
Somalia: From Trust Territory to Nation, 1950-1960

Author(s): Gilbert Ware

Source: *Phylon* (1960-), 2nd Qtr., 1965, Vol. 26, No. 2 (2nd Qtr., 1965), pp. 173-185

Published by: Clark Atlanta University

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/273632>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Phylon* (1960-)

By GILBERT WARE

Somalia: From Trust Territory to Nation, 1950-1960

It is always under great difficulties, and very imperfectly, that a country can be governed by foreigners; even when there is no extreme disparity, in habits and ideas, between the rulers and the ruled. Foreigners do not feel with the people. . . . The government of a people by itself has a meaning, and a reality; but such a thing as government of one people by another does not and cannot exist.

John Stuart Mill, *Considerations
On Representative Government*

INTRODUCTION

A MAJOR PURPOSE of the United Nations trusteeship system has been to give government of a people "a meaning and a reality." This lofty goal notwithstanding, the results, in some instances, have been disquieting as the new nation is caught up in a wave of nationalism which runs counter to the basic United Nations objective of maintaining world peace. So it has been with Somalia; recent headlines sketch the story: "Trouble for Kenya: The Somalis Assert Themselves"; "Somalia Says Ethiopian Army Is Attacking Border Tribesmen"; "Tiny Border War Pressed By Kenya"; "Somalia Sweeps Ethiopia Into East-West Struggle"; "Premier Says Somalia Sought Soviet Arms for Self-Defense"; "Somalia: Communist Bridgehead?"

As one of a number of new nations spawned by the United Nations, Somalia has come in for considerable attention since its birth on July 1, 1960. But the question of how it came into being — that is, how its transition from a trust territory to a state was effectuated — remains relatively unexplored. This paper attempts to answer that question by focusing on the transformation of Somalia from trust territory to sovereign state within the short span of one decade. Italy, former colonial power in Somalia (ex-Italian Somaliland), served as the Administering Authority in whose hands the United Nations entrusted responsibility for preparing the Somalis for self-government. The thrust of this paper is toward an understanding of the discharge of that responsibility and of political modernization (such as it was) in Somalia.

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

The trust territory of Somaliland (hereafter Somalia) extended some 1,900 kilometers along the extreme northeast coast of Africa and cov-

ered an area of 500,000 square kilometers. It was bounded on the west by British Somaliland, Ethiopia, and Kenya; on the north by the Gulf of Aden; and on the east and south by the Indian Ocean. The northern part of Somalia was covered by stunted scrub. The adjoining area to the south, extending to the Uebi Scebeli River, was a sterile plateau. The best area for agriculture was that enclosed by the Uebi Scebeli and Juba rivers. Because of heavier rainfall, the area between the Juba River and the Kenyan border had richer flora and fauna. During eight or nine months of the year monsoon winds prevailed in the trust territory, much of which was semi-arid.¹

At the time of trusteeship, approximately 1,250,000 persons lived in Somalia. The Somalis were predominantly Sunni Moslems and fell into five principal groups: Darod, Hawiye, Dir, Dighil, and Rahanuin. The first three groups numbered 560,000 and were, for the most part, nomads. The latter two groups numbered 270,000 to 300,000 and were farmers in the area between the Uebi Scebeli and Juba rivers. Between 4,000 and 5,000 Italians lived in Somalia.² It should be emphasized that roughly 70 percent of the Somalis were nomadic or semi-nomadic,³ for the nomadic problem hampered Somali advancement in every respect.⁴

UNITED NATIONS TRUSTEESHIP IN SOMALIA

ITALY AS COLONIAL POWER

Late in the nineteenth century, Italy joined the scramble for African territories. By means of a treaty with the Sultan of Zanzibar in 1885, Italy secured commercial advantages in that area. Within four years an Italian protectorate extended to the territories of the Sultans of Obbia and Migiurtima and the ports on the Benadir Coast, Uarscek, Mogadiscio, Marca, and Brava. In 1892, Italy and the United Kingdom, Protector of the Sultanate of Zanzibar, concluded a treaty under which Italy obtained a fifty-year lease over the Benadir ports with a hinterland of six to ten miles in radius. From the British, in 1905, the Italians purchased the land between Uarscek and Brava. In 1924, the British government ceded to Italy the Jubaland province of Kenya, including the port of Kismayu. By 1927 the Italians had established administrative control over the hitherto independent Sultanates of Obbia and Migiurtima.⁵ They then ruled Somalia.

ITALY AS ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY

In the wake of the British victory over Italian forces in Somalia in

¹ United Nations Document A/1856, 1951, p. 81. See also I. M. Lewis, *Peoples of the Horn of Africa: Somali, Afar, and Saho* (London: International African Institute, 1955), pp. 56-67.

² Robert Gavin, "Economic and Social Conditions in Somaliland Under Italian Trusteeship," *International Labour Review*, LXVI (September, 1952), 225-26. For additional information about the tribal groupings and demography of the Somalis, see Lewis, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-55, and I. M. Lewis, "Modern Political Movements in Somaliland, I," *Africa*, XXVII (July, 1958), 244.

³ A. A. Castango, Jr., "Somalia," *International Conciliation*, No 522 (March, 1959), 339.

⁴ UN Document A/1856, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 223. For a fuller account of Italy's acquisition of Somalia, see E. Sylvia Pankhurst, *Ex-Italian Somaliland* (London, 1951), pp. 11-30.

1941, a British Military Administration was established. This was the arrangement when the Foreign Ministers of France, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics met in London in 1945 to consider the question of disposing of the former Italian colonies of Libya, Eritrea, and Somalia. Failing to agree on this question, they postponed consideration of it for one year. In the meantime, the Treaty of Peace with Italy was concluded. Annex XI of the Treaty provided that should the Four Powers fail to reach such an agreement within a year of the effective date of the Treaty, they were to refer the matter to the General Assembly of the United Nations for a recommendation, which would be binding upon them.⁶ On September 13, 1948, representatives of the Four Powers failed to reach the required agreement. They referred the matter to the United Nations two days later, but it was not until November 21, 1949, that the General Assembly decided to place Somalia under International Trusteeship with Italy as the Administering Authority.⁷ On December 2, 1950, the Assembly approved the Trusteeship Agreement under which Italy assumed the responsibility for guiding Somalia toward statehood. And this within ten years.⁸

POLITICAL ADVANCEMENT

EMERGENCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Among the Somalis, the first significant political movement began with the formation of the Somali Youth Club on May 5, 1943. Several years later, on the first of April, 1947, the organization was reconstituted as the Somali Youth League (SYL). From the very beginning, the SYL advocated the elimination of tribal and communal friction, the education of young people in modern ideas, the adoption of one Somali language and the use of the existing script, Osmanya, and the protection of Somali interests.⁹ The officials of the British Administration encouraged the development of the SYL largely because the SYL, like the Administration, urged the unity of all Somalis under a single — and presumably British — governmental structure.¹⁰ (Subsequently, the SYL would favor international trusteeship but not under Italian administration; its main opponent, the Hisbia Dighil Mirifle, and several other parties supported the proposal for Italian administration for a period of thirty years.)¹¹

Although the Somalis had gained some political experience under the British, Somali political development at the beginning of the trus-

⁶ Benjamin Rivlin, *The United Nations and the Italian Colonies* (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1950), pp. 9-18.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-61.

⁸ Lawrence S. Finkelstein, *Somaland under Italian Administration: A Case Study in United Nations Trusteeship* (New York: Woodrow Wilson Foundation, 1955), p. 10. The date of independence, originally set as December 2, 1960, was changed to July 1, 1960. *New York Times*, January 24, 1960, p. E3.

⁹ Pankhurst, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-76; Castagno, *op. cit.*, pp. 370-72.

¹⁰ Pankhurst, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-81.

¹¹ Rivlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-96; UN Document A/C. 1/422, April 26, 1949.

teenship period in 1950 was described as "primitive."¹² Even the SYL, the most modernistic of the parties, was tribal based, drawing its main support from the Darod and Hawiye tribes. Hence endemic tribal conflict was one of the serious obstacles to the attainment of statehood.¹³ (The Administering Authority gave as a reason for its reluctance to integrate Somalis into responsible governmental positions early in the trusteeship period its desire to avoid "too sudden a disruption of the tribal system.")¹⁴ The number of parties dropped from eight in 1951 to three in 1954: Somalia Youth League, Hisbia Dighil Mirifle, and Partito Democratico Somalo.¹⁵

The leaders of the majority party, the SYL, were Aben Abdullah Osman, the chairman, and Abdullah Issa. Osman was a trader and vice-president of the Territorial Council.¹⁶ Issa had led the opposition to the assignment of Italy as the Administering Authority. The only party completely established on a tribal basis was the Hisbia Dighil Mirifle, led by Abdi Nur Mohamed Hussien, also a vice-president of the Territorial Council. All but one of the fifty-seven seats which the party won in the 1954 municipal elections (the SYL won 141 of the 281 seats) were confined to the two provinces occupied by the Dighil and Mirifle tribes. Abdulahi Hagi Mohamud, chairman of the Partito Democratico Somalo, was a school teacher; its secretary-general, Mohamed Sceik Osman, was a Territorial Councillor. The Somali Youth League was the party of the indigenous workers in the Italian Administration; the Hisbia Dighil Mirifle (HDMS) was the party of farmers, traders, tribal chiefs, and Somalis employed by the Administration; the Partito Democratico Somalo was formed by a merger of several parties.¹⁷

Indicative of the political awakening in Somalia was the increase in party membership from 38,567 in 1950 to 62,509 in 1954.¹⁸ The exceptions to this awakening were the nomads whose noninvolvement in politics made the political life of Somalia uncertain. The United Nations Advisory Council in Somalia was apprehensive about the impact of a possible sudden increase in the number of electors on the political power structure.¹⁹ This concern can be appreciated in view of the fact that

¹² Finkelstein, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁴ United Nations, Trusteeship Council (9th Ses.), *Examination of the Annual Report of the Administering Authority on the Trust Territory of Somaliland under Italian Administration for the period from April 1950 to December 1950*. Official Records (New York, 1951), p. 28.

¹⁵ UN Document T/1143 and Corr. 1, December 15, 1954, p. 3.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-5. The Trusteeship Agreement required the Administering Authority to appoint a national consultative organ, the Territorial Council, and to consult it in the exercise of legislative powers. This procedure was followed until a statutory and elected Legislative Assembly was established in 1956.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁸ UN Document A/2933, 1955, p. 112.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 113. One of the unique features of the Trusteeship Agreement for Somalia was the provision for an Advisory Council to assist the Administering Authority in the control of affairs in the trust territory.

the nomads would almost certainly respond to the wishes of their tribal chiefs rather than to those of Somali political leaders.²⁰

In the general elections of 1956, the SYL won forty-three of the sixty seats in the Legislative Assembly into which the Territorial Council had been transformed. By then the Administering Authority had concluded that it was time for the Somalis to form a government.²¹ As the Administrator put it: "It seemed logical and appropriate for the smooth working of the machinery of government that, given an Assembly vested with wide legislative powers, the executive powers should be at least partly vested in a Government enjoying the support of the Assembly and responsible to it." Moreover, Somali political leaders should have every opportunity to learn the art of government before 1960.²² Abdullah Issa formed the first all-Somali Cabinet.²³

The HDMS immediately accused the new government of showing favoritism toward the Samaale (nomads). The accusation befitted the spokesmen of the Sab (agriculturists).²⁴ But this was not the only factor contributing to political turmoil in Somalia. Another such factor was the rift in the SYL which resulted from a dispute between the president of the SYL, Hagi Mohamed Hussein, and the president of the Legislative Assembly, Aden Abdullah. Hussein's pro-Egyptian stand led to his expulsion from the party. He then founded the Great Somalia League and attempted to woo from the SYL a large group, the Darods, whose members comprised a majority in the five Somali regions, Somalia, British Somaliland, French Somaliland, and parts of Kenya and Ethiopia. Hussein's appeal to the Darods was the advocacy of unification of all Somalis. At first this proposal was of dubious value (the GSL won but thirty-six of the 663 seats in the 1957 municipal elections),²⁵ but it was destined to take on considerable significance in the years to come.

THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The inexperience of the political parties with modern electoral systems and the political immaturity of the masses persuaded the United Nations and the Administering Authority to extend gradually the suffrage in Somalia.²⁶ Municipal elections were held in 1954 and 1958, general elections in 1956 and 1959. The 1954 elections were based on universal male suffrage. The elections of 1958 were based on universal suffrage; women were eligible for election to public office as well as for

²⁰ It is assumed that the nomads will take whatever course of political action their leaders decide upon. As reported below, this assumption has been borne out to a certain extent by the inability of the Somali Government to enforce a cease fire agreement with Ethiopia, at least as far as the nomads are concerned.

²¹ UN Document T/1344, December 4, 1957, p. 5.

²² UN Document A/3170, 1956, p. 91. It should be noted, however, that Italy was eager to rid herself of her Somali burden. See Sergio Appollono, "Border Dispute, Egyptian Influence Are Thorny Problems," *Africa Special Report*, III, No. 2 (December, 1958), 10.

²³ UN Document T/1344, loc. cit.

²⁴ Castagno, *op. cit.*, pp. 357-59.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 359-60.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 355.

voting. Every voter had one vote which he could express freely, directly, and secretly. But he had to vote for lists of candidates presented in each electoral area by the parties; he had no personal choice within the party list. The voter had to be eighteen or more years of age. Voting was on the basis of electoral certificates distributed by municipal officials to persons registered on general lists of electors which were compiled in accordance with the population register.²⁷

To spare municipalities the costs of holding elections, no voting occurred in those in which only one list of candidates was presented; in such instances, the candidates won by proclamation. This practice led to SYL victories in eighteen communities. In the twenty-seven municipalities in which actual voting took place, the SYL received 39,178 votes, the HDMS, 38,214. But of the 663 councillors elected in the forty-five communities, the SYL won 321 more seats than did the HDMS (416 to 175) because the SYL total included uncontested seats.²⁸

The voter turnout in the 1954 elections was 75.1 percent.²⁹ In the 1958 elections, 85.5 percent of the registered voters went to the polls. While most of these (127,548) lived in municipalities in which no balloting was held, many (29,088) of the total electorate (156,636) resided in communities in which there was no voting. The number of voters jumped from 50,740 in 1954 to 156,636 in 1958, largely because of the adoption of woman suffrage and the lowering of the voting age from 21 to 18 years.³⁰

It was in the elections of 1956 that voting irregularities first presented a serious problem. Because women and persons under 21 years of age were ineligible to vote at the time, no more than 300,000 ballots should have been cast; but the number of votes recorded was equal to one-half of the total population. An invitation to abuse was inherent in the practice of having the nomads vote for tribal leaders who, in turn, voted for the group. Some leaders inflated the numbers of votes, others sold votes. In an attempt to prevent a recurrence of this kind of corruption, the Administering Authority sought to register the nomads in 1957-1958. One writer has explained the failure of this census in this way: "For reasons of prestige and from a failure to understand the significance of census-taking, chiefs in the nomadic areas were eager to report an impressive number of tribesmen." It was not surprising, therefore, that some of the chiefs submitted figures that exceeded the total population of Somalia.³¹ Many of them filed lists containing the names of non-existent tribesmen.³²

²⁷ UN Document T/1444, April 14, 1959, pp. 20-23.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Castagno, *op. cit.*, p. 356.

³⁰ UN Document T/1444, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23.

³¹ Castagno, *loc. cit.* (author's italics)

³² UN Document A/4100, 1959, p. 67.

For the elections of 1959 each party was required to present a country-wide listing of candidates. All Somalis who were twenty-five years or older were eligible to become candidates, provided only that they were literate in Italian or Arabic.³³ Still in effect was the election law which ruled out voting in districts where only one list of candidates was presented. The law held, despite United Nations criticism that it would deprive some persons of the right to vote, would fail to disclose the number of voters in all districts, and would not prevent persons in whose districts no elections were held from voting in another district. Before the opening of the elections proper, the SYL won sixty-one seats in the Legislative Assembly when the other parties failed to present lists in nineteen electoral districts. There ensued a five-day election in which the SYL won twenty-two of the twenty-nine contested seats. The HDMS won five seats, the Liberal Somali Youth Party, two. Hence the SYL controlled eighty-three of the ninety seats in the Legislative Assembly.³⁴

THE MATTER OF SELF-GOVERNMENT

TRAINING ADMINISTRATORS

Early in the trusteeship period SYL leaders accused the Administering Authority of having dismissed or imprisoned Somalis who had held high political posts under the British Military Administration. Denying the accusation, the Administering Authority set forth the steps which were being taken to train Somalis for the arduous task of self-government. Somalis were being assigned to high posts in government, and a School of Politics and Administration had been established in Mogadiscio to train more of them for such positions.³⁵ Reporting in 1951, G. Fornari, the Administering Authority's special representative to the Trusteeship Council, informed the Council that the curriculum of the school included courses in Arabic and Italian, administrative practices and principles, political economy, history, law, and instruction concerning the principles of the United Nations. Students also had opportunities for studying in Italy. The enrollment for the first year consisted of thirty students.³⁶

Fornari admitted that the top executives in the territory were Italian, but he stressed the training of prospective Somali executives in the School of Politics and Administration and in the Territorial Council. (He did not say that the Council was dominated by tribal chiefs who opposed virtually everything that smacked of modernization, including changes in traditional institutions.³⁷ It was unlikely that they would support the move for a greater Somali voice in government.)

³³ Castagno, *op. cit.*, p. 357.

³⁴ UN Document T/1444, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-31.

³⁵ UN Document A/1856, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

³⁶ United Nations, Trusteeship Council (9th Sess.), *Annual Report of the Administering Authority on the Trust Territory of Somaliland*, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 27; Castagno, *op. cit.*, pp. 28, 348-49.

For the next several years the Administering Authority continued its policy of trying to meet simultaneously United Nations and SYL demands for an acceleration in the program for training an indigenous administrative corps and to retain a real measure of control over the country. By 1954, for example, the Administering Authority could report that an Administrative Council had been established to advise it on socio-economic and political matters. Somalis attended the Council's meetings, but were not members of it. In 1954, a Higher Institute of Legal, Economic and Social Studies was established to provide higher education for Somalis in their own country.³⁸ But the educational program was heavily cultural, and drew the criticism of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Somalia in 1954. The Visiting Mission called for in-service training and education outside Somalia to supplement it.³⁹ Subsequently, graduates of the Institute received two years of advanced credit at the University of Rome.⁴⁰

SOMALIZATION

Throughout the trusteeship years, the United Nations called not only for the training of Somalis for governmental posts but also for Somalization, that is, wider participation by Somalis in the governmental process. In 1951, Fornari informed the Trusteeship Council that the Administrator had established six Regional Commissions and appointed twenty-seven Residents to serve as middlemen between the Administration and the Somalis. Municipal Councils were to be set up.⁴¹ Prior to 1950 there was but one such unit of local government in the country; by 1956 there were forty-eight elected, largely autonomous, Councils which were considered to be effective units.⁴² In 1956, the municipalities were given greater powers, including the power of taxation. Each had a council, a standing committee, and a mayor whom the Council elected from its members.⁴³

Somalization proceeded slowly during 1950-1954 in accordance with the Administrator's announced intention of excluding Somalis from executive slots in the trusteeship administration.⁴⁴ The Administrator displayed less reluctance to employ indigenous administrative personnel, so that the breakdown of employees in 1954 was 4,044 Somalis, 725 Italians, and 15 persons of other nationalities.⁴⁵

By 1955 the pace of Somalization had quickened, and Somalis were in charge of all regions and districts. Organs of self-government were further developed in 1956 with the formation of a cabinet and the election

³⁸ UN Document T/1143 and Corr. 1, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

⁴⁰ Castagno, *op. cit.*, p. 368.

⁴¹ UN Document A/1856, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

⁴² Castagno, *op. cit.*, pp. 352-55.

⁴³ UN Document T/1344, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁴⁴ UN Document A/1856, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

⁴⁵ UN Document A/2933, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

of a legislative assembly. The Assembly's powers were limited in that the Administrator could veto legislation and could dissolve the Assembly in the event that it failed to discharge its functions or endangered the legislative process in its functioning. The Administrator granted the Somali Government control over internal affairs but retained control over external affairs.⁴⁶

After 1956 Somalization proceeded rapidly. By the end of 1958 the Somalis controlled fifteen of the nineteen governmental departments (the remaining four were technical ones for which there were no qualified Somalis).⁴⁷ The Administrator had decided that prior to the date of independence the Legislative Assembly would be granted the powers of a constitutional assembly. It would decide whether other representatives of the trust territory would participate in the drafting of the Constitution. It would also decide how the Constitution would be promulgated on the day of independence.⁴⁸ The Administrator would not exercise his veto power with respect to the Constituent Assembly's efforts to draft a Constitution.⁴⁹

LEADERSHIP, CONSENSUS, IDEOLOGY

LEADERSHIP

At the outset of trusteeship, the indigenous leaders were tribal chiefs. The emergence of political parties brought with it the rise of a different kind of leader. Of the new leaders, the principal ones were Abdullahi Issa, the Prime Minister, Aden Abdulla Osman, president of the Legislative Assembly, and the political party leaders. Their rise did not eclipse completely the chieftans, an observation prompted by the obviously tribal nature of Somali society.⁵⁰

CONSENSUS

"Where the elite is largely the product of superficial westernization, achieved through education and not the result of fundamental economic changes in the country as a whole, the traditional pattern of political cleavages is not changed but simply translated into a new idiom," I. M. Lewis has written.⁵¹ Somali political leaders have confronted the difficult problem of bridging those cleavages. The difficulty stems largely from the fact that the means of political communications are limited in Somalia. Even in the year of independence (1960) there were only one radio station (in Mogadiscio) and two newspapers in the country.

⁴⁶ UN Document T/1344, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁴⁷ UN Document A/4100, 1959, pp. 64-65.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 65. The Administering Authority retained only those powers necessary to discharge its responsibilities under the Trusteeship Agreement. From the Administrator's view, his veto power was not so much a limitation on the Legislative Assembly's operations as it was a necessary assurance that his ability to meet his responsibilities would not be seriously impaired. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁴⁹ "Three Trust Territories due to Reach Statehood This Year," *United Nations Review*, VI, No. 7 (January, 1960), 18.

⁵⁰ A. A. Castagno, Jr., "Ethnic Homogeneity Helps to Balance Divisive Factors," *Africa Special Report*, III, No. 12 (December, 1958), 11.

⁵¹ I. M. Lewis, "Modern Political Movements in Somaliland, II," *Africa*, XXVII, No. 4 (October, 1958), 362.

Cinemas were just beginning to appear in Mogadiscio. Only 5 percent of Somalis were literate.⁵² Moreover, the Somali language was spoken but not written. Yet the political leaders succeeded in gaining some support and involving the people in the political process, as shown by the participation of 85 percent of the eligible voters in the 1958 elections.⁵³

The Somali Government granted universal suffrage without property or literacy qualifications. This, says Edward Shils, "is perhaps the greatest single factor leading to the formation of a political society." It draws the whole adult population periodically into the national political life.⁵⁴ As to the involvement of the nomads in this life, Castagno has remarked:

It may be assumed that in the forthcoming [1959] elections the nomad will vote according to the consensus of his tribe. This should not, however, detract from the contribution the elections will make to the political advancement of Somalia. The nomads will be brought into direct contact with a new political process for the first time.⁵⁵

IDEOLOGY

It is not surprising that in their quest for consensus, Somali leaders have found nationalism a useful tool for crystalizing purposes. For "modern nationalism [David E. Apter has noted] tries through the western devices of representation and participation through elections and political office, rather than blood lines and lineage mythology, to provide a structure of common identity and membership and a larger loyalty to the state."⁵⁶

Nationalism in the trust territory took the form which it was to keep in the new nation: a demand for a Greater Somalia, that is, the unification of the five Somali areas under a single government. As indicated above, the seeds of this demand were sown by the British. In seeking British trusteeship over the Somali region in 1946, Ernest Bevin, Foreign Minister, said that such unification would enhance the chances of the nomads to enjoy a decent economic life. SYL leaders echoed this view, adding that the creation of a Greater Somalia would also facilitate the elimination of inter-clan conflict.⁵⁷ Although in general agreement on the goal of a Greater Somalia, Somali leaders differed as to the means for bringing it about.⁵⁸ Sentiment for it, in fact, was strongest in the trust territory and in British Somaliland. These two areas were to be joined later into what came to be known as Somalia, but at the outset even some of the leaders in the trust territory were uneasy about the prospects of their party should the motion of unification be promot-

⁵² Gabriel A. Almond and James S. Coleman, *The Politics of the Developing Areas* (Princeton, 1960), Appendix.

⁵³ UN Document A/4100, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

⁵⁴ Edward Shils, "Political Development in the New States (I)," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, II, No. 3 (April, 1960), 387.

⁵⁵ Castagno, "Ethnetic Homogeneity Helps to Balance Divisive Factors," *loc. cit.*

⁵⁶ David E. Apter, "Development of Ghana Nationalism," *United Asia*, IX, No. 1 (1957), 124.

⁵⁷ Castagno, "Somalia," *op. cit.*, p. 392.

⁵⁸ Castagno, "Ethnetic Homogeneity Helps to Balance Divisive Factors," *op. cit.*, pp. 9, 11-12.

ed. As members of the Hawiye tribe (which was over-represented in government) some governmental leaders feared a loss of power should the Darods of British Somaliland, after unification, support the opposition parties.⁵⁹

With the attainment of statehood by Somalia, the drive for a Greater Somalia has taken on broader significance. It has made the Somali flag, a pale blue banner with a white, five pointed star, "one of the most politically charged emblems in Africa." Each star represents one of the parts of Greater Somalia. To bring the Ogaden, a semi-arid wasteland in Ethiopia, within the fold, some 750,000 *shiftas* ("camel-riding, camel-stealing bandits who glory in shooting up the villages of other tribes") have been waging guerrilla war there. Their leader, Muk-tal Dahir, whom Ethiopia held for ten years, is determined to emulate the "Mad Mullah," the Somali poet-warrior who led a twenty-year-long fight against the British in the Ogaden early in this century. Muk-tal vows that he will not honor the cease fire agreement signed by the Somali and Ethiopian governments in April, 1964.⁶⁰

In Kenya, government security forces have been fighting *shiftas* who are intent on secession as a first step toward "rejoining" Somalia. Kenyan officials accuse Somalia of supplying the *shiftas* and arming them with rifles and grenades. The stakes in the battle are 60,000 square miles of scrub desert which Somalia claims, arguing that Somali nomads (who still make up a majority of the population) lived there years before the Somali-Kenyan border was drawn. As in the Ogaden, the *shiftas* conduct guerrilla warfare, attacking and disappearing. Kenya would prefer an all-out conflict rather than permit the conclusion to be drawn that anything less will suffice to wrest the disputed area from its grip. It seems unlikely, however, that the young nation could afford to push the conflict to that point, for it is increasingly difficult to support the \$140,000-a-month effort against the *shiftas*.⁶¹

The Greater Somalia issue extends beyond the Somalia-Ethiopia-Kenya area. Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie does not really overstate the case when he asserts that "Somalia is a football field for the players of the East and West."⁶² Somalia's geographic location is such that it commands the approach to the Red Sea; by gaining a foothold in Somalia, the Russians, as one observer has written, could "fulfill their age-old dream of making the Red Sea Red."⁶³

Somalia's principal benefactors during trusteeship, the Italians and

⁵⁹ "Somali Take-Off," *The Economist*, CXCIV (February 27, 1960), 789.

⁶⁰ "Somalia: Shades of the Mad Mullah," *Newsweek*, LXIII (April 13, 1964).

⁶¹ "Tiny Border War Pressed by Kenya," *New York Times*, April 19, 1964.

⁶² Drew Pearson, "Somalia Sweeps Ethiopia into East-West Struggle," *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, June 11, 1964.

⁶³ Drew Pearson, "Nasser Hits at Selassie using Somalia as Front," *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, June 10, 1964.

the Americans, have been displaced by the Russians, who provided \$63,000,000 in aid in its first three years of statehood. In November, 1963, Premier Abdirashid Ali Shermarke awarded to the Soviet Union the privilege of bestowing upon his nation \$31,000,000 in military aid. The United States, Italy, and West Germany had made a joint offer of \$18,000,000 worth of small arms. The Russians have begun construction of a huge air base which could facilitate their Cuban traffic; such a base has been denied to them by other African countries. Nor have the Russians overlooked an advantage in training and enlarging the Somali Army from 4,000 to 20,000 men: this is certain to lead to new border controversies involving two allies of the West, American-supported Ethiopia and the former British colony of Kenya. Moreover, the Russians may gain an edge in their competition with the Red Chinese — who have charged that the Soviets do not differ from other white neo-colonialists.⁶⁴

Nationalism on the Horn of Africa may not augur well for world peace.

CONCLUSIONS

It would be ironic, and tragically so, if Somalia were to contribute to the disruption of world peace. For, in the eyes of some critics, this would not only add to the misfortunes of mankind but would lend credibility to the argument against the entire United Nations approach to the challenge of transforming so-called undeveloped areas into states. But the latter argument must be viewed in the context of international politics in general and United Nations politics in particular. Viewed in this light, the trusteeship system is seen as one approach to world peace and the United Nations is seen as the institutionalization of that approach. It is therefore of considerable significance that the United Nations was available to take a problem on which the major powers could not agree, draw up a solution for it, and implement that solution. In all these phases of its action in Somalia, the United Nations was obliged to accommodate diverse drives and goals, particularly those of the anti-colonial forces which were beginning to gain a new dimension of power and a new satisfaction in exercising it.

It is still too soon to gauge precisely the impact which Somalia will have on peace on the Horn of Africa or beyond that area. It is too early to know how this product of the trusteeship system will fit into the community of states. But if, as Inis Claude holds, "the task of trusteeship is to help make the world fit for peace by launching a kind of international slum clearance project, and promoting the progressive devel-

⁶⁴ "Somalia: Communist Bridgehead?," *Newsweek*, LXII (November 25, 1963).

opment of peoples which have been left behind and pushed to the rear,"⁶⁵ then the United Nations Somali project may yet be seen as a positive contribution to the attainment and maintenance of world peace.

⁶⁵ Inis L. Claude, Jr., *Swords into Plowshares: The Problems and Progress of International Organization* (New York, 1959), p. 343.

