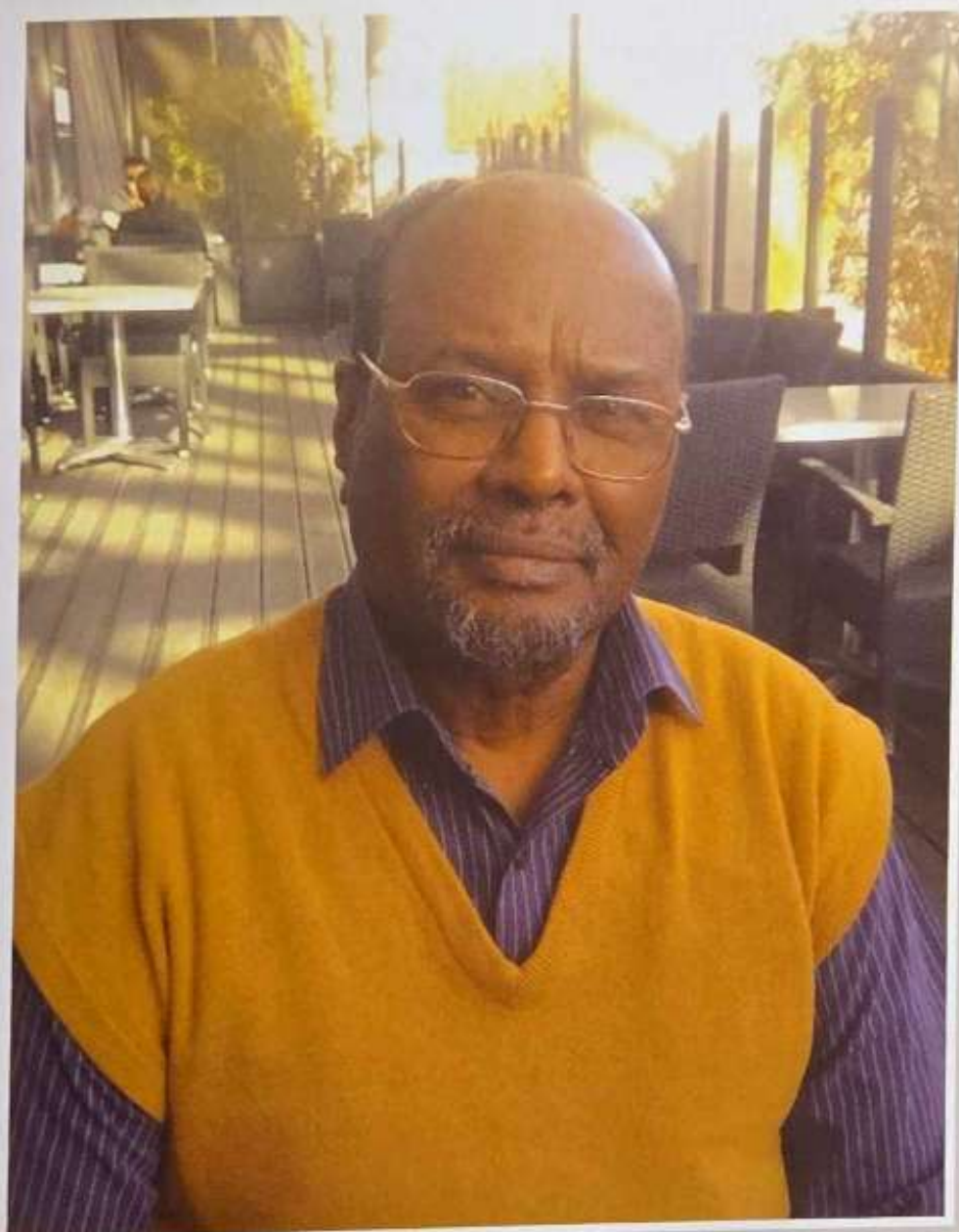
“Recording this history may be a way of freeing survivors from a heavy burden ; a painful memory they have tried to keep for more than 61 years for their relatives and for future generations. Remembering -this terrible story may

have been an ordeal for them but perhaps also a sigh of relief and liberation. The witnesses who shared their narratives in this book have accepted to confronted their past. They all have appreciated and supported our initiative to write about this tragic event. We deeply thank them for their trust and hope that we will deserve it. Interviewing and listening to these witnesses was also for us an enriching and moving experience which reinforced our determination to shed light on this genocide. The transcription and publication of their testimonies is a fundamental step in counterbalancing the coldness and the bias of the archival documents consulted, often written by external observers responding to other interests.

In doing this work of remembrance, we would like, through the transcription of facts as they are told, to praise their resilient memory and narratives and pay tribute to all those who have not survived the genocide.

We are presenting in the following pages some of the narratives that we have collected in 2019 and 2020, hoping that other researchers will continue to collect other key information that could one day be used for the memorial or museum to be dedicated to this genocide.

IDRISS ALI BORE



*Idriss Ali Bore was 10 years old
at the time of the massacre.
He is retired and lives
in Geneva, Switzerland.*

I was a teacher in Somalia and after the Ethio-Somali war of 1977 I moved to Switzerland where I held different functions such as application and system programmer, project manager, database manager in IT companies, international banks and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

... The school was closed the month of August ; as usual, I came to Djibouti for the Holidays. It was around 5:30 to 6:00 PM, on the 12th August when I saw a crowd of business women ("sharshaari") crying and weeping, outside the Arab shops, in place Rimbaud in Djibouti. As a curious child, I joined the women to find out why they were weeping and asked questions to some of them. Then one of the women responded to me and said, "The militaries are killing the people in Aysha'a and there are a lot of armed soldiers surrounding the town". Without even considering the risk, and sharing the information with anyone else, I decided, to take the train, the next morning...

... The next day on the 13th August, at around 4 :30 to 5 :00 A.M, my brother, Abdi Ali Bore, hired a horse-cart, packed the goods on it, with the help of the driver, and took me to the railway station. There, we found a trusted man, who happened to be my uncle, Mohamud Elmi Waberi, arranged the goods under my seat, and bid me goodbye. The train stopped at Ali Sabieh, the town was crowded with people fleeing Aysha'a. On the other hand, Danwanle the border city in Ethiopia, was crowded with heavily armed military, nervous and on a perpetual movement. Then the train started to roll towards Aysha'a. The train whistled three times, as usual, yet not a single person appeared on the horizon. There was a lot of army, moving up and down,

to all directions. The train stopped and I was the only person to get off the train, that day. The train started to roll towards Dire-Dawa and all the travelers were looking at me.

... I left the goods at the railway station and started walking home. There were only armed soldiers, military trucks and American jeeps, moving to different directions. As I rushed forward, the continuous whistling of bullets from different directions, the pounding of the military boots and even the noises of my new sandals started weighing on my nerves and frightened me.

So I took off my sandals and continued towards my destination bare footed. After turning several streets to avoid the soldiers, I encountered the first military group, sitting in the middle of a road, trying to share their loots and yelling to each other, like wild dogs. I immediately turned back and ran as fast as I could and took another way to home. Luckily, I knew Aysha'a very well. I passed in front of a house, near the school, I saw the first dead woman dressed in red, face down, and I thought she had been murdered shortly before for her body was not yet swollen. I knew that woman and her two daughters very well, and if I am not mistaken, her name was Sadiya.

After 15 minutes of changing directions several times, crossing many dead bodies, both men and women in the compounds and in the streets, some blocking the small streets and forcing me to pass over them, I reached home safely, but the door was widely open and my father was sitting on a chair, surrounded by more than 30 to 40 men and women. I think they were waiting for me. My father stood up and said, "There, he is, I told you that he is on the train". Then, I murmured something inaudible

like, "opening of the school ..." which certainly no one heard, except me. Then my uncle, Waber Dider Warsame (cousin of my father) came towards me and said to my father, "let him, he will take his chance (iskadhaaf, nasiibkiisu qaadidoonaaye)".

At around 8 :30 to 9 :00 A.M the next day, my father asked me to accompany him to the railway station for he was intending to leave Aysha'a, with all his family, and travel to the encampment of his second wife, somewhere between Las Hadhaad and Hadhagala. My father asked the station manager if there was a train that day and the station manager greeted him, returned to his office, phoned someone, came back and said to us, "there is no train, today".

Around 16 : 00 PM, while passing near the house of Hosh Duale, I heard the boots of two soldiers talking loudly and approaching and I, immediately, dashed into the house, where a woman and her 5 children were hiding inside. All the business owners in Aysha'a knew this poor family, who recently came to Aysha'a, as a result of successive famines, and I personally used to distribute alms, every Friday. When I heard the footsteps of one of the soldiers heading towards us, I hid under the bed and the five children joined in the hideout and surrounded me.

The room had no windows and was very dark. Then the soldier turned to the woman and said in a broken Somali, "aaway, oday, aaway, oday". (Where is your husband?) "Oday ma lihii, masaakintii Ayshaca nahaye". (I have no husband, we are the poor people of Aysha'a), the woman replied. When the police just bent down to check if someone was under the bed, holding the trigger of his gun with a long bayonet, the five children

sprang out from under the bed and went outside, leaving me alone. Then the soldier thought the father should still be under the bed and returned with his gun and with the bayonet and passed it several times, from one side of the space under the bed to the other, slightly touching my legs. I hugged my body against on the wall behind me, in order to avoid being detected by the killer's bayonet. The position was really unsustainable : profusely sweating, heavy drops of sweat dripping from my face and tired of standing on the tips of my toes. Fortunately, he ceased searching for the father, lined his gun against the bed and started raping the woman, while I was still under the bed. She was strong enough and threw him, with all her might, against the wall behind him and rushed out of the room. He ran after her, and caught her behind the house, because I heard the woman weeping, screaming, and imploring for help by saying repeatedly, "Toll la'ay, Toll la' ay".

Then I came out and ran towards the place where I left my father this morning, i.e. in front of Haji Ismail Awalle's shop. After too many difficulties, I reached the shop but it was closed and I went directly to Hasan Qooti's Restaurant. There I found my big brother, Mohammed Ali Bore, whom I left at home, this morning. He informed me that my father was taken to the police station, this morning at around 10 :00 A.M, and he never reappeared ... Few days earlier, I had heard from people saying that the houses belonging to Train Company, around the railway station, were not attacked by the military and people could escape from there, at night. So, I advised my brother to accompany me to Farah Dalmar's house, but my brother was reluctant and was repeating, "the war is finished, we will soon go home".

Then I greeted him for the last time and went under several wagons, crossed the rails and knocking the door of Farah Dalmar's house despite the yelling of the soldiers guarding the railway station. The women and the children, inside the house, started crying, weeping and asked without opening the door, "Who was there?" I told them my name and our neighbor, the wife of Ali Diriiye, opened the door and hugged me and said, "we were told that you were killed".

She took me under her protection, from that day on. At around 20 :00 P.M an old Somali policeman, rather, a guardian came to our hiding house and informed us that my father was shot by a squadron at the police station between 12 :00 and 13 :00 P.M. My brother, Mohamed Ali Bore, was killed in Hassan Qooti's restaurant, where I left him.

The train stayed longer than usual, there were at least 20 to 25 people hiding in Farah Dalmar's house with me, no one was making the slightest noise – not even the babies. We were wondering what was happening outside, Why the train was still at the station ? Abruptly, at around 13 :00 to 13 :30 PM, we heard several shots, just behind the wall, in front of me. One of the men, near me, climbed the wall and watched the horrible scene of a direct assassination occurring below him, in front of all the travelers in the train. Two persons were shot, and one was my young cousin, Abdi-Hayaan Ahmed Bore (disguised in woman's attire), the other was Hassan Fadan Kawaaliye (with a French passport), who tried to save my cousin by disguising him as his wife. Then I recognized the cry of my young cousin requesting for water, repeatedly, saying, "biyo, biyo," water,

water, and the murderer shot him on the head at a point blank, and said, "inka wuha – hoo biyaha (here take the water ! Since I could not cry, I wept silently and tried to climb the wall, but I was not permitted by the adults and the wife of Ali Diiriye, my guardian angel. I was so upset that day, I kept shedding tears and sobbing without crying the whole day, and I can affirm that -I have learned how to cry without crying since that day. Then the train left for Djibouti without Hassan Fadan Kawaaliye, who sacrificed his life for a member of my family. I sincerely thank him and his entire family from the depth of my heart.

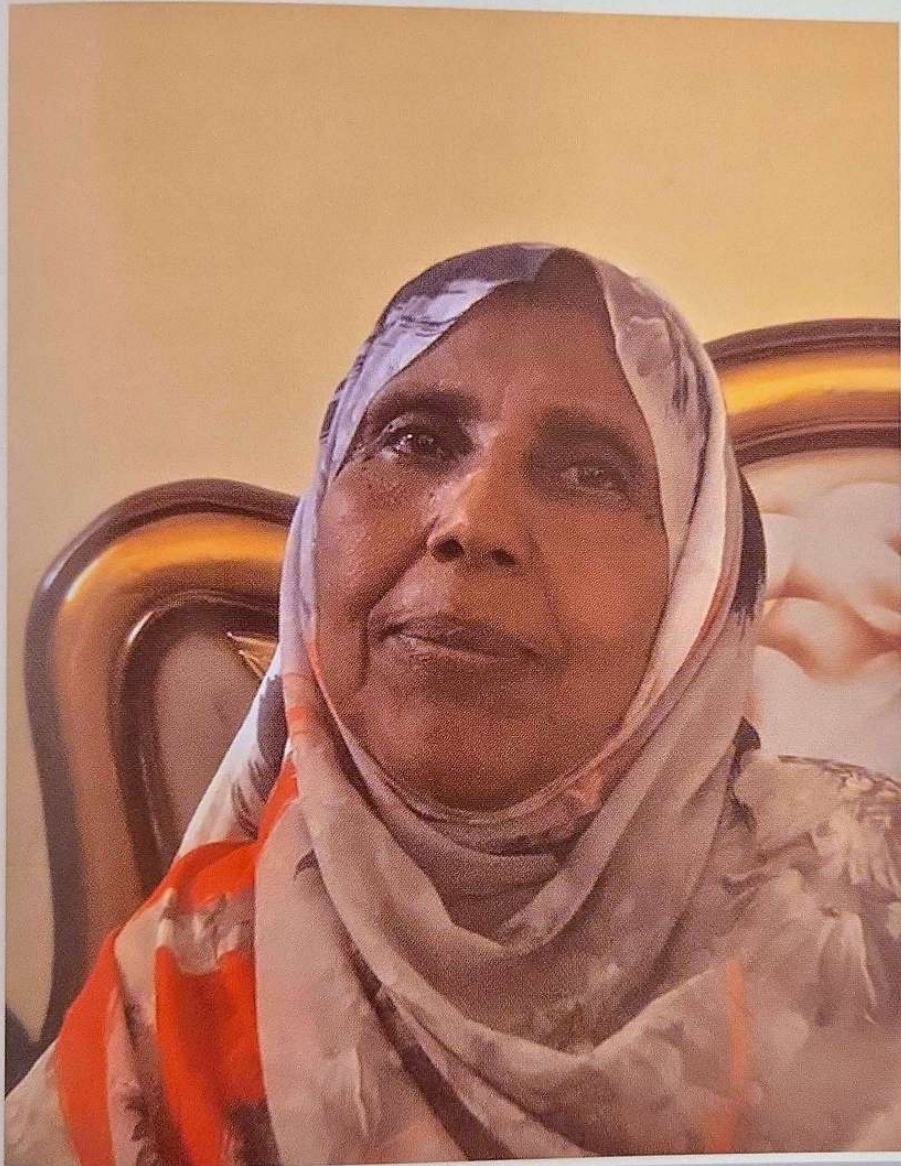
At around 10 :30 to 11 :00 P.M in the evening, the daughter of Ibrahim Dankali came to my hiding house, saw me and said textually, "Waryaa, sow adiga iskanool ! Ina adeerta Habiba Waberi ayaa raadinaysa wixii reer Boreh ka nool. Waxay lahayd Idris na waa ladilay" – "(Hey, you are still alive. Your cousin, Habiba Waberi is searching for the survivals of Bore family. She was saying that you were murdered, too").

Few minutes later, my cousin burst into the house in which I was hiding trembling, weeping, and started crying as soon as she saw me alive. She hugged and embraced me tightly with all her force, kissed me all over, while at the same time, recounting, repeatedly, the names of the members of the family murdered in the operation, including her own father, Waberi Dider Warsame.

She covered me with her shawl (shalmad), took me to the train and hid me under her seat in the train. That day, there were no more whistling of the bullets. I was not at ease under the seat and was becoming more apprehensive as long as the

train remained still at the station, because that horrible tragedy – killing of young cousin Abdi-Hayaan Ahmed Boreh and Hassan Fadan Kawaaliye, was haunting me and resonating in my mind. I was a little relieved when the train left Aysha'a. I stayed under the seat till my cousin asked me to come out, just before arriving Hadhagalla. After a few hours, without any obstacle, we arrived at Dire-Dawa safely, but not assured because the area was swarming with armed military and most of the people, inside and outside the railway station were also terrorized like us ...

HABIBO SUBANE KAYAD



*She was 10 years old
at the time of Aysha'a massacre.
She currently resides in Dire Dawa.*

We had been attacked the day before Thursday evening. The bullets whistled all night until dawn. The next day, Friday morning, the door was broken down and five relatives were killed in our courtyard (Yussuf Kayad Buh, Jama Waïs, Waberi Jideel, Jiq拉克 and another employee of Jama Waïs). Then their feet were bound, and their bodies dragged out like animals. I had personally followed the bodies. To a soldier who knew me, I asked where he was going to throw them. I fell on the body of the elder Bubaker, the grandfather of Abdi Jibril with his dagger lying near a garbage can ... They buried him near the cemetery. All the other bodies had been thrown into two pits used for garbage disposal. There were bodies everywhere. It was only on the third day that the railway coolies were called to bury the bodies in the garbage pits to avoid the smell ...

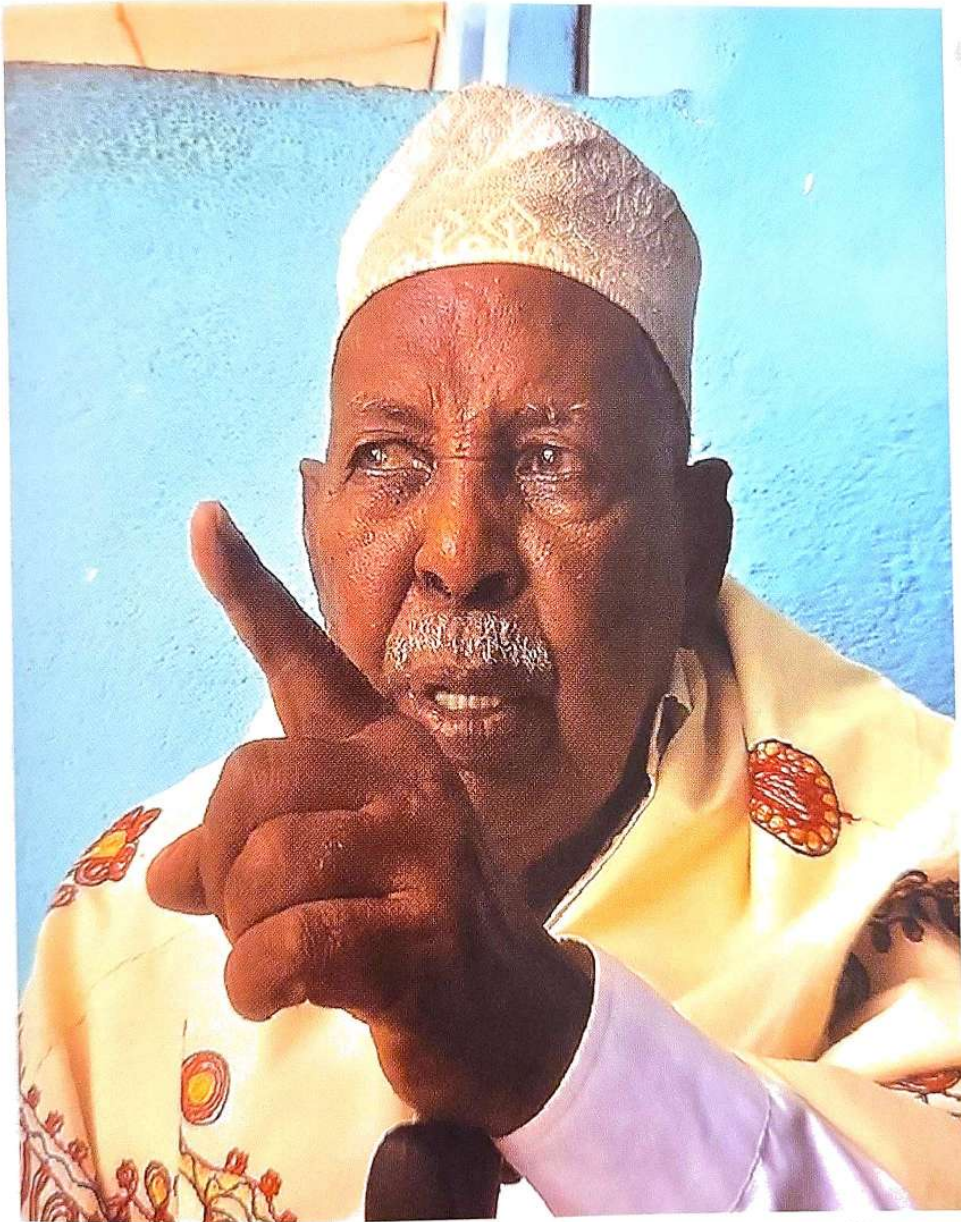
... At that time, I was a little girl and we lived in an Amhara neighbourhood. I wore a short Amhara dress and ran around. And when we went upstairs, it was said that Abdillahi Yasin, Ali Bore, Ahmed Bore and his son had been taken near the school, near a pit. I and other Amhara girls went there together. Personally, I saw them killed there. They shot them and threw them into the pit. They were buried in these three places (near the cemetery and in two garbage pits) ...

... When the other soldiers had entered the town to see those who were shooting at them, they did not see anyone ; they then went to position themselves near the administration. All their cars were equipped with red flags. The soldiers stationed in the town looted houses and killed people. When the other soldiers

PART 3 : WITNESSES' NARRATIVES ...

arrived, people were told to open the stores and resume their work. But this resumption of work made it possible to identify the few who remained alive. They were killed the next day. Then in the end, they threw their bodies into the pits. Yes, two pits in which garbage was thrown and which were near the cemetery. I can still see the exact place . My God ! These people were not spared anything !

MUSA ISMAIL BUH (HAMARGOD)



*He was 23 years old
at the time of the massacre.
He currently resides in Dire Dawa.*

I worked at the Franco-Ethiopian Railway Company and was assigned to Aysha'a station in 1957 as a telephone operator.

At the time, the freight train used to leave Dire Dawa on Tuesday, and the passenger train used to go to Djibouti the same day. They crossed each other. I wanted to take the freight train from Dire Dawa to Mille. My Amhara friend, in charge of the radio with whom I was staying, had been transferred to Dire Dawa. People were afraid and there was some tension in the town but I was with an Amhara family ...

... On Tuesday, the train I was to take was ready to leave, with all the goods loaded and some passengers but we had no news of the passenger train. The telephone operator and the head of the train station said they had not heard anything since the train had left Lugdahar. The radio was cut off. At 8 o'clock in the evening, we were still without any news. A plane was sent to search for the train along the railway. It took pictures of a derailed train between Hadhagalla and Lugdahar and surrounded by many people, as if it had stopped in a town. In fact, they were nomads who had come from nearby camps to loot the train, including containers of clothes and shirts that they had put on top of each other, and which gave a mixture of colors similar to military outfits ...

... After examining the photographs, the army was called to the rescue. 400 soldiers, including 200 commandos, were dispatched to the scene. Each group had its own command, headed by a colonel. The freight train was emptied to load the 400 sol-

diers and transport them to Hadhagalla. They joined the passenger train and cleared its passage, which was blocked by stones, and then the convoy arrived in Assal. 200 soldiers remained in Hadhagalla. Rumors circulated about the murder of a white man during this event ...

... On Wednesday, an Amhara policeman came out of Aysha'a and saw nomads on the move. Fearing that they would cross the Somali border, he ordered them to move towards Aysha'a. They refused, killed him, and crossed the border. The body of the dead soldier was brought back to Aysha'a... At that time, most of the region's authorities were in Diré Dawa, because the Western ambassadors residing in Addis Ababa had come there to identify the body of the white man...

... On Wednesday afternoon, the body of the Amhara policeman was buried in Aysha'a in the presence of all the communities leaving in the city. Kasahun Mekuria, the administrator of the city of Aysha'a made a speech in which he informed the population that what happened in Hadhagalla did not concern them. As for the policeman who was buried that day, he said that he himself had provoked the altercation he was the victim of. He asked everyone to go home and not to go out again that night...

... The head of the Aysha'a train station was an Issa Walaaldon named Ali Farah. Kasahun asked him to go home. He told him that if he was called by radio, he will warn him himself. All the company's employees had also been released from their jobs...

... Wednesday evening around 7 : 00 P.M, myself, my Amhara friend, Kebrebe Haylemariam, an Issack man named Omar Musa and an Arab train conductor named Mohamed Ahmed, we were in the cafeteria near the station with a personality named Yohanes Tedros ; A man of a certain age who had just returned from the place where the white man's body was found and who was recounting the speeches of the ambassadors, especially that of the French ambassador. A young telephone operator, Yohanes Bayu, came running to us and informed us that Aysha'a had been attacked by the Somalis, that there was war there. We went to the station telephone and the oldest of us, Yohanes Tedros, picked up the receiver, but we were all around him and could hear perfectly what was being said. He called Kasahun who said they were being attacked by Somalis, that bullets were coming from all sides and he wanted to know if they would be rescued or if they had to surrender ...

... That day (Wednesday afternoon) Haile Selassie was in Dire Dawa, back from Harrar. Yohanes wanted to warn a French official present at the station in Dire Dawa, but my friend Kebrebe interrupted him by asking him it was the Ethiopian authorities who should be warned first. So he called the office of the person in charge of the city of Dire Dawa and very quickly he put the receiver back down saying "it's the Emperor ! It's the Emperor !". My friend Kebrebe grabbed the handset and spoke to the Emperor's assistant to whom the latter seemed to have passed the handset in the meantime, explaining the situation... We then called Kassahun back. In less than 10 minutes, an army general came in a jeep, dangerously driving and braked suddenly in front of the station. He stormed into the telephone room

and demanded to speak to Aysha'a. Kasahun told him the same thing. The General then asked us to call Hadhagalla. He asked to speak first to the head of the police and then to the head of the army who was there, introducing himself beforehand. It seems to me that he said his name was Tadesse. He said to each of the chiefs of corps, "Go immediately to Aysha's, don't ask yourself if he is tall or short, man or woman, you shoot"...

... There was a place called Warabob, not far from Aysha'a, where when the vehicles stopped in the evening, their headlights were visible from the city. When the police and military vehicles left Warabob and their headlights illuminated Aysha'a, Kasahun gathered the police and all the armed Amharas and ordered them to search the town. He told them that as soon as they heard gunshots, they had to fire back ... Shortly afterwards, Kasahun Mekuria fired into the air and they all started shooting. The Ethiopian army landed in the midst of all this shooting.

The 200 policemen entered the city while the 200 military surrounded the city. They spent Thursday executing the macabre massacre. On Friday, Kasahun Mekuria issued a list of men to be executed ...

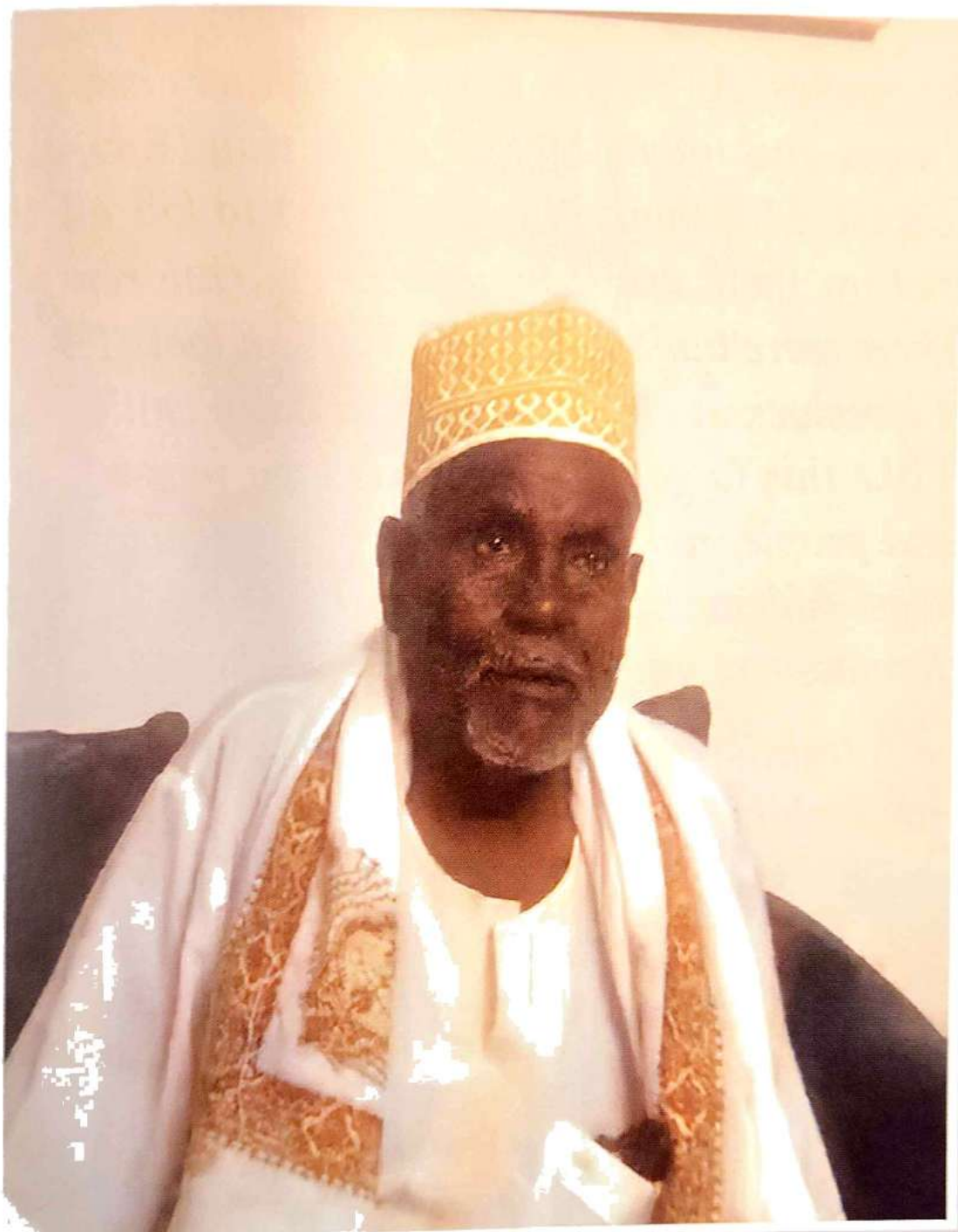
... Aysha'a was a very commercial city, with large clothing stores. The Amharas were very numerous in the city and were integrated. They were mostly civil servants. There were no military at that time. The Aysha'a train station was as important as the one in Dire Dawa. It was very frequented by the great merchants and notables such as Haj Ahmed Bore, Haj Ali Bore, Haj Duale Dheere, Haj Ismail Wayrah, Haj Ismael Awale, Haj Ali Dalmar and many others who are not so well known ...

... I had read in a newspaper that at the beginning of 1959, Haile Selassie had given the order to hold a special conference on Ethiopia's security in Harrar in June. It is often said that Aysha'a collapsed in 1960, but for me it was in 1959 that the fate of the city was sealed politically. Haile Selassie had said on that occasion that the dream of the Somalis was being realized through the independence of Somalia scheduled for July of the following year, and that it was imperative that decisions be taken in the interest of Ethiopia. All officials, civilian and military, in charge of cities bordering Somalia participated in this meeting.

For Aysha'a, it was Kasahun Mekuria and the Chief of police, Chambol Hangof, who had participated in this meeting. Kasahun was a tall, light-skinned man with a slightly crooked mouth, and the Somalis called him "Afmaroor," (crooked mouth). Chambol had a scar on his cheek and was nicknamed "Canjeeh," (scarred cheek). Upon their return from the security meeting, they implemented the decisions taken, namely :

- The restriction of movement along the borders between Ethiopia and Somalia to facilitate control ;
- The administration of the "Reserved Areas" by an Amhara who was knowledgeable of the habits and customs of the Somalis ;
- The preparation of events in three cities near the border, namely Aysha'a, Dhagahbuur and Dannood.

ABDI OKIE ADAR



*He was 26 years old
at the time of the massacre.
He currently resides in Djibouti.*

In 1960, I joined the liberation movement of Somali territories under colonial domination. I was imprisoned for my resistance activities in Jigjiga and Djibouti. I was employed at Djibouti International Airport until I retired.

...The soldiers started shooting and killing people inside and outside the houses. As for the nomads, soldiers had gone out of all the villages and towns along the railway (Biki, Erer, Hursu, Diré Dawa, El Bahay, Harrawa, etc.) to kill all those they encountered on their way : men, women, children and the livestock. There were tanks, planes, troops on foot. The planes attacked the livestock at close range, especially cattle and camels, which fell like this (a gesture signifying *en masse*). Among the animals and people, nothing was spared. No place was spared. From Hawas, Afdem, Biki, etc., soldiers had gone and invaded the bush to massacre and pillage the Issa nomads...

... The Administrator of Hadhagalla had refused to kill his constituents, while the Administrator of Aysha'a had agreed to massacre his own... The massacre in these various places had lasted from 3 to 4 months. Faced with the combined attacks of troops on foot, tanks and planes, the nomads had fled the plains, everywhere from Gahwi to Badhiwein, to take refuge in the mountains. Survivors of the massacre fled to Abdulkader in Somalia, where the Somali State took care of all school-age children and put them in schools. Refugee families from Aysha'a had been rescued by nomads and Issas from Somalia who picked them up with trucks, sometimes across the border (Ethiopian side). After the death of the leader (Mahamud. Harbi), we stayed three years near Abdulkader. We had no one to train us, no one to give us anything....

SAID DUALE IDLE



He was 10 at the time of the massacre. Engineer and cartographer, he worked at the Djibouti Ministry of Transport. He is now retired and lives in Djibouti.

Among those killed, there was Hassan Fadan Kawa-
lie, Jama Arre. Only one of his sons, Ibrahim Jama
Arre, is still alive. There was Saïd Ahmed Beyra
whose family, three sons and his wife, had come to take refuge
in Abdulkader. There was also Abdillahi Yasin Farah. His fa-
mily composed of three sons, three daughters and his wife had
taken refuge in Abdulkader. Among his sons, one nicknamed Ali
went to Canada, another went to Australia and the other died
in France. There was also Aden Adawe, Haji Osman Duale, the
paternal uncle of Yussuf Omar Duale. Among those killed, there
was also my maternal uncle Igue Buh and so many others

... Igue Buh had a business in Aysha'a ; his family had not
come to Abdulkader for they had fled into the bush... I was in
Abdulkader at that time. I started the 2nd year of my schooling
there. We had heard of an incident that had happened before
the Aysha'a massacre, the train derailment provoked by Husain
Lahdil. People had left the city when the first military reinfor-
cements arrived. They had said that the Ethiopians were prepa-
ring themselves to punish Aysha'a. Somali State (Mogadishu
and Hargeisa) was informed. They had sent people to collect
information. They had come back to say that the rumors were
true and that the city was surrounded.

... At that time, the Somali state was weak. It had only been
independent for forty days. They had sent a truck of 20 soldiers.
About ten other soldiers were stationed at Abdulkader. During
the day, the soldiers left for the border to listen to the people,
those who were fleeing ...The inhabitants of Abdulkader were
ready to welcome the refugees who were from the same commu-

nity. They had agreed on the steps to follow. They had contributed to arrange existing empty houses to accommodate future refugees...

...The first to arrive were the people who had fled individually. We had listened to them to understand what they had witnessed. They had given a lot of information. The town of Aysha'a was a commercial hub between Somalia, Ethiopia and Djibouti. There were many people present there to buy supplies.

... Somali soldiers were going close to the border. They were stationed on the bank of the Beyo Cilaan wadi. They spent the night 25 km from Abdulkader to take shelter. The inhabitants were prepared, and some men were staying with the soldiers. The city was ready to receive the refugees. Among them was Daher Issa Ali, my uncle's younger brother. He went there every day because he knew how to handle weapons. He had joined the first Parliament of Somaliland. Many inhabitants accompanied the outings of the army. The refugees were driven by the army to Qabri Gaheyr located between Aysha'a and Abdulkader. The Aysha'a-Abdulkader distance is 61 km. There is 20 km between Aysha'a and the border and 41 km between the border and Abdulkader. The inhabitants of Abdulkader came to pick the refugees up there and took them away after having looked after and fed them. I witnessed it. We, the school children had taken care of frightened, devastated, barefoot people. They were dressed and treated at Abdulkader's hospital. We wrote down their names to give them to the Elders of the city...

... The town of Aysha'a had been surrounded. Additional soldiers were brought by train. People were not allowed to leave

the city. It was only after that that the city was attacked. Those who were in their houses were ordered to open the door and killed. Those who circulated outside were killed outside.

The people visiting the city had taken refuge in the restaurants. Doors were broken to find them. The people outside were first killed then the houses were attacked one after the other. People over the age of 18 or able to use a weapon were killed. They mostly killed men. Many of my friends had been disguised as women so that they can leave the town. The youngest were spared. The massacre had lasted a week if not longer. Later I heard that the bodies had been thrown into a large pit. People had left the town in several ways. There was a gentleman who had tried to protect himself from the bullet with his hands. The bullets had crossed his hand. He joined us in Abdulkader with a bloody hand...

... The soldiers were arriving by train. Among the dead were my family who lived there, the families of my classmates. For example, Sulaiman Hasan Fadan ; we were in the same Koranic school in district 6 and I knew his father. Said Ahmed Belan ; I was in the same Koranic school as him in Aysha'a in 1959 for 15 days. Yusuf Omar Duale ; I used to go down to his neighborhood, he was next door to a man called Khaire, who lived in the same subdivision. This man was killed. This is how I learned about the massacre....

... The death toll was recorded by Daher Hersi Ali Allamagan, another maternal uncle. He was literate ; because he had joined the British Colonial Army by saying that he was 18 when he was only 15 in 1943. In Abdulkader, he wrote down informa-

tion on the dead. He removed from the list those whose death was not confirmed. According to Dahir Hersi at least 1002 people were killed. He had noted the names of the victims on the register used at the time by the school. He kept this register with him when he moved. It was the first thing he put in his travel bag....

... In 1988, he still had the register with him in Zeila. He was the Mayor of this city. We were there for Eid el Fitr with an okal, General Subagle and a maternal cousin. He had asked me to bring him the okal Ina Farah Qore. The Elder had been brought to him. At that moment, I knew he had the register with him because he had indicated to me where it was stored....

... While keeping the register in this way, the SNM front entered Zeila during the civil war in Somalia and people had fled the coast but once they reached the heights they could not advance. My uncle then contacted the SNM to tell them that as Mayor of the City of Zeila, he was going to bring back his constituents. On the day of Eid in 1989, while he was heading towards Guestir on Maan Daaha hill, Dahir Hersi was trapped by a mine at 11 :30 A.M. He was killed by the explosion of this mine. He had the register with him. He died there with two other people. The nomads who had come to his aid had only taken care of him to organize his burial.

... In this register were recorded only the dead, and not the wounded. There were a lot of injuries like the guy who took a bullet in his hand, Arreye. When we made a comparison, the dead were more numerous than the wounded....

.... Saad, one of Dahir Hersi's sons, can confirm the existence of the register. He is at Asha'ade. He told me he had taken

the register with him. He had planned to go to Maan Daaha and Sheikh Issa. He was expected there that day. The Issa of the region had placed their trust in him. I told him to leave the area and proposed to him to drive him later to Sheikh Issa among his community. He was on his way to this place. He had his belongings with him.... The sons and daughters of Dahir Hersi are alive : Husain Dahir Hersi, Abdo Dahir Hersi. They are numerous ; More than ten. They live here. There are two in the Zeila area. One works in Customs in Asha'ade and the other is in Loyada. Everyone else is here in Djibouti.

... I was often with the Elders of Abdulkader, among whom there was Omar Qaadi and my other maternal uncle, Aw Jama Dirie. I listened to their stories and that was how I found out what had happened. It is believed that the reasons for the massacre were primarily the train derailment by Husain Lahdil. It was after this derailment that the Amhara prepared themselves. Second, Aysha'a was a place where people were very aware of their Somali identity. Contributions to the SYL Party were entrusted to a man called Roble Dhegjar, the father of Fuad Roble Dhegjar. He used to go to Abdulkader to take a car to bring the contributions to Hargeisa. He used to come back with a receipt from SYL. People were politically awake.

In 1959, the League of Nations had sent a Commission of Inquiry to find out about the people's claims. There was a delegation from Aysha'a with them. All ages had signed the petition. It is for these reasons that the city was massacred. The Amhara denied the Somalis any self-determination saying that the Somalis will have a state when the donkeys will have horns. The

genocide was to put an end to any aspiration for self-determination....

...The repression did not just affect Aysha'a that year. It also affected Danood and Dhagaxbuur, although it is possible that there were fewer casualties, as Aysha'a was a big city. All those years the Somalis were repressed. The reports sent from Zeila and Berbera to Aden in 1887 and 1888 show the way in which the Abyssinians behaved with the Somalis.... The massacre took place in town but also in the bush. It was something constant. For Aysha'a, most soldiers were transported by train. They entered and then dispersed throughout the city. Those who executed people came from Harrar. They left by train as soon as they had finished their dirty work...

... There were not many soldiers stationed in Aysha'a. Those who killed people and those who watched outside the city came from elsewhere. People were shot dead. Those outside were first killed and then the houses were attacked in a systematic way to search male adults and shoot them. The killing took place during the day. At night, they only killed those they found walking around. There were hooded people with them whose identity was hidden.... I can say that the massacre lasted 10 days, the number of days the city was surrounded and the number of days the inhabitants were executed from 10 up to 12 days. This is my personal estimate... The Amhara gathered the dead and then threw them in a pit. I heard about a mass grave located near their barracks.

... In Abdulkader, the refugees were installed in the houses and the aid collected was distributed to them. Food had also been

sent by the Somali State. At that time, solidarity existed. The towns in the North of Somalia were asked to help the refugees. The city of Hargeisa had sent a lot of clothes, sheets, and blankets, some of them new. They also sent children's clothing. They had also added lots of money they had collected. When the refugees had all of this, we the inhabitants were a little jealous (laughs). At that time, Hargeisa had just gained independence.... Later, Abdirashid Ali Charmarke had come to Abdulkader. I remember he hugged orphans one after another, crying.

... There were only two classes at Abdulkader. Those who were to be educated filled the classes where a few students were missing. The grown-ups had joined our classes. Among them were Sheik Omar Haji Ismael, Aynane and Yusuf Omar. For the little ones, we created a new class. The others waited until the following year to go to class. The older ones, Duale Ali Hogweyne, Abas Ahmed Bore, joined the upper classes in Hargeisa. Duale and Ali Hogweyne were taken to Amud. That was how education was provided to the survivors' children...

... The rest of the money collected to feed people had been deposited in a bank in Hargeisa. The people of Aysha'a had received an allowance of 60 shillings per month. At that time, the shilling was worth 30 Djiboutian Franc. Men were especially responsible for this. This allowance was being distributed until people could recover...

... There are many survivors among the people whose fathers were killed. Among the refugees, there are several people still alive : for example, Abdi Jama Farah ... Few people have re-

turned to live in Aysha'a. Among them there were those people expelled from Djibouti in 1967....

... No town can replace Aysha'a ... In 1959, I stayed there for 15 days. The inhabitants were very numerous. There were a lot of young people in the streets. There were over 10,000 residents. The amhara were not very numerous. They were soldiers and officials with their families. They lived near the railroad tracks. It was a very busy city. The streets were crowded in the morning... Yusuf Omar wrote something about that. His paternal uncle had been killed. Yusuf is now deceased....

... People have been traumatized and had kept the silence for a long time. It was only after 1977 that people raised their heads a little bit. Before that, they were devastated and humiliated....

... I took down the names of the fathers of my classmates who were murdered, and I did so recently. In the late 1990s, people began to talk about the need to write the story of Aysha'a. Among Abdulkader's students from Aysha'a, I noted in a notebook those who are alive :

- Ahmed Haji Ismael Awale,
- Sahal and Mohamed Haji Ismael Nur
- Mohamed Hasan Fadan Kawaliye,
- Ibrahim Jama Arre
- A son of the Abdillahi Yasin's family
- Ibrahim Khaire,
- Ismael, Ali and Omar Ilmi Aw Muse

YUSUF OMAR DUALE



Yusuf Omar was around 10 years old at the time of the massacre. He became a diplomat and served as Djiboutian Ambassador to Yemen and India.

Yusuf Omar passed away in 2015. He has started writing an unpublished book, in Somali language, on Aysha'a massacre from which we have extracted the following testimony".

... Why did Aysha'a pay for the train incident, which was attacked in Habaqo, near Hadhagalla? In fact, Aysha'a was already targeted by the Ethiopian authorities because it was a living city and its inhabitants were evolved ("ilbax"). They had written a letter to the United Nations in 1948 calling for the recognition of their people's right to self-determination....

... Before the massacre, many soldiers were sent to the city. They were installed in the so-called "Cawro Eeg" district and near the big prison.... The city's policemen had dug large holes. When asked why they did it, the authorities said, "It's to bury the city's garbage." This was a proof that the Ethiopian State was planning the massacre of the population. That is also why the city's intellectuals and traders were the first to be targeted....

... Residents were led to believe that rebels were trying to enter into the city to cause unrest. They were asked to stay in the houses and leave the doors open so that the soldiers could intervene quickly. They were told that nothing will be done against the inhabitants if they do not hide the "Shiftas" (brigand rebels)...

... The Ethiopian administrators and soldiers who were in Aysha'a lived in miserable conditions. Many of them lived on the backs of the people they were racketeering. The soldiers knew the city was rich. The massacre of Aysha'a thus offered the op-

portunity for the wretched soldiers of the Abyssinian Empire to loot this opulent city....

...When they entered the houses, they first asked for money and gold. Even when it was given to them, they did not stop there. They began to search everywhere, shops, houses, by threatening women and children. They were killing all the men they found on their way....

Ethiopian Air Force was heavily involved in the massacre. The planes were bombing all the caravans heading towards the city. They hit Mordhale, Dulcusbo, Wadi Malaaseed. At the time many camps with their herds were established in the plain of Cayl Weyn...

... The massacre spared neither the Sheikhs nor the Sufis ; the soldiers had invaded the Mausoleum of Sheikh Musa and killed Ahmed Sheikh Musa and many of the disciples who were there. On the same day, were killed Bobaker Farah, Awale Jilaal and his brother Mohamud, Said Ahmed, Elmi Burgan, Abdillahi Yasin, Hasan Lagun, Jama Miguil, Elmi Adem and Iltire Kamil ...

... Some time before the massacre a police sergeant had come to see my brother-in-law, Abdillahi Dirir, who was his friend and asked him to take his family out of the town. My sister Aicha had just given birth to twins. So, she was evacuated to the bush. The policeman took my brother-in-law and locked him in the great prison to save him, without telling him anything about what was going to happen in the city. He took him out of prison after the massacre occurred. He said, "Don't think

about the people who were killed and the lost property. We have received orders from the State. I could only save you and your wife who just had twins."

What is incredible about this story is that it was my brother-in-law who had gotten the contract to build the prison just before the massacre. Instead of being paid for this construction, he was the first person to be locked up there.

... The Head of the railway based in Aysha'a was a Frenchman, married to an Arab woman called Myriam, I believe. He was shocked by what was happening and raised the French flag on all the homes of the railway workers. Thus, he was able to save many people among them Husain Urqud, Ibrahim Takhtar, Igue Harlawi, Abdillahi Desen Wiid....

... A few days after the massacre, two trains came, one from Djibouti and the other from Dire Dawa. It was at that time that Abdi Hayaan Ahmed Bore who had disguised himself as a woman with the intention to take the train to Djibouti and escape was killed. They had also killed Hasan Fadan who was on the train...

... People who were able to hide on the train and those who fled on foot arrived in Ali Sabieh. But the French authorities who were the colonizers tried to send these people back to their butchers. Fortunately, the inhabitants of Ali Sabieh resisted this refoulement operation and, in particular, Jama Jilal and Jibril Gulal, both ministers in the local government. They alerted the authorities to the risk of uprisings if these people were turned back to their killers ...

... My two sisters and the man, who had welcomed us to their camp when we fled, decided to leave for the city of Abdulkader. While we were in the Wadi Beeyo Caanod, we met wounded men who were being evacuated to Abdulkader. After exchanging some information, they told us that they had attacked Ethiopian troops based in Beeyo Caanod in revenge for what they did in Aysha'a. The place was close to the border of Ethiopia and Somalia. We had accelerated the pace to cross the border and about three kilometers inside Somali territory we met first aid. They were Somali soldiers walking. After a while we saw a lot of vehicles coming and we were put in one of them with the wounded. At Gahayr Askir's grave, we encountered other vehicles heading towards the border. It was amazing to see a small country that had only existed for a month and 13 days providing such relief to the survivors. Most of the survivors, mostly women and children, had reached the city of Abdulkader, which was swarming with people. Relatives of the survivors had come from all over the region to rescue their loved ones or to seek information about those left in Aysha'a ...

SOULAIMAN OBSIE MUSA



*He was 26 years old
at the time of the massacre.
He currently lives in Ali Sabieh.*

A letter had arrived from Somalia and more particularly from Abdulkader. In this letter were mentioned the names of all the merchants of Aysha'a. The guy to whom the letter had been entrusted was an Uurweyne named Husen Aynane Xuunshaale. This letter had fallen into the hands of the authorities.. Somalia, which had just gained independence, had sent this letter to the merchants of Aysha'a. I don't know what was in it. But the letter had been intercepted and given to the Governor of the city. The authorities of the city had transmitted it to the Central state. It was for this reason that the order was given to punish the city. But we did not have this information. At that time, it was said that people entering the city could not leave. And those from the city had to lock themselves in their homes and turn away those from outside who wanted to enter their homes. An order like that had been given...

... The soldiers present were those from Aysha'a and others from Dire Dawa or elsewhere. At the time, I was a khat trader and our camp was in Mordhaale. I had left my camp where my son had just been born on Wednesday. The camp had set out for Somalia because of the threatening behavior of Ethiopian soldiers. I told my family that I was going to the city to get khat. I brought the khat to Dikhil. I arrived at a place called Cawra Eeg. I was a good runner and difficult to catch unless I was hit by a ball, because I was in my twenties. Soldiers with big shoes did not run very fast...

... I was on the hill of Cawra Eeg, alone. The town had been attacked on a Friday. Twelve vehicles had left Biyo Qaboobe in

succession. Their headlights had illuminated me. I could see them arriving and entering the town. The vehicles had been parked between the Governorate and Adarey. The soldiers got out and stood guard. They had surrounded the town and then opened fire....

... People started shouting. I was sitting up there listening to everything that was happening. I could even hear the words. When the firing started coming from everywhere, I ran away....

... People were massacred in Aysha'a, but also in Danwanle. A woman had been killed in another place called Il Waïs. I had left that place during the evening to go to Dikhil. I spent the night at a place called Guedi Madoobe on a promontory. In the morning, I went down to a nomad camp to have tea. As I was drinking this tea, bullets started whistling over our heads. So even in the bush, camps had been attacked, cattle taken, houses burned. The vehicles had left for Durdur. Wherever they met people, the soldiers killed them throughout this period....

... In the bush, planes were bombing with heavy weapons. They had not killed people at my home place, but they had killed people in Maru and in the plain after Hadhagalla. In one camp, a woman and several sheep had been killed. The planes were dropping big bombs before going elsewhere....

... The refugees went to Dikhil and Ali-Sabieh. Others went to Somalia, particularly Abdulkader. The French administration of Djibouti tried to turn back those who had reached Ali Sabieh. Ministers including a certain Gudal said that these people belonged to the same groups as the people of Djibouti.

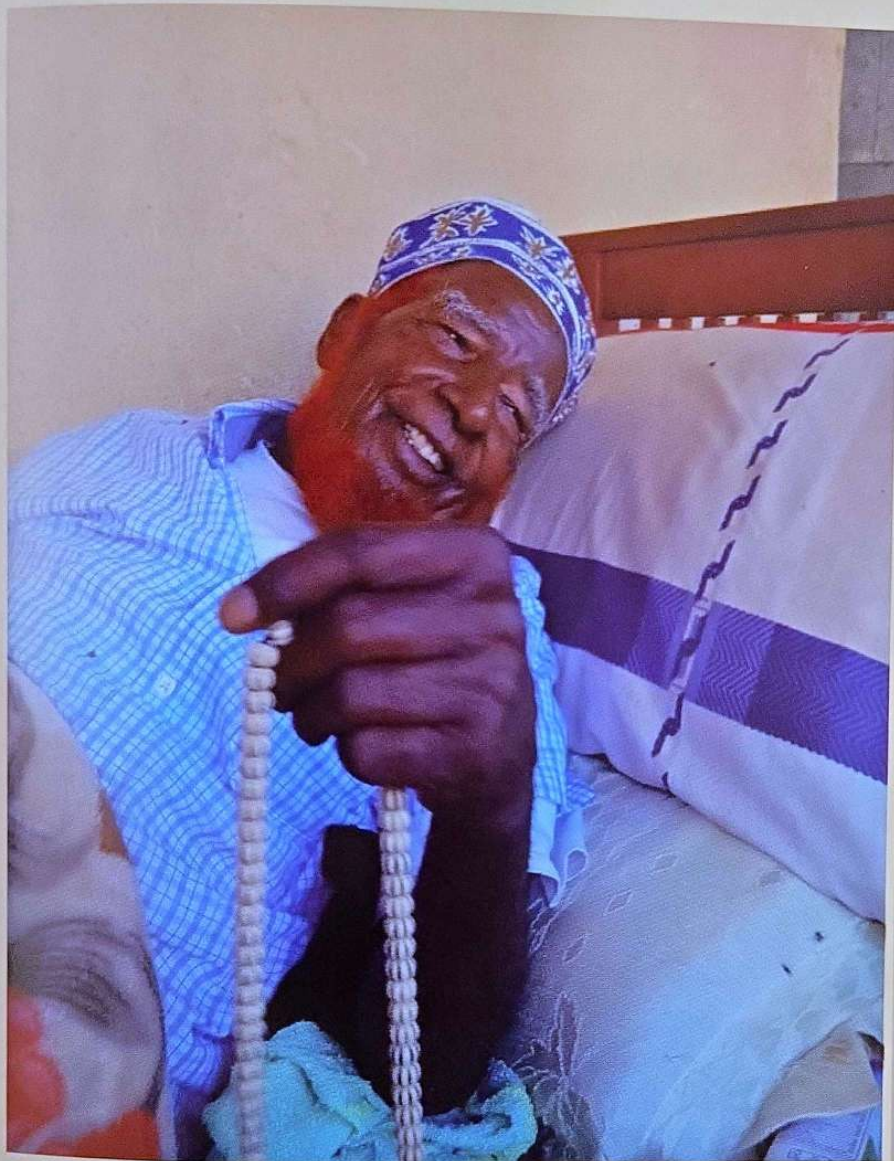
... I heard that thirty men, who were in prison in Aysha'a, had broken down the door of the prison when they began to starve and fled. The soldiers who had come to intervene had found only an old man named Blasqariye who could not save himself and they killed him on the spot.....

... The soldiers who killed people and drove the cars were from the army... We did not see any civilians ; it was men wearing uniforms who killed people. They prevented the nomads from leaving the city, but they let in those who came in...

... I heard that many bodies had been thrown into a deep well near the security post dug by the Italians ... Much later, messengers were sent to bring people back. We had entered Somalia and we came back but to settle on the red lands around Danwanle where we had found pasture.

The people who survived the massacre died. Very few are still alive ... The survivors have tried to live as they could with the painful memory of this horrific massacre ...

ALI DUKSIE KHAIRE



He was about 30 years old at the time of the massacre. He passed away in March 2021 while he was still living in the city of Aycha'a.

Ali Duksie Khaire was one of the elders and depositories of the memory of Aysha'a where he lived all his long life. He passed away in March 2021, few months after we had the chance to interview him. This book is dedicated to his memory.

... Abnormal things were happening because of the train attack. The authorities had been asked to release the imprisoned people and end the increased surveillance of the city as it was peaceful. They replied, "tomorrow we will end the surveillance and release the prisoners". So, we slept in peace....

... At the time, there were people moving in the hills around Aysha'a and three men entered the city through the Cawara Eeg neighborhood. One of them was armed ...A soldier had seen them while they were quenching their thirst at someone's house. The soldiers wanted to stop them. One of the soldiers tried to grab the one who was armed and the latter shot him. It was at sunset. After that, the shots started to never stop...

...The city Administer said that what some people were trying to hide from him had finally come to light. At that time, Haile Selassie was in Dire Dawa and Ogaas Hassan was also with him. The Ogaas told him that if there were interventions in the town of Aysha'a, the civilian population will be killed. It seems that Haile Selassie had looked at him harshly... It was that night that all those who were caught were killed. The next day, we all went out to meet in the mausoleums to understand what had happened during the night.

While we were still there, the soldiers had been ordered to take us into our houses so that there would be no one outside.

They said : "gibu, gibu", (in Amharic) "come in, go inside". Everyone had gone home or to the nearest house... It was a Thursday evening and the next day was a Friday.... It was the evening that the Elders returned from a meeting in Beyo Gurguri as part of their mission to preserve the peace. That evening a soldier was killed by an armed man. This had become the pretext for the massacre...

... Regarding the train, we were told that the incident did not happen in our area and that the matter did not concern us. Haile Selassie had ordered the capture of the perpetrator, Husain Lahdil. He had taken the Issa elders into hostage in Dire Dawa and ordered them to bring the culprit to avoid collective repression. The train had been attacked by this man whose property had been confiscated by the local authorities. The culprit had to be brought back. Elders have gathered to discuss the case and went to find him at Geer Odacali. Husain Lahdil had been caught and imprisoned. But this did not prevent the attack of Aysha'a the day before Friday.. Bullets had started whistling all over the town ...

Those who were outside were pushed inside, "Kifad", open, Tac, Tac (sounds of bullets) ". At first, we were told to go home, then we were asked to come out to search us and then execute us....

... One day while we were under surveillance, people who had suffered from thirst gathered, mostly women and children. During this time, the planes were bombarding the nomadic camps. They said, "we're dying of thirst, we're going to fetch water from the pumping station in Mordhaale". They were al-

lowed to go. Thus, children, women and the elderly were able to go out. But they had continued to march to Somalia.

... At that time, I went to my backyard because my wife had just given birth. There were two of my sister's children there, and two of mine. We were neighbors with a man called Istoo-gta, his wife was very sick. She had two children. I said to my wife, "Many people have fled, we must leave". They left but could not catch up with the people who have fled. So, eight people (mine and neighbors) found themselves in the middle of nowhere. But They were able to survive. The next day, I had gathered somewhere a group and those who had taken refuge in my house. I had hidden them in a room. We decided to leave the city the next day.

... The city was lit with large spotlights. God had saved us. Personally, God had saved me, because the day before Friday, when we were attacked, two soldiers had passed over the wall of my house.

An old man called Isman Iltire, who had been injured in the hand and who was one of the traders had fled and jumped the wall to take refuge in my house. While I was taking care of him, two soldiers came to the yard. One had gotten behind the door with his rifle and the other at the window that had opened. I decided to sacrifice myself and went out. God softened the heart of the one who was Oromo. The other one said something to him in Amharic and he responded "This is someone who is sure to die, let another do this work and take what he has." I gave them money and they let my life save ...

... When we left the town the night after my family left, there were several of us, me and the injured man ; we were a big group. God had saved us. We went to the Somalia side. At that time, my family had not been able to catch up with the others who had gone as far as Abdulkadir. I walked at night and was able to catch up with those who had left town before me at Saawer. My family was not with them. I was told that no one had seen them. I came back.

They were not able to go beyond the place called Laas Geel, south of Mordhaale. One of the women was in childbirth and the other was very ill. I went back and spent the night in Usbo with Ahmed Bore who had left Geel Casse with his camp and whose herds had been bombed. My family was not there. Ahmed Bore had seen them bed ridden in Laas Geel. They had asked him to stay with his camp. He had carried the children on his shoulders and brought them to the camp of Rayaleh Aynache. A small stone hut was built for them and they were fed....

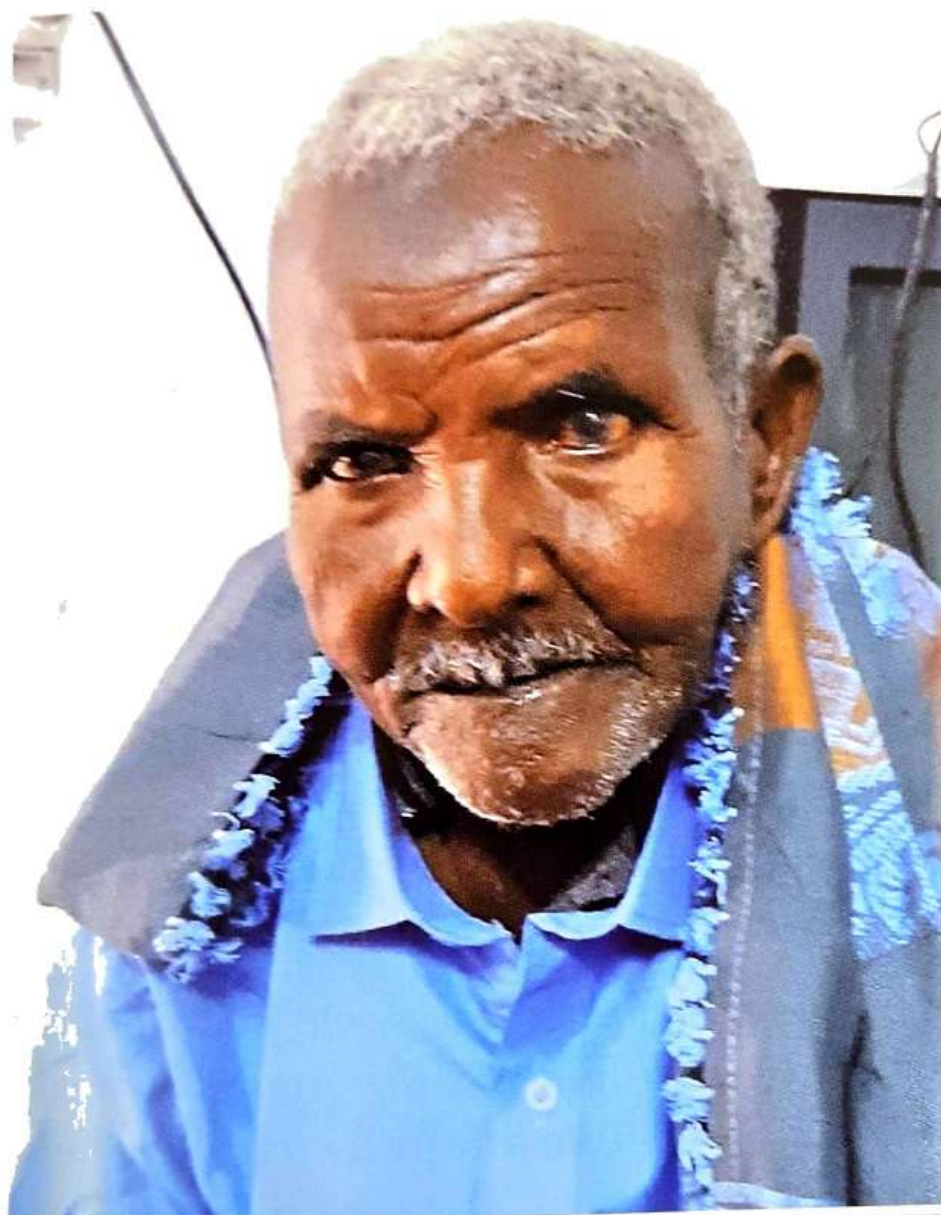
.... The people of the city were killed for two weeks. Even the survivors were taken out of their homes. Ali Bore was taken out of his home to be killed along with others. It was said that his body had been thrown into a well dug in a school yard whose water was brackish . Among those imprisoned, there was a grandson of Sheikh Musa and a guy called Farah Gaas, who could not leave. They were killed. The other prisoners managed to escape. There was also a son of Sheikh Musa who had been disguised as a woman to help him escape. He was recognized and killed.... After the massacre, there was an attempt to identify people who were killed but I do not know if this was achieved ...

... It was because of a letter that arrived from Somalia and ended up in the government's hands, that Aysha'a was massacred, after the elders said there was nothing to report about the town. At the same time, the train had been attacked...

... The letter had been given to a trader in khat. He had been told to hand it over to the people of Aysha'a and to alert them... Yes, rumor about an attack by the Somalis was circulating. A few people were arrested, but things have settled down. However, after the train attack, the government said it was an act of the same rebels who wanted to attack Aysha'a. The authorities were reminded in that this did not happen in our area and that was why the elders had gone everywhere to seek the truth : Biyoo Qaboobe, Durdur, etc and came back to assert that there was nothing to report. The soldier's death outside of the town was the pretext for the massacre.

The Government had claimed that it had discovered what the people were trying to hide from it. This is why Haile Selassie had given the order to massacre the inhabitants, supposedly to defend his country.

WAIS DUKSIE FARAH



*He was 22 years old
at the time of the massacre.
He currently resides in Dikhil.*

As we were quietly settled in our homes, the town was surrounded by members of the police stationed in Aysha'a on a Thursday afternoon. They then entered the city on the night of Thursday to Friday and asked people to lock themselves in their homes. Then the army came to reinforce them the following evening. About 3 trucks of soldiers had arrived. They continued the killings that had started the night before. And it lasted a week. Some trusted Amhara civilians, armed by soldiers, participated in the massacres. They broke down the doors of some houses and killed everyone in their path ...

... They started with guns, but then planes bombed the camps outside the towns. They launched a rocket near Aysha'a, but it did not explode. This rocket was aimed at a herd of cows that was there. Outside the cities, the bombings targeted nomads and their herds.

... On the fourth day of the massacre, seeing the corpses piling up, I and three other young people fled. We hid, watching out for the soldiers on guard and we were lucky...

... When we returned to the scene five months later, the human bones were still lying on the ground. The bodies of the people had been thrown into salt water wells dug for a while by the Italians ...

... I was thrown in jail for 1 month for fleeing and being accused of participating in an attack. I was finally released for lack of evidence.

... The reasons for the massacre were, in my opinion, that Somalia had just gained its independence and had its own flag there for about a month.

And the people living at the site of the genocide were part of the Somali community, which posed a threat for Abyssinian regime...

... Some of the survivors went to Somalia, others to Djibouti, still others stayed in the bush for a little while, then they came back but they were exterminated....

... After these killings, the Ethiopians said that their country was now at peace and invited people to come back and continue to live and work in their city... They sought to calm the situation. There was a rumor going around that a small group had attacked a post called Biocaanood, just as we were fleeing Aysha'a. But nothing significant....

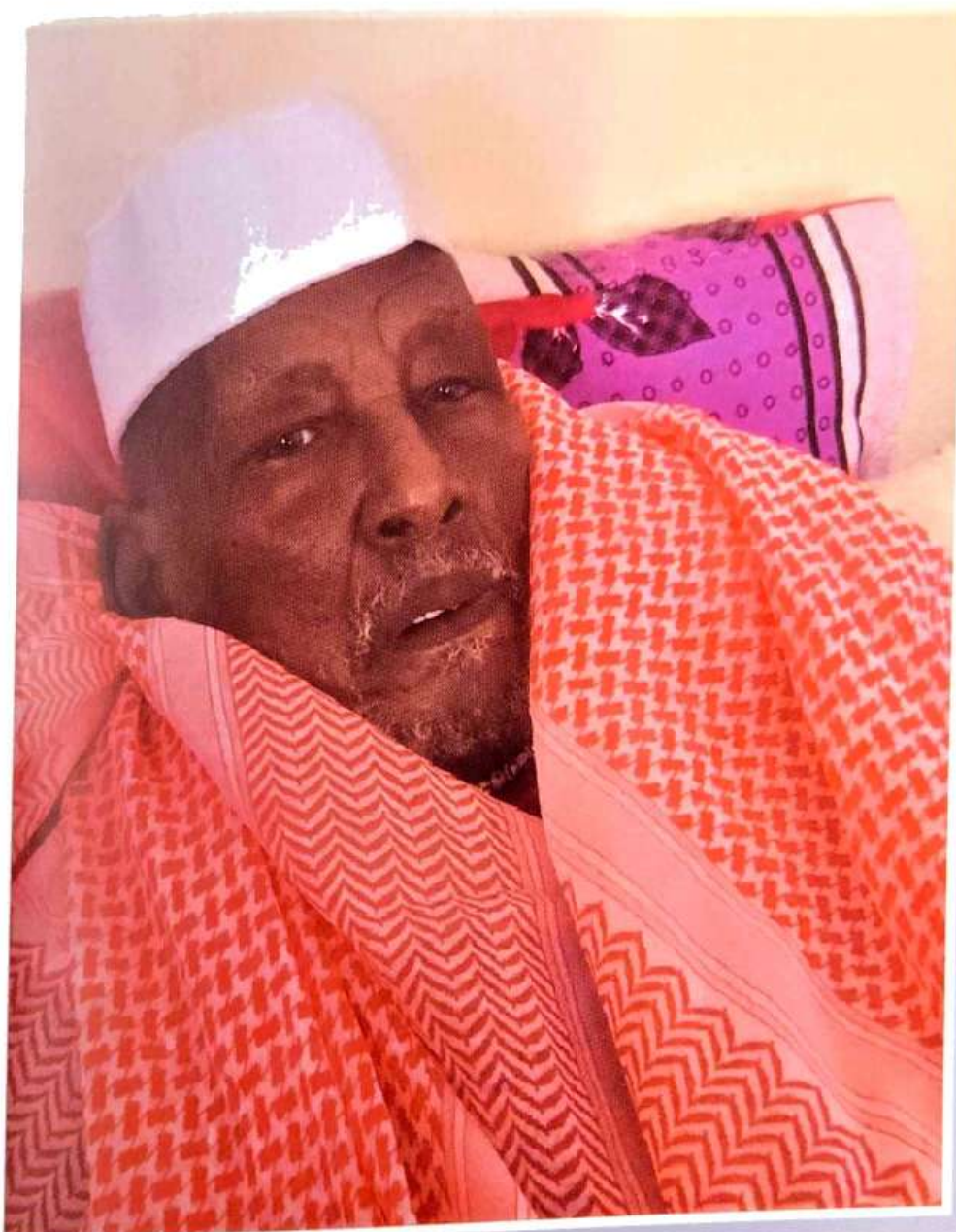
ROBLE HUSAIN GUELLE



*He was 14 years old at the time
of the massacre. He worked
at the Franco-Ethiopian Railway.
Retired he currently lives in Diré Dawa.*

The attack on this village took place in broad daylight while I was in the company of two men and a young man of my age quenching the thirst of a herd of camels. The water point was located upstream of the Ceel Bahay wadi. The place was also home to a large camp of Reer Jilaal. One of the men did not want to graze his camels that day because he would have heard of attacks. Shortly afterwards, the attacks began, and people started to flee. Soldiers from Dire Dawa were debarked down stream from the wadi to raid the camp of Reer Jilaal. The nomads were trying to flee to the Berje Shebeeley mountain, when a plane strafed the camel boys and their herds in Qallisa, killing many of the herds. The rest of the cattle were later looted. Three of the men I was with died that day. In Qallisa, I met a naked man who was wounded in the head by soldiers with his own dagger (*qolxad*). The man had defended himself and killed his assailants with their own rifle.

MAHAMUD DIRIR ROBLE



*Mahamud Dirir Roble was 32 years old
at the time of the massacre.
He passed away in March 2021 while
he was living in Djibouti.*

Mahamoud Dirir Roble was a trader in Aysha'a where he owned three grocery stores and a depot. Severely injured and left for dead under the bodies of his father, his four brothers and his cousin killed the same day, he was secretly evacuated by friends to Diré Dawa where he was treated. After his recovery, he settled in Diré Dawa and resumed an informal business in the passenger train which linked Diré-Dawa and Djibouti. He passed away few months after having given us the following testimony. This book is dedicated to his memory.

... On Thursday, two armed guys from Dikhil had attempted to enter the town. Amhara soldiers had denied them access and shot them. The two men returned fire and killed one soldier. The soldiers had therefore telephoned Haile Selassie who was in Dire Dawa to tell him that they had been attacked from Somalia before asking for rescue. At the time, the town had only 50 soldiers.

... By 2 : 00 A.M on Friday morning, 12 cars full of soldiers had arrived. The soldiers of the town had proposed them to deal with the people who were attacking the town from the outside and let them handle the people inside. The attack therefore began and continued all day long as well on Saturday all day long. But the deadliest attack took place on Thursday evening ...

... The soldiers exterminated people everywhere. After that, they killed the people they found in their homes and looted the city. The attack lasted 3 days. The corpses remained at the exe-

cution sites until Sunday. Some of the wounded were evacuated by train. I was with two other men who were also wounded and we were among those who were evacuated. The women were not killed ...

... Following a phone call on Sunday, people were buried by the railway coolies who were not affected by the massacre. Some corpses were thrown into the garbage pit ...

... The survivors of the massacre were divided into 4 groups : one group went to Somalia, to Abdulkader, mostly women and children. One group went to the bush, one group to Dire Dawa and the last group found refuge in Djibouti ...

OSMAN GABOBE



*He was 6 years old
at the time of the massacre.
He currently resides in Djibouti.*

I must have been 5 or 6 years old at the time. Orphaned by my father, I kept the few goats that we owned. So, I did not have time to listen to the conversations and above all to measure the seriousness of the situation. In fact, more and more soldiers were arriving in Aysha'a but also in the main places where the nomads passed through....

... Our camp was not far from the city. Also, my mother insisted that I graze the herds away from these hostile people. From time to time, there were reports about people who were killed by the soldiers on their way to the city for food supplies ...

... One evening, at dusk, sounds of gunfire from automatic weapons came from Aysha'a. The decision was taken instantly to move our camp to find secure shelter elsewhere. In less than four hours of forced march, men and animals crossed the border between Ethiopia and Somalia near Abdulkadir. The next day, at dawn, two wounded young men arrived at our camp. One of them was bleeding from his shoulder. They asked for directions to the city of Abdulkadir. They were given food and shown the way. We did not ask for additional information, as we used to do traditionally. The mere sight of their condition was enough to give us an idea of the disaster...

... It was not until the summer following the massacre (in 1961) that we dared to return to our usual transhumance sites. On our return, only women had the courage to visit Aysha'a which remained in desolation. All the men had been coldly shot and skeletons in perfect condition, were still in the homes, stores and restaurants according to their testimonies ...

... To satisfy my curiosity, I too decided to take a closer look at these skeletons that everybody was talking about. One morning, after having taken some camels to the pasture, I took the direction of Aysha'a located at 2 hours of walk. Arrived near the city, a soldier on guard gave the alarm with a whistle. Very quickly a group of soldiers, visibly surprised by this brutal alert, shirtless, ill-fitting boots ran towards me. They grabbed me and slapped me and kicked me in the buttocks. One of them questioned me in the Somali language, without any accent :

-Who are you? Where are you from? What are you doing here? Why aren't you on the right path?

I answered with snippets of crying words.

-My name is Osman... I'm from Moordhaale... I'm a shepherd ... I'm going to town...

A violent slap knocked me down.

-You gotta be kidding me, kid. You come from the country that gave you these clothes, don't you?

I was wearing a little piece of sky-blue sheet. Later, I knew he was referring to the Republic of Somalia's flag.

I stammered :

- These are my clothes...

They dragged me to the military camp. A tall man, impeccably dressed, came out of a shack. He said a few words in Amharic. I was suddenly freed and then I got another kick in the buttocks. One of my inquisitors shouted :

-Go away, kid, and if I see you around here again I'll cook you and drink your juice !

I started to run towards downtown. As there was no one in the streets, I took refuge in a house in tears. A woman consoled me and served me tea. She explained to me that only one passage was allowed in and out of the city. I took the direction of the salutary passage without trying to see the skeletons that were so dear to my heart...

ISMAIL KAYAD OBSIE



*He was 20 years old
at the time of the massacre.
He currently resides in Ali-Sabieh.*

The people had been arrested by Amhara soldiers and then shot. It was the Ethiopian state that had ordered their execution with rifles. Those killed were buried in wells dug by the soldiers....

... We had fled the vicinity of Danwanle to come to Guelille. The people did not return to Aysha'a until 3 months after the massacre. The survivors went to Ali-Sabieh. A large group went to Dikhil. But the majority of the refugees fled to Somalia.

MUMINA BULHAN BUH



*She was around one year old
when the massacre took place.
She lives in Djibouti city.*

I learned this story from the members of my family who had survived this horrific ordeal, especially from my aunt, who was deeply traumatized by the massacre ...

My family was slaughtered there. First, my maternal grandfather was killed, his name was Idriss Warsame Adawe ; my maternal uncle, the oldest of my mother's family, was also killed. His name was Ilmi driss Warsame Adawe, my brother, the eldest son of my mother was also killed, Ahmed Bulhan Buh ...

... My brother was 25 when he was killed. During the massacre, he had left the city to go to the mountain then he returned. He had gone to my maternal aunt, whose name was Dino Buh. He had entered her house. He was followed inside the house and killed in front of her...

... My uncle Ilmi Idriss Warsame Adawe was one of the big traders in the city. He owned a large store and used to send butter and livestock to Djibouti. The town traders had been tied together, then a ditch was dug behind them, and they were shot there. They fell into the ditch and were buried...

... My grandfather Idriss Warsame Adawe was a railway worker. His son had entrusted him with his money. The soldiers came to see him and told him that he will be killed. The soldiers knew everyone. My uncle's wife was with him. They killed him and took the money ... My aunt has been repeating since how Idriss Warsame was killed ; the memory of this massacre had remained engraved in her head. Her husband, her stepfather as well as her nephew were also killed along with everyone she knew. She lost her mind because of all this pain...

... It was the soldiers who knew the people who killed them. The other soldiers were in charge of watching outside the city, as additional troops were expected to come to increase the number of soldiers. It was said that they had gone inside Sheikh Musa's mausoleum to kill people there. I got this from my sister's father-in-law who was called Cookaashe and who belonged to the people of the mausoleum....He said that they were told to go and take refuge at the mausoleum of Sheikh Musa. They had therefore gone there to find refuge in this sanctuary place . When they entered the mausoleum, the soldiers had arrived and shot them. He said he was spared by the first salvo, and that during the second he hid under the corpses and played dead...

... The massacre that took place in Aysha'a is not a massacre whose victims can be quantified. It is a massacre that would require bringing the perpetrators to justice if it were reported and known by the rest of the world. We have not even gotten recognition for this massacre by the Ethiopian State yet. Let us not even talk about an international recognition ...

... A man called Husain Lahdil (Laxdil), had stopped a train with the help of a small group, at a place called Harta. On the train, there was a Frenchman who was killed there along with other people.

...The goods carried by the train were looted by the nomads of the surroundings. It was because of this incident that Aysha'a was slaughtered. Husain Lahdil had also committed another mischief in Hadhagalla but the city was not repressed. Aysha'a was a hub of exchanges for the population of the region. The goods used to come from Zeila, Ethiopia, Djibouti. It was the

quintessential trading town. Cattle and butter were exported from Aysha'a to Djibouti. My uncle used to send cattle and it was with the livestock sent before his death that we had organized his funeral in Djibouti city where he owned also houses ...

... Aysha'a was slaughtered for revenge, because it was the wealth of its inhabitants that was being sought. It is a revenge linked to the death of the French passenger and the looting of the contents of the train. The city was prosperous, and the money crammed into big bags. The reasons were a mixture of greed, lust for Aysha'a riches and revenge ...

... When Somalia gained independence, a copy of its flag was brought to Aysha'a because Somalis and the city residents were connected. This independence was celebrated in Aysha'a. This was also another reason for the massacre.

... The Ethiopian forces knew the people, the wealthy traders, those who had celebrated Somali independence. It was for this reason that Aysha'a traders were identified, tied together, and shot. The nomads of the nearby areas were also massacred ...

... That day, many people had fled, and the majority had entered Djibouti. Some hid in the bush. A city that was a big hub of trade had been wiped out ... The Ethiopian state was not a State to which one could complain. It was a repressive and dictatorial State. No one had complained and demanded accountability or justice. The families of the massacred people were scattered all over the region. My maternal family was impoverished, and they have remained poor to this day. No State or institution came to rescue them ...

JAMA OMAR ARRE



*He was 18 years old
at the time of the massacre.
He currently resides in Ali-Sabieh.*

All that year, there was talk of war, a war that I did not know the reasons for, because we were rural people who did not know much about it. We were scared by that...

... And then the killing took place. Yes, people were killed in their homes....It was reported that there was knocking on the doors and when they opened the doors people were shot. Some fled because the soldiers were not aiming very well. Several joined us in the bush after escaping the bullets fired into the houses, including wounded people who had had parts of their bodies torn off by the bullets. They were fed for a while. Afterwards, Somalia came to rescue them and took some of the people away.

Those who survived were searched for and killed the next days while searching houses. The killing lasted a whole week....

... Planes were shooting at people, killing many nomads... We had seen that while we were sitting on a promontory watching the camel herd. We saw people fleeing. That was where we saw two planes coming from the direction of Aysha'a. One dropped two bombs on the camel herds of Las Geel. One bomb exploded and killed animals belonging to Reer Meraneh. The other did not explode....

... The corpses were eaten by wild animals, as no one could enter the city to bury them...We heard that only Aysha'a has been massacred. The houses had been seized and were now inhabited by Amharas....

... Some of the survivors came here to Ali Sabieh. Some

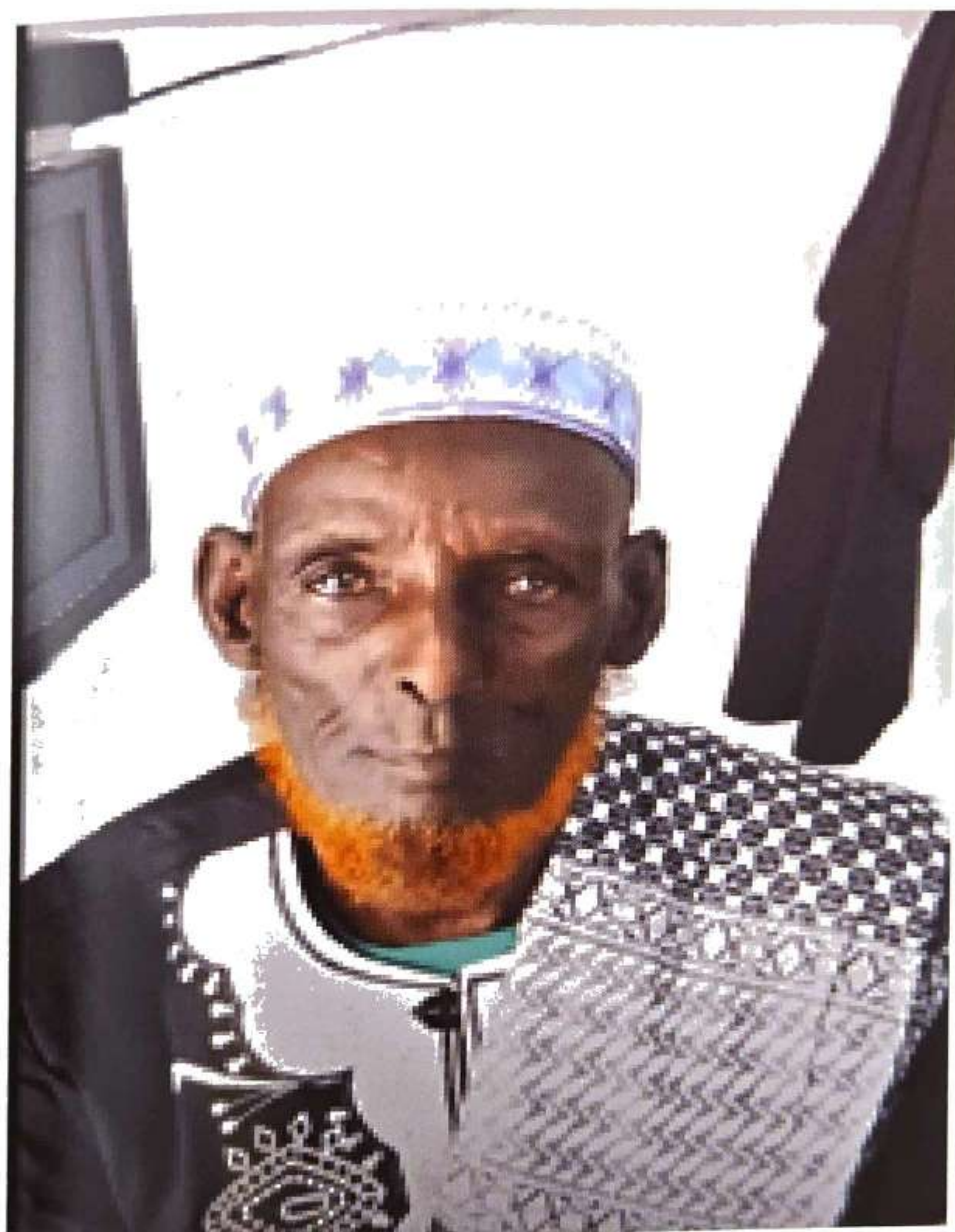
others went to Abdulkadir. Some went to Dikhil and to Djibouti. The French had refused them, but a minister asked to leave them alone, because they belonged to the same group. So, the French let them in. The Bore was part of these people ; there was also a man named Ladieh Faatah...

... A few months later, the people behind the massacre called all the notables in the area for reconciliation. The notables came. My father was one of them. Another notable called Ladieh Buh was also among them...

... They were told that the people had to come back and settle in the same way and that they should not hold grudges. We were told that kind of thing. My father and Ladieh Bouh did not think it was normal to tell a person whose father and uncle had been killed not to hold a grudge. The discussions stopped there...

... Nobody wrote anything about this story. Who is going to write something ? The Ogaas came later during the reconciliation. It is said that he complained and attributed all this to Haile Selassie's government, because the cause of the killing was unknown...

GUEDI KAYAD FARAH



*He was 24 years old
at the time of the massacre.
He currently resides in Dikhil.*

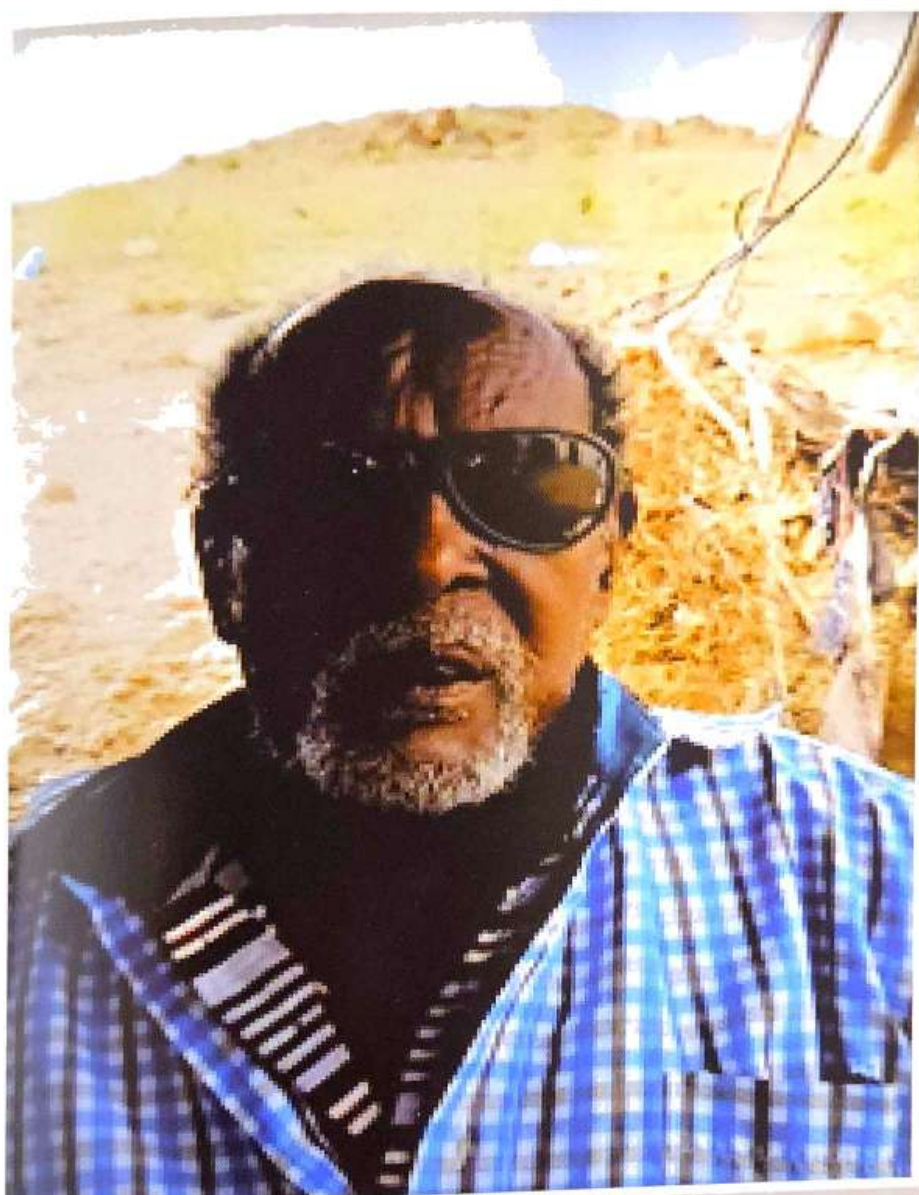
A Koranic school master called Sheikh Osman was killed as well as many traders... There were many of them. The solders came in their house to kill them...

... It was when the special train was attacked that the disaster started from there, in my opinion. The train was attacked in the Harti tunnel near Hadhagalla. It was the Issas who had done that. It was a guy called Houssein Lahdil who was from Hadhagalla who gathered a militia and derailed the train. He put stones on the rails to attack the train. He called upon people from the bush to help him. In the morning, they came to the rescue. But in the meantime, the army had arrived, and we were afraid and turned back...

... Two days later, the city began to be repressed. It was in 1960. Aysha'a was a big city where we used to come to get our supplies. The herds had been decimated, but I do not know their number ...

... We were nomads and we fled towards Maru and Dikhil... The traders in the city were exterminated... The soldiers had all types of weapons. They surrounded and suppressed the city. They came from Dire Dawa. It was said that they had dug a pit with an excavator in order to bury the dead. Many people had fled to Somalia and Abdulkadir, others fled into the bush ... Others came to Djibouti. The killing lasted for a week. People came back only the year after...

ALI ABDILLAH MIGIL



*He was 17 years old
at the time of the massacre.
He currently resides in Dikhil.*

Iknew a man called Bogore Fatah. I do not remember too much. We were teenagers and there were no surviving adults ... People were killed in their homes for some and in the bush for others....

... We were young people and we hid under the thatch used to cover a house. We survived that way. Of the four we were, two were killed later but two survived : a guy called Ina Wayrah and me...

... There was my grandfather called Rirash Buh Qoryoro who also lived in Ali Sabieh. He was old and was killed with his own dagger as well as another person called Abdillahi Yasin....

... We took refuge in Somalia. We found Ahmed Bore there. With nine other young people, we were put in a car and driven to Loyada where we were issued laissez passer to enter Djibouti.

... It was said that fighters from Somalia were coming to attack. For 7 months, there was a curfew in Aysha'a. Then it broke out....

... The causes of the massacre were the attack on the train at the Harti tunnel. It was a special train coupled with another train and there was in it the Head of the railway, a French. Witnesses said that he took a pistol and went to the window to shoot at the crowd. Then an Issa who was outside put a bullet in his abdomen. The white was dead....

... The problem happened in Hadhagala, and then a guy was killed in Aysha'a. His nickname was Silikeeye. Then it broke out in Aysha'a... A call came to say that Aysha'a had been attacked.

Then the order was given to send army vehicles to that location. These cars entered the city at 4 A.M... I had woken up the four young people with whom we were sleeping in a courtyard. I had advised them to flee. But they called me a coward. I had given up convincing them because I was too young. God saved me...

...The army had four large trucks. They had been sent from Dire Dawa. They had guns. Planes attacked the nomads in the area. A guy called Ali Dhagoole and I had fled. The night of our departure, we had met a lady on the way who had told us that her caravan had been massacred. We suggested that she go with us on foot. She had asked us to help her load her donkey. We refused and offered her to leave with us. Of all of her caravan, only the donkey had survived. We had left her. The planes gathered the herds before throwing bombs on them...

... Some of the dead were buried by a State excavator that was sent later for this. The wounded were evacuated to Dire Dawa. Among those who were spared was a guy called Hassan Qoti who owned a restaurant. The Governor had spared him so that he could feed the people. Among the wounded, I knew a guy called Mahamoud Dirir who had received five bullets but God saved him....

... The massacre lasted a whole month. We fled after two nights. After that, we listened to the noises from afar.... The perpetrators also included civilians. They looted the city. We had not traveled around the city too much. We were too young. There were five of us in a house and there was with us a guy called Ilmi Burjan who was one of Cheikh Musa's disciples. I suggested to the young people to leave, but they refused. I sur-

vived with another. The 3 others were killed as well as Ilmi Burjan ... Very few survived.

... We returned years later. I went there to go to Dire Dawa in 1962. I was asked where I was during the last years. The Amhara soldiers who knew me almost held me there, but one freed me. That night, two guys were killed...

... Nothing has been written about this massacre. The Ogaas had come after the murder of the two guys. He had asked not to organize a party in his honor. He had cried... I took refuge in Marmar, then in Sawyer then in Somalia. Then I came here to Dikhil ...

ALI ADEN MOHAMED



*He was in his twenties
at the time of the massacre.
Retired he currently lives in Jigjiga.*

His testimony concerns the Dhagaxbuur massacre. We publish it here to show how the same strategy of collective punishment has been used against the civilian populations in the Somali region.

... At the time of the Dhagaxbuur massacre I was about 20 years old . The massacre took place I believe at the end of March 1961...

... At that time, I had just been recruited into the police. The new recruits had just come out of the "depot" (registration of the regiment). We had not started working yet. A party called "Nasrulla" had emerged in the region. Somalia had just gained its independence. The people of Dhagaxbuur heard about this through the media and the radio, and publicly expressed their joy. People from Nasrulla's Party were sent to us from the Somali side. They were trying to mobilize the population so that, if the Abyssinians came, we would be ready for talks. People joined this Party. They paid one shilling at the time of registration, and half a shilling ("sumuni") per month...

... The people had woken up, thanks to the media that had grown in importance and Somalia's existence had become a reality. Moreover, people were unhappy with the oppression that occurred in Djibouti (after the self-determination referendum)
...

... Some young intellectuals wrote a letter calling for the construction of roads, schools, and hospitals. None of this existed ; there was no State in the area, except a few police offi-

cers and those who worked under them. The authors of the letter said that we are a people and that we want our rights to education, to health, to water and to roads. They wrote this to the authorities : "If you are the state, you must give us our rights, otherwise we must be left alone and given our independence"...

The town Administrator had asked them to bring him the letter. Young people and religious leaders gave it to him. Some say they demanded that "the Ethiopians leave our land", but this was not the case, I was one of the people who knew about all this. The commissioner had told them to wait three days for his response. At that time, there were only a few policemen apart from the Somali policemen in the town. The soldiers were stationed at the borders, but here there were only police. The Administrator had taken the information to his hierarchy. The army was then ordered to intervene and the police presence had been reinforced. Two evenings after the letter was transmitted, military trucks arrived and stationed in the hills west of the city. But it was the reinforced police which entered the city....

The Somali-born police officers, whose loyalty was not sure, were ordered to stay at home and those who were trusted were given their weapons. Since we were new recruits, no one cared about us. It was late in the day. I was sitting near a shop next to the police station and taking some khat twigs with others. A group which included Somali notables like Galool and others, led by a captain named Shaambal, went towards the house where the young intellectuals were meeting. This man called Galool told the young people "don't move, keep quiet, if you move you will be killed". But the young people all rushed towards the door

to escape, and one of them named Mohamed, who was their leader wounded one of the policemen with a sword. He barely hurt the policeman, as he had not learned to fight with a sword ; but he was killed on the spot and some of the youths as well.

From that moment the bullets were heard whistling. I was ready, as soon as the shooting started, I entered the police station. I was dressed in an incomplete uniform. Many people were caught and taken to the police station. The police station rooms were packed to the brim.

Gunfire had never happened in the city. But when the gunshots were heard, the soldiers in the hills began to fire cannon five or six times. People were fleeing in all directions. There were 72 people killed. This number was known when the bodies were buried. The shooting continued until the evening. The police had been dispersed in the city and were taking away any animals they found there while the people were fleeing the city....

... The next day, there were talks between the customary chiefs and the army, and people were able to come back to the city to bury their dead. Among the dead were Haji Ahmed Hayle, Mohamed Sheikh Salah (the leader of the Nasrulla party), the son of Muhumad Mahalin, Salim Haji Mohamed, etc. There were many....

... The number of inhabitants at the time in the city was between 20,000 and 30,000. It was a rich and lively city, with a lot of traders. The cause of the massacre was authorities did not want people to express themselves and understand the situation....

...Many people had exiled to Hargeisa, others had returned within a day or two to the city. The state did not provide compensation. On the contrary, the Ethiopian authorities said they had killed "shifto" [bandits]. A few families were given 2000 bir [Ethiopian currency]. But the city had been completely vandalized...

... Due to the global media coverage of these events by the Somali State, there had been international pressure on Haile Selassie. He had summoned the customary chiefs of the Somali region to Addis Ababa. He had said he did not want to slaughter the city, but the terrorists. The Somalis told him that he had only to capture these terrorists and not to destroy the whole city ... After that, Haile Selassie introduced a new administrative division of the Somalia region by creating several sub-regions to allow a greater administrative presence of the State....

CONCLUSION

This research work has allowed us first to understand the different factors that have led to the massacre of Aysha'a. It also allowed us to understand how the trauma suffered by the victims, the disappearance of documented evidence and the impunity that generally protected those responsible for collective crimes, can foster unbearable amnesia in our oral societies. These societies tend to develop a capacity for insouciance, or even unconsciousness, which leads to fatalism in the face of historic crimes. This fatalism not only discredits legitimate demands for justice and reparation for the crimes of the past, but it also anesthetizes our vigilance to prevent further tragedies.

Thus, our amnesiac and fatalistic societies are not often equipped to "learn from history", allowing the perpetrators of massacres to impose their own version of historical facts. The atrocities of colonial conquests have often been forgotten, denied or minimized to the point that some have been able to talk about the "positive aspects of colonization" in order to rehabilitate this criminal enterprise. By contrast, the perpetrators have never spared their efforts to erase the traces of their crimes, rewrite history to

their advantage and to discourage in advance any further search for truth about their misdeeds.

We have shown how the Aysha'a massacre can be qualified as a genocide according to criteria accepted by the international community today. As a result, it fully deserves to be inscribed as such in the history of Ethiopia but also of other countries in the region (Djibouti and Somalia) because it was the result of regional tensions at that time and had serious repercussions beyond Ethiopian borders. It must also be included in the list of crimes against humanity which calls out to universal memory, as is the case with other genocides. No life is worth more than another and all innocent victims of mass killings should be honored.

Now that the facts of this massacre have been established, it is the responsibility of the Ethiopian authorities and more particularly those of the Ethiopian Somali regional State to take the necessary measures to officially recognize this massacre as a genocide and to inscribe it in their historical records. The authorities in the Somali region have started to commemorate this historic event by organizing in 2005 and 2019 in Aysha'a commemoration ceremonies.

However, such a tragedy deserves further commitment from the national and regional State. It should be marked in public space, at the scene of the crime, in the city where it took place, by building a monument or a memorial dedicated to the memory of the victims which

would help take them out of anonymity. The descendants of the victims should be associated with this endeavor to contribute to the establishment of a comprehensive list of the names of all those who lost their lives in the massacre.

Beyond its goal of breaking the silence, working on past tragedies such as the Aysha'a massacre helps first to recall the importance of written and oral archives and the urgency of grouping them together and preserving them with great care. For it is unjustifiable to continue to search for documents about our past and our cultural heritage in the archives of others.

Working on such tragic events also highlights the usefulness of historians and the methodologies they have developed to identify sources of information and to cross-reference both written and oral documents to establish historical facts. History has this special virtue of serving as a torch to illuminate our present and helping us to better see the possible options for our future, in the light of our past.

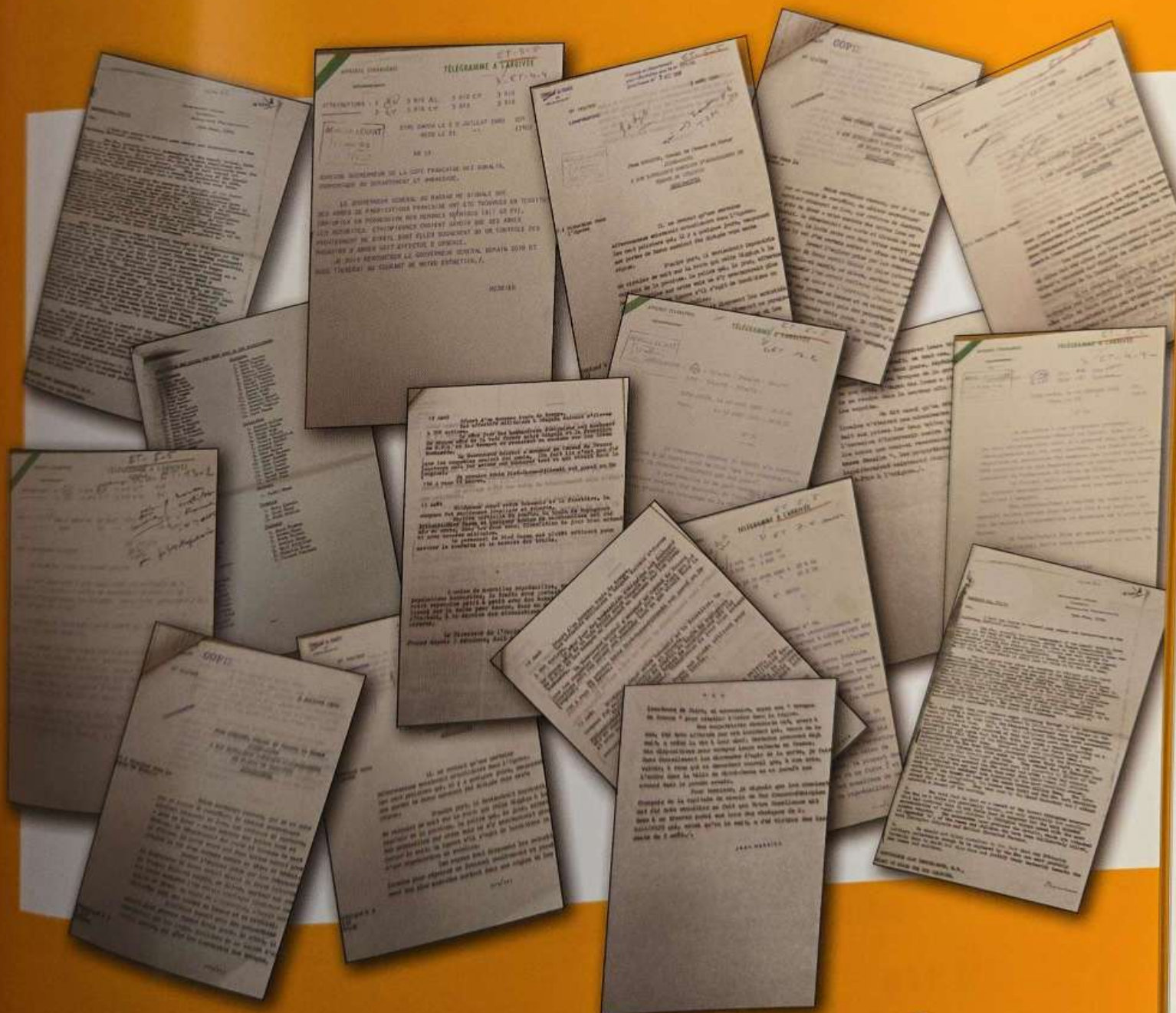
On the other hand, this type of work highlights the role that identification with a collective painful memory can play in building a common identity and citizenship. We know how certain peoples of the world have been able to use the tragedies they have had to experience as vectors of unity, awareness of their community of destiny and of mobilization around collective political causes and developmental projects. The Aysha'a genocide showed how the Somali identity and aspirations of emancipation,

self-determination and development shared by its inhabitants were the reasons for which they were slaughtered.

Beyond the duty to remember, the reconstruction of what happened in this city in August 1960 should serve to rehabilitate these legitimate aspirations of autonomy and justice and to strengthen the awareness of a common destiny. In a country (Ethiopia) once again plunged into a new period of transition, at a time when our region (the Horn of Africa) is going through new turmoil, the collective memory of this genocide could contribute to the development of the necessary resilience and vigilance to face these new challenges.

Finally, this type of work aims to raise awareness among young researchers of the region about their history and motivate them to undertake pioneering research on the yet unaddressed critical issues about their people. This is only how endogenous knowledge and perspectives about our history and culture could be developed and integrated in school curricula and university's courses.

THE ARCHIVES



THE AYSHA'A GENOCIDE OF 1960: Shedding light on a Hidden Tragedy

Annex 1

16/226/02

H 342/8

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,

HARGEISA,

SOMALILAND PROTECTORATE.

DESPATCH NO. 579/56

23rd June, 1956.

Sir,

I have the honour to request your advice and instructions on the following difficult problem.

2. The Esa, probably the most independent of the Somali tribes, live partly in the West of the Protectorate, partly in French Somaliland but mainly are in Ethiopia. Many of those who live in the Protectorate move for the seasonal grazing into Ethiopia proper, outside and well beyond the boundaries of the 1954 Agreement Territories. They are one of the Somali tribes with whom Great Britain concluded a treaty of protection in 1884. To all the Esa, that treaty is still just as valid as it has ever been.

3. For some years ever since the handover to Ethiopia of the Harar Province in 1948, till then under the control of the British Military Administration, relations between the Esa and their Ethiopian rulers have alternated between uneasy peace and open fighting. (Their Chief or Ugas is still as a consequence held under house arrest by the Ethiopians in Dire Dawa). The initial cause of these outbreaks of fighting is usually the normal Ethiopian custom of quartering their troops on the local Somali population from whom stock looting by their troops is not discouraged. As the Esa depend for their very existence on their stock, naturally they react violently in defence of their property and attack and counter-attack have thus consequently become a regular feature of their lives. However, up to the present in these fights, the women and children were regarded as sacrosanct and continued to live their lives unharmed.

4. Early this year rumours began filtering through to the Protectorate that following a serious reverse suffered by Ethiopian regular troops at the hands of the Esa in late 1955, the Ethiopian Government were taking stringent measures to break them. Due to the very efficient Ethiopian news censorship, no confirmation was ever received of this but lately more rumours began filtering through again that the Esa tribe had taken a terrible beating as a result of the full force of the Ethiopian Army and Air Force being used indiscriminately against them. These rumours were confirmed when a delegation of the Esa from Ethiopia journeyed secretly to the Protectorate, contacted their kinsmen who live under us and, under their aegis, on 20th June approached this Government for help. They stated that in February last an Ethiopian punitive force in armoured cars and supported by planes of the Ethiopian Air Force entered the Esa country and after a five day running battle defeated the men and drove them away from their women and children whom the Ethiopian soldiery then butchered in the most revolting manner, cutting off the breasts of some of the women before killing them. The live-stock were then slaughtered, the houses were burnt and the Esa left destitute except for a few camels. They were seen by the Chief Secretary and I attach herewith a record of the meeting.

5. The bald fact is that as a result of the latest Ethiopian measures the Esa as a tribe are practically broken, not only physically but morally. What has achieved this is not their loss in manpower but the cold blooded extermination of women and children by Ethiopian troops armed with the most modern weapons. The emissaries have produced the details, which are attached at Appendix 'A', of the women and children who have been deliberately killed, both Ethiopian subjects and British Protected Persons.

6. We should not blind ourselves to the fact that any Ethiopian soldiers unfortunate enough to be captured by the Esa are most probably brutally done to death but this does not justify their barbarity towards the Esa women and children.

HONOURABLE ALAN LENNOX-BOYD, M.P.,
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.

/7.....

Annex 2a

LIST OF ESA MEN KILLED WHO WERE BORN IN THE PROTECTORATE.

Rer Gulaned

1. Musa Hared
2. Robleh Abdi
3. Ibrahim Abdi
4. Omer Abbadeed
5. Fatah Raghh
6. Gadi Egeh
7. Esa Samater
8. Booh Gedi
9. Robleh Gailleh
10. Ahmed Khairih
11. Wais Mohamed
12. Adan Geddi
13. Gailleh Suggeh
14. Gedi Suggeh
15. Booh Abbadeed
16. Robleh Hussein
17. Hosh Wais
18. Idleh Absiyeh
19. Hared Adan
20. Hosh Hared
21. Adan Esa

Harla

1. Hosh Absiyeh
2. Asowe Absiyeh
3. Riyaleh Absiyeh
4. Assowe Bullaleh
5. Ayeh Af'ase
6. 'Adawe Robleh
7. Darar Waberi
8. Robleh Gabad
9. Booh Musa
10. Egeh Robleh
11. Geddi Iladah
12. Huffaneh Musa
13. Robleh Darar

Rer Musa

1. Booh Sher
2. Ali Elmi
3. Abdi Godd
4. Farah Abdi
5. Yahan Subagleh
6. Hassan Adawe
7. Segeh Dualeh
8. Musa 'Aroosh
9. Arreh Soyan
10. Gessaleh Samater

Koroneh

1. Girreh Assoweh
2. Wais Assoweh
3. Mohamed Wais
4. Hassan Robleh
5. Bahdon Gulaid
6. Riyaleh Farah
7. Robleh Hassan
8. Humdubleh Frah
9. Geddi Gadeed
10. Gulaid Robleh

Furlabba

1. Farah Hassan
2. Abdi Riyaleh
3. Abdi Gailleh
4. Bahdon Ismail
5. Riyaleh Dualeh
6. Adan Subbaneh
7. Maidal Tukaleh
8. Dualeh Robleh
9. Ahamed Lowdone
10. Farah Geddi
11. Waberi Had
12. Qumaneh Amood
13. Hussein Billeh
14. Adawe 'Aukiye
15. Egeh Farah

Walal-Don

1. Asoweh Mallow
2. Mallow Farah
3. Farah Gedi
4. Geddi Gulaid
5. Gulaid Hargalleh
6. Ahamed Robleh
7. Diddah Jama
8. Omer Saeed
9. Assowe Hassan
10. Omer Sheikh
11. Abdi Dirane
12. Wais Qayad
13. Omer Hassan
14. Hared Gedi
15. Geddi Jama

Wardeeq

1. Geddi Musa

Urweine

1. Wais Mahabe
2. Hosh Deen
3. Abdi Robleh

Odahgob

1. Booh Diddah
2. Adawa Omar
3. Booh Girreh
4. Awaleh Musa
5. Haji Mihilleh
6. Riyaleh Musa
7. Fareed Khairih

Annex 2b

E/28

LIST OF ESA WOMEN AND CHILDREN WHO WERE BRITISH PROTECTED PERSONS AND WERE KILLED BY THE ETHIOPIAN ARMED FORCES

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(Particulars obtained from the ESA party sent on a Mission to the British Government. Given at HARGEISA on Saturday the 30th June, 1956).

ESA, Rer Gulaneh

1. Fauduma Gaileh, girl	(F)
2. " Aboker, girl	(F)
3. Booho Adan	(B)
4. Faduma Eliye, girl	(F)
5. Gedi 'Elaye, boy	(F)
6. Faduma Hersi	(B)
7. Ahmed Musa, boy	(F)
8. Faduma Musa, girl	(B)
9. Faduma Duhgeleh	(B)
10. Robo Duhgeleh	(B)
11. Faduma Aboker	(B)
12. Hawa Burruleh	(B)
13. Timiro Booh	(B)
14. 'Oley Hassan	(F)
15. Raliya Robleh	(B)
16. Medow Adan, girl	(F)

ESA, Fur Labba

1. Isnino Awaleh	(B)
2. Bariso Robleh	(B)
3. Faduma Abok	(B)
4. Khadija Kedar	(B)
5. Hawa Dualeh	(B)
6. Elmi Robleh, boy	(F)
7. Ali Maidal, boy	(F)
8. Isman Waberi, boy	(F)
9. Khadija Waliye	(F)
10. Hawa Adan	(B)
11. Hawa Farah	(F)
12. Isbaha Alaleh	(B)
13. Asa Abdi, girl	(F)
14. Hassan Bahdone, boy	(F)
15. Hawa Abdi, girl	(F)

ESA, HORONEH

1. Isnino Ahmed	(B)
2. Isnino Robleh	(B)
3. Wilo Mi'in	(F)
4. Wilo Wais	(B)
5. Hawo Mohamed, girl	(F)
6. Maida Musa, girl	(F)
7. Halan Robleh, girl	(F)
8. Guleh Ali, boy	(F)
9. Hassan Girreh, boy	(F)
10. Hussein Maidane	(F)
11. Maide Gangeleh	(B)
12. Shaqlan Gedeh	(B)
13. Timiro Booh	(B)
14. Halan Booh	(F)
15. Asa Areto	(F)
16. Jama Riyale, boy	(F)

ESA ODAH GOB.

1. Gelo Ali	(B)
2. Isbaha Offle	(F)
3. Maida Booh	(F)

ESA, Walaldon

1. Robo Lowdon	(B)
2. Hawa Farah	(B)
3. Araba Omar	(B)
4. Isnino Mohamed, girl	(F)
5. Booho Soyah	(B)
6. Olus Malow	(F)
7. Dilan Riyale	(B)
8. Bariso Alale	(B)
9. Amina Asowe, maid	(F)
10. Robo Hamed	(B)
11. Boho 'Urdi	(F)
12. Ebla Gasle	(F)
13. Muslimo Farah	(B)
14. Ambarro Yunis	(B)
15. Wilo Alaleh, girl	(F)
16. Hawa Iltir, girl	(F)
17. Bariso Asowe, girl	(F)
18. Gelo Robleh, girl	(F)
19. Uteh Asowe, boy	(B)
20. Gedi Malow, boy	(F)
21. Farah Robleh, boy	(F)

ESA, Harla

1. Maida Iltire	(B)
2. Isnino Ahamed	(F)
3. Gelo Yusuf (Gariye)	(B)
4. Maleko Askar	(F)
5. Hawa Yunis	(F)
6. Hawa Booh	(B)
7. Isnino Mohamed	(F)
8. Maida Musa, girl	(F)
9. Halan Robleh, girl	(F)
10. Hassan Girreh, boy	(F)
11. Hosh Booh	(F)
12. Mohamed Hussein	(F)
13. Ajabo Mohamed	(B)
14. Wilo Ibrahim	(B)

ESA, RER MUSA, Rer Ali Hassan

1. Roho Robleh	(F)
2. Burro Salah	(B)
3. 'Udon Fahal	(B)
4. Ajabo Gadeed	(B)
5. Roba Gaileh	(F)
6. Hawa Gaileh	(F)
7. Samayo Dimbil	(B)
8. Maida Ibrahim, girl	(F)
9. Qoran Abdi, girl	(F)
10. Mumina Abdi, girl	(F)
11. Halan Gedi, girl	(F)

4. Fayu Girreh	(B)
5. Ali Robleh, boy	(F)
6. Wila Booh, girl	(F)
7. Bullaleh Booh, girl	(F)

NOTE: (B) = Born in the Protectorate. (F) = Father born in Protectorate.

Annex 3

MEETING WITH DELEGATION OF ESA PEOPLE HELD IN THE SECRETARIAT LIBRARY
ON 20TH JUNE, 1956.

Present -

Mr. J.R. Stebbing, O.B.E., - Chief Secretary

Mr. Michael Mariano, M.B.E. and representatives of
the National United Front.

Twelve Esa Tribesmen representing Esa Tribesmen in Ethiopia.

Mr. Omer Isman, Judge, Subordinate Court, Zeilah.

The Kadi of Zeilah.

Headman of Abdul Khadir.

Mr. W.M. Dickinson - Assistant Secretary, Political.

We are grateful for the opportunity to meet our fellow tribesmen here today and we are grateful for the peace given by the British Government and their help in arranging this meeting. We want Government to understand the Esa point of view.

I am happy to greet the Esa who have come here today. I realise they have come from another country under another Government. Our first concern here is about the future of the Somalis within our own borders; we want them to advance. We want our visitors to understand that while we will listen, we cannot say now whether we shall be in a position to help. We will listen to everything you have to say and I promise to try and understand what the trouble is. I cannot promise help.

Sometime ago, the Ethiopian Government sent officials to enquire what nationality we claimed to have. We answered we were Esa. Then we were asked again who we were and we said we were Somalis. They told us not to say that we are Somalis; they told us to remain Esa, but Ethiopian subjects. We replied that we were Esa and Somalis but we were not Ethiopians. Then they asked us what Government we were subject to; we told them that Somalis claimed to be British Protected Persons. We, Esa, replied that from the time of our grand-fathers and our fathers, we have been told that we have agreements with Great Britain. Then the Ethiopians said that if we said we were Somalis and had agreements with Great Britain, we must leave their territory. Then we were at a place called Tolo. We were born in that place. We had nowhere else to go. Then the Ethiopians said that if this is true, we must stop making assertions that we had agreements with the British Government and were Somalis. We said we could not give up these things which were traditions handed down to us from our forefathers. Then the Ethiopians said we would be compelled to move. We had no force nor might to resist but we were born in that place, so we had to stay there. The next thing that happened was that the Ethiopian military attacked us. It was on a Friday in Rejab (1st week in February approximately). The fighting continued for 5 days and nights. We were forced back across 7 river beds until we were driven to the last and 8th river bed at Erer. We had not the ability to resist this force. We were driven away from our women and children but this did not greatly worry us as they had always been left untouched before. On this occasion however the Ethiopians killed all they could find. We were attacked by armoured cars; we have always had fighting and trouble in our lands, but we had never been attacked armoured cars before. We are used to fighting soldiers with bayonets, rifles but not armoured cars. I do not know how many armoured cars were there but this is what defeated us. After this we talked together and it was decided that we should be sent to meet the Government and to ask the Somalis of this Protectorate and to ask their help. We marched six days and six nights to Abdul Khadir without rations or water. In the past we have been attacked by Ethiopians and we are used to this but this time they have killed our livestock, destroyed our houses and all our people were lost. Our worst fighting in the past used to be between the Esa and the Danakil and we accept the fact that men get killed in

Annex 3 a

COPIE

N° 131/AMB

5 juillet 1960

CONFIDENTIEL

Jean MERRIEN, Consul de France au Harar
DIRRE-DAOUA

A SON EXCELLENCE MONSIEUR L'AMBASSADEUR
DE FRANCE EN ETHIOPIE
ADDIS-ABEBA

A/S : Troubles dans la
région de Errer.-

Selon certaines rumeurs, que je ne suis pas en mesure de contrôler, de sérieux accrochages auraient récemment eu lieu, aux environs de Jaedorra, - près de Errer - entre membres des tribus Issa et Dankali. On dénombrerait des morts et blessés de part et d'autre. La lutte entre ces deux tribus aurait pour origine le vol d'un certain nombre de têtes de bétail.

Devant l'ampleur prise par les événements le Gouverneur du Harar aurait décidé de faire intervenir la troupe. Celle-ci aurait, me dit-on, surtout agi contre les Issas auxquels l'on aurait confisqué plusieurs centaines de bêtes. Au cours de l'opération, l'armée aurait elle-même subi des pertes en hommes et en matériel.

L'affaire aurait pris des proportions encore plus grandes depuis trois jours. En effet, il semblerait que les Issas, profitant de la tombée d'abondantes pluies, qui gêne les mouvements des troupes,

Communiqué à :
AL (3)
Djibouti

.../...

Annex 3 b

- 2 -

auraient tenté de récupérer leurs biens.

Il paraît, en tout cas, que les autorités auraient, il y a deux jours, dépêché sur les lieux une grande partie des troupes de la garnison de Dirré-Daoua. De son côté, l'Ougan des Issas a été, lui aussi, prié de se rendre dans le secteur afin de tenter de calmer les esprits.

On dit aussi qu'au début les autorités locales n'étaient pas mécontentes de la lutte qui mettait aux prises les deux tribus qui offrait à l'armée l'occasion d'intervenir contre les Issas et de récupérer les armes que ceux-ci recevraient du " Club de la jeunesse Somalie ". Les proportions prises par l'affaire inquiéteraient maintenant ceux-là mêmes qui en sont peut-être à l'origine./.

J. MERRIEN

Annex 4

COPIE

N° 141/AMB

28 juillet 1960

CONFIDENTIEL

Jean MERRIEN, Consul de France au Harar
DIRRE-DAOUA
A SON EXCELLENCE MONSIEUR L'AMBASSADEUR DE
FRANCE EN ETHIOPIE
ADDIS-ABEBA

A/S : Troubles dans la
région de ERHER.-

Je me réfère à ma lettre n° 141/AMB.

Les accrochages entre les forces de l'ordre et les membres de la tribu des Issas se multiplient dans la région de ERHER. Les pertes seraient de plus en plus sévères de part et d'autre. C'est ainsi qu'une quarantaine de blessés - policiers et soldats - ont été évacués, au début de la semaine, sur les hôpitaux de Dirré-Daoua et de Harar. Une centaine de policiers venus en renfort d'Addis-Abéba ont installé leur campement à l'entrée de la capitale de la province.

Ces événements creusent d'avantage encore le fossé qui sépare les Somalis des Ethiopiens. Si un arrangement n'intervenait pas rapidement, il est à craindre que les autorités n'éprouvent, dans les mois à venir, les plus grandes difficultés à maintenir l'ordre

Communiqué à :
AL -
Djibouti

.../...

Annex 5

AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES

DÉCHIFFREMENT

TÉLÉGRAMME A L'ARRIVÉE

ET-5-5
3-ET-4-4

ATTRIBUTIONS : 2 AL 3 BIS AL 3 BIS CT 3 BIS
3 CT 3 BIS CT 3 BIS 3 BIS

AFRIQUE LEVANT

20 JUIL 1960

ARRIVÉE

DIRE DAOUA LE 20 JUILLET 1960 20h
RECU LE 21 " 17h07

NR 19

ADRESSE GOUVERNEUR DE LA COTE FRANCAISE DES SOMALIS.
COMMUNIQUE AU DEPARTEMENT ET AMBASSADE.

LE GOUVERNEUR GENERAL DU HARRAR ME SIGNALE QUE
DES ARMES DE FABRICATIONS FRANCAISE ONT ETE TROUVEES EN TERRITOIRE
ETHIOPIEN EN POSSESSION DES MEMBRES DE TRIBUS IS(1 GR FX).
LES AUTORITES ETHIOPIENNES CROIENT SAVOIR QUE CES ARMES
PROVIENNENT DE DIKKIL DONT ELLES SUGGERENT QU UN CONTROLE DES
MAGASINS D ARMES SOIT EFFECTUE D URGENCE.

JE DOIS RENCONTRER LE GOUVERNEUR GENERAL DEMAIN SOIR ET
VOUS TIENDRAI AU COURANT DE NOTRE ENTRETIEN./.

MERRIEN

THE AYSHA'A GENOCIDE OF 1960: Shedding light on a Hidden Tragedy

Annex 6

AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES

DÉCHIFFREMENT

MDK

AFRIQUE DU NORD
25 JUIL 1960

IONS : 2

(14)
ET

3BIS

14

3BIS

CT

3BIS

CT

3BIS

SC

DIRE DAOUA, le 22 JUILLET 1960

18H

Reçu, le 23

"

IIH03

N° 20

Je me réfère à mon télégramme précédent.

Le Gouverneur Général du Harrar, avec qui je me suis entretenu hier soir, m'a précisé que, selon les renseignements qui lui sont parvenus, les fusils Lebel et les munitions en possession des membres des tribus Issa auraient été soustraits de nos magasins par un certain Wais Bouca, assistant du Commandant di Cercle de Dikkil.

Le Colonel Kefle a demandé au Gouverneur Aicha de lui envoyer quelques exemplaires des ces armes afin de faciliter l'enquête.

Mon interlocuteur a exprimé le voeu que des mesures soient prises pour mettre fin à ce trafic, qui est de nature à compromettre le maintien de l'ordre dans le Harrar.

Je souhaiterais être en mesure de donner dès que possible au Colonel Kefle tous apaisements au sujet de cette affaire./.

MERRIEN

Viz EMODA anti

Annex 7
L'UNION DE FRANCE
AU
HARAR

Transmis au Département
pour information sous le n° 257/AL
Dirré Daoua le 3 AOUT 1960

N° 149/MB

3 août 1960

CONFIDENTIEL

h. a. h. y. d.

*upai → Karsingy 15/2
TOM*

Jean MERRIEN, Consul de France au Harar
DIRRE-DAOUA
A SON EXCELLENCE MONSIEUR L'AMBASSADEUR DE
FRANCE EN ETHIOPIE
ADDIS-ABABA

2/3 : Situation dans
l'Ogaden

Il ne revient qu'une certaine
effervescence existerait actuellement dans l'Ogaden.
Les cent policiers qui, il y a quelques jours, campaient
aux portes de Harar auraient été dirigés vers cette
région.

D'autre part, il deviendrait impossible
de circuler de nuit sur la route qui relie Diggiga à la
capitale de la province. La police qui, le jour, effectue
des patrouilles sur cette voie ne s'y aventurerait plus
durant la nuit. On ignore s'il s'agit de banditisme ou
d'une organisation de rebelles.

Les moyens dont disposent les autorités
locales pour réprimer un éventuel soulèvement ne paraissent
pas des plus modestes surtout dans une région où les

.../...

Annexé à :
(3)
M. BOUTI

THE AYSHA'A GENOCIDE OF 1960: Shedding light on a Hidden Tragedy

Annex 8a

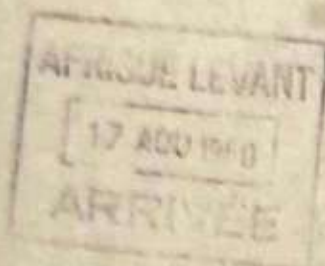
AU
HARAR

Transmis au Département
pour information sous le n° 257/AL
Dirré-Daoua le 3 AOUT 1960

ET-5-5

N° 149/AMB

CONFIDENTIEL



Jean MERRIEN, Consul de France au Harar
DIRRE-DAOUA

A SON EXCELLENCE MONSIEUR L'AMBASSADEUR DE
FRANCE EN ETHIOPIE
ADDIS-ABEBA

A/S : Situation dans
l'Ogaden

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des plus modestes surtout dans une région où les

Communiqué à :
AL (3)
Djibouti

.../...

Annex 8 b

Adagalla qui aurait ainsi voulu se venger de la confiscation par les autorités locales d'une certaine quantité de marchandises lui appartenant.

Il convient également de noter que les assaillants, dont le comportement à l'égard des voyageurs a été odieux, n'ont pas, ainsi qu'ils en avaient la possibilité, procédé à un massacre général. Les victimes elles-mêmes ne semblent pas avoir été choisies - L'assassin de notre compatriote aurait même manifesté un certain regret d'avoir tué " un européen ".

La nouvelle concernant l'attaque d'Aïcha, sans doute par des membres de la même tribu, semble indiquer que l'affaire est bien plus sérieuse - Selon les dernières nouvelles, le calme aurait été rétabli dans cette localité. Un policier aurait été tué et les victimes Issas seraient fort nombreuses.

D'autre part, les trains circulant hier entre Dirré-Dacua et Adagalla ont rencontré de nombreux obstacles sur la voie. Aujourd'hui encore les fils téléphoniques entre ces deux villes ont été à nouveau coupés. Il ne peut donc s'agir d'un acte isolé, mais d'une affaire soigneusement montée.

Il paraît certain que le coup a été l'œuvre de membres de la tribu des Issas. D'après certaines informations, il s'agirait de ceux-là mêmes qui depuis bientôt deux mois déjà, sont aux prises avec les farces de l'ordre de la région de ERHER.

Les milieux Issas d'ici paraissent désapprouver la conduite de leurs " frères " mais font néanmoins valoir que la responsabilité en incombe au Gouvernement qui, selon eux, a fait massacrer les femmes et les enfants et confisquer les troupeaux de ces hommes.

Annex 8 c

- 3 -

L'on peut se demander si les sévères mesures de répression prises par le Gouvernement d'Addis-Abéba seront suffisantes pour ramener rapidement le calme dans la région. Il est même à craindre que de nouveaux troubles ne se produisent, dans un proche avenir, dans d'autres secteurs de la province.

Sortant d'une certaine inertie dont elles ont fait preuve au début de l'affaire, les autorités militaires paraissent maintenant décidées à mettre en oeuvre tous les moyens dont elles disposent.

En effet, dès ce matin, un train spécial a conduit vers Adagalla 170 hommes prélevés sur la garnison de KERRER. Un autre détachement d'environ 150 soldats, venant d'Addis-Abéba, est arrivé ce matin à Dirré-Daoua. Ceux-ci ainsi qu'un important matériel sont en voie d'acheminement sur les lieux des troubles.

Selon ce que j'ai pu savoir, les forces de l'ordre auraient, dès ce matin, engagé une importante opération contre les rebelles qui tiendraient encore certaines positions stratégiques entre Adagalla et Aïcha.

Il m'a été dit que l'Empereur qui, lundi dernier déjà avait tenu un langage ferme à l'Oguz des Issas, lui aurait déclaré, hier, que si les coupables n'étaient pas rapidement capturés, lui-même et les principaux responsables de sa tribu pourraient payer de leur tête le comportement de leurs fidèles.

Il est certain que le développement de la situation doit inquiéter très sérieusement aussi bien le Souverain que son entourage. Jusqu'à présent, la tradition a en effet voulu que l'ordre soit respecté durant la présence de l'Empereur dans le Harar.

Selon une rumeur circulant dans certains milieux de Dirré-Daoua et que je rapporte, sous toutes réserves, S.M. Haïlé Sélassié aurait même menacé ses inter-

.../...

Annex 8 d

- 4 -

locuteurs de faire, si nécessaire, appel aux " troupes de France " pour rétablir l'ordre dans la région.

Nos compatriotes cheminots ont, quant à eux, été très affectés par cet incident qui, comme on le sait, a coûté la vie à leur chef. Certains prennent déjà des dispositions pour envoyer leurs enfants en France. Sans formellement les dissuader d'agir de la sorte, je fais valoir, à ceux qui me demandent conseil que, à mon avis, l'ordre dans la ville de Dirré-Dacua ne me paraît pas menacé dans le proche avenir.

Pour terminer, je signale que les cheminots français de la capitale du chemin de fer franco-éthiopien ont été très sensibles au fait que Votre Excellence ait tenu à se trouver parmi eux lors des obsèques de M. HALLEVAYS qui, ainsi qu'on le sait, a été victime des incidents du 9 août./.

JEAN MERRIEN

Annex 9

AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES

DÉCHIFFREMENT

ATTRIBUTIONS

2.

(AL)

3 BIS

(AD)

3 BIS CT

CA

3. CT

3 BIS

CT

3 BIS CH

SC

AFRIQUE LEVANT
16 AOUT 1960
ARR

ADDIS ABEBA LE

12 AOUT 1960

RECU

13

14

NO 572/77

QUE A GOUVERNEUR DJIBOUTI.

JE ME REFERE A MON TELEGRAMME 567/68.

M'ETANT RENDU HIER A DIRE DAOUA POUR LES OBSEQUES DE M. MALLEVAIS. J'AI RECUEILLI AUPRES DU GOUVERNEUR GENERAL ET DE DIVERSES AUTRES PERSONNALITES QUELQUES INDICATIONS SUPPLEMENTAIRES SUR L'INCIDENT DU 9 AOUT.

1/ EN DEHORS DE TROIS TUES, ON NE COMPTE QU' SEPT BLESSES LEGERES, DONT UNE RELIGIEUSE FRANCAISE.

2/. LE NOMBRE DES ASSAILLANTS EST EVALUE PAR LES SERVICES ETHIOPIENS A 600 HOMMES. CEUX -CI APPARTIENDRAIENT AUX TRIBUS ISSAS. ILS DISPOSERAIENT DE PEU DE FUSILS ET, SEMBLE T-IL, D'AUCUNE ARME DE GUERRE MODERNE (PARMI LES COUPS DE FEU TIRES, I RELEVES DES COUPS DE CHEVROTINES). LA MAJORITE N'AVAIT QUE LES VIGNARDS QUE PORTENT HABITUELLEMENT SUR EUX LES SOMALIS DE LA REGION.

3/ LES AGRESSEURS ONT PILLE LE TRAIN, MAIS N'ONT PAS CHE'CHE A MASSACRER SYSTEMATIQUEMENT LES PASSAGERS, QU' ILS SOIENT PLACES OU ETHIOPIENS. SELON CERTAINS TEMOINS, ILS AURAIENT FAIT DE CEN'E LES

ET-5-5

TÉLÉGRAMME A L'ARRIVÉE

ET-13-2

pour le 10
par courriel
15/8
16/8
par fe 1 → Mozambique

Annex 10 ANGÈRES

DÉCHIFFREMENT

TÉLÉGRAMME / A L'ARRIVÉE

ET 5-5

V
3-ET 13.2

AFRIQUE LEVANT

[13 AOUT 1960]

AIR - ATTHIBUTIONS

3/AL - 3bis/AL - 3bis/CH - 3bis/CT
3/CT - 3bis/CT - 3bis/CA -

DIRE-DAOUA, le 12 août 1960 - 17.H.00

Reçu, le 12 août 1960 - 22.H.55

N° 31

Le Gouverneur Général du HARRAR m'a convoqué aujourd'hui à 16 heures pour me dire "que les responsables de la mort de Monsieur MALLEVAYS ont été punis".

A une question de ma part tendant à savoir si les intéressés avaient été capturés, le Colonel ^{KEFLE} /a répondu : "Nous avons procédé au nettoyage de la région entre ADACALLA et AICHA".

Il m'a également précisé que l'opération se poursuivait.

Je vous signale, d'autre part, que le trafic ferroviaire entre DIRE-DAOUA et DJIBOUTI a pu être repris dernièrement. Pendant quelque temps, celui-ci se fera uniquement de jour./.

MERRIEN.

pl 24 - Lander
13/8 - Rome
- Mayabisco

Annex 11 a

REPUBLIQUE FRANCAISE

Contrôle du Chemin de fer
France-Ethiopien
de Djibouti à Addis-Abeba

Diré Daoua le 13 Août 1960

L'Ingénieur principal des Travaux Publics
d'outre-mer
chargé du contrôle local du C.F.E.

n° 1185

A Monsieur l'Ingénieur en Chef
Chef du Service du Contrôle du C.F.E.
I.G.T.P. - 3ème Bureau
27, rue Oudinot
PARIS

Suite 1164 des 9 et 10 Aout

11 Aout.

Le personnel de Diré Daoua est plutôt effrayé pour assurer la A 4 heures départ d'un autorail avec l'équipe devant assurer les premiers travaux de déblaiement de la voie. Le Directeur Général et moi-même accompagnions l'autorail. Le contrôleur général éthiopien, invité, n'était pas au départ.

Situation approximative du convoi après déraillement au Km 196 A :

Voir croquis joint

Pierres sur la voie entre Adagala et Afcha.

Le soir on annonçait l'encerclement d'Afcha et l'échange de coups de feu autour de l'agglomération.

Gros émoi en gare de Diré Daoua. Le Gouverneur Général de la Province est venu aux nouvelles au téléphone -après qu'un des sous chefs de gare éthiopiens ait eu l'Empereur au téléphone (en demandant le Palais) pour annoncer ce nouvel événement.

Deux heures après on annonçait 1 mort et la fin de la fusillade.

L'affaire avait été grossie (peut-être pas sans raison) par Afcha, mais l'inquiétude était grande autant en gare que parmi les Autorités éthiopiennes.

.../...

Annex 11 b

12 Août

Départ d'un nouveau train de troupe.

Les effectifs militaires à Adagala doivent s'élever à 500 environ.

Le même jour des bombardiers éthiopiens ont bombardé de chaque côté de la voie ferrée entre Adagala et la frontière de C.F.S. et les troupes se rendaient en camions sur les lieux bombardés.

Le Gouverneur Général a annoncé au Consul de France que les coupables avaient été punis. (En fait ils n'ont pas été punis mais les avions ont bombardé tout ce qui vivait dans la région).

Le premier train Dire-Daoua-Djibouti est passé au Km 195 à vers 15 heures.

Le pillage a été une suite du déraillement mais n'était pas précédé.

13 Août

Téléphone coupé entre Daoua et la frontière. La coupure fut rapidement localisée et réparée.

Reprise partielle du trafic. Un train de voyageurs entre Dire Daoua et quelques trains de marchandises ont été mis en route, dans les deux sens. Circulation de jour bien entendu et avec escorte militaire.

Le personnel de Dire Daoua est plutôt réticent pour assurer la conduite et le service des trains.

A moins de nouvelles représailles, en retour, des populations bombardées, le trafic avec protection militaire devrait reprendre petit à petit avec des horaires lents, se normalisant par la suite pour tendre, dans un délai imprévisible pour l'instant, à la reprise des circulations de jour et de nuit antérieures.

Le Directeur de l'Exploitation, en congé annuel en France depuis 3 semaines, doit arriver à Djibouti sous peu.

Annex 12

ATTACHES ÉTRANGÈRES

TÉLÉGRAMME A L'ARRIVÉE

ET 5-5

DECHIFFREMENT

ATTENTION : 2 AL 3HIS (AL) 3HIS CT 3HIS CT
3 SC 3HIS CT

DIRE-DAQUA, LE 15 SEPTEMBRE 1960 -
RECU, LE 15 SEPTEMBRE 1960 - 18541

NO. 51/53

G. de la Haye

J'AI EU LE 5 SEPTEMBRE, UN ENTRETIEN AVEC LE COLONEL
DESUMA 12INEH QUI VIENT DE PRENDRE SES FONCTIONS DE GOUVERNEUR
DE DIRE-DAQUA.

MON INTERLOCUTEUR M'A LONGUEMENT PARLE DES OPERATIONS
DE NETTOYAGE AUXQUELLES L'ARMEE ETHIOPIENNE PROCEDE DANS LA REGION
DEPUIS LE 9 AOUT. L'AFFAIRE, M'A-T-IL DIT, EUT ETE RAPIDEMENT
MENEES A BIEN SI SA MAJESTE NE S'ETAIT POINT TROUVEE DANS LE HARB
A L'EPOQUE.

C'EST L'EMPEREUR QUI, SUR LES INSTANCES DES CHEFS DES
TRIBUS, A DONNE L'ORDRE D'ARRETER LES OPERATIONS. CELLES-CI ONT
ETE REPRISES ET MENEES AVEC VIGUEUR DES LE DEPART DU SOUVERAIN,
PAR DES TROUPES ENVOYEEES SUR LES LIEUX PAR TRAIN DE DIRE DAQUA
ET PAR DEUX BATAILLONS PARTIS DE GIGGIGA.

A AICHA, M'A DECLARE LE COLONEL, LA REPRESSION A ETE
RAPIDE ET SEVERE. DE NOMBREUX CADAVRES SE TROUVENT ENCORE DANS
LES MAISONS., DES EQUIPES ONT DU ETRE ENVOYEEES DANS CETTE LOCALITE
POUR Y PRENDRE LES MESURES SANITAIRES INDISPENSABLES.

Annex 13

Transmis au Département
pour l'information sous le n° 317/AL
Dirré-Daoua le 28 OCT 1960

28 octobre 1960

CONFIDENTIEL

Jean MERRIEN, Consul de France au Harar
DIRRE-DAOUA

A SON EXCELLENCE MONSIEUR L'AMBASSADEUR
DE FRANCE EN ETHIOPIE
ADDIS-ABEBA

A/S : des Indes du Harar

Un de nos compatriotes qui vient de passer deux jours à Afcha m'a indiqué que la ville est toujours désertée par ses habitants Somalis. Seuls, quelques Ethiopiens et les employés du chemin de fer vaquent à leurs occupations.

Les maisons se trouvent encore dans l'état où elles ont été mises par les massacres. Mon informateur a dénombré une dizaine de crânes jonchant les rues désertes de la localité.

Il me revient, également, que les efforts entrepris par les autorités et par l'Empereur lui-même afin de faire revenir les bédouins à leur campement ne rencontrent que peu d'échos. L'Ougaz HASSAN ERZI a toutefois pu récupérer une vingtaine de chefs

.../...

Annex 14 NISTRE

N° 2478-2479

TELEGRAMME ARRIVEE

GOUVERNEUR DJIBOUTI

SECRET

SAHADETOM PARIS

16 Août 1960.

N° 209-210.

Adressé Ministre d'Etat Paris-Communiqué Ambassade Addis-Abéba.
A la suite des mesures répressives des Ethiopiens dont auraient
été victimes les Issas originaires de la Côte Française des
Somalis, l'émotion est très vive en milieu Issa à Djibouti où
déjà trouve crédit l'idée que nous sommes d'accord avec
l'Ethiopie.

Devant les risques de représailles sur les ressortis-
sants éthiopiens(de) Djibouti, j'ai demandé au Consul Général
d'exiger la plus grande prudence de ses compatriotes.

Des réfugiés surtout des femmes et des enfants sont
déjà arrivés à ALI-SABIEH et DIKHIL. Etant donné pénurie des
(moyens), il est à craindre que nous nous trouvions rapidement
devant un véritable problème de réfugiés.

AFCOUR.

Annex 115

AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES

DÉCHIFFREMENT

NR

TÉLÉGRAMME A L'ARRIVÉE

ET 5-5

V ET 7-4 Somalia

ATTRIBUTIONS : 2. AL 3 BIS AL 3 BIS CT
 3. SE 3 BIS CT 3 BIS CT

A. M. 11

DIRE DAOUA LE 17 AOUT 1960 à 18 H 45
 RECU 18 " " 10 H 02

N° 38/40

ADRESSE A ADDIS ABEBA

CONFIDENTIEL.

Je me réfère à votre télégramme N° 46.

Il est possible en effet que des ressortissants de la Côte Française des Somalis qui se trouveraient à AICHA aient été victimes des impitoyables mesures de repression prises par l'armée et la police depuis le 10 Août.

Les nouvelles qui me parviennent de cette localité sont encore confuses. Il se confirme toutefois que tous les hommes du village qui n'avaient pu prendre la fuite ont été passés par les armes. Seuls les employés de la gare paraissent avoir échappé au massacre. Deux de nos compatriotes qui était hier à AICHA ont pu constater qu'il y avait encore des foyers d'incendie. Les massacres semblent avoir été suivis.

D'autre part, les services de sécurité ont, le 14 Août, fait descendre à la gare d'AICHA tous les voyageurs Somalis du train DIRE DAOUA-DJIBOUTI. Il est probable que ceux-ci ont été tués. Il n'est pas exclu qu'il y avait parmi eux des ressortissants de la Côte Française des Somalis. Les services des voies du chemin de fer sont en partie désorganisés. En effet, la plupart des Somaliens qui y travaillaient ont disparu - morts ou en fuite ! et les autres demandent à rejoindre (DIRE DAOUA). Les somaliens de cette ville sont eux-mêmes terrorisés par la crainte de représailles.

.../...

Annex 16

APPRETS (STRANIERES)

RECEVUE

E.T. 5-5

TÉLÉGRAMME A L'ARRIVÉE

ATTRIBUTIONS : 2 AL 3 CH 315 AL 315 CA 315 BJ 315 DE 315 SC

ADDIS ABEBA, le 2 SEPT. 1940 1540
Reçu, le 2 " 1540

N° 651/652

De DIRE DAOUA N° 46/47 en date du 2 Septembre.

Il me revient que le Gouvernement éthiopien aurait décidé l'arrestation des responsables du massacre dont la population d'ALCHA a été victime. Il s'agirait du Chef de district et de policiers. Les intéressés seraient, me dit-on, traduits devant le tribunal d'Addis Abeba. Cette décision serait, pense-t-on, de nature à calmer les milieux scialis. Elle aurait été prise surtout dans le but d'enlever au Gouvernement de Mogadiscio tout motif de porter l'affaire devant une instance internationale.

D'autre part, selon une information parvenue à Dire Daoua, les forces éthiopiennes subiraient des pertes sévères au cours d'opérations de nettoyage qu'elles ont entreprises depuis le 9 Août - on parle de 6 tués en moyenne par jour - De son côté la troupe tirerait sans sommation sur toute personne qui se présente à sa vue./.

JUNIAC

Annex 1

AFFAIRES GÉNÉRALES

DÉCHIFFREMENT

E T 5-5
~~TÉLÉGRAMME A L'ARRIVÉE~~

1. N. 11.

1000 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000

1000 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000
1000 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000

N° 651/672

De 1000 1000 N° 46/47 en date du 2 Septembre.

Il me revient que le Gouvernement éthiopien aurait décidé l'arrestation des responsables du massacre dont la population d'AICHA a été victime. Il s'agirait du Chef de district et de policiers. Les intéressés seraient, me dit-on, traduits devant le tribunal d'Addis Abeba. Cette décision serait, pense-t-on, de nature à calmer les milieux somalis. Elle aurait été prise surtout dans le but d'enlever au Gouvernement de Mogadiscio tout motif de porter l'affaire devant une instance internationale.

D'autre part, selon une information parvenue à Diré Daoua, les forces éthiopiennes subiraient des pertes sévères au cours d'opérations de nettoyage qu'elles ont entreprises depuis le 9 Août - on parle de 6 tués en moyenne par jour - De son côté la troupe tirerait sans sommation sur toute personne qui se présente à sa vue./.

JUNIAC

Annex 18

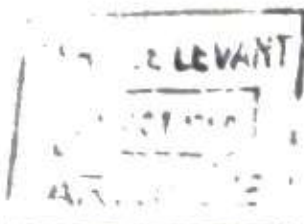
HARAR

Transmis au Département
pour information sous le n° 23/AL
Dirre Daoua le 10 OCT. 1960

GT. 5.5

10 octobre 1960

Reçu



Jean HERRIEN, Consul de France au Harar
DIRRE-DAOUA
A SON EXCELLENCE MONSIEUR L'AMBASSADEUR
DE FRANCE EN ETHIOPIE
ADDIS-ABEBE

A/E : Règlement des incidents
d'Aïcha.-

Durant l'audience qu'il leur a accordée,
lors de son passage à Dirré-Daoua, l'Empereur a déclaré
aux chefs de la tribu Issa qu'il avait ordonné que des
mesures soient prises en faveur des victimes des ré-
pressions d'Aïcha.

Le Souverain a, en particulier, indiqué
qu'Il comptait prendre à Sa charge les orphelins de
cette localité qui pourraient être groupés à Dirré-
Daoua même. Cette mesure si bienveillante qu'elle paraît
en soi n'a pas rencontré la faveur de tous les dirigeants
Issas. Certains y voient en effet une manœuvre du Gou-
vernement Ethiope en vue de soustraire ces jeunes gens
à l'administration d'Aïcha. Les autorités
locales se sont efforcées de faire comprendre que les mesures prises contre les responsables de

Communiqué à :
M. (3)
Djibouti

This book is the first document to be published on one of the great massacres perpetrated against the Somali populations of Ethiopia. It presents the results of a research work carried out by an independent team to break the silence on the atrocities that the inhabitants of the city of Aysha'a and of its surroundings had lived on the 12th August 1960 and the following days.

Cross-referencing archival documents found in different countries (France, United Kingdom, Ethiopia, Egypt and Somalia) and testimonies collected from survivors and victims' relatives, this book provides first-hand information that establishes undeniable evidence on the reality, the scope and the consequences of the Aysha'a massacre. It analyzes the chain of events in the world and in the Horn of Africa that led to the planning of this massacre by the former Ethiopian imperial regime and demonstrates why what happened in Aysha'a can be qualified as genocide, according to the definition and criteria established by the United Nations, in its Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Dedicated to the memory of the victims, this research aims to shed light on a hidden tragedy, to facilitate its official recognition as a genocide and to prevent the recurrence of other crimes against humanity of this nature in the region. In this, it constitutes an example of a citizen and academic initiative to meet the duty to remember and lays the groundwork for further research on this historic event.



Price : 17 US\$

