

the Commission of Investigation, and subsequently before the United Nations, a demand which had no chance of realisation. The League had no alternative to offer. The unfortunate separation from Ethiopia, which the continuance of British Military Administration of the Ogaden had imposed, had perpetuated the artificial aloofness from Addis Ababa created by Italian colonisation, and had thereby prevented the friendly negotiations with the Government in Addis Ababa, and the relations of mutual confidence and co-operation which would have given the policy of the young, energetic and progressive Somalis another orientation and would have opened to them the possibility of the desired new era of happiness and liberty. That the way was, as yet, obscured was largely due to the protracted British Military Administration of the Ogaden, which had created a belief in the possibility of a separate Somali State.

*"The atmosphere of intimidation which oppressed the colony, the economic pressure amid Somali poverty made a genuine and truly frank expression of Somali public opinion impossible. The Somali Youth League leaders were employees of the British Military Administration; they had their jobs to consider. Their opponents, who later gained courage to display themselves, were mainly employees, or former employees of the Italians. The two strong opposing forces: The British Administration, and the Italians, landowners, employers and still important officials under the British, created the view that there could be but two alternatives for the future of the Colony: the British plan, or the Italian plan. A Somali who held another opinion would be without support from either force—an outcast."*

# XVI

## CONTEMPORARY SOMALILAND

### POPULATION

There has never been a census of population in Ex-Italian Somaliland; only estimates of population have been attempted.

The British Military Administration estimate was approximately 971,000 in 1947, though as regards the nomadic population the estimate was considered by the Administration as subject to error up to 20 per cent.

Of the above total population estimate, 940,000 were judged to be indigenous. The remainder, living mainly in the seaport towns, were estimated as 25,000 Arabs, 1,000 Indians, 3,744 Italians.

### Nomadic Tribes

Of the native inhabitants, the largest section, approximately 560,000, belong to the three main Somali tribal groups: the Darot, Hawiye and Dir. Within these are sub-tribes, sections and clans, which last term is equivalent to family, but it may be used to apply not only to the small unit of parents and children, but to a much more extended relationship.

The majority of these three main tribal groups, some 350,000 or thereabouts, live in the eastern and western pastoral areas of the Benadir and Upper Juba Provinces, the remainder comprise the majority in the sparsely populated Mijjertein and Mudugh. They are mainly nomadic, being compelled to this manner of life by their surroundings, and accustomed to it by long tradition, but the Dir and a few of the Hawiye have taken to mixed farming.

The members of the tribe are united by descent from a common ancestor. They settle their affairs in the tribal council, the "Shir," where all tribesmen are entitled to attend and speak, as in Saxon England. The chiefs and headmen are chosen by their tribes and sub-tribes. The greater chiefs are usually hereditary, but the succession is subject to the consent of the tribe. Important decisions by the chiefs are submitted to the Shir.

The tribes own no land, but certain wells are recognised as belonging to each tribe.

### The Sab Tribes

The Sab tribes are estimated to number about 292,000. They speak Sab, a dialect closely related to Somali, and are considered to be of similar racial stock to the Somali speaking tribes.