

(2) *To educate the youth in modern ideas and civilisation by schools and cultural circles.*

The Club made swift progress. When it was reconstituted as the Somali Youth League two further aims were added:

(3) *To eliminate by constitutional means any situation prejudicial to Somali interests.*

(4) *To adopt one Somali language, and to put into use the existing script known as "Osmania."*

The script, Osmania, had been initiated some thirty years before, but the Italian Government had strongly opposed it; any Somali found using it was imprisoned, as was stated by the Somali Youth League deputation to the Four Power Commission of Investigation.

The Youth League gained steadily in membership among Somalis of all ages. When testifying before the Commission in January, 1948, they claimed an active membership of 93,000, supported by 300,000 relatives, dependents and followers of members, and 79 branches outside Mogadishu. They explained that the Central Committee consisted of thirteen members, who elect from their number a President, Vice-President, Secretary-General, General Treasurer, two Financial Controllers, and two paid inspectors. The Central Committee had to meet at least once a week. There were local committees elected for six months by the local members. A Committee of Appeal of seven members was elected by the Central Committee. The President, Vice-President, Secretary-General and General Treasurer formed a Central Direction who formed the executive of the League, preparing the Agenda of the Central Committee and putting it into execution.

The General Assembly consisted of all members of the League in Mogadishu and representatives of local committees.

Membership was open to all Somalis and "assimilated Africans" not less than fifteen, or more than sixty years of age; persons over sixty might be elected as honorary members. All members must be of good character, without criminal convictions; they might not belong to other Somali organisations. The membership fee was 1s. per month, with 5s. entrance fee. For breach of rules, or behaviour prejudicial to the League, a member might be expelled, reprimanded or fined up to 100s. (£5). Appeal against such punishments might be made to an Appeal Committee. After expulsion a member if permitted to rejoin had to pay 50s. A member who voluntarily withdrew had to pay 100s. before being allowed to rejoin.

Members suffering financial or other difficulties might appeal for aid to the League.

It will be observed that the League had an exceedingly elaborate constitution, democratic in form, but of an authoritative trend, that it exercised a strong discipline over its members and imposed onerous penalties, which must have borne hardly on the small means of any who incurred them. The founders of the League regarded its work as immensely important.

The swift growth of the organisation, its early success in overcoming some tribal feuds apparently was greatly surprising to many British Administrators with long experience of Somaliland.

By 1947 the Youth League had a hundred full-time employees and was engaging actively in several aspects of Somali welfare:

(1) The League had intervened to secure ameliorations in the slave conditions of the indigenous labourers on the Italian estates at Genale and in other districts, and had succeeded in procuring some concessions.

(2) Two commercial and agricultural companies had been promoted by the League, the "Società Anonima Agricola Somali" founded in February, 1947, and the "Società Anonima la Somali" founded in May, 1947. The League claimed that the stimulus given to Somali agriculture by the first of these companies had doubled the area under indigenous cultivation by the end of the year.

(3) An anti-Tuberculosis Board had also been promoted by the Youth League, which had raised considerable sums for the work of the Board.

(4) The League claimed to have established and maintained without assistance from the British Administration, either in funds or material, six evening classes in Arabic, two in English, held regularly in Mogadishu, and a further eleven classes in English and seven in Arabic in the following centres: Beletwen, Bullo Burto, Baidoa, Bur Hakaba, Merka, Margherita, Kismayu, Brava, Galkayu, Gardo, Bender, Kasim, Villagio.

The maintenance of such classes is a praiseworthy activity, no small achievement on the part of a voluntary organisation of people with small incomes, in a period of economic depression; it indicates devotion and ability on the part of the organisers, and a keen desire for education by the students—a resilience and eagerness for advance in a long-oppressed people, which reveals them worthy of a better fate than to be thrust again under the old tyranny and exploitation.

The Somali Youth League received great encouragement from the British Military Administration. A speech of Brigadier Brigham, expressing sympathy with the League, was reported in the official organ of the British Administration, "The Somalia Courier," on May 21, 1947. In giving thanks for being invited to take part in the anniversary celebration the Chief Administrator said:

"The development and expansion of the Somali Youth League during the past four years has been a very remarkable achievement and reflects the greatest credit not only on those who have organised it, but on the large numbers of Somalis who are ready to devote their money and their services to the improvement of the conditions of their countrymen.

"The aims you have expressed to-day, and which are embodied in your constitution, are worthy of the highest praise, and you may be confident that during the short time which remains to