

THE ISAQ SOMALI DIASPORA AND POLL-TAX AGITATION IN KENYA,  
1936-41

by E. R. Turton  
University of Zambia

Kenya has always regarded the Somali as either an infernal nuisance or embarrassment'.

Glenday to Beckett, 21 June 1941

Poll-tax agitation has been a fairly common phenomenon in Africa. On most occasions it has involved little more than vocalized protest. In a few instances, however, it has led to resistance that has been both serious and violent; the earliest example of the latter is probably to be found in the widespread Fante uprisings that occurred immediately after the introduction of the Gold Coast Poll Tax Ordinance of 1852; a later example is the Natal uprising of 1906 which has been attributed in large measure to the introduction of poll tax at the end of the previous year. Yet the agitation by the Isaq Somali in Kenya did not follow either of these two patterns. In several respects it was a highly unusual movement: first, the Isaq were campaigning to pay higher taxation; secondly, in order to secure their aims they attempted to mobilize the whole Isaq diaspora, so that Somali in Uganda, Tanganyika, British Somaliland and Britain were all involved in this agitation, (see map )

The Isaq are one of six Somali clan-families (the widest level of segmentation amongst the Somali) and are divided further into clans, sub-clans and primary lineages. Traditionally their home is along the northern coast of the Somali peninsula, though for centuries a number have settled in Arabia. The emergence of an Isaq diaspora, however, only dates from the end of the nineteenth century and seems to have been encouraged by three different factors. First, there was the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Then, during the jihad of Muhammad Abdille Hassan between 1899 and 1920, the Isaq found themselves on the whole supporting the British Government and subject to increasing political and economic pressure. Lastly, there was the constant problem of poverty and population increase and the opportunity of alleviating this by temporary or permanent emigration.

The opening of the Suez Canal led to the development of bunkering facilities at Aden which quickly became an important port of call. The Isaq were well placed geographically to take advantage of this development, since many lived at Aden or on the Somali coast immediately opposite, and they enlisted in significant numbers as stokers and firemen on passing ships. As a result, by the end of the nineteenth century, ports as far apart as Perth and New York had small Isaq communities, but the largest groups outside Africa and Arabia were to be found along the Welsh coast of Britain.

At the same time there was a steady flow of Isaq from the northern Somali coast down to East Africa and their numbers gradually increased between 1900 and 1930. Initially many

came as askaris and gun-bearers. It was Stanley who set a precedent in 1874 by stopping at Aden and recruiting the first Isaq for his Congo expedition. Others quickly followed suit: Count Teleki, Sir Richard Burton, Captain Lugard and J. W. Gregory all hired Isaq for their trips. Most explorers formed a highly favourable opinion of them and not surprisingly, therefore, many were encouraged to stay on in British East Africa, despite strict repatriation clauses in their contracts.

Many Isaq entered government service as clerks and interpreters or joined the King's African Rifles and the East African Constabularies. Most, however, became stock-traders an occupation at which they excelled—either trading on their own account in the pastoral reserves, or working as factotums to large stock-owners such as Lord Delamere, the Hon. Galbraith and Berkeley Cole. A number of European farmers encouraged and financed Somali stock-trading contracting them to buy donkeys in Karamoja or Southern Ethiopia and to exchange cattle for sheep in Laikipia.

Invariably the Isaq ended by residing in the townships and trading centres of Kenya. From 1900 onwards the largest concentration of Isaq was to be found in Nairobi, while Isiolo became their second most important centre after 1927. There were sizable communities at Nanyuki and Nyeri and less numerous groups at Kakamega, Kajiado, Maralal, Nakuru, Embu, Kitale and Eldoret. There were also a small number of Isaq in Uganda most of whom were confined to the area around Mbale. During the same period there was a similar, though very much smaller, movement of Isaq to Tanganyika. The Germans, like the British, had made use of Somali askaris recruited at Aden, and most of those that remained on had likewise turned to the cattle trade. But the evidence suggests that during the 1930s Isaq migration to Tanganyika was very much more rapid than it was to either Uganda or Kenya, until eventually their number came to be almost as great if not greater than in either of the other two East African countries.

#### The status of the Isaq in Kenya, 1919-36

Virtually without exception all those who wrote of their contacts with the Isaq either in Kenya or in Tanganyika noted their proud, reserved bearing and haughty demeanour towards other East African peoples. The Isaq were indeed strongly convinced that their status was superior to that of other East Africans and they bitterly resented being placed in the same category as the Bantu, whom they perjoratively referred to as 'slaves'. Moreover, such an attitude was encouraged by those government officials who claimed that the Somali were not of African origin and who advised that the Isaq should not be classified as ordinary African natives. For their part, the Isaq refused to be called Africans, or even Somali, if this gave the idea that they came from a part of Africa. Instead, they emphasized that they had either resided or been born at Aden, and that their written language was either English or Arabic. The significance of this claim lay in the fact that from 1839 to 1937 Aden was annexed to British India and its inhabitants were therefore considered to be Asians. But the claim suffered from the fact that verification was impossible due to the absence of documentary evidence, and so, despite Isaq pretensions, they were initially classified as natives.

Pressure from the Isaq in Kenya to be allowed to pay higher poll-tax was almost certainly motivated by their desire to acquire Asiatic status. According to a Provincial Commissioner of the Northern Frontier District (NFD), the Isaq believed

'that Asiatic status would confer, amongst other things, immunity from arrest by African police constables, special accommodation in hospitals and prisons, more favourable treatment in the law courts, and eventually the sharing with the Indians of lands in the "White highland".'

Whether the Isaq ever wanted land is a moot point, but according to Ahamed Nur and M. H. Mattan, two prominent members of the Isaq Association, their aims were to obtain: (1) access to Asian wards in hospitals, which was granted them between 1919 and 1928; (2) Asiatic privileges in jail; (3) an Isaq member on the Legislative Council; (4) the same trading privileges as Indians both in the townships and in the reserves the Somali, for instance, were not allowed to own more than one shop, and trading licences, so they claimed, were sometimes refused them.

Isaq Somali aspirations were partially fulfilled in 1919, when they achieved limited non-native status through the Somali Exemption Ordinance of that year. This ordinance allowed them to pay non-native poll-tax and also permitted them to be classified as non-natives in all future ordinances. In a government notice of 1921 defining the term 'native', in the General Revision Ordinance of 1925 which repealed it, and in the Interpretation (Definition of Native) Ordinance of 1934, the Isaq were indeed consistently defined as non-natives. At the same time, however, almost all native legislation was still made to apply to them with only a small number of exemptions. This was clearly an unsatisfactory state of affairs. 4 The Isaq were considered to be natives under the Native Authority Ordinance but not under its corollary the Native Tribunal Ordinance, while under the Registration of Domestic Servants Ordinance they were considered to be either native or non-native depending on their salary. Their social position was confused and uncertain.

Nevertheless, between 1919 and 1936, the Isaq continued to pay exactly the same taxation as Asians and this, to them, was a significant vindication of their claims to equality of status. In 1936, however, a sliding scale was introduced and non-native tax was divided into three categories: Europeans paid 40s., Asians 30s., and other non-natives 20s. The Isaq found themselves placed in the last category, their per capita tax being reduced by 10s. and it was this that sparked off their agitation.

Initially, they sought to change the 1936 Non-Native Poll-Tax Ordinance by articulating their grievances to as wide an audience as possible. Lawyers were consulted, memorials drafted and signatures gathered for petitions. In 1937 the Isaq asked Ormsby-Gore, then Colonial Secretary, to appoint a board of enquiry so that their complaints could be properly investigated and settled definitively. The following year they sent a petition to King George VI. All this proved to be extremely expensive, however, and funds had to be

raised to defray the costs. Moreover, this sort of activity if it was to be sustained, required some form of central organization, and this was provided by the Ishaakia Shariff Community, an Isaq Somali association, which met once every three months as a national body in one of the Eastleigh sections of Nairobi. Yet, in the process of orchestrating their complaints, the Isaq were not content merely to involve their fellow clansmen in East Africa. At their most expansive, they addressed circulars to 'Isaq everywhere in the World'; but, in particular, they attempted to organize a vocal and sympathetic following in British Somaliland.

### The support for the Kenya Isaq in British Somaliland

The Kenya Isaq had persuaded their clansmen in Burao as early as 1926 to raise the question of their status with the Governor of British Somaliland, and four years later the Burao Isaq presented the Duke of Gloucester with a memorandum on the same issue when he visited the Protectorate. After 1936, however, the Nairobi Isaq began to organize support in British Somaliland for their agitation more systematically. First, they started to correspond regularly with the Nadi Atiya Rahmani Association, a sort of Somali welfare club, which had been founded by Isaq traders in 1935 and which had branches in Burao, Hargeisa and Erigavo. Secondly, in 1938 they appointed Haji Farah Omar as their representative in British Somaliland. Educated in India, where he had been greatly influenced by Gandhi, Haji Farah was an experienced political leader, and, according to Touval, was 'one of the first modern politicians to emerge in the Protectorate'. Within a matter of months Haji Farah had found an issue the proposal to introduce written Somali into the school curriculum which not only aroused widespread local opposition but which could also be closely linked to the struggle of the Isaq in Kenya over Asiatic status.

At this time, the administration in British Somaliland was preparing to implement a programme of educational expansion that was long overdue. A Director of Education was appointed for the first time in 1938 and it was hoped to open a number of new schools, starting with one at Berbera. It was also planned to introduce written Somali into the curriculum. Mr Ellison, the new Director, arrived in the Protectorate in April 1938 and almost immediately began a tour of the government assisted Koranic schools. At that stage the government's plans seem to have been accepted without opposition, though from the start a number of reservations were expressed at Berbera by certain influential religious leaders.

These reservations, which were initially religious, quickly acquired a political significance when they were supported by appeals from Isaq Somali in East Africa for full scale opposition to the introduction of written Somali. The Isaq in Kenya claimed Asiatic status partly on the basis that Arabic was their written language and they feared that this claim would be undermined if an alphabet were invented for the Somali language which was at that time only spoken. They therefore wrote to British Somaliland expressing their keen apprehension that if Somali were to be written in Roman script, as were many Bantu languages, Somalis everywhere would be reduced to the same status of the Bantu they despised. Many of these letters described the plight of the Isaq in East

Africa in highly emotive terms; an Isaq trader from Moshi for example wrote to the Nadi Atiya Rahmani Association in Burao:

'We are in a very bad condition and treated very severely in respect of the tax as some new regulations have been issued against us. Because we agreed to pay yearly the same taxes as the Indians and Asiatics and now we are ordered to pay the same taxes as slaves as if we are the natives of this Africa. . . . You must not think that he (the new Governor Sir Vincent Glenday) came to Somaliland to administer justice —No! No! No!—but he came to make you slaves as those in this Africa . . . This information must be kept secret.'

An impression was created in British Somaliland that should written Somali be accepted there, other disabilities against which the Isaq were vigorously campaigning in East Africa, such as poll-tax and registration, would likewise be introduced into the Protectorate. The fear that poll-tax might be introduced was not entirely unreasonable since the British Somaliland Protectorate must have been virtually unique in 1939 in not having any system of direct taxation. Earlier attempts to introduce tax had been dropped after bloodshed and riots. However, there was in fact little chance of any tax being introduced until the Somali clans had been disarmed and that did not happen until 1942. But additional substance was given to these fears when it was learnt in January 1939 that the Governor, Sir Arthur Lawrence was to be succeeded by Sir Vincent Glenday, who had previously been a Provincial Commissioner in Kenya primarily concerned with the Somali there. Glenday was described by the Nairobi Isaq in a telegram to the Secretary of State as an administrative officer venomously opposed to the Community's efforts at rising of its status' (sic). The telegram ended: 'Appointment viewed with apprehension, in Somaliland may cause unrest.' The interests of the Kenya Isaq in their struggle to pay a higher poll-tax, and thus secure a higher status for themselves, seemed more than ever at this point to coincide with the interests of their brethren in British Somaliland who felt their own status threatened by the possibility that Somali would be rendered in a Roman script.

This combination of religious and political opposition proved to be extremely potent, and resistance to the introduction of written Somali spread remarkably quickly. From the start, the leaders of the Qadiriyya tariqa (brotherhood) played a prominent part in securing widespread opposition to the idea of written Somali. In June 1938, Sheikh Ibrahim Egal, a Habr Awal Isaq, brought a letter from the leaders of the Qadiriyya tariqa at Berbera to the elders of the Salihiyya tariqa at Burao, appealing against Somali being taught in the schools; this letter was read out in the mosque at Burao.

At the same time, the qadi (judge) in Hargeisa also expressed his opposition to written Somali stating: 'We Somalis are Arabs by origin and we like to consider ourselves as still being of the Arabic race. We can never consent to our being considered as Africans.' He claimed that the issue over the status of the Isaq in East Africa was only a minor consideration and had not influenced his stand, but other religious spokesmen openly connected the two issues. On 15 July, at the feast of Aw Barkadle, two wadads (people

who claim to be religious experts) spoke out against teaching Somali in the schools and specifically referred to the Isaq campaign in East Africa where, they stated, the Isaq were already classed with the Asians and the Arabs, and paid the same taxes as the latter; and they added that if Somali became a written language, they would then all be classified as Africans.

Even more disquieting for the administration were the rumours that were started and the allegations that were being made and widely circulated about the Director of Education:

'In the mosques and coffee shops, in all the larger centres, it was preached that the Director of Education was a disguised Christian priest and that he had been seen in Aden wearing a beard (a supposed characteristic of Roman Catholic missionaries).'

It was suggested that the attempt to introduce written Somali was motivated by a desire to spread Christianity, for as long as Somali could not be written, so the argument ran, the Bible could not be propagated. It became quite common for Somalis to address the Director of Education as 'Padre', and the whole education scheme was brought into disrepute.

Meanwhile, the campaign against written Somali was also being organized along political lines. When in 1938 Haji Farah Omar had been contacted by the Kenya Isaq and appointed as their representative, he had immediately sought their financial assistance and had begun organizing political support for the anti-Somali movement. In particular, he had tried to get himself appointed 'spokesman' for the Somali, thereby by passing the political structure of traditional and government appointed headmen. His first success occurred at Burao where at the beginning of August he was chosen to be the 'spokesman' of the local Somali. A document signed by 125 people declared:

'We the undersigned Akils and elders of British Somaliland do hereby declare that we have come to the conclusion that we have nominated and appoint Haji Farah Omar to represent British Somaliland subjects grievance and we fully authorize him to represent in whole matters which injures and interests the tribe. '

However, the akils and elders of Burao did not give Haji Farah authority to act simply as he thought best. He undertook to consult them about events that concerned their welfare and this consultation was to take place in Burao itself. He also agreed not to interfere in tribal disputes and to be impartial in tribal affairs. He agreed that his position was to be elective annually, and reserved the right to resign after giving four months' notice. At the same time, Haji Farah successfully reorganized the normal decision-making structure by creating a small council, and it was normally this council and not the larger body of elders that he consulted before making representations to the Colonial Office.

He certainly lost no time in making the most of his new position. Within three days of being elected he sent the following telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies:

' British Government loyal subjects lost complete confidence with this Government. They suffer spy raids, unbearable fines, other intolerable torture. Appeal for immediate protection from Distractors (i.e. District Officers) . . . Haji Farah Omar spokesman.'

By the end of August he was gaining support in Hargeisa. Signatures were collected supporting his appointment as 'spokesman' there, though a certain amount of intimidation was used. Many signatures were obtained through pressure exerted at the local branch of the Qadiriyya tariqa. In the mosque a wadady Abdullahi Warsama, was alleged to have declared: 'The man who does not follow (other) Muslims and appoint Haji Farah Omar as spokesman is finished with religion. The few government interpreters who spoke against Warsama and Haji Farah Omar were openly called kafirs in the streets and jostled or threatened. When, therefore, Haji Farah was elected spokesman in Hargeisa, the administration began to look on his movement in a rather different light. Previously, it had been assumed that he was simply trying to unite the Somali in their grievances. It was now felt that his aims were 'purely anti- Government and that he definitely wants to cripple the whole administration.

Nevertheless, the movement continued to grow and was beginning to make an impact on Protectorate affairs. The Governor came to the conclusion that the Protectorate's educational policy would have to be held in abeyance for the time being, stating that 'the opposition to written Somali is still almost universal.' Meanwhile, Haji Farah got himself elected 'spokesman' in Berbera and persuaded the local akils to sign an obsequiously worded petition supporting Isaq agitation in East Africa which was sent to the Colonial Office:

' In East Africa the Somali community is sometimes considered on the same level as the Negroes of East Africa. Since they pay non-native poll tax cannot the British Government assure them that they will get the same privileges as the non-Europeans residing there. We Somalis have always tried our utmost to show our loyalty to the Union Jack . . . Thousand and thousands of lives have been laid down for the British flag in East Africa not to mention Mesopotamia. During the struggle with the Mad Mullah we were fighting against our own countrymen but we realized that we were fighting for an ideal Government . . . This may not compare well to the sacrifices of other parts of the Empire but it surely proved our loyalty. . . (ends) long live the King.'

A few weeks later, in the middle of October, he sent another telegram to the Colonial Office, asking for a Royal Commission to be appointed immediately in order to investigate the unrest in the Protectorate. He claimed to be writing on behalf of the so-called Burao National Council, a characteristic hyperbole which referred to nothing more

than the small consultative council Haji Farah normally created in those towns where he had been elected 'spokesman'. The Colonial Office, however, was suitably impressed by the terminology and even the Governor was momentarily caught off balance by the hyperbole. He cabled that a most urgent reply was required but added that he had never heard of any National Council.

Haji Farah Omar, however, had over-reached himself. Nemesis followed swiftly, not as the result of any action by the British administration but through the rapid desertion of his followers. Both in Burao and in Berbera this was due to his high-handed manner and his failure to consult with the elders there. Twice he had sent telegrams to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in the name of committees that had never functioned. In practice, he interpreted his role as 'spokesman' in a very different way from that of the people who had elected him.

By the end of the year, the 'spokesman' movement had died down and in December the school at Berbera was opened, though without written Somali being part of the curriculum. Religious opposition was also weakening, and, while the Qadiriyya tariqa remained steadfastly hostile, both the Salihyya and the Andarawiyya turuq agreed to appoint Koran teachers at the school. More-over, the appeal of the religiously motivated claim that the Somali were essentially Arabs who accepted Arab culture declined until it was ultimately restricted to a tiny educated elite, who had for the most part visited Arabia. The ordinary coastal Somali, on the other hand, became increasingly conscious of a potential rivalry between themselves and the Arabs for jobs. This rivalry became so acute that in December 1938 it gave rise to the Nadi al-Shabiba el-Arabiya, an Arab Youth Club, established to protect Arab rights along the coast. It was so effective that in Jibuti jobs were divided equally between Somali and Arabs on the steamers of the Messageries Maritimes and the two no longer formed one body within the Syndical des gens de Mer.

At the beginning of 1939, the Governor visited the Atiya Rahmani Association and specifically criticized the use of the club for political discussion. Haji Farah Omar dropped out of the Isaq movement and the club does not seem to have played any further part in supporting the Isaq of Kenya. However, the situation was still potentially explosive in the Protectorate, and on 18 May 1939 the Director of Education was stoned by a hostile crowd when he was visiting the Koranic school at Burao.

Nevertheless, the 'spokesman' movement did not entirely disappear. At the same time that Haji Farah seemed to be losing popularity a new candidate appeared on the scene, Jama Siad (also known as Jama Telephone), a Dolbahanta Herti. The Protectorate administration was never quite sure whether he was a potential rival to Haji Farah or working in league with him, but later events and oral testimony suggest that the two were co-operating closely. Haji Farah had achieved no success in British Somaliland. It was clearly time to start campaigning elsewhere and Jama Siad was in an excellent position to do this, for he had lived almost 33 years in England and was obviously going to return there. In November 1938 he started visiting Erigavo, Burao and Las Anod in connection with the 'spokesman' movement, collecting money and signatures. The following year he

undertook an extensive trip to the out-lying areas of the Protectorate, always trying and sometimes succeeding to get himself appointed as delegate to represent the Somali in England where he returned in March 1940.

The attempt by the Kenya Isaq to gain effective support from their clansmen in British Somaliland had not proved to be very productive, whilst at the same time being a costly undertaking. Far from contributing to the financial resources of the Kenya Somali, their clansmen in British Somaliland demanded payment for their assistance. Moreover, the orchestration of Isaq grievances from Burao and Berbera probably only intensified and widened the opposition of the British Government to their demands. Strongly worded despatches from the Somaliland Protectorate, warning of the dangers and pointing out the broader implications of granting them Asiatic status, were often referred to by Colonial Officials as one reason for not acceding to Isaq requests. As their allies in British Somaliland proved less effective than anticipated, so the Isaq increasingly pinned their hopes on their supporters in Britain.

### Somali agitation in Britain

Most of the Somali who visited or lived in Britain were seamen, and many of the latter were stokers. Others were involved in service industries associated with the sea: a few owned cafes at sea-side ports offering light refreshment and entertainment; rather more were hotel-keepers providing accommodation for seamen, frequently finding employment for them as well and even smuggling them into the country if necessary.

There are no accurate statistics yet available on the number of Somali in Britain at the time when their poll tax agitation began. However, in 1930 there were approximately 500 Somali in Britain and close on half of these were Herti Darod and not Isaq. The small number of Isaq clearly limited their scope for action. Moreover, there was a long history of competition and hostility between the Somali and other much larger immigrant groups, such as the Arabs and the Indians. An alliance with the Arabs would have been particularly useful. In Cardiff, where there was the greatest concentration of Somali, they numbered 227 in 1930, while the Arabs there numbered 1,241. Furthermore, all of these Arabs professed to have come from Aden, thus claiming Asiatic status on precisely the same grounds as the Isaq. But destitute Adenese and Indians long remained a problem at Cardiff and competition for jobs between these groups and the Somali was often acute. In a notice concerning the rules of employment in the port it was written that officers engaging Somali and Arab crews shall be informed that it is very undesirable to mix Somalis and Arabs'.

Because of their relative isolation and the lack of support they could obtain from other immigrant groups, and because of their small numbers, the Isaq never attempted to mobilize mass support to gather petitions or to raise money. Nor did they try to mobilize the support of other Isaq in Britain, since many of the latter were often only transient visitors. Instead, they sensibly concentrated their efforts on a campaign of political lobbying.

As early as 1930 the three members of Parliament for Cardiff had arranged a meeting with officials from the Board of Trade, the Home Office and the India Office to discuss the plight of the Somali and of the Aden Arabs. Later that year, Mr Henderson Jr. wrote to the Prime Minister about the problems that the Herti and the Isaq were facing. When, therefore, the Kenya Isaq approached Mr Abi Farah, a Somali lodging-house keeper who lived at Barry Dock, to be their representative in Britain the Somali community there had already formed its contacts with a firm of Cardiff solicitors and the local members of Parliament, and they had also formed their own Somali Society.

Through Mr Abi Farah and a Cardiff solicitor, Mr Morgan, the Isaq community managed to make direct contact with the Colonial Office where their grievances were made known. Much more important, they got a succession of MPs to write about their aspirations and difficulties to the Colonial Secretary. In retrospect it is tempting to be sceptical of the practical value of this lobbying and to conclude that it achieved nothing. Certainly it produced no change in British Colonial policy. Yet, in fact, there were two very important results.

First, the Colonial Office approached any question relating to the Isaq with a constant awareness that what they were doing might at any moment be brought to the attention of a wider public in Britain and that awkward questions might easily be raised in Parliament. This factor alone encouraged a certain caution where otherwise one imagines there would have been little. Moreover, the mere fact that Governors in Kenya were asked to write much fuller explanations of the motives behind their decisions than they were wont, the mere fact that their despatches were often found to be wanting in detail, meant that Governors themselves were aware of some pressure, however slight, which in itself was useful to the Isaq.

Secondly, and this surely was the real importance of the lobbying, it gave the political organization of the Isaq community a truly formidable appearance to their followers in East Africa. It must have greatly assisted both their recruitment of new members and also their fund-raising campaigns to defray the costs of Mr Morgan's services. The fact that they were apparently able to circumvent an unsympathetic administration in Nairobi and that they had their own direct line of contact with the Colonial Secretary, so that they could plead their case directly to those responsible for the formulation of policy, brought them immense prestige. These were powerful psychological props which boosted the morale of the Isaq and encouraged them to pursue their action with determination. There can be no doubt that their contacts with Isaq in Britain and the knowledge that their representatives there had access to the Colonial Office, added a new dimension to their struggle and made it seem almost impossible to their supporters that it should fail.

Jama Siad's return to Britain in 1940 also added to the barrage of Parliamentary representatives pleading the case of the Isaq. Sir Richard Acland wrote stating that he was thinking of putting a question in the House of Commons about the Somali. He emphasized that the 'question of the status of Somalis has been represented to me very strongly by some of them', and it was assumed at the Colonial Office that Jama Siad had been his main source of information. It was obviously embarrassing for the Government

to have a question brought up in Parliament. A long and detailed reply was sent to Sir Richard with the plea that it was earnestly hoped he would not find it necessary to raise the question in the Commons. At about the same time, similar queries were raised by Creech-Jones and it was again thought that Jama Siad had been in contact with him. Indeed although Jama Siad was regarded at the Colonial Office as 'quite a pleasant gentleman', he was also the one Somali in Britain with a sufficiently wide range of contacts to cause the authorities some uneasiness. Not only did he have contacts with a number of well-known Labour political figures such as Clement Attlee, Fenner Brockway and Creech-Jones, but he was also one of the Joint Secretaries of the Somali Society and from 1935 had been an office holder on the League against Imperialism.

However, the Isaq campaign in Britain, as in British Somaliland, was an expensive foray. There was a heavy price to be paid for the kudos of being able to lobby support there. The essence of the Isaq movement was therefore necessarily concentrated in East Africa, and particularly in Kenya, where their numbers were sufficiently large to support their agitation.

#### The Isaq campaign in Kenya

The nature of the Isaq movement posed a number of problems for the Kenya administration. It was exceptionally difficult to keep under constant surveillance an organization whose contacts extended throughout the Colony and into Uganda and Tanganyika, and the CID Nairobi often bewailed the lack of any substantial interchange of information between the three East African territories. In practice, neither Uganda nor Tanganyika furnished any reports on the Isaq until a specific query had first been submitted and even then the reply was almost certain to take many months. The mobility of the Isaq posed a further problem. One week their leaders might be in Nairobi and the next week in Tanga or Kampala. Traditionally, the Kenya administration had made considerable use of Isaq traders as a useful source of intelligence. Now, in the 1930s, by contrast, these highly mobile people had in their turn to be watched, their movements noted and controlled, and some efforts made to gauge their intentions. And this proved more than a little difficult.

From the beginning of 1938 the Isaq started holding secret meetings and placing look-outs outside houses, and they were remarkably successful in preventing the authorities from discovering what they were discussing. There were wild and unsubstantiated rumours of plots to assassinate various administrative officers which were taken very seriously. The CID made strenuous efforts to infiltrate informants into the movement and also made plentiful use of plain-clothes officers. However, the number of Isaq informants was very few and the plain-clothes men tended to be of strictly limited value. PC Muhammad Abdi, described as 'the pseudo fish scout', found that within a few days of taking up his duties at Nyeri his house was being watched by a strange Somali. After climbing out of his back window he found himself constantly followed and was soon relegated to other duties. The plain-clothes constable on special duty in Isiolo who was trying to pick up local gossip in the coffee houses reported that he was so well known that local Somali deliberately avoided discussing controversial subjects when he

appeared. Elmi Farah was sent as a temporary replacement and reported at the end of the first day that many Somali had asked him whether he was yet another plain-clothes officer seeking information about them. Corporal Elmi was a disappointment to the CID for he was quickly won over by Isaq arguments and started pleading their case to his superiors. Even the local administrative officials seem to have doubted the value of the extra police effort. As the District Commissioner at Isiolo noted light-heartedly in April 1938: 'there had been a change in the political atmosphere since Police precautionary measures were instituted. The change may, however, be due to the rains which started at approximately the same time. '

One consequence of this is that there is very little information about the activity of local Isaq committees, while quite a lot is known about the National meetings held in Nairobi, for no attempt was made to conceal the latter. Indeed, on several occasions the Commissioner of Police was invited to attend, and the Isaq were fully aware that police informants were present at these meetings. As a result, special motions clearly designed for police consumption would be slowly and laboriously read out in English, while most of the proceedings were naturally conducted in Somali.

The National branch met once every three months in the Eastleigh section of Nairobi. Members who attended were charged one shilling admission fee and attendance varied between 150 to just over 200. The organization was highly centralized and the greater part of every meeting was taken up with the election of office-bearers. First, there were seven office-bearers on the National Committee; then there was a Central Managing Committee of 15; finally, the main office-bearers of the local branches were chosen and so too were local clan-heads. Wisely, the choice of office-bearers in Uganda and Tanganyika was generally left to the local branches in those countries. But in Kenya there was often considerable friction between the Central Committee and the local branch over the nomination of local office holders. In January 1938, the local branch at Nakuru refused to accept their new President who had just been elected in Nairobi at a National meeting; and the local branch unanimously threatened that if the appointment were not cancelled 'then we shall be obliged to take up the matter legally and have your Private elections stopped. ' Yet the Central Committee got its way, as it did elsewhere, by threatening to impose heavy fines on any branch that defied its authority.

The second major item discussed at all National meetings was the question of finance. The leaders of the Isaq community showed a certain penchant for flamboyance and extravagance. There were occasions, true they were rare, when anything up to 850s. were spent on hiring a fleet of cars to visit a single branch. And while the normal mode of communication was by word of mouth or by letter, the Central Committee was all too often inclined to send telegrams. At the end of 1937 the Isaq had succeeded in collecting 3,000s. and by March 1938 the sum had risen to 10,000s. At the March meeting it was agreed to divide the Association into three sections: (1) Nairobi; (2) outlying districts; (3) Northern Frontier Province. And each of these sections was to contribute 1,000s. a quarter. Additional revenue was to be raised by the sale of tickets and at the meeting 110 books each containing a hundred tickets at one shilling each were issued. Moreover,

every member of the Association was expected to pay a monthly contribution of one shilling.

A great deal of this money was presumably spent in obtaining legal advice. Mr Morgan had to be paid for his services in Cardiff and there were two firms of solicitors whom the Isaq consulted regularly in Nairobi. But as their agitation became more intensive, especially towards the end of 1938 and through- out 1939, more and more money was needed to support those members who were arrested and imprisoned. Throughout 1937 the Isaq successfully paid the 30s. poll tax that was demanded from Asians. The Kenya administration accepted the money but returned a receipt of 20s. in lieu of poll tax and a separate miscellaneous receipt of 10s. Money collected on this miscellaneous account was then deposited in a bank and the payee told that he could withdraw it whenever he wished. In 1938, however, the Government decided not to accept 30s. from the Isaq any longer. But, since the latter had just petitioned King George VI over the tax issue, they refused to pay at the lower rate until they had heard the result of their petition.

By the middle of 1938 it was estimated at Isiolo that out of 154 Isaq registered there only 11 had paid their 1937 tax and none had paid anything in 1938. Moreover, the movement was having an impact on the Herti Darod and out of 120 of the latter only 38 had paid their 1937 tax and six their tax for 1938. There was apparently little the administration could do. Two dozen tax defaulters were arrested, but lack of jail accommodation prevented the arrest of any more. The complete lack of grazing for attached stock (seized in lieu of tax) was also a serious handicap. Again the identification of a defaulter's cattle could be difficult. Objections could be lodged and towards the end of 1938 a movement to make over cattle to wives was started. Towards the end of the year over 100 Somali were arrested in Nairobi and imprisoned. Nevertheless, during the first three months of 1939, the Isaq continued to refuse to pay any poll tax, though according to Police Intelligence a number of Isaq did in fact pay but then attempted to keep this a secret for fear of reprisals.

Due to the lack of administrative staff, the Isaq campaign of passive resistance was beginning to have some success. By this time the campaign had spread to all centres where the Isaq were to be found, and two leaders were imprisoned in Lamu. In the middle of April 1939, the Isaq learnt that their petition to King George VI had been rejected. The news was received with incredulity. The Isaq maintained that they were being duped by individual District Commissioners and that the truth was being kept from them. The year 1940 opened with the campaign of the Isaq to be allowed to pay Asiatic tax in full swing. Passive resistance to the payment of lower tax was extended in April to non-observance of the Outlying Districts Ordinance; the Isaq rejected their passes because they were described as Somalis, whereas they now called themselves Sharif Isaq Arabs.

The Officer in Charge of the Northern Frontier District (NFD) noted with concern that 'much is made of the greatness of the Somali nation, and the great deeds of the Isaq troops in the past. The spirit of nationalism seems to have spread to East Africa.' One may doubt the accuracy of this diagnosis, for there was a considerable difference between Isaq tribal chauvanism and post Second World War Somali nationalism, yet clearly the

Isaq movement was causing concern. It was well known that a number of Isaq were in the pay of the Italian Consul at Nairobi and there was the usual fear that their agitation was being manipulated from outside sources. It is not altogether surprising, therefore, that when allied troops gained control of Italian Somaliland the Officer in Charge of the NFD wrote hopefully: 'we want to get rid of as many Somalis as possible be they Herti or Isaq and we are asking for the assistance of British Somaliland and Somalia as well. , Such assistance, however, was not forthcoming; while, in July 1941, the Attorney General ruled that though many Isaq and Herti had entered the Colony illegally, those who had resided there over five years —and this was the vast majority—would have to be considered as legally domiciled in Kenya. Yet, by the end of 1940 the Isaq had begun to pay their tax and the following year the administration was surprised to discover that to the best of their knowledge the Isaq had indulged in no disloyal or subversive activity. Even more surprising, the Isaq in no way opposed the issue of identity certificates in 1941 under the Defence Regulations and willingly put their thumb-prints on certificates instead of photos. This sudden collapse of their movement requires an explanation. And, although the war situation in East Africa was clearly a contributory factor, a much more important reason can be found in the actual organization of the movement itself. The failure of the Poll Tax Movement

It was one of the main weaknesses of the Isaq movement that they failed to gain the support of two important groups of East African Somalis who could have contributed significantly towards the successful achievement of their goals; these were the Herti Darod and the NFD pastoralists. There were many good reasons for the hostility that often prevailed between the Darod and the Isaq. In the first place, many of the supporters of Muhammad Abdille Hassan (better known perhaps as the Mad Mullah) had been Darod, while most of the Somali who had fought on the side of the British against him had been Isaq. The legacy of this conflict was a long-standing blood feud between these two groups. Secondly, this blood-feud was compounded by the actions of Abdurrahman Mursaal of Serenli, who led an uprising in 1916 in which a number of Isaq were murdered by Darod. Finally, most of the Herti Darod came from Italian Somaliland and there was little point in them supporting the Isaq claim to Asiatic status since the claim was based so firmly on their alleged place of birth being Aden.

At the same time, there were equally important reasons why it was most desirable for the Isaq to win the support of the Herti. Ultimately, it was a question of numbers: Herti support would have doubled the size of the Isaq movement. During the last months of 1937, therefore, the Isaq made every effort to get the Darod to participate in their agitation, but without success. Realizing that co-operation was not possible at that stage they changed their tactics and began to violently denounce the Herti. They declared that all the Mijjertein Herti (a sub-clan that lived in Italian Somaliland) and most of the Dolbahanta Herti were Italian agents and they openly pressed for their expulsion from the Colony. Such allegations were naturally impossible to prove and the Herti were not slow to bring similar charges against the Isaq. Accusation and counter-accusation for theft, sedition and espionage followed; but after a time, the pressing need for some form of co-operation once again made itself felt.

In March 1938 it was reported that the Isiolo Isaq were trying to persuade the Herti Darod there to present a united front with them. They used, as intermediaries, men who had Darod fathers and Isaq mothers. But the failure to achieve a rapprochement led in May 1938 to renewed and more violent bitterness. Writing of this hostility one of the leaders of the Isaq movement at that time claimed that 'the latter hates the former like hell' and it took many months for feelings to calm down. A final attempt in January 1939 to secure a joint Isaq and Herti protest over the appointment of Glenday as Governor of British Somaliland failed partly because of bad timing. The approach was made after the Herti had already sent a congratulatory telegram. Equally important was the failure of the Isaq to gain the support of the NFD pastoralists. This was due largely to the fact that these pastoralists attached little significance to the objectives of the Isaq. Thus, while the Isaq wanted to gain continuing access to Asian hospital wards, the NFD pastoralists merely wanted a hospital in their Province, for none existed, and there was no experience of Asian wards. Again, the Isaq wanted to be able to send their children to Indian schools, but during the 1930s there is no evidence of any desire amongst the Somali pastoralists for a Western-type education for their children. More-over, until the Second World War there was not even one school in the whole of the Province.

At the same time, the Isaq were willing to pay a higher rate of taxation in order to secure these privileges. Indeed, this insistence on voluntarily paying higher taxation lay at the very centre of all their campaigns. Yet, it is clear that the Somali pastoralists had no desire to pay any more tax. At the beginning of 1933 there had been a certain amount of resistance to the introduction of poll tax. The Muhammad Zubeir had paid slowly and reluctantly, while the Habr Suleiman and a group of Abd Wak under Kuni Jibrail had absconded to Italian territory without paying anything. Later, when the principle of individual taxation was introduced into Wajir District in 1936, the Digodia stated that they would refuse to pay. This was because communal agreements had previously let the Digodia off very slightly, some sections only paying between one or two shillings a head. Yet the Isaq were campaigning at this very time to increase their per capita tax from 20s to 30s. Naturally they could hope for scant support from pastoralists who balked even at paying a few dozen pence.

Not merely were the Isaq unable to gain any support from Somali pastoralists, but those Isaq who resided in the NFD found their position there extremely precarious, and this made it difficult for them to participate fully in the policy of non-cooperation or of civil disobedience laid down in Nairobi or Isiolo. The Isaq had no prescriptive right to be in the NFD and at the slightest hint of agitation or recalcitrance, the administration could, and at times did, expel them from the Province. Both their continued presence there and their authorization to trade depended on their continuing good behaviour. Moreover, there was a natural bias amongst all the Provincial administrative staff against them. And Reece, for many years the officer in charge of the Province summed up this attitude observing that by 'disseminating propaganda and Islamic ideas of a crude and fanatical nature they often do much harm. '

Furthermore, during the 1930s the Isaq in the NFD experienced a number of economic problems that hardly gave them the opportunity to endanger their position still further.

During the early years of the 1930s the stringent application of Quarantine Regulations meant that the stock trade, which was their livelihood, practically disappeared. And when that trade picked up, especially after 1935 when there was a flourishing export trade to Italian Somaliland, the Isaq and other 'alien' Somali found themselves discouraged from participating in it.

The inability of the Isaq to co-operate with the Herti also made itself felt in the NFD. At Mandera, at the end of the 1930s, there were 12 'alien' Somali of whom only two were Isaq. Their numbers were generally so small as to make them totally ineffective. Thus, although the Isaq at Moyale and Wajir were urged not to pay tax in 1938, there were few defaulters. 'Their attitude', according to a Moyale Intelligence Report, 'appeared to be that they were only a small community in Moyale and that a demonstration by them would be quite ineffective, especially as they do not have the sympathy of the other alien Somalis, and that should they give unnecessary trouble to the Government it would undoubtedly react to their disadvantage later.'

Lastly, the start of the Second World War and the evacuation of the NFD in 1940 dealt a conclusive blow to any possibility of Isaq agitation in the Province. Their impact remained purely on the intellectual level, as the disseminators of new ideas. 'Already one or two NFD tribesmen who have gone down country are reported to have tried to pay non-native poll-tax in Nairobi, Gerald Reece noted in 1938, and he continued: 'The prominence at the present time of the Isaq Association and their efforts to exalt themselves by making contemptuous remarks about other Somali is probably responsible for the beginning of a feeling of tribe consciousness amongst the Somali of this District.'

But, if a key weakness of the poll-tax agitation movement lay in the failure of the Isaq to win sufficient support from other Somali clans and clan-families, their own internal disunity also played an important role in their relative lack of success. Not all Isaq sections had participated with the same amount of enthusiasm in the movement, and, even more important, not all sections contributed equally to the campaign funds. From the very start the Habr Yunis were at the forefront of the agitation, closely supported by the Ediagalla and the Arap (these three sections made up the Habr Gerhajis Isaq clan). The second main Isaq clan, the Habr Toljaala, closely supported the agitation but was anxious to hide its activity. On the other hand, the third Isaq clan, the Habr Awal, did not participate in the movement for several years and at best were lukewarm supporters of the agitation.

Moreover, the arrest of over 100 Isaq in 1938 for non-payment of tax began to put a mounting strain on the financial resources of the community. Isaq who had been imprisoned necessarily suffered a financial loss and they began to demand assistance from the Association. In January 1939 it was agreed to levy 10s. from each member and the amount collected to be placed in a special fund to be used for the benefit of ex-prisoners. But this was not enough. At the National meeting in July 1939 it was stated that at least 10,000s. in cash were needed and a few months later the Association was heading towards bankruptcy. By November there was no money in the bank, and the

President was attempting to borrow 200s. to pay for a trip to Isiolo, the money to be repaid out of future annual subscriptions.

Pressure on the different Isaq clans to increase the level of their contributions intensified competition between the different sections for posts. Already, at the beginning of 1939, the Habr Yunis were insisting that the Treasurer and the Secretary should belong to their sub-clan, since they contributed the largest share of the Association's funds. Rivalry became so intense that at the July national meeting each sub-clan was asked to swear an oath of fidelity to the movement. The President tried to restore calm by grandiloquently announcing: 'We have telegraphed our London legal adviser and Mr Aby Farah about this, they both said we should be cool.

But when at the beginning of 1940 it was announced that the Association needed a further 12,000s. the movement split asunder. The Habr Yunis, Habr Awal and Eidegalla refused to contribute because they maintained they did not have a large enough say in the disposal of funds. The delegations from Tanganyika and Uganda claimed that large sums had been paid to Nairobi and they demanded to know how they had been spent before contributing any more. By March 1940 only the Habr Yunis were willing to continue with the campaign of civil-disobedience and the centre of the movement gravitated to Kitale where Habr Yunis influence predominated and where they tried to consolidate their position as the controllers of the movement's policy and funds. What ultimately brought the poll tax agitation to a close was the very rapid increase in the level of taxation as a result of the war. In 1940 it was decided to levy non-native tax according to wealth instead of race. Those with an annual income of over £120 were to pay 60s. a year; those earning between £60 and £120 were to pay 40s. and those earning less than £60 were only to pay 20s. The Kenya administration, however, used a very much easier rule of thumb for assessing the Somali: Isaq shop-keepers were taxed 60s.; Isaq stock-traders were taxed 40s. 63 By the end of the year, the Isaq found that their level of tax had either doubled or trebled and there was no desire to increase the level still more. Equally, the new tax system was no longer linked indirectly to a whole series of related privileges. The Second World War, moreover, dealt a crushing financial blow to the Isaq. Lack of money ensured that in the post 1945 period there would be no revival of the earlier agitation. As the Provincial Commissioner of the NFD noted in 1950, 'the older men, who in earlier days caused trouble as a pastime, have now quietened down, their standard of living has fallen and they no longer have the spare cash to indulge in worthless litigation.' 64 What he might have added, equally appositely, was that the sort of goals which had inspired the Isaq in the 1930s no longer inspired the mass of the Somali in the 1940s. Conclusion

Though in Kenya the practical achievements of the Isaq had been limited, they had not been entirely unsuccessful. In 1942 they succeeded in getting themselves classified as Asians for the purpose of rice rationing. Rather more important, they got themselves classified as Asiatic by the Commissioner of Labour in 1947. Yet the watchful eye of Sir Gerald Reece and Sir Richard Turnbull ensured that these aberrations were either limited or erased. The real success of their movement, however, lay outside Kenya. For in Kenya they had been recognized as being non-native since 1919, but this had not been the case

in Uganda and Tanganyika. In the 1940s, on the other hand, the administrations in both these countries agreed to reclassify the Somali so that they became non-native. Whether this was a really significant advantage is of course another matter altogether. The common formula adopted was to say that the Isaq was not a native of East Africa, but, nevertheless, he was a native of Africa! In practice, this meant that according to the various Definition of the Term Native Acts he was clearly classified as being non-native, though at the same time and incongruously almost all native legislation was made to apply to him. Yet the significance of Isaq agitation in the 1930s needs to be viewed within a broader perspective. Where the Isaq had shown themselves to be particularly innovative had been in their appeal to a diaspora; and where they have been politically most mature was in the way they attempted to put pressure on the government in Britain by lobbying for support amongst sympathetic MPs, and in their attempt to co-ordinate their activities in Kenya so that where possible pressure was applied simultaneously in the outlying regions and in Nairobi. Most subsequent political movements tried to emulate this aspect of the Isaq poll-tax agitation.

However, the development of mass Somali nationalism in the post-Second World War period challenged the traditional goals of the Isaq for the latter had always aimed at improving their status within the colonial framework and had never aspired to overturn it. The result was a split amongst the Isaq: one group, initially consisting mostly of members of the younger generation, joined the nationalist movement; while a minority remained faithful to the Isaq Association, which continued to exist under a new name, and to its old ideals. The Association continued to pay for the services of a Cardiff solicitor and continued to press for improvements in their status. Yet, while emphasis on Isaq clan superiority had had its positive advantages in the 1930s, it proved to be a heavy liability in the 1950s greatly diminishing the appeal of the Association and providing an example of the tribal chauvinists. Its membership declined drastically and its political influence disappeared. As far as the administration in Kenya was concerned its members acquired a new aura of respectability by dissociating themselves from the main branch of Somali nationalism. It was indeed ironic that the Association which had a long tradition of striving for an improvement in the status of the Isaq in Kenya should have found itself so out of sympathy with the more energetic and popular nationalist movement which attracted the support of the great mass of the Isaq themselves precisely because it seemed to offer a real chance of improved status.

1. V. Glenday to Beckett, 21 June 1941, CO.535/138 Pt 11/46219.
- 2 G. Reece to Chief Secretary, 9 May 1944, PC/GRSSA/23/1.
3. DC Isiolo to Reece, 4 April 1938, and Mattan to Reece, 19 May 1938, PC/NFD/4/7/2
- 4 The position of the Arabs and Swahili in Kenya was similar to that of the Isaq. See A. I. Salim, *Swahili Speaking Peoples of Kenya's Coast, 1895-1965* (1973), pp. 182ff
- 5 For further details see E. R. Turton 'Somali resistance to Colonial Rule and the development of Somali political activity in Kenya, 1893-1960 \ *Journal of African History*, XIII, 1 (1972).
- 6 Second Quarterly General Meeting, 11 July 1939, Shariff Ishak Community, Kenya,

Uganda and Tanganyika, PC/NFD/4/7/2

7 Grigg to Lord Passfield, 15 September 1930; Kittermaster to Passfield, 10 September 1930, CO.533/402.

8 He first became politically active around 1920 and as a result of his agitation was later exiled to Aden where he established the Somali Islamic Association which often sent

petitions to the British Government, see: Saadia Touval, *Somali Nationalism* (1963), p. 65. 9 Especially Sheikh Abdillahi Aden, leader of the Qadiriyya tariqa, and Sheikh Muhammad Hussein and Sheikh Nabih Muhammad of the Anderawiyya tariqa.

DO Berbera to Ellison, 15 August 1938, encl. in Lawrence to Macdonald, 18 August 1938,

CO.535/129/46062.

10 DO Burao (R. H. Smith), Minute, 10 September 1938, and DO Hargeisa (N. Park), Report, 10 September 1938, encl. in Lawrence to Macdonald, 17 September 1938; R. E. Ellison, 'Memorandum on Education Policy in Somaliland', CO.535/129/46062.

11 Ahmed Ali to Nadi Burao, encl. in CID to G. Reece, 2 August 1939, PC/NFD/4/7/2

12 Governor Kenya to Secretary of State, 9 February 1939 tele., CO.533/506.

13 R. E. Ellison to Secretary for Government, 14 July 1938, in Lawrence to Macdonald, 20 July 1938, CO.535/129/46062

14 Report of Commission of Enquiry into the Causes of the disturbance at Burao on 20 May 1939 end. in Glenday to Macdonald, 7 October 1939, CO. 535/132/46036.

15 Somaliland Protectorate, Annual Report, Education Department 1938; Glenday to Dawe, 9 January 1940, CO.535/133/46036.

16 Haji Farah Omar, Habr Toljalla and Hassan Dahri to whom it may concern, 2 August 1938; R. H. Smith to Secretary for the Government, 9 September 1938, CO. 535/129/46036.

17 Haji Farah Omar to Secretary of State for Colonies, telegram 5 August 1938, CO.535/129/46036.

18 E. N. Park (DO Hargeisa) Report, 14 September 1938, CO.535/129/46036.

20 Lawrence to Macdonald, 17 September 1938, CO.535/129/46036.

21 Petition to the Marquess of Duffering and Ava from Akils of Berbera District, n.d., CO.535/128/46021/8

.22 Wynne Grey to Secretary of State, 2 December 1938, CO.535/134/46171. See also Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, *Djibuti and the Horn of Africa* (Stanford, 1968), pp. 31, 152, 220-1.

24 Somaliland Protectorate Intelligence Report for the quarter ending 31 December 1938, encl. in Acting Governor to Malcolm Macdonald, 21 January 1939, CO.535/130/46076/2.

25 Much of my information about Jama Siad comes from Ahmed Ismail Abdi whom the author interviewed in July 1971. See also Somaliland Protectorate Intelligence Report, 31 December 1938, CO. 535/130/46076/2.

26 This is the last occasion of an attempt to connect Isaq grievances in Kenya and British Somaliland. Increasingly, Isaq agitation in the Protectorate such as Haji Bashir's resistance to disarmament in 1938 and Isaq resistance to the anti-locust campaign in 1945 was purely local.

27 Somali cafes and hotels were also known as Habdi and Hussein houses. There is a description of Somali immigrants in Britain in Ras Makonnen, Pan-Africanism from Within, as recorded and edited by Kenneth J. King (Nairobi 1973). 28 The second largest group of Somali lived at Barry Dock and very small numbers were to be found in Hull, South Shields, Swansea and Lime Street in London. Chief Constable Cardiff to Home Office, 2 December 1930, HO.45/14299 Pt. 11/562898/72.

29 The majority of destitute Aden Arabs and Indians went to Cardiff and South Shields from the early 1920s. At that date they totalled over 3,000. G. Demster to New Scotland Yard, 29 August 1921, MEPO (Metropolitan Police) 2/1803.

30 'Rules of Joint Registration and Engagement of Somalis and Arab Seamen', 1 August 1930, HO.45/14299 Pt. 1/562898/22.

31 Sir E. N. Bennett, Mr J. Edmunds, Mr Arthur Henderson Jr., minute of meeting, 29 November 1930, Mr Short; Arthur Henderson to Prime Minister, 21 November 1930, HO.45/1499 Pt. 11/562898/54.

32 J. J. Pascin, Position of British Ishak Community of Kenya: note on an interview at the Colonial Office on 19 October 1938, CO.533/491.

33 Fletcher to Macdonald, 4 July 1938, CO.533/491; P. M. Fischer to Macdonald, 6 June 1939, CO.533/506.

34 Sir Richard Acland to Hall, 26 July 1940, CO.535/135/4601/8. 33. In 1935 he had also been an office holder on the committee of the International African Friends of Abyssinia. The only other office holder from Africa on the committee was Jomo Kenyatta. See Roderick J. Macdonald, 'Some reflections on London in the 1930s as a focus for Black anti-Imperial agitation and ideological development', 1971 Makerere Social Sciences Conference Paper. Hall to Creech-Jones, 6 August 1940; Lambert, Memorandum, 30 January and 8 July 1940, CO.535/135/4601/8.

35 Much of the information in this and succeeding paragraphs comes from CID reports which are to be found in PC/NFD/4/7/2.

36 Superintendent CID Nairobi to DC Nairobi, 11 January 1938, PC/NKU/2/200; Superintendent CID to Commissioner Police, 6 July 1938, PC/NFD/4/7/2.

37 Nakuru Ishaak Association to Chairman British Ishaak Association, PC/NKU/2/200.

38 PC Rift Valley to DC Nandi, 30 December 1937 and 22 July 1942, PC/RUP/6A/2/3/2

39 Superintendent CID to Commissioner Police, 11 April 1938, PC/NFD/4/7/2.

40 These were Daly and Figgis, and Shapley, Schwartze and Barrett.

41 Costley White, Minute, 20 July 1938 on Brooke-Popham to Macdonald, 12 July 1938, CO.533/491.

42 OC NFD to Colonial Secretary, 2 April 1938, PC/NFD/4/7/2.

43 B. W. P. Morgan to Malcolm Macdonald, 12 December 1938, CO.533/491.

44 Police Half-Yearly Intelligence Report in Summary No. 47 of Military Intelligence 1939, CO.820/34.

45 Even in Nandi, Nyeri and Nanyuki, Isaq and Herti attempted to pay 30s. tax. DC Nandi to PC Rift Valley Province, 15 June 1938, DC/NDI/1/6/2; Assistant Superintendent Police Nyeri to Comm. Police, 21 April 1938, PC/NFD/4/7/2.

46 R. G. Turnbull to D. O'Hagan, Isiolo H/O Report 1940. PC/NFD/2/4/2.

47 The term \* sharif' indicated the unfounded claim of the Isaq to be descendents of the Prophet Muhammad.

48 Military Intelligence: summary for the period 1 July 1939 to 14 August 1939, CO.820/34.

49 Officer in Charge NFD to DC Marsabit, 27 August 1942, DC/MBT/7/7/1.

50 Reece to Chief Secretary, 14 June 1945, PC/GRSSA/23/1.

51 DC Mandera to OC NFD, 2 September 1942 and DC Wajir to OC NFD, 24 August 1942, PC/GRSSA/1/10.

52 British Ishak Community Memorial, 10 April 1937, CO.533/480; Supt. CID to Commissioner Police, 10 March 1938, PC/NFD/4/7/2.

53 Mattan to Reece, 23 May 1938; DC Isiolo to OC NFD, 21 March 1938; Assistant Commissioner to Commissioner Police, 16 April 1938, PC/NFD/4/7/2.

54 The only success of the Isaq was amongst the Dolbahanta Herti who had quarrelled with Haji Hassan their headman. Assistant Superintendent Police to Reece, 29 April 1939, PC/NFD/4/7/2.

55 There were of course Koranic schools, though they were not assisted by the administration. See E. R. Turton, 'The introduction and development of educational facilities for the Somali in Kenya', *History of Education Quarterly* (1974).

56 The Muhammad Zubeir, Habr Suleiman and Abd Wak were all sections of the Ogaden Darod. Wajir Intelligence Report, January 1935, PC/NFD/3/2/1 (c); H. B. Sharpe, f Abd-Wak Somalis', January 1932, DC/GRSSA/3/4.

57 Wajir Intelligence Report, December 1936, PC/NFD/3/2/1 (d).

58 Reece to PC NFD, 27 July 1929, PC/NFD/4/2/2.

59 The term 'alien\* Somali was applied especially to the Isaq and Herti-immigrant groups of Somali not originally domiciled in the Colony. The alien Somali did succeed, however, in exporting several hundred head of cattle. D. O'Hagan to P. F. Foster, Isiolo H/O Report, August 1936, PC/NFD/2/4/2. See also Alan Smith, 'The Economy of the NFD and the Italo-Abyssinian War', East African Journal (November 1969), 38.

60 Mandera Personalities, DC/MDA/6/1.

61 A similar attitude was adopted by the few alien Somali in Garissa district and by the 72 adult male Herti and Isaq in Wajir District where only four Isaq defaulted. Moyale: Special Military Intelligence Report, April 1938, PC/NFD/3/3/6; Wajir Intelligence Report, April 1938, PC/NFD/3/2/1 (f); DC Garissa to OC NFD, 1 December 1939, PC/NFD/4/7/2.

62 G. Reece to Colonial Secretary, 21 May 1938, PC/NFD/4/7/2.

63 Commissioner Police to OC NFD, 30 January 1939; Dep. Comm. CID to PC NFD, 2 August 1939, PC/NFD/4/7/2.

64 However, the evidence suggests that especially after the war, poor Isaq were paying less not more tax. This was certainly the case with the few Isaq in Nandi. DC Nandi to PC Isiolo, 24 July 1948, DC/NDI/6/2. D. O'Hagan to Howes, Isiolo H/O Report 10 April 1941, PC/NFD/2/4/3. An Ordinance to Provide for the Raising of Additional Revenue during the Present War, XLII, 1939, CO.533/516.

65 O'Hagan, Northern Frontier Province, Annual Report, 1950, PC/NFD/1/1/9.

66 Reece to Chief Secretary, 14 September 1942, PC/GRSSA/23/1.

67 Reece to Chief Secretary, 7 February 1947, PC/GRSSA/1/10. 67. It is curious that while in East Africa the Isaq Somali gradually obtained recognition of their non-native status, in Southern Rhodesia the position was reversed. Prior to 1930 Somalis were regarded as non-natives under the Pass and Native Tax Laws but in that year they were re-classified as natives under a new Native Tax Act. CNC to Secretary to Premier, 28 November 1930, National Archives of Rhodesia, S.I561/30; the author owes this reference to Dr Robin Palmer. East Africa Standard, 10 June 1949; Governor of Uganda to Secretary of State, 13 April 1943, judicial 1/458.

Kampala

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