

# Somalis as Africa's First Democrats: Premier Abdirazak H. Hussein and President Aden A. Osman

---

Abdi Ismail Samatar and Ahmed I. Samatar\*

In truth, O Listeners, this is the most close-linked chain of events—from the conviction of desiring to help human society is born duty, from repeated duty is created the reputation of virtue, from that reputation of virtue the praise of the good follows, from the praise of the good men by necessity the power of leadership emerges, then honors, riches, and followers.

Vico, *On Humanistic Education* (Oration IV), p. 102.

When Maandeeq went into labor  
Twins the day she gave birth and  
the two flags became one,  
When we again gave thanks to Allah  
And assembled the two parliaments into one,  
When they were elected into Presidents and Ministers and  
with healthy mind all faced the same direction  
The pernicious politicians caused confusion and  
Kept all privileges to themselves  
If only they had led us competently, we wouldn't have  
come out empty-handed  
Those merciless ones did not even knit a garment for the land  
"Never lose an election," they who made it their sole conviction,  
In our rural areas they handed a killing knife to everyone  
They repeatedly made false wail of no succor and without kin support  
The catastrophe they created divided one household from another  
The poison they have injected in us has destroyed reciprocity among the  
youth,  
Their aim was always the car and the house  
From the beginning they taught lies, lies and  
lies only.

Abdillahi Sultan "Timacadde"

## I. Introduction

A specter is haunting the Somali people: It is the debilitating absence of leadership fit to meet the complex vicissitudes of national reconstitution.<sup>1</sup> Whether in the macropolitical despair of the whole country or in the imperatives of molecular and local needs tied to the collective interest, the terrain of Somali politics is filled with petty and “wannabe” politicians but totally bereft of statesmen. To engage this critical yet unexamined issue presupposes, however, an encounter with two larger and prior notions — that is, with *development* and the *state*.

### A. Development and the State

Like all pivotal ideas, development is the subject of long, contentious, and continuing debates. In fact, no concept has so dominated the academic discussion and the practical arrangements of political, economic, and social life in almost all societies. To be sure, the concentrated attention has been on those countries with a higher deficit of collective power — a deficit most manifest in acute institutional brittleness, accompanied by enormous social vulnerabilities. Development, then, is a fluid process of the historical transformation of the basic structures of a society. No nation, no matter how successful in its attempts, can fully and forever defy the social equivalent of the Second Law of Thermodynamics — that is, the historically built-in contradictions that relentlessly bring with them varieties of entropy and unintended but negative consequences. In this sense, development, both in the intensity of human exertion and the perpetuity of the task, is akin to the labor of Sisyphus. Condemned, as all are, to such an eternal project, there is no doubt that those with the least intellectual, political, economic, and social provisions find it most strenuous. Moreover, their vulnerability is compounded by the peculiarities and weight of their inherited history, and the nature of the matrix of prevailing structures of world order. Nonetheless, opportunities, small and big, are never totally absent. A key ingredient in identifying and taking advantage of these possibilities is the state.

We have dealt with the concept of the state in many of our earlier writings.<sup>2</sup> Here, we only aim to suggest a quick definition and then to register a few of the fundamental points of why we believe that the state is a decisive agent in the communal journey of development. To

be construed as a broad authority with a monopoly of force, the state comprises a dense hub of habits, procedures, and institutions that accommodate individual or group interest and, most significantly, look after national or collective well-being. Expressed differently, the state is both an idea and a concrete phenomenon with geographical, economic, military, social, and cultural components. Its elemental function is not only to address diverse and standing partisan interests but, in commanding instances, to fashion out of them a national polity and development agenda. In the latter sense, the state is a combination of ethical and functional imperatives. Since the idea of the state includes the imagination of a collective identity and value that extends, if not transcends, immediate or parochial affinities, an embrace of the distant *Other* presumes an enlargement of selfhood. The optimum point of such an inclusion is the feeling of national belonging that, in extreme conditions, drives individuals to sacrifice their own lives for the common good. Envisioned in this way, the state is, in Frantz Fanon's thinking, "The warming, light-giving center where [woman] man and citizen develop and enrich their experiences in wider and still wider fields..."<sup>3</sup> Functionally, four specific but crucial items—items that if accomplished are bound to valorize the mutuality represented by the state — present themselves forthwith: establishment of general security and law; investment in basic services and infrastructure; protection of the weak and the environment; and promotion of a transparent policy framework, including reliable macroeconomic decisions. We have, in other works, offered a spectrum of five state types, depending upon their degrees of success and failure.<sup>4</sup> In this formulation, none of the conditions are eternal; the escalator of experience is in constant motion in both directions.

If the "great ascent," as Paul Baran called the challenge of development,<sup>5</sup> is eminently contingent upon the capability, effectiveness, and hence legitimacy of the state, we propose that such a phenomenon is unthinkable without a particular kind of leadership.

## **B. Leadership**

An anatomy of the state yields four concatenated frames, viz.: leader, regime, administrative apparatus, and collective consciousness. While we have argued, and still insist, that collective belonging is at once the most precarious and most difficult to create, we have, nonetheless, become increasingly cognizant of the optimum necessity of leadership

in the making and sustenance of a viable state. Indeed, such might be more the case in a transitional context, when revival of a civic spirit and national mobilization are a *sine qua non* for renewal.

In the quadruple death of the Somali state, where each of the frames is no more, we suggest that political leadership is where current history-making is most jammed. Two facts underscore such a judgment. First, a deteriorating quality of leadership, accelerated by unvarnished personal and militaristic dictatorship, directly contributed to the demise of civic life and autonomous national institutions. Second, the present interregnum, both in its regional and national guises, registers either a recycling of spent out yet still ambitious failures or throws up relative newcomers hungry for power but Lilliputian in the attributes that count: competence, integrity, and promise. If the times are hostage to these two categories of aspirants, the following question arises: how can those Somalis genuinely committed to recharging the positive movement of national history distinguish between the fake and the genuine article—that is, separate the mere politician from the statesman/woman?

We start with this conviction: *All statesmen/women are politicians, but all politicians are NOT statesmen/women.* The politician, though capable of occasional acts of collective value, is primarily energized by myopic self-interest, at times instrumentally linked to the promotion of a sectarian group project, and, in the end, satisfied and even exhausted by playing the game of *fortuna* to collect the personal spoils it delivers to the victors. While a politician could possibly repent and transmute him/herself, a statesman/woman defines him/herself as quintessentially a trustee. More concretely, we think there are, among others, four additional organic characteristics that separate the latter from the former.

- Self-confidence

Different from concentrated egocentricity, this trait is a fusion of healthy but rigorous self-minding to improve one's life chances, and an early awareness of civic obligations. As one moves into large arenas, preoccupation with inclusive well-being begins to dominate priorities.

- Strong Moral Code

While there are, probably, precognitive sentiments of goodwill to others that are the bequest of primary socializing agents such as the family, the potential statesman/woman sculpts his/her own iden-

tity by cultivating a deep sense of righteousness. Here, necessary properties include wakefulness, probity and duty, respect for the rights of others, overall emotional intelligence, and a strict adherence to the constitution of the land.

- Vision

The rudiments of an appealing, if not moving, conception of the task at hand requires a cluster of abilities. These include an evolving knowledge of the relevant past; thoughtful engagement with the perplexities of the age; an eye for a possible future, or a workable utopia that identifies hope within the hard contradictions worth striving for; and a modicum of public eloquence to inspire others to embrace the vision.

- Competent Management

A statesman/woman need not be a micro-manager. Rather, leadership of this kind requires a supervising attention that recruits deliberative competence, efficiency, and technical expertise. Furthermore, a normalization of such criteria for appointment and appropriate promotion, together with the example set by the leader, would motivate the personnel to take ownership of their responsibilities. In turn, this Weberian administrative rationality boosts the currency of the leader, too. Together, they deepen the legitimacy of the state, which bodes well for the building of effective national authority.

It is difficult to logically explain the prevailing Somali condition without coming to terms with the political, economic, and cultural developments of the last century and their consequences. Barring such considerations, it is inconceivable to treat this puzzling question: *how did this society, traditionally known for non-despotic political order and self-reliance at the community level, produce scheming localists, warlords, and self-indulgent faction leaders as dominant national actors?* The insistence of these individuals on personal rule, a winner-take-all political game, and lack of accountability, contrasts sharply with an earlier era in Somali history—a time, now expunged from collective memory, when many aspirants were cognizant of the onerous responsibilities of leadership. In this regard, it is instructive to revisit the formation of Somalia's first internal self-government in 1956. At that time, the victorious Somali Youth League (SYL) elected the late Abdillahi Issa Mohamoud and Aden Abdillah Osman as Prime Minister and President of the Legislative Assembly, respectively. When Abdillahi Issa approached

members of the Assembly and offered them ministerial posts, nearly everyone declined. Each retorted that the appointment required a skill level well beyond the nominee's capability, and he did not want to shame himself. Aden A. Osman, Abdillahi Issa, and several key members of the SYL met and exerted pressure on the reluctant to step up to the new responsibilities. After a month of appeals, Sh. Ali Jimaaleh, Mohamoud Abdi Noor (Juujeh), Haji Musa Boqor, Mohamed Mahmoud Farah (Maalinguur), Noor Hashi, Haji Omer Ali, and a few others accepted their assignments. This episode marked three major benchmarks in Somali political history. First, it signaled the beginning of the end of the colonial era as these Somalis stepped into key positions of state power. Second, and Somalis have yet to appreciate the significance of such a milestone, those appointed were ill equipped in terms of having political or professional experience. Although perhaps unintended initially, this set very low professional standards for ministerial posts, a terrible precedent that continues to bedevil Somali leadership. Third, the public also had no way of assessing the unqualified, who, later, swamped the political process and manipulated the population for their particularistic utilities. To be sure, this fateful affair could not be blamed on Abdillahi Issa, for he selected from the best Somalis available; nonetheless, his choices set a political trajectory that has been impossible to alter or reverse. To a great extent, the Italian colonial authority that governed Southern Somalia for the previous seventy years bears the bulk of responsibility for the poverty of Somalia's modern political leadership and an even more illiterate public.

This article charts Somalia's most decisive political conflict in modern times: the struggle for democratic governance and professional, competent public institutions. The 1967 presidential election undoubtedly put into sharp relief the contours of the saga—at once a determinant and a symbolic event in the annals of postcolonial Somali history. That election was the first and only national occasion in which leadership, democracy, and the autonomy of public service were at the center of the contest. A handful of older Somalis know some aspects of this story, but the rest of the citizenry are virtually ignorant of this momentous affair. The narrative that follows, then, has three principal objectives. First, we aim to educate the Somali public about a crucial chapter in their history that may cast light on the current and vexatious conjuncture. Second, we argue that two of the key actors in the drama, President Aden A. Osman and Premier Abdirazak H. Hussein, were examples, albeit little known, of Africa's first genuine modern democ-

rats, underscoring the importance of leadership in the calculus of the construction of a viable national governance. Finally, the narrative transmutes this piece of oral history into a written record.

Our central proposition reinforces a general perspective that informs all our works. It is this: the character, habits, and culture of the urban elite, contrary to conventional wisdom that sees the “clan” structure as an eternal system of communal polarization, have been, among other factors, the forces most responsible for the poisonous degeneration of political and communal relations. Consequently, the absence of a critical mass of visionary, organized, and competent cadre to promote and stand up for institution-building and, therefore, defend civic and national imperatives strengthens the resolve of sectarian politicians. Many commentators on postcolonial Somali politics are in agreement that the Aden/Abdirazak leadership, though short-lived, was different to the extent that it mounted a bold and sustained effort to create professional public institutions and an order that could contain the elite’s divisive predispositions as well as maintain democracy. We think that this is a story that must be told in numerous guises, for it flies in the face of widely circulated but false perceptions of the Somali people, and, rightfully, recalibrates attention upon the pivotal question of leadership. This essay is an introductory note to a work-in-progress that deals with the foundational contributions of President Aden in the inception of Somali democratic practice between 1950 and 1967, and Premier Abdirazak’s efforts to build public institutions that would sustain Somalia’s democratic endowment and ensure the rule of law. *We are in the midst of extensive fieldwork pertaining to Aden’s life and work, and, therefore, this essay will only touch upon some key elements of his legacy (the thick details will come in the book). Our work with Abdirazak is more advanced and thus we will devote much space here to narrate his life and contributions.*

We think the two men complemented each other in exactly the ways that the constitution intended. The President provided the anchor and strategic guidance to keep a focus on the national interest by nominating premiers who served the spirit of the constitution. Aden was an exemplary founding statesman who was misunderstood by sectarian politicians. The general public never had a chance to appreciate his extraordinary leadership qualities until many years after he left office. His stature grows with the passage of time and most of today’s generation find it incomprehensible that Somali leaders of such high caliber existed in recent history. Hence, our belief that some memories, if

properly retrieved, have the potential to capacitate, inspirationally, the hard search for a Somali political community. Part Two deals with Abdirazak's formative years in politics, starting during World War II until the late 1950s. Part Three narrates his emergence as a key figure in the Somali National League in the South and decolonization. The fourth section is an account of his role in the politics of the First Republic. Part Five focuses on the critical years after President Aden nominated him to premiership. Abdirazak's appointment, to say the least, was a political earthquake, as everyone thought that the President would reaffirm the popular Prime Minister, Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke. Section Six captures the main dynamics of the 1967 presidential election that brought a brief but progressive moment of modern Somali public life to a foreboding end. We conclude with a reminder of the meaning of that history. Methodologically, then, our essay adopts a strategy that combines external or public accounts of the past, and reflections on the interior motion and sentiments of one, albeit important, life—all brought forth to engage the dead-end present.

## II. Initiation: From World War II through Trusteeship<sup>6</sup>

Abdirazak H. Hussein left rural Garowe shortly after his father died and went to Galkayo where one of his sisters, who was married to one Haji Ali Mirreh, resided. Already having spent some time in Quranic school under the watchful eye of his religious father, he introduced himself to Sheikh Mahmoud Yusuf, a distant relative of his father, who owned a *madrassa*. The Sheikh urged him to immediately join the *madrassa*. Shortly thereafter, Abdirazak moved to his sister's house. One of the teachers who had a lot of influence on the students was Sh. Mohamed Issa. He often lectured about the failure of Moslem societies to keep up with other advancing societies and posed the question: "*Li madha ta'akhara al-Muslimun wa taqadama ghayruhuma?*" (Why are the Moslems backward while their cohort civilizations have progressed?) Naturally, the representatives of the Italian colonial state suspected that the *madrassa* was a hotbed of new Islamic thinking. Abdirazak stayed in the *madrassa* for about three years, where he was promoted several times. He was thirteen years of age.

One day, Abdirazak and his younger brother, who was attending the same *madrassa*, met a truck driver from Mogadishu. The driver inquired of Abdirazak's younger brother if he had a brother called *Sunweyne* (Big Nose). Neither of the two boys knew their older

brother's nickname. Then the driver asked if they had a brother in Mogadishu. When they said yes, he offered to take them to the big town. They accepted the offer. However, because they did not want their relatives and teachers to know they were leaving, they told the driver that they would meet him on the main road several miles out of town. The trip took three days and Mr. Dashow, the driver, who provided for them during the journey, dropped them off in the area of Mogadishu called *Afar-irdood* (Four Gates). It was late afternoon and the boys did not know how to find their brother. They slept in the street for the first night. Late next morning, they discovered that their brother was no longer in Mogadishu. Earlier, the Italians had commandeered most private trucks to carry supplies for their troops in the Ethiopian campaign. Abdirazak's brother was one of those drivers drafted; he was already in Nagele. The year was 1939.

Another distant relative, Hassan Lugay, who was employed as a shopkeeper in the neighborhood where the two brothers slept, discovered them on his way to the mosque. He took them to a restaurant to have breakfast. Later, Hassan Lugay introduced them to another relative (Jama Ahmed Gurrey) who owned a butcher shop. Within a few days, Abdirazak's younger brother got a job in a major store owned by an Italian Jew. It catered to the large Italian population that had recently moved to Somalia as a result of the war. Abdirazak decided to study Italian and enrolled in the school for the natives, *Scuola elementare per nativi*. This was at the height of Italian fascism and segregation was the norm. Most of the teachers in the native school were nuns who taught Italian language, Italian fascist history, and arithmetic. The school was designed to train clerks and interpreters. Two years later, both the Italian and the native school were closed as all resources were mobilized for the war front. During his time in school, Abdirazak also worked in a new shop established by his brother-in-law. But imports dried up and, consequently, most shops in town went out of business. Abdirazak was drafted into the Italian army, only to be released due to his age. He requested an official letter of release that protected him from further drafts. Soon thereafter, Italy was defeated and the British took over all of Somalia and Ethiopia. Abdirazak and two brothers pooled their savings and bought an old truck from one of their relatives. They loaded it with sugar and left for Nagele, Somali Ethiopia. After some mechanical difficulties on the way, they finally made it to Nagele and sold the cargo. There they finally met their older brother, *Sunweyne*, who at this time also had his own truck. Abdirazak and his

brothers bought another cargo and took it to Adola where gold mining was taking place. Here, he fell victim to malaria and remained sick for a while. On their return from Adola, they met a British South African military contingent, which commandeered their truck. They were given a letter to take to Commissioner Captain Thomas, nicknamed Gar Badiil (Big Beard), who later became commissioner in Mogadishu and permitted the establishment of SYL. Abdirazak's brother delivered the letter to the Commissioner expecting compensation, only to be told that the coffers of the government were empty. Still weak from malaria, Abdirazak had to find his way back to Mogadishu. With little money, he begged for a ride from Luuq to Mogadishu and was fortunate to hitch a ride with one of the trucks owned by the Arab merchant called Beihani. In Mogadishu, he stayed at a relative's house. A Somali male nurse, who used to borrow money from Abdirazak when he was a shopkeeper, found out about the malaria. The man lived in Wardhigleleh and Abdirazak stayed in Iskuraran. The nurse was kind enough to walk the distance in the mornings and treat Abdirazak, who felt better after several injections and never had malaria symptoms again.

Several days later, Abdirazak wrote a job application to the British Headquarters in Mogadishu. The chief administrator was one Beckingham. He was a General and had two Colonels, Daniel and Morgan, working under him. Daniel had an attractive Italian woman secretary. The woman and her brother came from Eritrea after Britain had taken over that territory. The Italians from Eritrea, who also spoke English, were needed by the British administration in Somalia. Someone gave Abdirazak Italian shorts to wear when he took his application to the office. The beauty of the woman stunned him, as she instructed him in Italian to take the application to the personnel officer and then to report back the reaction. The personnel officer told him to come sometime later. Abdirazak returned many times, and on each occasion the response was the same—nothing. On one of these visits, the secretary took his application and told him to stop by the next day. Next morning, she informed him that his application was approved and that he would work for her as an office boy. This was late in 1942. His job was to deliver messages and clean the office. The secretary soon appreciated Abdirazak's diligence and work ethic. The office where he worked was in the Government Center—*Ufficio del Governo*—a building that would become his office as the country's Prime Minister twenty-two years later, adjacent to Mogadishu's best hotel, the Southern Cross. The secretary had a taste for *café latté* and her boss loved *cap-*

*puccino*. It was one of Abdirazak's tasks to bring these drinks to the office from the hotel. They often gave him 20 shillings to deliver the coffee and let him keep the change (close to 15 shillings, which was a lot of money for him). This generosity was in part because they wanted his silence about witnessing their lovemaking in the office. Abdirazak earned more from these tips than his salary and in a short time he felt well off by local standards. Seven months later, Colonel Daniel was posted as governor of Upper Jubba. He took Abdirazak with him but was later transferred to Nairobi. Abdirazak returned to Mogadishu and the secretary told him that she was going with Daniel. Daniel asked what he could do for him and Abdirazak responded that he needed employment. Daniel wrote a letter to the Signal Squadron, which offered him a job. Abdirazak had to go through full military training that lasted for six months to qualify. Five of his classmates passed the graduating examination with Abdirazak having the best grades. Of these five men, three were of Yemeni descent and two were Somali. This was the second class to graduate from the training school. Ahmed Shire Egal (Lawaaha), who later became Abdirazak's chief of cabinet, was in the first class. Training in the school was conducted in English, and the key to success in the Signal Squadron was the ability to write speedily while receiving messages. The five graduates were promoted to First Private, and then each one was transferred to a different region of the country to work under a supervisor. Abdirazak was posted to Beled Weyn, where Lawaaha was stationed, and his assignment was to maintain the station's electrical battery and equipment. Shortly thereafter, he was posted to Wardeer in Somali Ethiopia, then under the British. In late 1944, Abdirazak was given full responsibility for the station, without a supervisor. Hashi Weyreh was his assistant. He then served in Boqol Manyo, 300 miles from Nagele. There was a lot of trouble in the area near Boqol Manyo as Somalis (called *governo Jegaheer*) disbanded from the Italian army (with their rifles) and roamed the countryside robbing pastoralists on their way home to Somalia. The British sent a military expedition headed by a Captain Thomas. Abdirazak, together with his subordinate and the radio equipment, traveled with the Captain. The expedition lasted for three months and then they moved on to Dolo. This was 1945.

A little later, Abdirazak was transferred to Qalaafo on the Shabeelle river. It was here that his nationalist politics got its first spark. The region around Qalaafo was also plagued by remnants of *Jegaheer*, who had already killed a British lieutenant. In retaliation, the colonial

British meted out punishments that the local people felt to be excessive. Bespectacled Captain Fitzpatrick (Somalis called him *afar indood*) commanded the district. He was an Irishman who, during his tenure in Galkayo, had already established a reputation for racist arrogance and harsh rule. Abdirazak reported to his station and Fitzpatrick. The Commander's first question was "who are you?" Abdirazak responded, "I am a Somali." Unsatisfied by the answer, Fitzpatrick inquired about his birthplace, to which Abdirazak replied Galkayo. Fitzpatrick smiled and then added that he was unlucky to be from Galkayo and to work under him. Abdirazak retorted that they would have no problem since he intended to do his work. Fitzpatrick expressed doubt since, in his experience, Somalis from Galkayo were hardheaded.

Soon, Fitzpatrick and his staff, including Abdirazak, went on two expeditions. The consequences were twofold: the rounding up of a large number of camels, and an order from Fitzpatrick to stop the payment of salaries to many chiefs whose communities were suspected of involvement in unlawful activities. Since former governor Colinwood had already punished these communities for the killing of the British officer, Abdirazak was upset by what he deemed an unlimited abuse of colonial authority. Thereafter, he decided to write to Headquarters. He dictated a letter, in Arabic, to his visiting younger brother in order for the authorities not to detect his handwriting. Two copies of the letter were produced, one of which was sent to Mogadishu. Three days later, Abdirazak left the second copy on Fitzpatrick's desk. When the Captain found the letter, he called his Arabic interpreter to his office. The two went for a drive for a good part of the day. At that time, Abdirazak was not asked about the incident, but the atmosphere in the camp became more tense. For Abdirazak, though, this was his first nationalist moment.<sup>7</sup>

Shortly after, Fitzpatrick promulgated a new rule in the office. He instructed his staff to take their shoes off when they approached his desk, which was on a platform. Soon after this rule was made, Fitzpatrick called for one of the *Illaaalo* (rural police), named Ardoon Abdilleh. Ardoon rushed in without thinking about the "shoes off" rule. Fitzpatrick growled in Kiswahili and reprimanded him for breaking the new instructions. He then kicked Ardoon, who did not react to this humiliation. Word quickly spread in Qalaafo regarding the event. Abdirazak was upset at Ardoon and wondered how a Somali man

could accept such degrading treatment from a colonialist. This was his second nationalist experience.

The behavior of the supervisor sufficiently infuriated Abdirazak that he decided to challenge the rule. Rather than ask his junior colleagues to take messages to the commander, as was customary, Abdirazak decided to assume such a task himself. Once Fitzpatrick settled into his chair, Abdirazak took the morning mail to him without taking his shoes off. The Captain's reaction was predictable. He demanded to know why Abdirazak entered the office with shoes and broke the rule. When Abdirazak replied, in Italian, that no such government regulation existed, Fitzpatrick asked if he was deliberately defying his superior's instruction. Abdirazak responded that all government regulations were printed and he had no intention of disobeying legitimate orders. Fitzpatrick became more furious, left his chair, and punched his subordinate in the face. Abdirazak fought back and outmaneuvered him as the two fell and wrestled on the floor. Fitzpatrick called for help and Ardoon came running. He was ordered to take Abdirazak to the jailhouse, run by one Mohamoud Mireh, who later became a member of Siyaad Barre's military regime in Somalia. Abdirazak was brought to the Commissioner's office later that day and instructed to take his shoes off. When he refused to do so, he spent the rest of the day in the jailhouse.

Abdirazak returned to the office the next day in an environment thick with tension. Two days later, Captain Fitzpatrick told Abdirazak that if he insisted on disobedience, he could be shot and easily become another war casualty. Emboldened by his readings of the literature produced by the evolving Somali Youth League (SYL), Abdirazak continued to take the signaled mail to the supervisor's desk without taking his shoes off. Given the situation, Captain Fitzpatrick decided to change his tactics by attempting to buy him off. A few days later, Fitzpatrick sent with his Somali driver, Hilooleh, an authorization for Abdirazak to buy several quintals of rationed grain for his own use. At that time, there was a shortage of these goods and, therefore, someone who brought such items to market could make a killing. Captain Fitzpatrick had already used this tactic to make up for the indignities to which he subjected his auxiliaries, particularly Hilooleh. The truce between Abdirazak and Fitzpatrick did not last long. Several days later, Fitzpatrick came over to Abdirazak's workstation while the latter was receiving messages on the signal. He noted immediately that Abdirazak did not stand up when the boss walked into the office. He

then kicked the chair on which Abdirazak was sitting. Abdirazak got up and swung at his supervisor. They struggled and then Fitzpatrick, who was much stronger, nailed him on the ground. Abdirazak used his legs around Fitzpatrick's neck to push him and got on top of the big man. Fitzpatrick then called for the *Illaaloo*, who quickly came to the rescue. Abdirazak was taken to prison and remained there for the rest of the day.

It was during those hours in prison that Abdirazak decided to try to physically eliminate this "colonialist." As a good Moslem, he convinced himself that he would go to heaven if he undertook such a righteous act. Accordingly, he went to the local blacksmith to order a dagger. He then decided to upset Fitzpatrick by taking the office keys and, in the process, prevent Hilooleh from moving one of the station's batteries to the boss's residence after work. Fitzpatrick was incensed and instructed the driver to fetch Abdirazak, but to no avail. When Abdirazak reported for work the next morning, Fitzpatrick was waiting for him at the entrance. Fitzpatrick tripped him as he tried to get into the office and fighting broke out. Abdirazak reached for his dagger as the two men wrestled on the ground, but was unable to access the weapon. Finally, Fitzpatrick freed himself and ran out of the office toward the ration store that was some distance away. An Italian named Rosi, married to a Somali woman, kept the store. Abdirazak chased after his boss, who shouted for Rosi to open the door, and then rushed in. Rosi came out and tried to calm the situation. A few minutes later, Abdirazak walked to the river and threw his dagger into the muddy water and then went home. Soon, a contingent of the police surrounded his living quarters, took away his government-provided rifle, and then escorted him to prison. Abdirazak's assistant at the Signal informed the central command in Mogadishu. Colonel Shaw, the head of the Signal Squadron, was an arrogant man who knew about Abdirazak's earlier complaints. Shaw immediately instructed that Abdirazak be transferred to Mogadishu. Fitzpatrick ignored that order, claiming that Abdirazak was a criminal who should be treated accordingly. He commanded the prison guards to take Abdirazak to the town's market square, where he announced, through an interpreter, who the prisoner was and then underscored that such would be the fate of anyone who disobeyed the laws of the authorities. This was calculated to humiliate Abdirazak, who was a popular figure — the only SYL member in town who, in addition, did a lot of favors for people who needed to send or receive messages from relatives elsewhere

in Somalia. Moreover, merchants in the area often asked him to find out what grain prices were in different regions of the country. But Fitzpatrick was adamant and made surprise visits to the prison to make sure that Abdirazak was treated as any other "criminal." During the day, the prisoners were used as labor to collect firewood. To prevent escape, pairs were tied together. Fitzpatrick followed the prisoners on several occasions to insure that Abdirazak labored. His replacement in the office, Mr. Lawaha, arrived. Finally, the Commissioner convened a court to try Abdirazak. When asked what he had to say about the case, Abdirazak replied that since Fitzpatrick was judge and jury, he would appeal, whatever the verdict. After a few such games, Fitzpatrick told his captive that he could be condemned to death, but given the fairness of British law he would be sentenced to twelve years in prison. After word spread about the sentence, authorities in Mogadishu ordered the prisoner transferred to the main city. While Abdirazak remained in prison for a while, the Somali prison inspector treated him favorably by unofficially exempting him from the harsh labor to which other prisoners were subjected.

The central command finally sent three prison wardens from Mogadishu to fetch Abdirazak. The senior Somali prison inspector in Mogadishu was Osman Mohamed Cadde, later a minister in Abdirazak's regime. Abdirazak remained in this prison for eight months, with the assignment to clean the house of the British head warden and wash the clothes. His sister and the wives of some of the other prisoners fed Abdirazak and his mates during this period. The British authorities interviewed the prisoner about his case and his appeal was sent to Nairobi. The authorities in Nairobi questioned the merits of the case and ordered his release. Abdirazak was impressed with the fairness of the judgment. This was late in 1946.

Abdirazak decided to spend some time in Jigjiga and Dire Dawa where two of his brothers were said to have a trucking business. He looked for a way to get to his destination via Hargeisa. He found a military convoy transporting decommissioned soldiers to northern Somalia, and the commanding British officer offered him a ride. It took a week to reach Hargeisa, and Mohamed Jama Badmaah, who would later become a member of Abdirazak's regime, was among the men traveling back to the North. Abdirazak's small suitcase that contained some of his money was stolen on the eve of arriving in Hargeisa. He found some relatives in Hargeisa who took care of him, but his chief companions during his two-month stay in the town were Northern

members of the Signal Squadron whom he had never met before in person. He describes Hargeisa's social climate as both dynamic and amusing. One of the things that caught his immediate attention was the large number of the town's male population carrying sticks and clubs. Finally he left for Dire Dawa where he found out that his brothers' trucking business was failing. In Dire Dawa, he studied the Quran and Islam under the tutelage of Sh. Omar Azhari, a popular Somali Sheikh who took Abdirazak under his wing.

It was here that Abdirazak became aware of Haile Selassie's political agenda for Eritrea and Somalia. Abdirazak met Jama Urdooh, who owned a teashop in Dire Dawa, and the two decided to ask for permission to establish a SYL branch in town. The Ethiopians welcomed the idea, assuming that the SYL could be a vehicle for their plan to bring Somalia into a greater Ethiopia. Jama Urdooh bought a few pieces of furniture for an office, where there were weekly gatherings attended by Somalis who made some money from the transit trade. Sometime later, Abdirazak decided to return to Somalia. In preparation, he bought several sacks of onions and coffee and left for Jijjiga. There he met Fitzpatrick who offered him a job in his office but he declined. Fitzpatrick then gave some money to cover the trip to Mogadishu. Fitzpatrick was a paternalistic colonialist who believed that a Somali nationalist could easily be bribed into subservience. Upon arrival, Abdirazak sold his goods and, for a while, toyed with the idea of becoming a merchant.

Abdirazak then met many of his former friends in the Signal Squadron who urged him to reapply for his old post. His application was accepted in late 1946. Shortly thereafter, he was transferred to Iskushuban. It was here that he would meet Abdirashid Ali Shar-marke, a young government clerk. Abdirashid was a popular fellow who loved to wear a Turko-Egyptian hat. Already, he had completed eight years of formal education, became fluent in Italian, spoke good Arabic, and picked up basic English during the British administration of Southern Somalia. All in all, he was among the best educated of his generation.

On his way to his assignment in Iskushuban, Abdirazak spent some time in Boosaaso and helped establish a SYL branch.<sup>8</sup> Later that year, Abdirashid and Abdirazak opened the SYL branch in Iskushuban and other villages in the region. They were expected to write monthly reports about SYL activities in the region and submit them to the central office in Mogadishu. The British encouraged the establishment of

the SYL in the country, hoping to use it as an instrument for supporting the British Labor government's policy of unifying Somali territories. Nearly all key SYL members were government employees.

Yasin Osman Sharmarke suggested, before he died in 1947, that Abdillahi Issa, a clerk in the Department of Public Works, be elected secretary general in a subsequent congress. Abdirashid, who was transferred to Mogadishu, joined the party's Central Committee and became an active writer. In 1948, Abdirazak was transferred to Mogadishu to supervise others as well as for further training.

### **III. Party Stewardship and Decolonization**

The peace treaty between Italy and the Allies promulgated that Italy's former colonies must be given a chance to voice their wishes. This led to the creation of the Four Powers Commission, assigned to visit the colonies and inquire into the sentiments of the population. Before the visit to Mogadishu, the Italian representatives invested a great deal of energy and resources in Somalia to win the locals over. One of their first tactics was an announcement that all those who were employed by the former Italian administration, even for a short duration, were to be rehired with full back pay. Moreover, the Italians used a lot of their own, who were administrators under the tutelage of the British in Mogadishu and elsewhere. The Somali population who worked for the Italians was estimated at 13,000 and, despite the shame associated with any pro-Italian views, many took the bait.<sup>9</sup>

The conflict between the Italians (together with their Somali supporters) and the SYL-inspired population came to a head when it was the SYL's turn to make its case to the Commission. The British tacitly supported the SYL. However, the SYL was aware that the French and Soviets were opposed to the British agenda. The Soviets expected the Italian Communist Party to win that country's 1948 election. Among the pro-Italian groups were parties from Mogadishu, called the "Conference," and others from Upper Jubba and Majeerteenia. The anti-Italian groups included the SYL and Benadiria. Many Somalis came from all the country and from as far as Dire Dawa to support the SYL. Although Abdillahi Issa was the party's secretary, it was Michael Mariano, a Northern Somali, and another lawyer by the name of Salol (Indian mother and Somali father) who wrote all SYL documents. These two proposed to the leadership that the Party should approach the British, who might support Somali unification. But the leadership

ignored the suggestion as it was worried that such a stance might push Ogaden and Majeerteen Somalis who had been raided by the British to support the Italian position. The SYL leadership was neither politically sophisticated nor highly educated. Hence, they were not able to work out a plan that would generate public support for a continued British administration of all Somali territories, as well as valorize the march toward eventual independence. The Commission traveled to all regions, except Baydhabo. The first showdown took place in Mogadishu, and the SYL, whose agenda called for ten years of United Nations Trusteeship rule of Somalia, readied its supporters to walk to the central square to present the case to the Commission. This was to happen at 3:00 p.m. But by 11:00 a.m., a group of pro-Italian Somalis armed with swords raided the SYL head office and killed several people. SYL leaders who were organizing the march at Dhagaxtuur rushed to the office and one of its members who had a pistol fired at the hostile crowd. A police inspector named Bashir Ali Qoslaye went to the police armory, blasted its gate open, and told SYL supporters to help themselves to the weapons. Abdirazak was one of those who partook in this raid. Since it was SYL policy not to take acts of revenge against Somali attackers but rather to target their Italian bosses, a small and armed group, including Abdirazak, decided to confront the Italian mayor of Mogadishu. Fifty-three Italians were killed and the Governor, upon hearing about the mayhem in town, speedily left his office and took refuge in the Catholic Church. The police intervened early that afternoon and restored calm. The SYL march went on and they submitted their petition to the Commission.

Later, the SYL dispatched Abdillahi Issa to New York as a representative when the Commission deliberated. Abdirashid was the acting party secretary and Haji Mohamed Abdirazak was its president. The first president of the SYL was Abdikadir Sh. Sakhaw Diin, a popular religious cleric who wrote many hymns. His moving songs included a nationalist one, "*Ya ayyuha al-Somali, qum, khudh al-musdas wa la tanum inna nuhayyika.*" (You, Somali, get up. Take a rifle and do not sleep. We will bring you back to Life.) Abdillahi Issa was enthusiastically met in London by Northern Somalis who lived there. Again, Somali residents in New York, who were mostly Northerners, hosted and maintained the delegation for the duration of its stay, since the SYL did not have the resources to completely support its agents' travel costs. Abdillahi Issa lived with Ismail Ahmed Ijeeh, who would later also accommodate Abdirazak in his home.

The Four Powers Commission failed to reach an agreement about how to dispose of former Italian colonies in Africa, and the matter was referred to the United Nations. In the meantime, there had been a shift in alliance due to government changes in Britain and the defeat of the Italian Communist Party in that country's election. Now Britain supported Italy's claim while the Soviets opposed it. Once the Somali population in Mogadishu found out about the agreement between Britain and Italy, large demonstrations took place. In December 1949, the U.N. General Assembly resolved that Italy should administer Somalia on a ten-year trusteeship basis, with an advisory council that would annually report on Somalia's progress. The council consisted of delegates from Egypt, Colombia, and the Philippines.

Italy took over the Somali administration on March 1, 1950, despite resistance from many Somalis. At this time, Abdirazak was the postmaster in Baydhabo where he replaced an Italian who worked for the British. He received the telegram that informed the British Governor of Upper Jubba about the U.N. resolution. The Britons were angry at their government's decision to support Italy, particularly when most Somalis did not wish the return of an Italian administration to their country.

Many Somalis in Baydhabo were pro-Italian and were kept in check by the police. These supporters celebrated as if it was Independence Day as soon as the Italian administration returned to the area. The new Governor, Copasso of Upper Jubba, was the former fascist administrator of the region, and his project was to recreate the political landscape by delegitimizing the SYL, in order to convince the U.N. to extend its tenure to thirty years. The Italians mobilized the support of the sympathizers in the region, which ultimately led to the formation of Hizbiya-Digil Mirifle.

Abdirazak and Ahmed Dahir, a clerk at the district office, were seen as the key SYL agents, despite the fact that Mohamoud Abdi Noor (Juujeh), who later became a minister in the Somali government, was the Party's secretary in Baydhabo. Abdirazak was in a strategic position as head of the Signal, which put him in touch with Mogadishu on a daily basis. So the SYL in Mogadishu knew of developments in different regions of the country even before the Italian administrators in the colonial capital. Abdirazak had his first confrontation with the Italian military police when one of them came to the postal office and tried to enter an area designated for "Staff Only." Abdirazak stood up to him, but the Italian paid no attention and proceeded to enter the proscribed area. Abdirazak stopped him, an action that exasperated the

officer who promised retribution. Later, Abdirazak wrote a long letter, in English, to the District Commissioner (D.C.) informing him about the incident, with the reminder that such behavior was an affront to the trusteeship's mandate. The Commissioner never replied. A day later, Abdirazak was summoned to the Commissioner's house where an interpreter (Ibrahim Uno) was initially present but then ordered to leave. The Commissioner informed Abdirazak that he read his file and noticed his quick promotions. Moreover, he relayed that Italy intended to fulfill its U.N. mandate but that the SYL was an extremist organization that would not help the project. Abdirazak retorted that the SYL was not the organization described. The D.C. then suggested that they work together. Abdirazak replied that he was satisfied with his current assignment. Finally, the D.C. indicated that he could keep his membership in the SYL, but could collaborate with the administration politically. Abdirazak declined the offer, a response in accordance with a SYL memorandum handed to the Italian administration and distributed to all the party's branches.

A few days later, the regional administration decided to push "non-Baydhabo" Somalis out of town—an edict that would present pro-Italians an opportunity to attack them at night. Sympathetic locals, who did not want to be identified with SYL by the Italians, leaked the cabal's intention. Abdirazak and his colleagues sent a message to Mogadishu warning party leaders of the Italian plan for Baydhabo. They responded by forwarding a small amount of ammunition. At 11:00 p.m. of the designated night, several Italian officers, including the D.C. and the military police and one Somali *Illaaalo*, came to Abdirazak's residence and told him they wanted to search the house for weapons. Abdirazak asked them if they had a warrant and the Commissioner responded that they were the authorities who issued the warrant. While this exchange was taking place, others slipped into his backyard and placed a bomb on the property. The search proceeded and ultimately discovered the planted bomb. The only other item they found in the house, besides Abdirazak's clothes, was his SYL membership card. He was immediately handcuffed and taken out to be "taught a lesson" for challenging authority. The military police and two other uniformed Italians physically assaulted him repeatedly. He was later taken to a prison cell where others were kept. Soon, the others were removed and he became the sole occupant of the cell. The senior Somali prison warden was a pro-Italian man from Mogadishu, an inspector named Daud Abdilla Hersi, who became the command-

ing general of the Somali military after independence. During that first night, there was an Italian orchestrated riot to chase SYL sympathizers from town. Similar events were reported from Kismayo, Galkayo and Jamama.

Abdirazak did not realize that he was spitting blood as a result of the beating until the following morning. He then came down with a fever and could not eat the meager prison rations provided. No one checked on his condition until the fourth day, when a Somali prison inspector opened the cell door. He was shocked and asked why there was so much blood in the cell. He immediately went to the D.C.'s office and reported that the man in that cell was dying. The two came together and the D.C. asked Abdirazak what happened, but he did not respond. The Somali inspector then went to the Governor and told him about Abdirazak's condition. Disturbed by what he saw, the Governor called his staff, including the D.C., and inquired about what had happened. Everyone pretended that they did not know. An ambulance took Abdirazak to the hospital.<sup>10</sup> After a quick examination, the doctor announced that nothing was wrong with the patient. The Governor was flabbergasted and instructed the prison inspector that Abdirazak was to be moved to one of the bigger cells and that the door should be kept open during the day. In addition, the prisoner could get food from outside, if he could afford it. The Somali inspector was so moved by Abdirazak's condition that the two became lifelong friends. Although the supply of better food and fresh air did Abdirazak some good, he continued to cough blood and developed a fever.

A few days later, one of the Somali prison guards told Abdirazak and his fellow political prisoners that the D.C. and his staff planned to free them soon, but he advised them not to leave the prison, as the Italians had organized a mob to finish them off after their release. Soon, the authorities acted accordingly, but Abdirazak and his fellow inmates refused to leave the prison. Shortly thereafter, the fifty political prisoners were transferred to Mogadishu's central prison, where they met colleagues from other regions of the country. Abdirazak was again transferred to the local hospital as the prison doctor thought he had tuberculosis. He was released from prison after nine months in detention, part of a new Governor's initiative that freed all prisoners. But there was a catch. All the freed political prisoners who were former government employees were barred from returning to their jobs. Michel Cotts, a private company, hired Abdirazak as a clerk, but his health deteriorated and he was forced to resign. Feeling that his life

would be cut short by his poor health anyway, he decided on a drastic action — to assassinate the Italian administrator of the Trusteeship's internal affairs, Mr. Benerdel. Abdirazak believed that Mr. Benerdel was the chief strategist of the Italian plan to destroy SYL, as well as boost the ranks of pro-Italian Somalis in order to convince the U.N. to extend the mandate to thirty years. Abdirazak secured a pistol from a relative and made numerous attempts to get an appointment with Mr. Benerdel. He failed in this, as each time he came to the office the guards asked him to identify his clan. Unwilling to do so and still bent on his scheme, he mentioned the name of another kin group, otherwise the guards would automatically label him as a SYL sympathizer. Before all of this was processed, Mr. Benerdel left for a holiday, and Abdirazak gave up the idea.

With the help of one of his brothers who heard of his sickness, Abdirazak returned to his hometown in 1951 for the first time. He was fed with heavy doses of roasted goat meat everyday, and made to drink three cups of fresh camel milk and a cup of ghee a day. This ordeal was part of the traditional treatment for people suffering from TB and similar respiratory diseases. The diet regime lasted for six months and Abdirazak gained a lot of weight and his cough nearly ceased. He moved to Galkayo where he was drafted into the SYL's town committee and, later, decided to apply for a license to become a public petition writer (*Scrivano pubblico*). The D.C. of Galkayo refused to respond to his application. After a long wait, he started working as a petition writer without the license. After a few petitions he wrote for others reached the D.C., Abdirazak was summoned and asked to explain how he could operate a business without official permission. He responded that he had applied for the license but that the government had failed to even acknowledge his application. The D.C. asked his clerk if Abdirazak's application was on file. When the clerk replied affirmatively, the Commissioner immediately approved it. While maintaining himself as a petition writer, Abdirazak also became the main speaker at SYL rallies, a mounting assignment that tested his physical energy as well as his vocal chords.

The U.N. Advisory Council visited the regions of the Trusteeship once a year to report on the evolving life of Somalis, and the work the Italian Government was doing on behalf of the UNO. Led by the Council, the Egyptian ambassador, Kamal al-Din Salah, stopped once in Galkayo in 1953. Abdirazak was assigned as the translator during the visit, and Salah was impressed enough to write a letter, a month

later, offering him a job, if he would move to Mogadishu. He accepted the offer after some initial hesitation. His duties were to gather information and news in the city, for Salah wanted to know the thinking of pro-Italian Somalis as well as views within SYL. This was a well paying appointment that, in addition, gave him an opportunity to meet a lot of important people.

At this time, the SYL's popularity was growing, almost in proportion to the degree of its suppression by the Italian administration. However, the new Governor, Anzilotti, calculated that the Italian's tenure as trustees of Somalia could be extended to a couple more decades if enough local public opinion was mobilized. Consequently, in a dramatic move, Anzilotti recognized the SYL as the leading political party. The SYL welcomed this shift and agreed to work with the Administration. But Abdillahi Issa, the SYL Secretary, who had just returned from New York where he led protestations against Italian rule, was very unhappy when he learned about the understanding between the Party and the Administration. Aden Abdillah Osman, then president of the SYL and Vice President of the Territorial Council, supported the agreement.<sup>11</sup> Shortly thereafter, the first municipal elections were held in 1954.<sup>12</sup> The improved relations between the colonial administration and the SYL notwithstanding, many Italian administrators continued to behave as if nothing had changed. It was during this period that Abdirazak came of age as a prominent actor in the Somali Youth League. In 1955, the Party wanted to send a delegate to the U.N. headquarters to present its case to the Trusteeship. Although he was working for the Egyptian Embassy and was not a member of the Central Committee, Abdirazak was chosen to carry the sentiments of the Party. Despite the honor, the selection underscored for him the dearth of educated Somalis who could handle such a complex task with the necessary alacrity. He shared his diffidence with the acting secretary of the SYL, Haji Farah Ali Omer. In the end, after some collective commiseration, Abdirazak was persuaded of the charge and he started preparations for travel to New York City.

Hisbia, the pro-Italian party, also selected its delegate, Abdikadir Mohamed Aden (Zoppo), to go to New York. In the meantime, the two presidents of the two parties called a joint meeting for the delegates and instructed them to work together and submit a joint report to the Trusteeship Council. This was the strategy that had been used by Aden Abdillah Osman and Hisbia's president, Mohamed Abdinoor Hussein, the previous year. Abdikadir Zoppo's trip was sponsored by

the Administration, while the SYL paid for Abdirazak's airplane ticket and a \$1,000 allowance to meet the other costs. The two delegates stayed in Italy for nearly a month in order to avoid the high cost of staying in New York. All this time, the Italian Government underwrote Zoppo's hotel and board. Abdirazak's meager budget was not a match for these expenses, and only the intervention of Abdikadir Zoppo himself saved the day — the Italian Government also paid part of Abdirazak's bill.

The delegates finally arrived in New York. Zoppo and representatives of the Italian Administration were put up in Imperial Hotel, too expensive for the SYL delegate who had to settle for a basic motel named Martinique. In their joint attempt to prepare the report, Zoppo categorically refused to accept any criticism of the Administration. The two finally agreed to report to the Council that there was a positive change in policy, although Italian plantation owners were still exploiting local workers. Zoppo presented the report and Abdirazak answered the questions raised by the Council. Back in Mogadishu, the Administration was relieved by the moderate nature of the Report. They were equally pleased with the "maturity" of Abdirazak, as they expected caustic criticism given his prison record. Consequently, he was invited to Italian social events in New York.

Abdirazak received instructions from SYL headquarters that he should stay in New York and take part in the presentation of the Report to the General Assembly and in the deliberations of the Fourth Committee (the committee on decolonization). It was in this context that he had his first formal encounters with both Ethiopian resistance to Somalia's liberation and the indeterminate nature of the Somali-Ethiopian boundary. Once his duties were done in New York, Abdirazak left for London (on the Queen Mary) and then to Mogadishu. He had to add \$90 to his ticket as he had overstayed his original departure date. Northern Somalis living in New York came to his rescue and paid for the increase in the fare.

Abdirazak returned to Mogadishu in the midst of the first territorial legislative election campaign in early 1953. He was not included in the SYL's list of candidates, as the law required one to be present in the territory to be considered for candidacy. The SYL's Central Committee gave him a vehicle and a driver and instructed that he campaign on behalf of the Party in Afmadow, Kismayo, Barawa, Merca, Baydhabo, Beled Weyn, and other towns in those regions. The SYL won 65 seats in the new assembly, Hisbia got ten seats, while another ten seats were

reserved for Italians, Arabs, and Asians. The SYL convened a national Party conference to elect a new central committee. One of the main issues on the agenda was how the SYL should deal with pro-Italian Somalis who had killed people. Delegates agreed that the SYL should take the high road and forgive the criminals. The conference then elected its key officers. Aden Abdillah Osman and Abdillahi Issa were elected to the Presidency of the Legislative Assembly and Premiership, respectively.<sup>13</sup> Abdillahi Issa was still opposed to the SYL's new relationship with the Administration and refused to participate in the meeting. He was finally persuaded to accept his nomination to the new post, while Abdirazak was elected to the Chairmanship of the Party. Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke was on a study-leave in Italy.

Abdillahi Issa approached several members of the legislative assembly, including Sheikh Ali Jimaaleh, Mohamoud Abdi Noor (Juujuh), SYL's party secretary in Baydhabo, Mohamoud Mohamed Farah (Maalin Guur), Nur Hashi Aalas, Haji Musa Boqor, Haji Omer Ali, Salaad Abdi Jaago and Omar Jiis to take up ministerial posts. Nearly all of those nominated declined the offer. They indicated that they had neither the necessary education nor the experience to competently manage their assignments. Aden A. Osman, Abdillahi Issa, and other key members of SYL intensively lobbied them and, after a month, swayed them into accepting their appointments. On a kin basis, Abdillahi Issa and Haji Farah were not only Hawiye, but were from Saad subgroup. Haji Musa Boqor and Salaad Abdi were also from the same subgroup of the Majeerteen. Despite these identities, no one complained about "kin imbalance." As a matter of fact, Abdillahi Issa did not use family background as the basis for his appointees. The key to his selection criteria was a candidate's knowledge of Italian. The Legislative Assembly easily endorsed the new internal government. Each minister had an Italian technical advisor who did all the work, leaving the minister to give his blessing by signing prepared documents. The privileges for the new Somali elite-in-the-making were immediately obvious. For instance, each minister was given a government car, a driver, staff, and a housekeeper. Given these "luxuries," the ministers looked well off after a short duration; those who visited them were driven in these government cars and, at times, given a bit of money. The general public got wind of this and wrongly assumed that the ministers were well endowed. Because the level of education and political awareness among the population in general, and the SYL rank and file in particular, was very low, many jumped to the conclusion that the

inception of an internal government meant instant prosperity. They expected the new Somali authority to reward everyone, an attitude already encouraged by the style in which the Italian Administration conducted its business. Since their return to Somalia in 1950, Italian authorities used government employment to reward their Somali supporters, regardless of ability. The exceptions to this form of reward were a few inherited from the British such as Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke. Thus, SYL supporters assumed that a SYL administration would do the same for them. Consequently, many people came to Mogadishu from the provinces seeking employment or monetary support from their SYL elected official, particularly ministers. Soon, the officials' offices as well as residences were besieged by new migrants from their respective regions. The public interpreted from the gathering of such crowds that government ministries were allocated along clan lines, a false conclusion, but it *appeared* to be so.

With the rumor mill in high gear, many individuals launched complaints about what they deemed to be the clanist behavior of the SYL government. Abdirazak, as Chairman of the Party, took note of these concerns, although he understood the fabricated nature of the accusations—hearsay creating its own reality. He called a meeting for all the ministers to address and deal with the public perception. Unfortunately, Prime Minister Abdillahi Issa and his cabinet did not take the issue seriously. They assumed that these false rumors would vanish on their own. Moreover, government leaders, especially ministers, lacked any experience in managing public affairs and had little cognizance of the enormous challenges Somalia faced. There was hardly any vision of the future; on the contrary, most of them acted as if they were the guardians of the status quo. Their actions were confined to routine oversight of whatever the Italian administrators were doing.

Hereafter, tensions developed between some ministers. Sheikh Ali Jimaaleh, who headed the Department of Social Affairs, Education and Health, and Mohamoud Abdi Noor (Juuje) accused Haji Musa Boqor, of Interior, of abusing his department's special fund in order to help their political rivals. Musa, in turn, complained that Abdillahi Issa was sympathetic to his two accusers due to their kin links to him. Moreover, Sheikh Ali Jimaaleh, too, was equally charged with favoring his kin group among applicants for employment in his department. The Prime Minister never called them together to air their conflict, for Abdillahi Issa was a chivalrous person who disliked conflict. In the meantime, Abdirazak's time as chairman was consumed by relentless

public complaints about various ministers, who were increasingly testy about his frequent telephone calls. Abdirazak realized that he could not turn the tide of inter-ministerial conflicts and the growing resentment of the SYL supporters toward the government's seeming inability to address their immediate and often personal concerns. Consequently, he decided not to run for the presidency of the Party in the forthcoming national conference.

Riven by simmering internal antipathies among some of the Party's leading lights, the conference became a platform for the deepening of differences. Those members who came from regions with ministerial representation in the cabinet supported the Government while others were critical of what they said was its "clanist" orientation. These clan-centered accusations and counter-accusations were not openly articulated but, nonetheless, created a strong subtext for the emerging, and ultimately self-ruining, political antagonism in Somali elite politics.<sup>14</sup> While unable to heal the division, and accompanied by much tension, the Party elected as President Haji Mohamed Hussein, who was in Egypt and had a habit of labeling Abdillahi Issa's government as quasi-colonial.

Haji Mohamed returned to Mogadishu a few weeks after the Party conference. He immediately started criticizing the Government as if he was in the opposition party. The Central Committee warned that he could not continue his assaults and still remain head of the Party.<sup>15</sup> He refused to heed this warning and was later removed. Aden A. Osman took over as SYL President. All those who voted for Haji Mohamed's presidency resigned from the Party, a third of the SYL membership. The majority of these were of a particular kin group. Haji Mohamed and his supporters established a new political party named Greater Somali League (GREAT, in short). The split of SYL and the development of the new party with a "clanist" basis marked a new departure in national politics and increased the significance of the other sectarian party in the Trusteeship, Hisbia.

The differences between Abdillahi Issa and Haji Musa Boqor flared again. Haji Musa's resignation from the government in 1958 added to the political problems of SYL. The undiminishing demand by politicians and others to seek audience with the Prime Minister and have him deal with their "personal" problems forced Abdillahi Issa to become even less accessible. This situation was compounded by the dearth of skilled Somalis in leadership positions in the political and civil service realms to shoulder some of the burden. Moreover, the

Prime Minister did not initiate a reformist agenda that would improve bureaucratic competence that could directly respond to the public's demands without his involvement in every case.

The Greater Somali League showed a lot of energy but increasingly became violent. Some of its members physically attacked and severely wounded the Somali Governor of Benadir, Mr. Ahmed Shuqul. Using British detention and deportation laws, the Government rounded up and deported many of those implicated. Some SYL Central Committee members objected to deporting suspects to their home regions because such action could have clanist connotations. They suggested prosecution and imprisonment for those found guilty. In the meantime, GREAT stressed its anti-colonial and socialist rhetoric, and received financial support from the Italian Communist Party and states of the Eastern Bloc. Hisbia, the other opposition party, became weak once the Italian colonial administration abandoned it. Some of its key leaders joined the SYL.

Abdirazak was a member of SYL's Central Committee during this period. Sh. Ali Jimaaleh appointed him as the nominal head of Somali University Institute (a two-year community college that offered courses in politics, economics, and law) located in the center of Mogadishu. Mr. Pironi, the Italian director of the Institute and Abdirazak's former foe during the Galkayo period, was shocked to learn about his new superior. Abdirazak was also appointed as the Vice-President of a Credito Somalo Bank, an institution established to give credit to farmers and small businesses. These two assignments were Abdirazak's sole source of income.

There was little improvement in the Party's political climate and matters got worse with the 1959 legislative elections. The SYL Government rigged the ballot in some of those areas, particularly in the north-east of the Trusteeship, where the Greater Somali League was popular. Nonetheless, several GREAT candidates won seats in the new Legislative Assembly. The majority of the seats went to the SYL, but this set a terrible precedent for the country. Even the Italian colonial administration could not deny that some underhandedness had taken place. In the end, Abdirazak, who did not campaign in his constituency of Garawe-Eyl, was elected. Also elected was Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke (who graduated with a B.A. degree in political science from an Italian university) from Qardho, where he did not visit or campaign.<sup>16</sup> Yasin Noor Hassan, who was the SYL secretary at Galkayo, was also elected to the Assembly. Distinctive of the 1959 elections was this: *all candidates*

*contested in their "home areas," unlike in 1956, when some members of the Legislative Assembly were sent by communities not belonging to their kin group.*

The Italian Governor reappointed Abdillahi Issa to the premiership. Once this became public, most legislative members rushed to the Prime Minister's residence to exhort him to include them in his ministerial appointments. Some stressed the importance of their "clan" in the general population and the legislature. This mindset marked a sea change in the country's political culture. The more politically conscious members of the SYL, such as Noor Hashi Alas and Abdirazak himself, who were concerned about the new trend, met with the Prime Minister and urged him to use merit as the basis of selecting his cabinet (a cardinal point in the nationalist principles of the SYL) and not to heed the political pressure of the self-serving clanists. Abdillahi Issa retorted that clan was a reality, and proceeded to nominate a large cabinet in order to accommodate many of the claimants. The young SYL Turks, including Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, considered the large size of the cabinet (twice the number of the previous regime), its clan base, and the poor quality of the ministers to be an affront to the Party's integrity. Aden A. Osman, who was president of the Legislative Assembly, expressed his sorrow over the process, but given his moderate nature did not openly support those critical of the Government. The latter wrote a letter to the Governor to register their displeasure. In response, the Governor repeated the earlier assertion of the Prime Minister that the clan was a reality. The critics took their case to the Central Committee of the SYL and urged that the Prime Minister be censored for transgression. But the Central Committee rejected the critics' claims who, in turn, accused the Central Committee of being beholden, as employees, to the Government. The argument came to a boil and, ultimately, the SYL sacked all the critics from the Central Committee and the Party.

These former SYL members decided to send a delegation to the Trusteeship Council in New York in order to challenge the legitimacy of the Government. Abdirazak was asked by the group to lead a two-man delegation since he already had experience with the Trusteeship Council (the other delegate was Ahmed Mohamed Adnan "Kutubohoor"). The alarmed Government tried to delay their departure through a bureaucratic slowdown of the issuance of their passports. In the meantime, opposition parties that felt robbed of their electoral success also decided to send their representatives to New York to petition

the Trusteeship Council. Premier Issa's Administration dispatched two former pro-Italian Somalis (Abdillahi Haji Mohamed "Insania" and Ali Mohamed Hirabe), while the colonial establishment sent a strong delegation. To say the least, the presentations to the Council by different Somali groups were contradictory and chaotic. But nonetheless, the opposition parties impressed on the Council that the election was rigged and illegitimate, while Abdirazak, speaking for SYL critics, described how the Government violated the basic SYL principle of selecting the cabinet on merit rather than on a "clan" basis, and unwisely expanded the number of ministers. Members of the Trusteeship Council queried whether election results were doctored. Abdirazak responded that there were complaints about irregularities but that the claims could not be verified.

The Italian Government, despite supporting the SYL, was apparently delighted by the conflicts among Somalis although it did not openly express its feelings. In the meantime, the Egyptian ambassador to the United Nations alerted the Somalis to a movement afoot in some circles to reopen discussions on the possibility of extending the duration of the Italian mandate. He urged the Somalis to take a common stand to preempt any discussion of this idea. The Somali groups, including SYL representatives, its critics, and the opposition parties, agreed to issue a joint declaration on the issue. Somalis crafted the statement with Egyptian assistance, and Abdirazak presented the common statement to the Council, which finally blocked the prospect of extending the mandate. The Somali Administration and the SYL were pleasantly surprised by the turn of events in New York, as they had assumed that the critics would spoil everything. Shortly after their return, Aden A. Osman and a few other members of SYL convinced the Party to readmit their former colleagues. The critics accepted the offer but maintained their political stance on the issues without being very vocal in the Legislative Assembly.

In the North, the British organized the first election for the Protectorate's Legislative Council in February 1960. The Somali National League (SNL) won the majority of the seats, the United Somali Party (USP) came in second, and the National United Front (NUF) gained one seat. The first Somali administration in the North was established shortly after that election, and the two major parties formed a coalition government while NUF's Michael Mariano retained the status of the opposition. The cabinet consisted of four: the Prime Minister, Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, and three ministers, namely Ahmed Haji

Dualeh, Ali Garad Jama, and Haji Ibrahim Noor. A distinguished Southern parliamentary delegation, led by Aden A. Osman, flew to the North to observe the election and the formation of its first internal self-government. They had amicable discussions with Northern political leaders and invited them to visit Mogadishu. Subsequently, a large Northern delegation traveled South and spent a month in the city. The two parties agreed to the speedy unification of the two Somali territories, and the Northerners were given copies of the draft constitution and asked to suggest whatever changes or modifications they deemed necessary. *After their return to Hargeisa and examination of the document, they added one article — an article directing both the establishment of an autonomous public service commission and the prohibition of state employees from engaging in partisan politics.* The draft constitution was subsequently sent back to Mogadishu. Another Southern delegation went to Hargeisa to partake of the festivities of the North's Independence Day, June 26, 1960. Soon after the celebration, Northern leaders, members of parliament, and department heads in the civil service went to Mogadishu to participate in the formation of the first government of the new Somali Republic. Given the absence of enough residential facilities and hotels in the city, two of Mogadishu's hotel landmarks, Jubba and Shabeelle, were quickly built by the Italian Administration. These hotels accommodated most of the Northern leaders and other dignitaries who were pouring in to witness the forthcoming inauguration of the new country.

The first act of the unified Northern and Southern parliaments was the approval of the Union Act by acclamation. The Parliament then proceeded to elect the nation's transitional leaders.<sup>17</sup> Aden Abdillah Osman was unanimously and without competition elected as the transitional president until the constitutional referendum of 1961. Next, the Parliament went on to elect its officials. It was at this point that the parties from the North and the South temporarily dissolved as MPs split into two groups almost equal in number. The two Prime Ministers of the former British and Italian colonies, Mohamed Ibrahim Egal and Abdillahi Issa, respectively, led one group. The second group was a combination of those Southerners critical of the Abdillahi Issa government, Northerners who were discontented with Egal's leadership qualities, and others whose immediate competitors joined forces to constitute the first. The second camp elected Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke as their leader, with no one else coming out to challenge his credentials. The two groups met separately in Afgoi and Balad to prepare

themselves for the campaign to elect parliamentary officers and form the regime. Abdirashid's group agreed to nominate a Northerner, former seaman Jama Mohamed Qalib, to the presidency of the Parliament.<sup>18</sup> Mr. Qalib won the contest when Parliament convened, and this victory gave Abdirashid's group great confidence that they might in fact have a majority to form united Somalia's first regime. But the SYL's Central Committee support for the Egal/Issa camp tempered this initial euphoria.

The campaign gathered momentum and President Aden continued to consult with different members of Parliament, religious leaders, and the public. Finally, in a surprising move, the President appointed Abdirashid as his designated Prime Minister. The message was delivered to Abdirashid's house in a pink envelope. President Aden characterized Abdirashid as the "most qualified person" in Parliament to lead the administration of the state. Once the announcement was made, all ambitious politicians rushed to the designated Prime Minister to offer him advice and seek ministerial appointments. Abdirazak, a key organizer of the Abdirashid camp, and also a close friend, stayed away from the constantly crowded residence. But the two talked on the telephone and the Prime Minister inquired about when they could get together. A few days later, they agreed to take a drive and have a meal in Afgoi. The Prime Minister-Designate told Abdirazak that most of those who came to advise him suggested that he select his ministers from both camps in Parliament. Abdirazak told him to think carefully about the implications of this advice as those from the other camp would constitute opposition within his cabinet. But the Prime Minister was more concerned about a divided nation than a split government, and, shortly thereafter, called all parliamentarians into a meeting in which he solicited everyone to support his planned coalition administration. Most members present in the meeting concurred and, consequently, he appointed the leaders of the opposition, Abdillahi Issa and Mohamed Egal to Foreign Affairs and Defense, respectively. Abdirazak was appointed, without prior consultation, to head the Ministry of Interior. Abdikadir Mohamed Aden (Zoppo), from the Digil Mirifle Party, was assigned the Ministry of Finance, while Mohamoud Abdi Noor Juujeh (also from Upper Jubba), who had better nationalist credentials, was left out of the new cabinet.<sup>19</sup>

The coalition regime immediately generated political dynamics that have become the hallmark of Somali elite politics ever since. Those in Abdirashid's camp who were not appointed were extremely bitter as

they felt that their opponents were given undeserved ministerial posts. Similarly, those in the opposition accused their leaders of betrayal. Despite these fulminations of letdown, the only official opposition in Parliament was Michael Mariano, the Christian and highly capable Somali from the North. Neither of the two major groups considered him for a post, and significant numbers of Northerners who opposed him were religious men. Overlooking Mariano was a capital mistake given his qualifications and experience. The stakes were set for the Somali Republic's first democratic order.

#### **IV. Democracy and Elite Politics in the First Republic**

The new coalition's tenure was limited to one year and its mandate was to integrate the Northern and Southern civil service into a single national structure, and to guide the country until its first constitutional referendum. The regime set up a commission, mostly staffed by United Nations employees, to integrate the two administrative systems.<sup>20</sup> The first step in civil service reform was to bring all the heads of departments in the North to Mogadishu, and many of them were reappointed as national leaders in their respective fields. Among these were Mohamoud Abdi Arraleh, Abdirahman Aby Farah, Abdirahim Aby Farah, Ali Sheikh, and Ali Said Arraleh. Southern civil servants resented the apparent Northern domination of the upper echelons of the new structures, but the integration process proceeded ahead and apace.

The leaders of the parliamentary group who lost to Abdirashid's camp turned their disappointment into an opposition to the forthcoming constitutional plebiscite. Northern elements among them were linked with some civil servants still in the North, such as the Governor of the entire region, Osman Ahmed Indoole,<sup>21</sup> a man with two years of advanced training in public administration who became the first Somali Governor of Hargeisa. Unlike the Governor, his deputy, Ahmed Jama Jengalee, supported the regime's position on the referendum. Another key Northerner, Jama Mohamed Qalib, commanded the police in Hargeisa. He wrote confidential police reports to Mogadishu that described the anti-constitutional activities of some senior officials in Hargeisa. As Minister of Interior, Abdirazak reviewed these reports and was concerned about the impact of such activities on public policy. He decided to pay an official visit to Hargeisa. John Drysdale, a former British colonial officer, retained by the regime to write a history of the

Somali peninsula, warned Abdirazak that his visit would not be successful and that he would have a lot of trouble with the opposition in Hargeisa.<sup>22</sup> It turned out to be a tough but worthy time in Hargeisa, where he confronted the Governor and other opposition civil servants. His meetings with the traditional elders and other civic leaders, peppered with a sense of mutual esteem, were more constructive. He stressed to them that the constitutional referendum was the first significant act of the nation's independence and a test of the nation's allegiance to democracy. One of the more amusing incidents he came across was the reaction of many Northerners who were surprised to witness his extraordinary capacity for public speaking. Apparently, it was a common stereotype among some Northerners that Southerners spoke poor and broken Somali and were perhaps better in Kiswahili. When he returned from the week's sojourn, Drysdale paid another visit and congratulated him for a successful tour, one that impressed many diplomats by the imaginative way Abdirazak had defused tensions in Hargeisa.

Immediately, Abdirazak transferred some of the key Northern opposition members in the civil service in his Ministry, with the exception of the Governor, to other regions of the country. He urged other ministers to do likewise. Mindful of the legacy of the 1959 election in the South, Abdirazak worked very hard to insure that the forthcoming plebiscite was conducted with utmost probity. In that spirit, he wrote to the President of Parliament informing him that the opposition should station their representatives in all polling stations for the duration of the referendum. The opposition came out into the open when this declaration was announced. Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, the Minister of Defense, was overtly in the opposition, but Prime Minister Abdirashid did not sanction him. The most vocal and active opponent in the constitutional referendum, however, was Sheikh Ali Jimaaleh.

The referendum took place in the spring of 1961, and the major opposition turned out to be from the central part of the Northern region. No irregularities in voting were reported by the opposition from the North, but that was not the case in two hamlets in the South, Wanlaweyn and Adale, where government officers clearly rigged the ballots. In the former, the District Commissioner, a former pro-Italian named Ibrahim Police, told the illiterate and poor public that anyone who voted "no" would be counted as Christian. Moreover, both District Commissioners stuffed all the ballots into the "yes" boxes to such an extent that, in the end, the two villages had more voters than the

resident populations. To be sure, these two fraudulent cases marred what was otherwise an overwhelmingly free and fair constitutional referendum. Nonetheless, when all was said and done, the majority of the electorate supported the constitution, and the significant negative vote in the central region of the North only underscored what became convincingly obvious: the two breaches in the South were not deliberate government policy, as the Minister of Interior immediately removed the two District Commissioners responsible for the irregularities, and the Civil Service Commission reprimanded and demoted them.

Once the referendum was over, the nation's first order of business was to elect a new president as Aden A. Osman's one-year tenure was coming to an end. The Government's candidate was Aden and the opposition nominated Sheikh Ali Jimaaleh. A vigorous campaign ensued in parliament as the two camps tried to win a majority of the deputies to their side. Manipulation of clanist interests came to the fore in this election. The opposition made innuendoes to the effect that Abdirashid's regime was dominated by the Majeerteen kin group. Consequently, the ranks of the Southern opposition were linked to Abdillahi Issa and united with ambitious Northerners. As a matter of fact, Abdirashid's cabinet consisted of a collection of disparate MPs, many of whom were from his 1960 parliamentary bloc. Both the opposition and the Government paid off MPs to win their votes. Aden did not partake in these transactions. Many MPs were eager to sell their votes but did not openly ask for bribes. Rather, they often pretended that they had guests from their constituencies who needed help to return home. In this milieu, the opposition, especially the Somali Great League, had significant resources as a direct result of support they had garnered from the USSR and the Eastern Bloc.

The Constitution stipulated that a presidential candidate must gain a two-thirds majority in Parliament to win on the first ballot. Neither Aden nor his challenger Sheikh Ali attained the necessary number. Aden led by two votes in the first ballot, but the balance remained virtually the same in the second and third. The vote was conducted through a secret ballot, and some of the MPs could barely write the name of the two candidates. In one instance, the ballot of an MP could not be read with certainty; it was decided that it be added to Sheikh Ali's column. In the end, Aden was elected President with a simple majority, and he was immediately sworn in as President of the Republic by Chief Justice Qadi, a member of the Supreme Court. After some

brief consultations with different stakeholders, he reappointed Abdirashid as Prime Minister. Then he reconstituted his cabinet in the spirit of a coalition government. Egal became Minister of Education while Abdirazak retained his post. Nonetheless, the reappointment of those ministers who were in opposition to the Constitution did not alter their political stance.

All was not well in the central part of the Northern region. Given the negative vote on the constitutional referendum but the overwhelming vote of approval by the rest of the nation, expressions of disillusionment over Somali unification were in the air. Several months after the new regime took charge of the nation's affairs, a small group of young Northern military officers attempted a coup in Hargeisa. This move surprised both Jama Mohamed Qalib, on whose meticulous police reports from Hargeisa the Government so depended, and even opposition politicians from the North such as Egal, until recently the Minister of Defense. The principal claim of the young officers, who were trained in Britain, was that poorly educated officers from the South had been undeservedly given most command appointments. The initiators of the coup claimed they had the blessings of the Supreme military chief, General Daud A. Hersi. To say the least, this event shocked the regime, and General Hersi instantly denied the accusation over Radio Mogadishu. Northern non-commissioned officers immediately reacted to the General's announcement and moved against the coup instigators; the loyalists recaptured Radio Hargeisa and killed one of the coup makers. The rest were captured and order was quickly restored. The Interior and Defense Ministers, the latter the Northern Sheikh Ali Ismail, immediately flew to Hargeisa. At the regional military command, they congratulated the loyalists and then convened a public meeting in the afternoon in which Sheikh Ali Ismail made a moving speech. He castigated the fomenters of the coup and opposition in the North, but went too far by suggesting that the coup makers might be hanged. While some of the public seemed unhappy with what they considered a regime dominated by the "Majeerteen Abdis" (Abdirashid and Abdirazak), there was no sign that they supported the coup. Abdirazak spoke in a conciliatory tone and told the gathered public that something unfortunate had happened, including the loss of an educated Somali, and it should be a warning to the entire nation. The two ministers returned and produced a report. This was in December 1961.

Many Northerners sought forgiveness for the plotters. A few went to the President to seek his intervention, but Aden responded that what they were asking him to do was not within his legal authority. Others approached the Prime Minister for clemency, while a few respected Northerners, such as Haji Basbaas, asked for the Minister of Interior's good offices in the matter. In the end, the regime decided that it did not want to set a precedent for the extralegal treatment of the case, and, therefore, started making preparations for a trial. Northerners accepted the proposition that the case could be heard in a civil rather than a military court, and that non-Somali and British trained lawyers be found to defend the accused. The regime initially rejected the need for foreign lawyers but the President persuaded his colleagues to honor this request as well. The Prime Minister was conciliatory and did not want the physical elimination of the accused, but Sheikh Ali Ismail and a few other Northerners felt strongly that coup plotters should be treated swiftly and harshly. The final accord between the state prosecutors and the two British lawyers stipulated that the court procedure would be that of the North (Indian) but the substance of the law would be Southern (Italian).

Soon the funds collected by the immediate families and supporters of the accused proved insufficient to pay for the British lawyers. The state decided to cover the balance. As the case went forward, the criminal facts against the accused seemed immutable. However, the public prosecutor made a minor procedural error and the judge quickly dismissed the entire case on technical grounds. There were celebrations in Hargeisa, but other Somalis felt that the judge was biased. In the ensuing cabinet meeting to discuss options, the Minister of Defense was among the angriest over the decision. With the recognition that the regime had the right to appeal the case, the Prime Minister consulted with the President and the two decided the state should drop the case. Limiting its reactions to a condemnation of the judgment, the regime expelled the judge from the country, and the coup instigators regained their freedom. *This was the first time (and maybe the last) in Africa's post-independence that a sitting regime released coup makers without any retribution.*

Three items dominated the agenda for the next two and half years: reintegration and reform of the civil service; finding a major power to train and arm the Somali military; and development planning. Civil service reform continued under the guidance of a well-known Pakistani development economist who headed the UNDP office in

Mogadishu. It was also under these auspices that the first five-year plan was produced, an idea borrowed from India. Regime dealings with major powers were in part guided by advice from President Gamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt who passed on his thinking to Prime Minister Abdirashid during a visit to Egypt. Nasser gave this synopsis of non-alignment: "Somalia must avoid political extremism. The West is very powerful and our Soviet friends have their own interests. Do not let yourself be used by either; be very careful." The regime took his advice and stuck to a neutral internationalist position, and then joined the Non-aligned Movement. Despite such a Somali stance, the Soviets funded several projects, such as the Tug Wajaleh farm, hospitals in Sheikh and Wagid, a government printing press, milk and meat processing plants, and the Benadir High School.

Meanwhile, the political rumor mill was working overtime both in the North and South. A key subject of these currents was the ostensible Majeerteen domination of high politics, in the personalities of the Prime Minister and his Interior Minister. Concurrently, the pressure on ministers to be in their offices and meet the public was unrelenting. Abdirazak was mindful of the dilemma this created. If ministers stayed in their office and met visitors, very little work would be done, but if they minimized this task and concentrated on their functional responsibilities, the result would be bad public relations. Consequently, Abdirazak decided to devote three days to see the public and the remaining working days (and many after-hours) to attend to his official duties. The Prime Minister saw that his Interior Minister was working long hours and advised him to mind his health. Abdirashid was not a micro-manager and let his ministers run their affairs. This was, in part, due to his attempts to avoid giving substance to the rumors of clan domination. Sensing the political pressure the rumors were generating, Abdirazak visited with the Prime Minister and told him that he wanted to undercut the veracity of these rumors by offering his resignation. He reminded the Prime Minister that the two of them were not only close friends but, also, that their grandmothers were sisters. The Prime Minister was not persuaded by the argument and declined to accept the resignation. Abdirazak then sought the support of the President to convince the PM of the wisdom of his proposition. Aden was not persuaded but, in the end, decided to take up the matter with the Prime Minister. Finally, President Aden, Prime Minister Abdirashid, and Minister Abdirazak met and discussed who could take over the post. Abdirazak suggested Mr. Egal<sup>23</sup> as his possible

replacement, but the PM decided to appoint Mohamoud Abdi Noor (Juuje) of Baydhabo.<sup>24</sup> Abdirazak was moved to the Ministry of Public Works.

Three major issues stand out in Abdirazak's performance during his tenure at Public Works. These projects singled him out as an upright and activist minister, with an uncommon vision: the reorganization of the ministry and an anti-corruption drive; the renegotiation with the Soviets; and the creation of Somali Airlines and a telephone bid. The Ministry of Public Works was less complicated politically but a challenging portfolio to manage as it dealt with technical issues. Abdirazak's predecessor, Abdinoor Mohamed Hussein, was an elderly man who was an interpreter for the Italians. He had not been an energetic minister and had offered little leadership and direction to his staff. Ali Sheikh, from the North and Somalia's first certified engineer, was the ministry's Director General. Public Works was the lead ministry in expanding the nation's extremely modest infrastructure. It managed many development projects, mostly funded by the U.S.S.R. These activities required administrative capacity well beyond that of the ministry. Abdirazak met with the only foreign consultant, a British citizen, and reassigned him to work as an operation's officer, a responsibility more in the thicket of everyday activities. Next, Abdirazak conferred with the Soviet ambassador and the Russian technical advisor to the projects in Somalia. He impressed upon them that the operational officer of the ministry, despite his nationality, was to be seen as a critical figure in the implementation of projects under the ministry's purview.

The Soviets complained a great deal about the progress of the projects. Most of the delays were due to the heavy congestion at the Mogadishu port facilities and untrained personnel. Abdirazak convened a meeting of his senior staff and discussed the matter. They concluded that the problem was that the projects' schedules were too ambitious for the country's capabilities. Subsequently, the Minister and the Soviets orally modified the agreement on project schedules and the speed of their implementation to their mutual satisfaction. Another area that required immediate attention was the misuse of the Ministry's resources. Portions of project materials, such as cement, were routinely privately sold by employees, particularly by those who oversaw or kept stores. Moreover, staff arrived and left their workstation as they pleased. In consultation with his senior staff, Abdirazak demanded that people arrive and stay at their stations for the full

duration of the workday. Not surprisingly, once the new work ethic was strictly enforced, many of the employees saw the new minister as a monster bent on giving them an unnecessarily hard time. Word was out in town that "Abdirazak burned staff at Interior and now was to do the same in Public Works." Nonetheless, Ali Sheikh and the more professionally-oriented of the staff were pleased with the attitude of the new minister. Within a week after taking office at Public Works, Abdirazak turned to clean up his office. Morality was lax among many Somali politicians, and the previous minister had six women working in his front office. Rumor had it that he exploited these women subordinates. When Abdirazak asked for an explanation as to what they did in the office, the women responded by saying that they "served the pleasure of the minister." Only one of them was a typist, and a very slow one at that, and spoke rudimentary Italian. Abdirazak told Ali Sheikh that he did not want to fire any of these people so soon, but instructed that they be found fitting employment elsewhere.

Ali Sheikh was a very busy professional. He had to travel frequently in and outside of the country to keep an eye on the projects as well as accompany official delegations. Although he had the full confidence of his new Minister and the Prime Minister, Ali Sheikh never shook off his own opposition to the regime. He decided to take early retirement to protect his pension, once it became apparent that the integration of a North-South salary scale might mean a reduction of income for employees from the North. Since no appropriate replacement was available, Ali Sheikh (like some other Northerners) was rehired on contractual basis.

One of Abdirazak's major accomplishments during his tenure in Public Works that unequivocally marked his commitment to a national rather than a regional or "clan" agenda was the establishment of Somali Airlines. It is not clear whose idea it was to set up a national airline, the PM or the Minister. The PM and the Minister approached the U.S. Ambassador and informed him of the country's immense communication and transportation problems, i.e., long and unpaved roads and the absence of air transport and railways. The two leaders specifically requested that the American government assist them in developing air transport. The Ambassador relayed the request to Washington and returned with a positive answer for the Somalis. The American offer was three completely reconditioned Dakota planes, each with a capacity of 26 seats. Satisfied with the response, the PM delegated Abdirazak and the Ambassador to finalize the agreement. Soon the

issue came up of training pilots and ground crews for the incipient venture. The Ambassador indicated that the United States could not help in this regard. On his own initiative, Abdirazak approached the West German Ambassador (who had already given generous logistical support to the Somali Police Force), and requested that West Germany assist Somalia by training Somali pilots and ground crews. The Germans reacted affirmatively within a week, with the only condition that Germans set up the training program. The first key provisions of the agreement were that the trainees be instructed in English and, therefore, must have a secondary school certificate from an English medium school. Second, the Germans would conduct the examination to select the trainees.

The Ministry immediately advertised 28 openings (for pilots, mechanics, assistants, and other ground crew) on the national radio and in the daily papers. Once the language conditions for the trainees became public knowledge, many Southern politicians heavily criticized the regime, and particularly Abdirazak, for favoring the North. He had audiences with them and tried to persuade them that the Germans mandated the examination's English requirement, and that he could not go against this if the country was to make progress in civil aviation. Moreover, he challenged them that there were Southerners who had studied English in the Egyptian Secondary School and other places and who should be able to compete for the posts. He warned that regional or family favoritism had no place in the regime's agenda, and national advancement would only take place when every citizen was given an equal opportunity. This was not sufficient to convince the Southern regionalists.<sup>25</sup>

The Germans conducted the examination as planned, and, as it turned out, all but two of the successful candidates were from the North; the two Southerners were selected for the ground crew. *As the entire class flew to Germany to commence their studies, Abdirazak called on Northern critics to take note of the merit-based competitive process for the selection of the pilots — evidence that should fly in the face of the sectarian rumors. He pointed out that had he been a regionalist, he would have automatically approached the Italian Government to assist in aviation development, a request that would have been met with enthusiasm.* This would have disqualified all potential Northern candidates. Although some of the Northern critics recognized the fairness of the pilot selection process, the general public, now so marooned in gossip and seduced

by instrumentalist politicians, did not care enough to appreciate the import of this event.

Another preoccupation of Abdirazak was curtailment of the theft of state property, and the curbing of corruption. Private appropriation of the ministry's materials was glaring and could not be ignored. Ali Sheikh, the best senior servant, took early retirement and there was no other person with the same combination of skill and integrity. Consequently, Abdirazak turned to another Northerner, his deputy governor of Hargeisa. He requested from his colleague, the Minister, to appoint Mr. Mohamed Jama Jengalee as the Director General of Public Works. Jengalee, an efficient and honest administrator, moved quickly to clean up the ministry under the watchful eye of Abdirazak. It was at this time that he realized the magnitude of corruption in the apparatus of the state. Some members of the cabinet were cognizant of this, but the issue never came up as an agenda item in cabinet meetings. One of the most visible manifestations of malfeasance was an alarming increase in the number of expensive villas that state employees were constructing and then renting to the diplomatic community. This habit had started during the Italian Trusteeship Administration. For instance, Bank Credito Somalo was created to mainly support farmers, but also, on a smaller scale, to give credit to senior government officials to build their own residences. One of the individuals who took legitimate advantage of this was Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, who was a functionary of the Administration. Abdirazak, as Vice-President of the Bank, could not access this credit, as he was not a government employee. He had some deposits in the Bank from his dual income and decided not to build a house during his tenure in the two ministries. Most Somali officials who built their houses through this scheme rented rather than lived in them, as was required by the terms of the loans. Given the shortage of decent housing in Mogadishu, these premises fetched a handsome price from the expatriate community, a practice only to be increased with independence. In due course, many politicians and civil servants took advantage of their position to raid the public purse, construct a coastal mansion, and lease it to expatriates for an exorbitant return. Even Abdirashid had his old house rented and made a decent profit. However, he was not a corrupt Prime Minister and, therefore, did not gain wealth as a result of his position.

As a prominent minister, Abdirazak had many opportunities to appropriate strategic plots of land in Mogadishu. All local governments in the country, including the capital city, came under the

purview of the Ministry of Interior. He had only one plot of property in Mogadishu that was vacant. It was this plot that attracted the most curious interest from the American Embassy. One day, the American Ambassador paid a visit to Abdirazak, during his days at Interior, to discuss matters of concern to the Americans. Once these items were concluded, the Ambassador shifted his attention to personal matters. He informed Abdirazak that his plot overlooking the Indian Ocean was nice property that the Embassy would be willing to develop without any cost to him. In addition, the Embassy would occupy the new building for five years after which the minister would take complete ownership. Abdirazak was dumbfounded. Feeling caught off guard, he asked the diplomat why the Embassy would want to do him this favor and why not approach private business people like Yusuf Egal, the entrepreneur who owned many parcels of land, including the compound that housed the United Nations headquarters in Mogadishu. It was now the Ambassador's turn to be confounded, for the response flew in the face of his hidden assumption that all African politicians were on the take. But such a perspective was not unique to the United States representatives. A few weeks later, the Italian petroleum company, Aggib, made a similar offer. The company director came to see Abdirazak and asked if they could get permission from the Public Lands Department to have a plot at a strategic intersection of the major Mogadishu-Afgoi road to build a gasoline station. Aggib would build the station but Abdirazak, as their titular agent, would share in the profits. However, in order to consummate the deal, Aggib needed the minister to use his authority to secure the permit from the Department of Public Land, a unit of his ministry. To be sure, this was a lucrative offer. But the cost was even greater—severe damage to the integrity of his office and the professional judgment of the staff. Aggib's director was dismayed by the rejection, but took the offer to Abdikadir Zoppo, the Minister of Finance. Zoppo jumped at the opportunity and made substantial money from the affair, particularly after 1967 when he no longer held a ministerial appointment.<sup>26</sup>

These were fantastically corrupting opportunities, but Abdirazak bucked the prevailing political impulses of the time. There is no doubt that he could have had any piece of land in Mogadishu during his tenure at Interior and then build the property with Public Works resources, when he was head of that ministry. Abdirazak belonged to a different breed of politician. His resolute self-monitoring in that honeymoon-like morrow of the new state when painless but unlawful

seductions were abundant; his scrupulousness toward the office and the morals of his staff; and his admiration as well as concrete support for competent senior servants, many of them from the North, testified to his developing national reputation as one-of-a-kind. *Added together, Abdirazak's perspective captured, and preceded by nearly three decades, what is nowadays proffered as the only solution to Africa's troubles: good governance.* From Abdirazak's point of view, the Italian Administration was singularly responsible for normalizing corruption in the South. Keen on winning Somali clients to its side, the Italian Trusteeship was a time of heightened political favoritism and venality—practices corrosive of managerial adroitness and, eventually, toxic to civic dedication. This was the enveloping culture faced by many honest Southern public administrators. An upshot of this context, for the immediate post-independence period, was the standardization of a disconnect among the state elite between their oath of office and the exploitation of that public authority for quick private gain. With such behavior increasingly flaunted, rank and file public servants were bound to join the fray.

Abdirazak's concern over the magnitude of corruption, given the aforementioned incidents and what he heard from many others, drove him to write a confidential report on the subject just before the first post-independence elections. The report warned the PM that the state could not afford to ignore the scope of the problem and that the regime should take a strong stand against this abuse after the election. The report specifically named four incompetent and fundamentally corrupt members of the cabinet. Copies of this confidential report were submitted to President Aden, and the two commanders of the military and police forces, Generals Daud and Abshir, respectively.

Abdirazak's tenure in Public Works lasted from 1962 to the 1964 election. Shortly after he took charge of the ministry, his old physical ailment resurfaced. A few weeks later, he started coughing blood and became seriously ill. A specialist, brought from Italy by the PM, gave him a thorough examination. After the bloody coughing had been halted, the doctor discovered that one of Abdirazak's lungs had a hole. It was recommended that he urgently be evacuated to the U.S.A., the country with the best medical facilities for his condition. Abdirazak was airlifted to Washington, D.C.'s Walter Reed Hospital. Shortly after, the American Ambassador wrote to the PM and told him that the U.S. government would pay for all the medical expenses in Washington. Abdirashid acknowledged the offer and thanked him. Abdirazak was under observation and medication during March and April, 1963.

Finally, his damaged lung was removed on May 3, and he left the hospital two weeks later. He remained in Washington for further treatment and observation until his return to Somalia in June.

President Aden had cultivated a reputation for unwavering abidance by the word and spirit of the Constitution. He became a national symbol and as such stayed out of party politics. Unlike many of his African peers, he tried not to intrude into the prerogatives of the executive PM. Often, he received a lot of complaints from the public. If he thought these accusations had merit, he would call the minister concerned or the PM. If an issue was of particular salience, he would write to the PM and counsel him to give it due attention. Aden wrote a few such letters to Abdirashid, which the latter disregarded.<sup>27</sup> These developments began to create a communication gap, which would become a problem between the two leaders later on. For Abdirashid, the President's proddings were tantamount to a breach of the constitutional division of labor between president and prime minister.

For some time, the Somali state had been requesting support for building its military from the West. This was turned down after several years of sustained effort. Finally, the PM turned to the Soviets and found a more sympathetic superpower. The commander of the military, General Daud A. Hersi, was assigned to represent the regime in the final negotiations in Moscow and then sign the agreement. This was happening while Abdirazak was in Washington for his operation. Western diplomats pressed hard on the PM to drop the agreement with the Soviets, and General Abshir of the Police, among others, was approached to convince him to do so. Finally, Western diplomats called upon Abdirazak to change the PM's mind, but he told them that they came too late. Many suspected that Abdirazak was pro-American given his recent treatment in Washington and the assistance he got from the State Department. When he returned, the PM told him that Western diplomats had lobbied with every member of the cabinet and, consequently, he was concerned about how this important issue would fare in the next meeting of the cabinet. Abdirazak suggested that the PM could not go back on the agreement and that the discussion should go forth. Abdirazak took the initiative to lead the deliberations in the cabinet, which ended with unanimous support for the agreement. From then on, Western diplomats and governments depicted the PM as leftist.

As the first post-independence election approached, the government began broadcasting electoral procedures and rules over the two

national radio stations.<sup>28</sup> Suddenly, the first Somali-Ethiopian war broke out in early 1964. The PM was in the town of Qardho when hostilities began. Once the news reached him, he wired Abdirazak, who was submitting his candidacy application in his constituency in Garowe. The PM picked him up en route to Mogadishu, using *Heen Finiin*, the police plane. Abdirashid addressed the nation with the now famous line, "We will vote with one hand and fight with the other."<sup>29</sup> Sudan mediated between the two countries and hostilities died down. Although Ethiopia had superior military hardware and its troops were better trained, the Somalis held their own despite many civilian casualties. Many of the latter were volunteers who took it upon themselves to help defend their country.

The election took place during the war and the SYL won a majority of the 123 seats in parliament. The relations between the President and the PM were cool, although members of parliament and the cabinet were not aware of this. Two issues separated the two leaders. First, President Aden could not close his eyes to a rising kleptocratic tendency among politicians and public servants nor to the consequent public disillusionment. Second, as the West applied pressure on everyone regarding the Somali-Soviet agreement, the President advised the PM to weigh the matter carefully. The PM may have interpreted the President's cautious approach as a signal of his pro-Western leanings. By the conclusion of the election, they were estranged from each other.

As was expected, new and triumphant MPs rushed to Mogadishu where they descended on Abdirashid's home and office in search of portfolios. Everyone, including Abdirazak, assumed that the President would renominate Abdirashid. Given how close the PM and Abdirazak were, the latter decided not to join the stampede. But while this crowding was going on, the PM and Abdirazak drove to Afgoi for an outing. It was on this occasion that the PM shared his differences with the President, differences strong enough to possibly rule him out for renomination. Abdirashid urged his friend to accept if the President invited him instead. Moreover, he warned that to decline such an invitation would open the way for Mohamed Ibrahim Egal or Abdillahi Issa, two men Abdirashid was convinced would ill-serve the country at that point in time. Abdirazak replied that there was no reason for Aden to appoint him, particularly given the precariousness of his health and the instructions of his doctors. In addition, he tried to convince his friend that the differences between him and the President

were minor and that, above all, Aden was a man known for his directness and rectitude.

The first act of the new parliament was the selection of its officers, but the entire city was already gripped by speculation about whom Abdirashid would select to his cabinet. Such preoccupations were partly due to Somalia's democratic fervor and the assumption that Abdirashid would continue to lead the new regime. Abdirazak began to distance himself from the electioneering process when Ahmed Sheikh, from Berbera, was nominated to the presidency of the new parliament. Ahmed Sheikh, according to Abdirazak, had a terrible reputation and his character was fundamentally flawed. This signaled to Abdirazak that the old corrupt MPs were directing things, despite the arrival of a number of new and more educated young MPs. Abdirazak followed his earlier memo on corruption with another one. Sent to the recipients of the first, Abdirazak knew that picking up the issue of corruption at that moment would seem a different campaign. Though the PM and Abdirazak met in cabinet discussions during this transition period, it was clear that their political intimacy was on the wane—a development underscored by the lack of private meetings between them. Those who wanted to push out Abdirazak, and his friend Zoppo, planted stories intended to marginalize them. Abdirazak's absence from the nomination and election processes of parliament, combined with the lack of visitations during the electioneering onslaught, had convinced the PM that his friend and Zoppo had not been loyal of late.<sup>30</sup> Abdirazak claims that he remained supportive of the PM, reservations about the post-election campaign for cabinet posts notwithstanding.

Meanwhile, the President began his consultations with different constituencies in order to select a PM. He met members of all legitimate groups, including many self-invited MPs and others who were eager to offer their unsolicited opinions. The President then dropped a political bombshell. One afternoon, after Abdirazak came home from work, he noticed a pink envelope on his desk. Pink envelopes were used for official mail only, and he noticed the stamp of the presidency. The letter instructed him to come to the president's office at a designated hour on the next day. Once he finished reading the note, he recognized what this meant, since he knew that Abdirashid had received a similar letter four years earlier. Abdirazak called Abdirashid and asked if he could see him. He met Abdirashid at his home and showed him the letter. Abdirashid congratulated his old friend but their body

language was stiff and not what it used to be. Abdirazak asked him why he thought (during that earlier outing to Afgoi) that he might be selected by the President. The PM responded by saying that he was among the strongest of the cadres and that he was qualified to take up the post. Abdirashid then added that he must accept the nomination. After a while, the conversation petered out and Abdirazak left the house with mixed feelings.

Abdirazak met the President at the appointed hour. Aden shared with him the wide consultation he had had regarding the state of the nation and the essential qualities of a new PM. Without expressing direct criticism of Abdirashid, the President conveyed his decision not to renominate the PM.<sup>31</sup> Aden stressed that the naming of the PM was the only occasion on which the President had a direct hand in the administration of the affairs of the state. As a result, the best way to heed his oath of office was to stick to what he thought to be in the interest of the country. Abdirazak reminded the President of his ill health, as well as his unpopular reputation at Interior. The President retorted by telling him about how many of those, particularly in the North, who were critical of him at Interior, had since recanted their negative opinions. Aden finally asserted pithily that *“Somali rageyga ha kala barato”* (Let Somalis learn to distinguish between their leaders). Abdirazak suggested that he should give Abdirashid a second chance, to which the President replied that he was not willing to experiment with his deeply held convictions. Abdirazak thanked the President for his consideration but declared that he could not accept the honor. Aden inquired whether his feelings had something to do with the fact that his cousin was not reappointed. In the end, Aden told him to take a day to think about the challenge. When Abdirazak returned to his residence, General Abshir paid an unexpected visit, apparently encouraged by the President to convince the minister to accept his new appointment. Once the politicians heard about Abdirazak’s nomination, they moved from Abdirashid’s home/office to the new center of gravity. After another day of an extended deadline, Abdirazak accepted the nomination and moved forward to form his cabinet.

## **V. Sweet and Sour Times: Premiership of the Second Republic**

The Prime Minister-Designate had these critical tasks on his plate, and in this order: cabinet selection and a parliamentary vote of confidence; public service reform; corruption; and preparation for the next presi-

dential election. Before going any further, however, Abdirazak called on his departing chief, Abdirashid, to both seek advice and invite him to join the new regime by choosing any portfolio. Abdirashid declined and added that he couldn't see himself being sworn in by President Aden. It dawned on Abdirazak there and then that the relationship between Aden and Abdirashid had deteriorated, perhaps, to a point of no political return. With sadness in his heart, Abdirazak started a process of extensive consultations, including many individuals in the public at large and almost all the members of the new parliament. General Daud A. Hersi paid a visit to warn and offer counsel on what he saw as the prevalence of a heightened clanist feeling in the country. In contrast, many others came on their own accord either to jostle for posts or to dissuade the Prime Minister-Designate from appointing their competitors. For instance, a delegation from Upper Jubba<sup>32</sup> visited to impress upon him that he should not appoint Abdikadir Zoppo, one of their own, as a minister, as they accused him of only looking after his interests. Some even hinted that he was a criminal, referring to the murder of Kamal al-Din. Earlier, during his consultative conversations, university educated Somalis complained to him about the political domination of un/undereducated old politicians. Subsequently, he called a secret meeting of these critics, among them individuals such as Dr. Hassan Ali Mireh, Ahmed Silaanyo, and Abdirahman Noor Hersi. They met at the seaside residence of Yusuf Egal, a wealthy merchant. Abdirazak challenged them to come up with a list of possible nominees that would gain the Parliament's vote of confidence. After two days of debates, they recognized the main political dilemma faced by the PM-Designate in selecting his new cabinet: talent versus regional representation. Abdirazak's ambition was to both curb the size of the cabinet and select as many of the younger and more educated MPs to ministerial posts as possible. While the latter became an impossibility due, in part, to intensive political pressure, he was able to make headway in the first. *As it turned out, a disproportionate number happened to be from the North, a result of his commitment to look for potential high performance rather than a political calculation to privilege Northerners.*<sup>33</sup>

The President endorsed the list of selected ministers and they were sworn in. Abdirazak then presented his cabinet and his program to Parliament. Many MPs were only interested in who was selected and paid no attention to the program. As the roll was called, opposition and government supporters stood even at sixty each. (Abdirashid voted with the opposition.) The last name to be called was Mr. Ali

Mohamed Hirabe, a former minister and a member of the opposition. He said “yes” first but quickly retracted and cast a negative vote. Government supporters tried to contest the retraction, but the PM-Designate intervened. Abdirazak spoke to the chamber and said, “My friend, Ali, was pro-Italian during the Trusteeship, then he joined SYL, became a minister in the previous government, and then I removed him from that post. He has been a ‘yes man’ all his life, and his chance to say ‘no’ today was betrayed by his ‘yes’ habit. Since my government’s fate depends on his vote, I want the President of the Chamber to count Ali’s vote as negative, so he could be liberated today.” The public in the gallery cheered and even opposition members joined in. All of Abdirashid’s ministers, except Abdikadir Zoppo and Abdillahi Issa who were in the new cabinet, casted a vote of confidence; many others decided to oppose as they felt slighted or because their competitors from the same constituency had been appointed. Most Northern delegates voted in support of the new government. The public crafted a joke to humor those who were or were not in a new cabinet. “Former ministers came early in the morning as if to catch their ride, expecting to be picked up by Abdirazak. Abdirazak came late and he only found Abdillahi Issa, who usually stayed late at night and slept until mid-morning, and Zoppo ‘the crippled,’ whom it took a longer time to get there.” This, they jested, is how Abdirazak picked his cabinet.

Abdirashid did not come out openly to oppose the new regime but worked behind the scenes to convey his displeasure. Yusuf Egal, Abdirashid’s ally, invited the two men to dinner to help patch up their friendship. Abdirazak offered Abdirashid, once again, whatever cabinet post he desired. But the former Prime Minister was in no mood for such niceties. Instead, he expressed his anger over some of the contents of Abdirazak’s first public speech on Radio Mogadishu in which he associated, Abdirashid claimed, the former regime with corrupt and clannish ways. Abdirazak contested this and asserted that his written and oral speech specifically promised to attempt to curb corruption. A second meeting was arranged between the two, but they made no progress in bridging the gulf. From then on, Abdirashid was firmly in the opposition. He rarely attended parliamentary sessions. He spent his days on Lido beach reading Italian novels and making rare appearances in Parliament to cast a crucial vote. At Lido, he was visited by disgruntled MPs.

Abdirazak went back to the presidency to deliver his resignation after the rejection by Parliament. He advised the President to rethink in

order to avoid another loss. Unvexed, the President sent another pink envelope to Abdirazak. Abdirazak accepted the designation but convened a meeting of the SYL Central Committee to get its endorsement before forming a new cabinet and submitting it to Parliament. Some members accused him of betraying Abdirashid, but the majority, after a week-long debate and through a secret ballot, gave its blessing. Moreover, and memorably, Mohamoud Issa Jama, the Minister of Agriculture-Designate in the failed attempt, offered to vacate his post so that more Southerners could be accommodated. He thought such a gesture might mollify many Southern MPs who were upset by the fact that Northerners were given disproportionately more cabinet seats in Abdirazak's first government. In his second attempt, a majority of MPs voted to support Abdirazak's regime and its unchanged program.

Reforming the civil service was an issue long in need of attention. The U.N.-assisted public service commission, set up in 1960, produced its final report in early 1964. Since Abdirashid's regime and the country were preoccupied with the first Ethiopian-Somali war and the forthcoming election, the report was set aside for the duration of those engagements. The new PM focused on the report immediately and informed the Commissioners that they need not be overly concerned about its political implications, as that was his responsibility. He impressed on them that their sole concern should be how to create an effective public service. In this context, Abdirazak recalled Mohamed Burraleh, a highly reputed administrator, from his consular post in Moscow and appointed him as the new Director General of Personnel. Burraleh was not happy losing his diplomatic post, but took on the difficult assignment with a sense of loyalty and purposefulness.

When the Commission unveiled its work, with an accent on the quantity and quality of personnel needed for the next decade, it stressed that numerous state employees, particularly in senior positions, had neither the experience nor the qualifications necessary for their posts. It was recommended that such individuals should be given two years, with salary, to re-qualify through training. Those who failed to capitalize on the opportunity ought to be discharged. The cabinet accepted the report and Abdirazak gave orders for its strict implementation. Each ministry was then required to look into its section of the report and deal with the recommendations accordingly. Many ministers were hesitant to face the unpleasant task of demoting and firing staff, but Abdirazak reminded them that he would take full responsibility for the fallout, but that each one must act with firmness.

The Prime Minister had his own list of senior employees whom he suspected of exploiting their position for self-enrichment or passing confidential state information to foreign interests. He asked the police and his staff to investigate these people, who found out that many on the list were involved in illegal activities. Finally, when nearly 200 senior officials were earmarked for redundancy (*Posta Rossa*), many were afforded an opportunity to enhance their qualifications. One of the ministries hit hard was Finance. All but two of the discharged senior staff were from the South, including a second cousin of the PM. Abdirazak knew him as a former SYL Central Committee member as well as his immediate superior in his days at the Signal Corps. Soon after joining Finance, this gentleman acquired numerous properties in the Capital. *But Abdirazak's campaign did not even spare his older brother, a lowly employee who was among the nearly 600 non-senior staff terminated as part of the reform process. The majority of this group, too, was from the South.*

Parliament was in session when the reforms were announced, and most MPs criticized these actions, with some interpreting them as acts of revenge or sheer cruelty. Abdirashid was among the critics and thought that the decision was extreme. In defense of the reform program, Abdirazak pointed out that three types of employees were targeted for dismissal: the corrupt, the incompetent, and individuals engaged in leaking national security information. Surprising enough, none of the critics in Parliament accused the PM of "clan" favoritism. Later on, Egal's regime (1967–68) rehired nearly all the major figures dismissed. The latter raised 200,000 shillings for Abdirashid's presidential campaign.

The establishment of a Public Service Commission created new dynamics in the service. It began to systematically evaluate government employees on a regular basis, creating transparent and predictable procedures for promotion and demotions. Slowly, the insulation of this process from political manipulation became apparent. Ironically, many young educated Somalis who had earlier assumed that they would quickly rise to the top of the civil service began to feel that the new regime would require not only qualifications but, in addition, experience and performance for promotion. The case of Abdirahman Noor Hersi was an instantiation of inflated expectations and subsequent disappointments. Hersi had recently graduated from Columbia University, with a Masters degree in economics. Abdirazak was approached soon after he was appointed PM and asked to

retire the Italian head of the Central Bank and to replace him with Hersi, who held a mid-level position at the Bank. The PM rejected this request and Mr. Hersi, one of the young educated men the PM had earlier challenged to identify a cabinet that would gain approval from Parliament to no avail, was dismayed by Abdirazak's stance. There were many similar instances across the bureaucracy.

An imprint of the new regime was respect for the independence of the Public Service Commission, which was given the task of reviewing all promotions and demotions of civil servants. Two instances highlight the professional protection the Commission afforded civil servants, even when the later engaged in transgressions, as well as the regime's readiness to abide by its rules. First is the case of Yusuf Dirir from Burao. *Dalka*, the late Yusuf Dhuhul's independent monthly magazine,<sup>34</sup> was popular among the educated Somalis. It had a monthly article that was usually very critical of the regime and whose author seemed to have access to classified state information. An investigation was conducted to determine the identity of the author and the source. Dirir, an economics graduate from a British university, was a consular in the Somali Embassy in Addis Ababa. It was discovered that he was the culprit and had used the diplomatic bag to transmit the articles to his friends in Foreign Affairs, who passed it to the editor of *Dalka*. The Minister of Foreign Affairs finally decided to intercept, and opened the suspected envelope without a warrant, only to discover an article destined for *Dalka* with Dirir's signature. Dirir was summoned to Mogadishu. He stridently argued that the Minister had no right to open his private letter, although he himself had no explanation for the wrongful use of the diplomatic pouch. The Ministry accused him of illegal use of state service and the publishing of confidential information. The case was submitted to the Public Service Commission, with a demand that Dirir be dismissed. After some careful deliberations, the Commission reprimanded Dirir rather than discharging him. Understandably disappointed, the regime, nonetheless, complied.

The second episode dealt with the curbing of corruption and the enhancement of democratic rule. One of Abdirazak's first edicts for his cabinet was that each one declare and register his or her private assets and wealth.<sup>35</sup> This had two primary purposes. First, it was intended to impress on the public that the regime was serious about its anti-corruption program and that its ministers were expected to be accountable, and, secondly, that the cabinet understood that they were being particularly watched to insure that none of them was engaged in ille-

gal wealth accumulation. Soon, several were fired. Most conspicuous, perhaps, was Osman Mohamed Cadde, the Minister of Commerce. Abdirazak had known Cadde since the 1950s when the latter was inspector of prisons and the former had been an inmate in Mogadishu. In addition, Cadde was a distant cousin. Abdirazak was informed that Cadde was blocking the usual importation of tea in order for his clients to exploit the artificially induced shortage. Not eager to act on the basis of rumors, he summoned Cadde to his office and asked him about the veracity of the talk of the town. Cadde denied the allegations, but the PM asked the police to investigate the matter. The police discovered that Cadde and his client, a first cousin of Abdirazak, were directly involved in manipulating tea importation by using the state's Trading Agency. Once the conclusive report was in his hands, Abdirazak signed a decree sacking Cadde and Ismail Dualeh, Minister at Agriculture, found guilty of another equally damning act of malfeasance with regard to banned charcoal exports.

Dualeh came pleading and, given the decades of acquaintance between him and Abdirazak, the response was both humorous and biting. The PM told Dualeh that people in Hargeisa had already dubbed him "Dhul cun" (land eater) during his governorship, because of his corrupt land practices. Now, as Minister of Agriculture, the public dubbed him "Dhir cun" (forest eater), from a general awareness of his kickbacks operation authorizing the export of banned forest products. In jest, the PM told Dualeh that this was a preemptive act before Dualeh became "Dad cun" (people eater)!<sup>36</sup> A third dismissed minister was the Christian Somali, James, of Finance. In this case, the national audit discovered that James illegally used 300,000 shillings from the Postal Bank in Burao for his election campaign in 1963–4. Since the dismissed ministers and deputy ministers retained their parliamentary seats and the concurrent immunity, further prosecution could only proceed with that protection lifted.<sup>37</sup> A formal request to that effect was delivered to the President of the Parliament, but to no avail. The opposition manipulated parliamentary rules, with the tacit consent of the President, since all those under fire had immediately joined the ranks of the opposition. Even though the President of Parliament, from Baydhabo, was elected with Abdirazak's support, he sympathized with the opposition and, therefore, kept the regime's request at the bottom of the agenda. Consequently, individuals accused of fraudulent actions were saved in the cocooned chambers of Parliament and within the flanks of the opposition.

## **VI. The Presidential Election of 1967: A Historic Turning Point**

A myriad serious concerns came onto the radar screen in the life of Abdirazak's regime. Among these were the forthcoming independence referendum in French Somaliland and the management of relations with Ethiopia and Kenya. But none would prove more crucial than the approaching presidential election. We have not been able to trace any evidence to suggest that the President and the Prime Minister hatched or even discussed a plan to subvert the election in order to ensure the former's reelection. On the contrary, there is enough testimony to sustain that they treated it as a routine and constitutionally guided democratic exercise. Such an absence of high anxiety is surprising given that both the President and the Premier knew that the public misunderstood Aden and a significant number of MPs disliked him. Four issues underscored Aden's low popularity with many parliamentarians: his refusal to offer personal favors to many MPs who sought such help; his strict adherence to the constitutional division of labor between President and Prime Minister; his brutal frankness in telling things as he saw them; and his indifference to his reelection campaign. Aden's reluctance to seek a second term was known to many. Some distinguished MPs such as Ibrahim Oonlaayeh, Hiloole Maalin, Mohamed Abdi Noor, and Mohamed Ali Dhooreh conclave with the President and urged him to actively run as he was the most appropriate leader for the country at the time. The group sensed Aden's diffidence and prompted Abdirazak to exhort Aden to seek reelection, but Abdirazak responded that he could not impose such a wish on Aden.

The Prime Minister invited Egal for dinner just before the SYL's annual conference in 1967, and declared that he was not interested in the Premiership after his term ended, and that Egal, as a most prominent member of Parliament, had a good chance for leadership if he joined the Party. Egal heeded the advice and the Prime Minister introduced him at the annual meeting where he was nominated and voted in as a member. In his acceptance speech, Egal remarked, half jokingly, that many in the house would assume that he was joining the party solely to realize his political ambition.

The SYL convened its annual meeting in Mogadishu several months before the election, and the first issue it dealt with was to appoint a new party chief. In the past, neither the Party's president nor its secretary general had become head of government. Despite Abdirazak's resistance, the Party changed its rules and approved that the Prime

Minister would, from now on, become also the leader of the Party. Abdirazak stressed the importance of keeping the management of the Party's affairs and that of the regime separate to maintain autonomy on both sides. But he was alone in his dissension and the motion passed. Next, the Party's attention shifted to the election. Some of the members, mostly Abdirashid's backers, vilified Aden and accused him of all sorts of things, but Aden's supporters outnumbered the critics, and the Party, through secret ballot, endorsed him as the SYL candidate. Abdirashid, who refused to attend the Party Congress, was told that he could not run on the Party's platform. His response was terse and defiant.

Campaigning started as the election date approached. Abdirashid openly plunged into the fray and began making advance promises to MPs to consolidate their support. Most significantly, he offered the premiership to Egal who accepted the pledge. Shortly afterwards, Egal invited Abdirazak and, over a meal, informed him that he was not certain that Aden would appoint him and, therefore, he had opted for the guarantee from Abdirashid (strange that Egal never thought of running for the presidency!). Aden could not make such a promise to Egal or anyone else since he considered such horse-trading cheap and irresponsible. Many MPs visited the President, anticipating that he would lobby them for his reelection and seduce them with offers of money or posts in the future regime. They left such meetings disappointed, as Aden would often urge them to vote for him only if they considered him to be the appropriate candidate. In contrast, Abdirashid's campaign developed this slogan on the basis of Aden's approach to the election: *Why vote for someone who does not want your support; vote for the candidate who begs for it.*

Aden did not actively lobby for reelection. Consequently, it fell to Abdirazak and his cabinet to take responsibility for mobilizing support in Parliament. A large number of parliamentarians were oblivious to the issue at stake in the presidential election, and were simply driven by their appetite for money or a ministerial post. For many of these MPs, this was not a contest between ideas, the records of the two candidates, or competing national agendas. On the contrary, their vote became a commodity, plain and simple, to be sold to the highest bidder and without the sanctity of a commercial/legal contract. In other words, any promise had a momentary shelf life and was subject to an incessant bidding war. Abdirashid's campaign deployed cash inducement, offers of ministerial and other positions, and protection from

prosecution for seven MPs accused of high level corruption. The former Finance Minister, James, was an example of those promised refuge from justice. James sent emissaries to Abdirazak to the effect that, in his heart, he preferred to vote for Aden as he disliked Abdirashid, but needed assurance that he would retain his parliamentary immunity. Abdirazak ignored James' request and, by default, lost the votes of the seven MPs targeted for prosecution.

In addition to cash handouts drawn from the ordinary discretionary funds of Interior and the Premier's special fund, Abdirazak authorized an additional 200,000 shillings to keep pace. Nonetheless, the regime suspected that the opposition had a bigger war chest, primarily through support from the Eastern Bloc, particularly the Soviets, and the Italian Communist Party for Abdirashid and the Greater League. (Abdirashid had toured the U.S.S.R., Germany, Italy, and Egypt prior to the campaign). Moreover, the opposition's fortunes rose substantially due to the regime's untimely diplomatic blunder. A short while before the election, North Korea, in search of strategic advantage in the Horn of Africa, sought diplomatic recognition from Somalia. North Korea sent and maintained a delegation in Mogadishu that put enormous and persistent pressure on the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmed Yusuf Dualeh. He gave in and told Abdirazak that he had promised recognition and that the announcement was scheduled for soon after the election. In addition, Dualeh took the delegation to see Abdirazak. Once the American diplomats found out about the meeting, they doubled their commitment to support the opposition. Their discomfort with Abdirashid as a presidential candidate notwithstanding, the American envoys were satisfied with his partnership with Egal and, most importantly, the designation of the latter as Premier in the event of victory. The Political Officer in the U.S. Embassy organized several elaborate social gatherings and many MPs were invited. The paradox here was that most Western diplomats and governments (especially West Germany), who were satisfied with the regime's commitment to improved administration and democratic practice, turned away from Abdirazak once America declared its preference.

A further liability for the Abdirazak regime was the unwillingness to accommodate particularistic political demands. Characteristic of intraparliamentary politics, members who came from the same regions or electoral districts competed for the same ministerial posts and other scarce resources. Each tried to outmaneuver the other and failing that, each attempted to deny the other any post. The only acceptable sce-

nario was if both MPs gained some similar appointment or none (a zero sum affair). Once one became a minister, the other joined the opposition. For instance, Abdirazak thought highly of his minister at Interior, Zoppo, as an effective administrator. Juujeh, who was also from the same region, had to be accommodated as minister without portfolio in order to keep the Upper Jubba deputies on the regime's side. In the end, the entire Upper Jubba delegation, with the exception of two members, asserted that they would support Aden's presidency if Abdirazak promised them that Zoppo would not be a minister in his future cabinet. Abdirazak responded that he was in no position to make such a pledge since he was not interested in the Premiership and, more relevantly, had no idea whether Aden would even reappoint him. He added that they should only come to him if Zoppo had in any way abused his position at Interior in order to punish his competitors or political foes. The delegation never took up the challenge, but many voted for Abdirashid to seal Zoppo's political fate. Juujeh, the Minister of Agriculture and one of the men who tried to convince Aden to seek reelection, had secretly agreed with Egal to vote for Abdirashid. A member of the Upper Jubba delegates, Gaaytano, informed Abdirazak that Juujeh had tried to convince him to support Abdirashid. Egal, apparently, had asked Juujeh to deliver Gaaytano's vote. Incidentally, Abdirashid and Juujeh had been foes since Abdirashid's premiership years. In the end, Juujeh voted for Abdirashid and was appointed minister in the Egal regime, only to be fired shortly thereafter. Another case was that of Aden Issaq of Borama and Minister of Defense. Although known for his administrative capabilities, he was engaged in double-dealing and he worried about the possibility of his fellow district MP, Abdi Hassan Booni, overtaking him. His conspicuous and proactive campaigning for Aden was belied by his betrayal when it mattered: he voted for Abdirashid and retained his ministerial post in the Egal regime.

The appointed hour had arrived, and candidate Abdirashid and all other members of Parliament came to the venue. Aden was at his official residence, since he was not entitled to vote. The constitution stipulated that a candidate for the presidency must gain a two-thirds majority in the first and second ballot, and an absolute majority in subsequent ones.<sup>38</sup> Two ballots were discarded, as the writing on them was illegible. Abdirashid won the first and second ballots by one vote (his own). On the third ballot, several MPs switched their support to Abdirashid, who received nearly seventy votes out of 123. When victory

was announced by the President of the Parliament, a deputy from Eyl held up his pencil and declared with trepidation, "*Fidmow kow*" (First trouble!).

## VII. Conclusion

Ali Said Arraleh, one of the first Director Generals from the North, has had this to say about the leadership quality of President Aden and Premier Abdirazak thirty-four years after they left office:

Aden was so strict with the taxpayers' money that he saved enough from the presidency annual budget to build a presidential retreat in Afgoi while others were pocketing public money. Abdirazak's respect for the law and his anti-corruption effort has no parallel in our history. His hands are absolutely untainted and the two are peerless as Somali political leaders.<sup>39</sup>

Aden and Abdirazak lost, in hindsight, what was the major watershed in Somalia's modern social and political history. According to the latter, about 70 percent of Aden's supporters were rock solid. But a combination of MPs accused of corruption, several turncoat ministers, and Upper Jubba deputies shifted the balance of politics in favor of a current that has yet to run its full course. The behavior of ministers who betrayed their own regime for personal interests, those accused of malfeasance but sought cover in parliamentary immunity, and, not the least, the front bench of the opposition whose main tactic of promising state privilege in exchange for votes vulgarized both the cultivation and conduct of leadership and signaled the triumph of instrumentalist politics.

Abdirazak was confronted with a Hobson's choice: ignore the conspicuous abuse of office by some of his ministers or surrender to the politics of *fortuna* and blackmail. Either option would have immediately destroyed his precious attribute as a reformer and, furthermore and in the last instance, would most likely have come up against the constitutional rectitude of President Osman. The old Somali pastoral saying could not be more apt: "*Haddii aan hadlana, waa aaf salax kula dhagayee; haddii kalana, bal Ilaahay siduu xoolaha ku hayo daaya*" (If I utter a complaint, my mouth is instantly sealed; If I keep silent, Allah's punishment of the realm is unabated).

Thoughtful and caring Somalis have every reason to hold Abdirazak's and Aden's combined contributions as exemplary of what courageous and noble spirit mean. Their clairvoyance to discern what was imperative for a different and more enabling future, coupled with a resolute belief in the necessity of constitutional practice to the making of a mature political community, are inspiring for Somali and African time, desperate for both. ●

---

## Notes

\*A significant part of this research relies on scores of hours of conversations with Premier Abdirazak H. Hussein between 2000–2001. We are indebted to Abdirazak's generosity to not only share with us his experiences but his willingness to entertain, with utmost candidness and open-mindedness, numerous and counterintuitive questions we posed to him in the course of the research.

1. We have identified a heuristic typology of current and ineffective Somali actors: (a) crippled nationalists; (b) Potemkin regionalists; and (c) scavenging warlords. The first holds on to honorable pan-Somali sensibilities but is unable to articulate them into full, concrete, galvanizing ideas; the second imagines ethnic localism, one that sponsors an exaggerated regional distinctiveness as a justification for new and self-serving centrifugal dispensation; and the third, reminiscent of pirates, has little allegiance to anyone beyond those who gather around him to loot whatever is left of the commons, as well as threaten those who refuse to capitulate with hatred and direct violence. While the first is a noble but tragic individual, the other two, though different, typify the general debility that accompanies "smallness," a condition that, in Jad Rubinfeld's expression, "...is the refuge of those who cannot bear the large responsibility for living over time, the responsibility of what they have been and will be." Jad Rubinfeld, *Freedom and Time: A Theory of Constitutional Government* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 16. We intend to elaborate on this typology in the fullness of our volume that is in progress.
2. See, for instance, Samatar and Samatar, eds., *The State in Africa: Reconsiderations* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 2002).
3. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963), p. 81.
4. Op. Cit.
5. Paul Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1957).
6. This section relies heavily on Abdirazak's own recollections.
7. "Moment" is used here in a mode akin to Henri Lefebvre's sense. It is a situation, according to David Harvey, to be "interpreted as fleeting but decisive sensations (of delight, surrender, disquiet, surprise, horror, or outrage) which were somehow revelatory of the totality of possibilities contained in daily existence. 'Moments' [could be] conceived of as points of rupture, of radical recognition of possibilities and intense euphoria." David Harvey, "Afterward" in Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), p. 429.
8. Founding members of SYL were Abdiqaadir Shakhaawa Diin, Mohamed Ali Nurr, Dheere Haaju Dheere, Ali Hassan Mohamed (Verduro), Haaji Mohamed Hussein Haamud, Mohamed Faarah Hilowle (Farinaajo), Khaliif Huudoow Mahalin, Mohamed Hirsi

Nuur (Sayiddin), Osman Geedi Raage, Mohamed Osman Baarbe, Daaji Osman (Dhegawayne), Mohamed Abdillaahi Faarah (Hayeesi).

9. For the humiliating nature of Italian rule, see Robert Hess, *Italian Colonialism in Somalia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).

10. The Italian doctor was connected to the authorities. Earlier, he used to be the underground link to Italian supporters during the British Administration. Money was sent from Mogadishu via the postal service to the doctor who then distributed it to the client Somalis. Abdirazak suspected the regularity of the money-containing parcel and so he opened it one day to find large quantities of cash. He informed SYL headquarters and passed on the money to Mogadishu for Party use. The practice ceased from then on.

11. Established in 1950, the Territorial Council was a 35-member advisory group, whose membership consisted of representatives of existing political parties, elders from various regions chosen by the Administration, and Italian, Arab, and Indo-Pakistani communities. The SYL was sufficiently satisfied with the shift in policy that it named one of Mogadishu's neighborhoods after Anzilotti.

12. Alphonso A. Castagno, Jr., *Somalia* (New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1959).

13. All Party elections were through secret ballot.

14. The paradox is that the creation of a Somali government and a slow but measurable improvement in service provisions generated divisions between those who benefited from such service and direct employment and others who felt personally left out. Herein lies one of the early sources of naked instrumentalist attitudes toward the state, a posture that enervated the development of a generalized consciousness of national interest.

15. Haji Mohamed was a good nationalist who did not understand how the political party system worked. Consequently, he acted as if there was no contradiction between his severe berating of the government whose party he himself backed.

16. The first group of Southern Somali college graduates returned to the country in 1959. Among them were Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, Ahmed Elmi Dualeh (a medical doctor), and Gabyo, who studied law and became the constitutional minister.

17. The unified national parliament consisted of 123 members, of which 33 were from the North. There is no evidence that Northerners ever questioned the distribution of parliamentary seats between the two regions.

18. He was a fairly literate and somewhat cautious man.

19. The level of education among Northern and Southern MPs was about the same. An advantage that some Southerners had was their ability to speak both official languages. In contrast, Northern civil servants were significantly more competent than those in the South.

20. Michael Mariano was appointed as head of the Commission after he left Parliament in 1964.

21. A former senior civil servant from the North heading a national ministry admitted that they urged their Northern colleagues in Hargeisa to work against the constitutional referendum. This individual told us that the cabinet, particularly all the senior Southerners, including the Prime Minister, had full confidence in Northern senior civil servants. Moreover, the PM and other senior ministers had special consultations with Northern Director-Generals when it came to matters of integration. Our source could not explain

what exactly motivated them to work against the Constitution given that Northerners had a lot more than their share of leading civil service positions!

22. John Drysdale restated his praise for the leadership of Abdirazak as “the best Prime Minister Somalia ever had.” This was noted in a postcard sent to Abdirazak in 1992 (in our possession).

23. It seemed that Mohamed Ibrahim Egal’s recent behavior in the North was still fresh in the PM’s mind, overshadowing his opposition to the Constitution. Two ministers, Egal and Sheikh Ali Jimaaleh, were on a visit to the North to speak with the public. They prolonged their visit. When a presidential visit to the North approached, the PM ordered the two ministers and their delegations to return to Mogadishu to avoid transport problems, given that the only available plane for the president had very limited capacity to accommodate both delegations. The two ministers requested that they be allowed to stay in the North during the President’s visit, but the PM insisted on their return to Mogadishu. This created strong resentment—both ministers felt belittled in the eyes of their respective regions and quickly resigned. Hitherto, Sheikh Ali Jimaaleh was a firm supporter of the regime, but immediately moved to the other extreme. The President’s visit was a success, affirming the general emotions surrounding the evolving sense of nationhood. Abdirazak worked to contain the political fallout precipitated by the resignations, while it took the PM some time to appoint replacements. Yusuf Ismail Samater took the place of Egal, and Basbaas became the Minister of Commerce.

24. Juujeh was an eloquent Somali speaker, but had little lived experience in the northern two-thirds of the country. He was from Baydhabo and settled in Mogadishu very early in his life and knew little about other regions. But he was a quick learner and had to move fast to understand regional political cultures to effectively manage the ministry. Internal politics were further exacerbated by Ethiopia’s vigorous campaign to destabilize the young republic. The Ethiopian authorities spent substantial resources and focused attention on the North. This was a difficult time for any serious politician. One of the daunting problems was how numerous politicians disguised their personal interest as regional and “clan” interests. There were no clear tactics to counteract this as the public was illiterate and mass media was poorly developed. The low skill and educational level of many cabinet members who could not convincingly articulate the nation’s common agenda compounded this. One example of the difficulty the regime faced with the public and with sectarian-oriented regional politicians is illustrated by the case of the town of Burao. Abdirazak, as Minister of Interior, honored a longstanding request of the elders of Burao to designate it as a new regional capital for eastern areas of the North. Although the Minister recognized that the country could not afford more administrative centers, he was concerned that any reluctance on his part would be misconstrued as a Southern leader’s unwillingness to give power to Northerners. But another equally plausible interpretation circulated when Burao’s request was approved that saw the creation of the new region as a Southern ploy to create a problem within the Isaaq kin. Further, when a native son was appointed as its first governor, segments of the Burao population who were not immediately related to the new governor petitioned the Minister. Abdirazak told the petitioners that the appointee was the most qualified person for the office and urged them to give him a chance. He added that they should directly communicate with him if the governor did not carry out his duties fairly.

25. The Minister pointed out to his Southern colleagues that he had several nephews who would not be able to take the examination, as they did not study English.
26. A further example of corruption involved the competition for a new telephone system in Mogadishu. An additional source of corruption was family pressure. Abdirazak claims that he does not remember giving a job to a single member of his own family.
27. See President Aden's diaries, 1961–64.
28. The electoral laws of the North and South were integrated into a single national code, developed after Abdirazak left Interior. Despite some irregularities in two locations during the constitutional referendum, there was no concern with the openness and fairness of the forthcoming election. While some members left SYL and Mohamed Ibrahim Egal and Sheikh Ali Jimaaleh began to campaign under the SNL banner, none of them raised any questions about the process. The Interior Ministry and the national police force managed the election.
29. A member of the cabinet originally coined this phrase.
30. It was also rumored that Abdirazak's disloyalty to the PM was manifested in one of the occasions when he was acting PM. He decided to act against the corrupt parastatal, which had a monopoly on incense. He claims that his intentions and those of other ministers were to relieve the PM from dealing with this agency, given that some of his constituencies were involved. This was construed as calculated mischief to undermine the Prime Minister.
31. This is the closest President Osman came to publicly explaining why he chose Abdirazak rather than Abdirashid: "I have faith that Abdirazak Haji Hussein is capable of attempting to solve some of the grave problems that have been worrying me for some time, and that are essentially internal." *Africa Report*, November 1964, p. 6. According to *Africa Report*, "The SYL Central Committee and parliamentary group had passed a unanimous resolution supporting the incumbent, Dr. Sharmarke, for the Premiership. But President Osman was convinced, apparently, that the country needed a change... Abdirazak's character as a tough minded, fair and enlightened leader was noted by many. His friends say he is firm, but fair. His enemies say that he has the makings of a tyrant. Nobody disputes his courage, nor the drive to work 18 hours a day, to the detriment of his health even after a serious operation at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C."
32. Upper Jubba had one of the largest numbers of parliamentary seats.
33. "[The] first cabinet caused consternation among the old guard, and excitement among young intellectuals. By Somali standards, it is highly unorthodox because the members were chosen without giving due weight to tribal and geographic balance. There was an effort to stress ability and education as criteria for holding office. Five ministers were from the north as against two northerners in the outgoing Sharmarke cabinet... Prime Minister Abdirazak also broke all precedents by requiring cabinet members to make a formal declaration of personal property and business holdings." *Africa Report*, November 1964, p. 6.
34. Dhuhul's *Dalka* depended on state printing since there were no other printers in the country. On several occasions, Dhuhul did not have sufficient funds to pay for printing but the Government allowed him to do so at no cost, despite his unflinching criticism.
35. *Africa Report*, November 1964.

36. *Dalka*, the independent weekly, took note of some of the political ground the Prime Minister was breaking. "The other important political development . . . has been the dismissal of the Minister of Industry and Commerce, the Minister of Agriculture and the Under-Secretary of Agriculture . . . the dismissals were due to charges of corruption. This is an epoch-making development. No longer will the appointment to a ministerial post mean a license to rob . . . . Another important political fact is that the dismissal of a minister because he has been charged with corrupt practices is a development we could not possibly have expected from any of our prime ministers. The present Prime Minister has his faults—certainly many of them. But it would be neither fair nor honourable to deny him the support and praise he deserves for re-establishing the principle that even ministers cannot afford to be caught in compromising situations, involving the misuse of public funds or the power of office . . . . A third important aspect—perhaps the most important—is that the Attorney General's office has applied to the National Assembly for authorization to institute criminal proceedings against the two ministers and the Under-Secretary. Such a request must be moved in the assembly by a fifth of its membership and must be approved by a two-thirds majority in a secret ballot. The requests for the authorization to prosecute in respect of at least the ex-Minister of Industry and Commerce is believed to have been submitted to the President of the National Assembly some months ago. The one in respect of the Minister of Agriculture was apparently submitted at about the time of or after his dismissal . . . . The general belief in informed circles is that the requests for authorization were kept from examination in the last session by the President of the National Assembly." *Dalka*, Vol. I, no. 8 (1966): 10.

37. *Ibid.*

38. The Constitution of the Somali Republic, p. 22.

39. Ali Siad Araleh interview, Nairobi, July 2001.