THE CAREER OF SIR JOHN L. HARRINGTON: EMPIRE AND ETHIOPIA, 1884 - 1918

DISSERTATION FOR THE DEGREE OF PH. D.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

EDWARD COLTRIN KEEFER

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ABSTRACT

THE CAREER OF SIR JOHN L. HARRINGTON:
EMPIRE AND ETHIOPIA, 1884-1918

by

Edward Coltrin Keefer

John Harrington was born in Swansea, Wales, in 1865, of middle-class Catholic parents. The premature death of his father caused his family financial difficulties. He was sent to one of the better Catholic public schools, but lack of money and a difference of opinion with his guardian compelled him, upon leaving school, to enter the British army as a private.

Within the army Harrington rose quickly through the ranks, became a staff-officer, and then a member of the Bombay Political Service. He performed administrative duty in the Kathiawar native states, Aden, and the Somali protectorates. At Zeila on the Somali coast, Harrington was drawn into neighboring Ethiopian affairs.

While Harrington was at Zeila, three events led to British diplomatic recognition of Ethiopia: reconquest of the Sudan, frontier conflicts with the expansionist Ethiopian empire, and the French attempts to gain a foothold in the Upper Nile Valley. Harrington assisted the first special diplomatic mission to Addis Ababa, and was then chosen to represent Great Britain in Ethiopia on a more permanent basis. In 1898, he went to Addis Ababa to

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stabilize Anglo-Ethiopian relations, to settle outstanding border conflicts, and to gain security for the main Anglo-Egyptian interest in the Solomonic empire, the source and affluents of the Blue Nile.

In these goals Harrington was basically successful, but he inescapably became involved in the intricate interplay of European national purposes in Ethiopia. London's policy was to guarantee and bolster Ethiopian independence as the best security for the Upper Nile, and Harrington rightly concluded that plans for a French-controlled Ethiopian railway system threatened the integrity of the empire itself. Harrington helped alert Emperor Menilek II to the danger, and together they sought to defeat the French. Ethiopia naturally required the assistance and support of London in the fight, but the Conservative government in Whitehall, hard-pressed for funds for defence and social services at home and stung by earlier railway failures in Africa, shied away from the logical step of building or supporting a rival line. Instead, the British government took advantage of a general détente in Anglo-French relations to settle differences in Ethiopia by direct negotiation. By late 1906, London, Paris, and Rome had signed the Tripartite Treaty, which ostensibly guaranteed Ethiopian independence, but was more important for its categoric definition of the special interests of the three European powers, should the Solomonic empire disintegrate upon the death of Menilek.

After 1906, London felt less compelled to support Ethiopian independence since it had reinsured its major interest, the Ethiopian Nile basin, by the tripartite agreement. Harrington, nevertheless, continued to warn of the French danger, especially since France retained a practical monopoly of the existing and future railways in Ethiopia. Meanwhile in London, the Conservative and the Liberal governments, reinforced by anti-German elements in the Foreign Office, were determined to cultivate closer relations with France. Harrington's anti-French posture was an embarrassment and irritant to intimate relations, as the Quai d'Orsay was quick to point out. When Great Britain no longer promised support against French influence, Menilek and his advisors cooled on Harrington. Unfortunately for Sir John, his superiors no longer trusted him because he was so firmly wedded to anti-French policy. He was eased out of the diplomatic corps in 1908. After his retirement Harrington made three abortive tries for Parliament as a tariff reformer-imperialist, and he served at the front during the First World War, but his important work was done.

Harrington had played a crucial role in stabilizing Anglo-Ethiopian relations and had alerted the Ethiopian government to the economic threat inherent in the French rail system. He was, however, something of a literalist, and believed in the immutability of the British diplomatic promises to maintain Ethiopian independence. He could not

readjust his thinking to the realities of the German threat and the need for a closer relationship with France, at least so long as he remained in the heated atmosphere of Addis Ababa.

The methods of this study are those of intensive historical research in governmental archives, private papers, contemporary and secondary printed sources. Throughout, I have tried to combine biography with institutional history.

THE CAREER OF SIR JOHN L. HARRINGTON: EMPIRE AND ETHIOPIA, 1884-1918

by

Edward Coltrin Keefer

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For Carol and Sophie

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation recounts the life of Sir John Harrington, the first permanent diplomat to represent Great Britain in Ethiopia, with special consideration of the formulation of British imperial policy in northeast Africa from 1895 to 1908. As senior diplomat in Addis Ababa, Harrington greatly influenced relations between the British and Ethiopian empires. Admittedly, the era of the independent plenipotentiary, relatively free from Whitehall's control, had passed; but because of the remoteness of his post and because of the propensity of the Ethiopian sovereign, Menilek II, for direct and decisive diplomacy with resident representatives, Sir John enjoyed considerable flexibility. In matters of timing and tactics during negotiations for Anglo-Ethiopian frontiers and generally in its assessment of Addis Ababa's reaction to questions related to Ethiopia, Whitehall relied heavily on their man-on-the-spot.

Within the diplomatic corps, still the sanctuary of the British upper classes, Harrington was something of an oddity. His parents were middle-class Catholics, and, although he attended a public school, he joined the Army as a private. After working his way through the military ranks

in India, he joined the Bombay Political Service. While serving as agent and consul for Zeila on the Somali coast, he was drawn into Ethiopian affairs, and his conspicuous efficiency in preparing for the special 1897 Mission to Menilek won him the post of permanent Ethiopian representative.

Three major considerations account for the British decision to establish diplomatic relations with Ethiopia. With the Anglo-Egyptian reconquest of the Sudan, British imperial policy developed a solid interest in preventing an entente, especially in the form of an arms trade, between Addis Ababa and Omdurman. The rise of expansionist Ethiopia resulted in conflict between Menilek's claims for the historic frontiers of the Solomonic empire and British spheres of influence in East Africa, as defined by European agreements. Finally, the French campaign for influence in the Upper Nile Valley and the possibility of a Franco-Ethiopian alliance there argued for a permanent British presence at Addis Ababa.

While in Ethiopia, Harrington acted in a dual capacity similar to that of Stratford Canning in Turkey; he was agent of the major imperialist power in northeast Africa and unofficial advisor to the Ethiopian government engaged in a careful diplomatic struggle to maintain its hard-won independence vis-à-vis covetous European powers. Such duality was possible because London perceived, until 1906, that an independent Ethiopia was the best means of assuring

its overriding interest in the Ethiopian empire, the security of the source and affluents of the Blue Nile.

During his years in Addis Ababa, Harrington became resolutely anti-French, believing Paris sought to undermine Ethiopian independence through control of the empire's economy. When Whitehall agreed to a colonial accommodation with Paris, Sir John strove to include Ethiopia in its scope. He soon became convinced that France still sought to transform the Solomonic empire into another Morocco, notwithstanding the Entente Cordiale of 1904 nor the Tripartite Treaty of 1906, a convention ostensibly engineered to guarantee the integrity of Ethiopia. In 1908 he resigned in protest and disgust.

Harrington's career convincingly illustrates three major themes of British and Ethiopian history. First, British imperial policy in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa was always a compromise arrived at by balancing major competing considerations: security for the water supply of Egypt and the Sudan, the prerequisites of London's European policy, and the limitations of the British Treasury. Second, notwithstanding its overall technological superiority, the British empire was surprisingly ill-suited to compete for disputed African territory with its Ethiopian counterpart. This curious disparity was particularly evident in the outcome of Anglo-Ethiopian frontier negotiations. Only on the Ethio-Sudan frontier, where London had a vast prior Anglo-Egyptian commitment (the army for the reconquest of the

Sudan), did Harrington manage to achieve a frontier which he considered favorable to British imperial interests. Finally, Harrington's inability to adjust his anti-French stance in the face of the larger priority of the threat from Germany was symptomatic of the lag between British imperial and European considerations during the first decade of the twentieth century. The retreat from isolation, with the concomitant movement towards France and Russia, no doubt, caught a great number of other British imperialists off stride.

In examining Harrington's career, no claim is made for universality. He was not the archetypical British imperialist (if that creature ever really existed). While Harrington displayed certain attitudes generally held among late-nineteenth century practitioners of imperialism, his position as agent and unofficial advisor to the sole major independent African monarch places him in an almost unique category. Rather than serving as a model for British imperialism, Sir John's experience provides a tool for understanding the particular composition of the British empire's policy towards Ethiopia.

Harrington himself was an intriguing personality. Like Kitchener, he suffered from doubts and anxiety to the point where his effectiveness as a diplomat was impaired. He was sensitive to criticism, easily excited, quick to speak his mind even at the risk of giving offense, and insistent on proper respect of his position as Britannic

representative. Nonetheless, during a good part of his tour in Addis Ababa, Harrington enjoyed a close personal relationship with Menilek, which was, in turn, conducive to effective negotiation and mutual trust. With the men of the diplomatic corps and Foreign Office, however, Harrington usually felt slightly ill at ease. He had earned his position not because breeding and educational background predisposed him towards the exclusive club of professional diplomacy, but because he was knowledgeable, capable, and available for his difficult post in 1898. Harrington always realized that Ethiopia would be his only important position; he had no claim to further service in the capitals of Europe.

Addis Ababa itself was a truly exceptional diplomatic post. Ethiopia, with its separate Christian church, rugged mountains, and independent inhabitants has always fascinated Europeans. After the stunning victory over the Italians in 1896, the flotsam and jetsam of Europe, freebooting adventurers, outright swindlers, and dubious concessionaires, descended upon the Ethiopian capital. Harrington continually suffered from these "undesirables" throughout his years in Ethiopia. Conditions in the new capital were primitive by European or Egyptian standards. For a good part of his tour Harrington lived in tents and a series of interconnected mud and wattle huts which passed for a legation. Notwithstanding Menilek's program of modernization, Addis Ababa remained one of the most remote and difficult posts available to a

diplomat. The small European community in the Ethiopian capital, especially the representatives of the rival limitrophe powers, engaged in a hectic and relentless struggle for influence, often using palace intrigues, rumors, threats, and canards to achieve their ends. To this demanding assignment Harrington came as a young, inexperienced lieutenant on loan from the Bombay Political Service. For the next ten years, he played an important role in stabilizing Anglo-Ethiopian relations and alerting Ethiopia to the danger of the French-supported railway, but he could overcome the overriding logic of British foreign policy during the first decade of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER I: EARLY LIFE, 1865-1894

John Lane Harrington was born on January 16, 1865 in Wales, where the industrial revolution was in the process of transforming both countryside and society. Since capitalization of resources was based on previous experience, relatively advanced mining technology was introduced into Wales to exploit its coal deposits. Whereas the English had experienced relatively slow industrial growth, the Welsh economy underwent rapid industrialization, with extreme social consequences. Demand for labor brought an influx of immigrants from southwest England and nearby, famine-racked Ireland. In the first forty years of the nineteenth century the population of Wales more than doubled.[1]

Among the newcomers were the Harringtons, Irish Catholics who settled in Swansea. John Harrington's father, Nicholas, had a surgical practice whose clientele, Irish artisans and laborers, could afford only modest fees. The Harringtons lived a comfortable middle-class life in provincial Swansea until August 1875, when Nicholas Harrington died, leaving his widow and three children only £800. To

[1] David Williams, A History of Modern Wales (London, 1950), pp. 229-30.

make ends meet the whole family had to work, and John, aged ten, licked stamps in an office part-time for five shillings a week.[2]

Swansea was a drab Victorian industrial town dominated by blackened and rusting metal works and rows of red-brick houses (two rooms up and two down). The town was not pleasant to the eye; yet the atmosphere was not grim. Within walking distance of the center of the metal works--the heart of industrial Swansea--was the beautiful countryside of the Gower peninsula. Slightly farther away were the hills and wild moorlands of the Tawe River valley. Swansea itself had a seaside with sands and a wide bay.[3] Despite Agnes Harrington's reduced circumstances, there is no reason to conclude young John's childhood was an unhappy one.

In 1882, John Harrington embarked upon what was to be a formative experience of his life. He was sent to Stonyhurst College, one of the older and more renowned of

[2]Will of Nicholas Harrington (d. Aug. 30, 1875), Somerset House, London; Crewe Guardian, Jan. 5, 1910.

[3]Eilvned and Peter Lewis, The Land of Wales (London, 1945), pp. 60-64; H. L. V. Fletcher, The Coasts of Wales (London, 1969), p. 35.

England's Catholic public schools.[4] Under the direction of the Jesuits, Stonyhurst boys received a full measure of cold Catholicism in the classroom, cold dips in the swimming bath, and cold sweat on the playing fields.

Although the Catholic public schools were a system separate from their Anglican counterparts, they nonetheless adopted and inculcated similar values: they "lauded public loyalty and limited individual privacy; they cultivated the 'thick skin' and usually ignored the tender heart."[5] Harrington attended Stonyhurst during a period in which headmasters, almost to the man, believed that their principal duty was to mould character and to prepare their boys for roles of leadership in British society. One method of preparation was through "the moral glorification of Games" on the house and inter-school level. At Stonyhurst, Harrington fitted into the category of "all-rounder." He took the challenging university course and enjoyed sports, at which he continued to play throughout his public career. A second ingredient in character formation was Christian morality;

[4] Stonyhurst College was founded abroad to provide education for Catholic youths prevented by the Penal Laws of Elizabeth I from obtaining Jesuit schooling. The school moved several times to avoid persecution; in 1794, it reopened in England at Stonyhurst, near Preston. Like most public schools, Stonyhurst College expanded greatly in the nineteenth century. Frances Irwin and Cecil Chichester-Constable, Stonyhurst War Record (Derby, 1927), passim; John Gerard, A Stonyhurst Handbook (Stonyhurst, 1927), p. 6; J. G., Memorials of Stonyhurst College (London, 1881), pp. 1-40.

[5] Rupert Wilkinson, The Prefects, British Leadership and the Public School Tradition (London, 1964), pp. x-xi.

as schoolmasters dedicated to Catholicism in a sea of sometimes hostile Protestantism, the Jesuits at Stonyhurst worked diligently to cultivate their charges' religious lives. Besides this emphasis on "muscular Christianity," the prefectorial system played a large part in conditioning the boys for lives of public service. In the 1880's, prefects of the upper form, or "Higher Line" as it was called at Stonyhurst, enjoyed immense power; they generally ran house activities, helped to legislate rules, kept order, and judged and usually punished offenders.[6] The similarity between the prefect's function and that of the district officer of the empire is obvious. During his three years at Stonyhurst, Harrington obtained what he most likely later considered invaluable experience.

Although the Victorian public school shied away from specialized or vocational training in favor of a general education (mostly the classics), conditions of school life acclimatized young men to the kinds of material disadvantages they would face if they chose an imperial career, either civilian or military. The "monastic isolation" of school previewed the family sacrifice usually demanded of a servant of empire, and unheated dormitories and cold baths found their rough equivalent in the rigors of life in the tropics or along the frontier. But the military characteristics of the public school are perhaps most striking:

[6] Ibid., pp. 30-31; Gerard, Stonyhurst Handbook, pp. 26-28, 44-45.

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discipline, hierarchy, hardship, barrackroom living, house spirit and teamwork, and finally, the reverence paid to school tradition. It is not surprising that so many public school boys chose military careers; their education was tailor-made for it.[7] Harrington, himself a future soldier, left no record of his immediate reaction to Stonyhurst; he did, however, remember his school days fondly in later life.[8]

In Victorian England the public school was the culmination of the education of the vast majority of the sons of the upper-middle class and aristocracy. Even if a boy went on to Oxford or Cambridge, the public school remained the "basic conditioner"; university was only a continuation of the educational process, not a new experience.[9] For those who attended, university was a transition from adolescence

[7] Wilkinson, Prefects, pp. 16-17. Stonyhurst, as one of the oldest Catholic public schools, carefully nourished those eccentricities which became hallowed school tradition. Not to be outdone by Rugby, they played their own form of football, and threw in a rudimentary form of criket, supposedly a holdover from Elizabethan days before exile. The combination of fervent Catholicism and a long history made Stonyhurst as tradition-conscious as any of the famous "Seven," the most influential and long-established Anglican schools. Gerard, Stonyhurst Handbook, pp. 26-28, 56.

[8] In 1909, Harrington became president of the Stonyhurst Old Boys Association. When Harrington's sister died in 1955, she offered his portrait to Stonyhurst College. Gerard, Stonyhurst Handbook, pp. 27, 35; Will of Agnes Francis Harrington (d. Dec. 24, 1955), Somerset House, London.

[9] Robert Heussler, Yesterday's Rulers: The Making of the British Colonial Service (Syracuse, N.Y., 1963), p. 107.

to manhood in which the lessons of public school became self-evident. Graduates were generally more polished, more sophisticated, than their friends without the Oxbridge experience. Harrington considered attending university; yet, to use the words of one of his closest friends, "financial complications and a difference of opinion with his guardian . . . led him to enlist in the Dublin Fusiliers."[10] Actually, the chronology is not quite complete. Upon leaving Stonyhurst after his eighteenth birthday in January 1884, Harrington tried to earn his living by teaching at fifteen shillings a week, but found he could not do so. Only then did he enlist in the British Army as a private.

Enlistment in the ranks was an unusual way for a public-school boy to begin his army career; such a step attests to Harrington's impulsive nature and to the bitterness of the argument with his guardian. In the 1880's the reputation of the common British soldier was unsavory; he was often considered a miscreant who spent his leisure time in either gambling, drinking, whoring, or fighting, and

[10]Sir James Rennell Rodd, Social and Diplomatic Memories, 1894-1901, Egypt and Abyssinia (London, 1923), p. 121.

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there was considerable truth in that generalization.[11] The men of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, Harrington's regiment, were probably no better nor worse than the rest of the British Army.

The Royal Dublin Fusiliers had been formed by linking the 103rd Royal Bombay Fusiliers and the 102nd Royal Madras Fusiliers, both European units in the Indian Army, and by transfering the new regiment into the British Army. There were actually five battalions; but only the 102nd and the 103rd, the First and Second Battalions respectively, were on active service. Harrington joined the Second Battalion at Gibraltar in 1884.

At the end of February 1885, Harrington's unit proceeded to Egypt and landed in Alexandria. The battalion did garrison duty there and in Ramleh for about six months.[12] In the autumn of 1885, the regiment received orders to proceed up the Nile and join the Anglo-Egyptian Frontier Force headquartered at Aswan. At the last moment,

[11] The British Army, even in the 1880's, drew manpower mainly from the down-and-outs of society. "Jack Frost" (the approach of a hard winter) was the army's best recruiter, and criminals were often given the choice of a prison/transportation sentence or service in the army. To those who joined voluntarily, army life had little correlation to the rosy picture painted by recruiting sergeants; reality made them bitter, resentful, and cynical. It was not until the mass enlistment and conscription of the Boer and First World Wars that the "Tommy" became a sympathetic figure. Donald F. Featherstone, All For a Shilling a Day (London, 1966), pp. 13, n. 2, 122-24.

[12] A. E. Mainwaring, Crown and Company, The Records of the Second Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers (London, 1911), pp. 304-03, 309-11.

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these orders were countermanded, and the men of the Second Battalion were mortified to see another regiment go instead. They read later that their replacement had arrived in time to take part in the successful fight against an advanced Mahdist army at Qinis (Ginnis) in December 1885.[13] By the beginning of 1886, the Second Battalion was on its way to India, where there was every prospect of still more garrison duty.

In peacetime, an ordinary soldier's life outside of the Indian Empire was unrewarding and monotonous. The men slept and ate in the same barracks room. Discipline was strict, segregation between the ranks absolute, and pay and daily rations, insufficient.[14] By modern standards training was minimal. For an infantry regiment, drill consisted of three hours of parade a day, one hour of saluting practice a week (the men detested it), compulsory boxing, and occasional lectures on the history of the regiment. The Army was no

[13] Mainwaring, Crown and Company, p. 311; P. M. Holt, The Mahdist State in the Sudan, 1881-1898 (Oxford, 1958), p. 126. While the opposition Conservatives castigated the Liberal government for not reconquering the Sudan and avenging the death of Gordon, they did nothing to effect these ends when they took office in June, 1885. The war against the Mahdists was even more limited under Conservative leadership. Before the Battle of Qinis was fought, the Nile Expeditionary force was replaced by a reduced Anglo-Egyptian Frontier Force. The British commanders did not even follow up their success at Qinis by giving chase to the Mahdist army. See also Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher with Alice Denny, Africa and the Victorians (Garden City, N.Y., 1968), pp. 134-35.

[14] Frank Richards, Old Soldier Sahib (London, 1965), pp. 31-33.

place to make a fortune. What little money was left to the private soldier after all the "extras" were extracted by his non-commissioned officers, was usually spent on cheap, watery beer in the canteen, or gambled away.

Things were better in India. The pay of one rupee a day--worth slightly more than the shilling a day soldiers received for duty in Great Britain--was more than adequate to provide for the needs of a soldier. Indian servants were hired to do all manual labor around the camp, including cleaning equipment. In fact, the only work a soldier need do was to take care of his rifle. Costs were low; and everything from contraceptives to bicycles were sold in the regimental bazaar.[15] Soldiers generally spent most of their time in their self-contained world--the canton.[16] Still, service in India was physically exhausting in another way. Summer in the plains was oppressive because of the heat and the threat of disease. Naturally, brutal and heedless treatment of Indian camp-followers was taken

[15] Ibid., pp. 33-36.

[16] At some stations the army even ran whites-only brothels patrolled by military police and inspected by military doctors. There were other diversions: troupes of acrobats and fakirs of amazing skill toured the camps and hill stations; a full complement of sports on an informal and regimental basis was arranged; and libraries were provided for the edification of the troops. Ibid., pp. 197-99, 238-43.

for granted.[17]

John Harrington spent four years as a private and a non-commissioned officer in the Dublin Fusiliers. His education and ambition insured him an early promotion to sergeant.[18] These were difficult years for Harrington. Non-commissioned officers were forced to associate only with men of equal rank. The wide gulf between ranks was probably greatest between the regimental-sergeant major and the youngest commissioned officer. Harrington diligently set out to improve his own position; in June 1888, he earned a commission in the Second Battalion of the Duke of Cambridge's Own Middlesex Regiment.[19]

Harrington's background was such, and his rise to the rank of officer so rapid, that he did not gain the stigma of "ranker"--one who worked his way up from private to officer, but was never really accepted by fellow officers.[20]

[17] If a soldier had to remain on the plains during the summer, he was most likely to be covered from head to foot with agonizing prickly heat rash. Boils and water blisters were common minor ailments; malaria, heat apoplexy, dysentery, and cholera posed greater risks. Soldiers wore only undershorts during the day and spent as much time as possible in swimming baths. Naturally, they were often irritable and took out their frustrations on Indian camp followers. The private soldier was the cutting edge of racism, a phenomenon which had been worsening since the Indian Mutiny in 1857. Ibid., p. 75; V. G. Kiernan, The Lords of Human Kind (Boston and Toronto, 1969), pp. 47-48.

[18] Rennell Rodd, Memories, p. 121-22.

[19] The India List, Civil and Military (London, Jan. 1889), passim. The Southwark and Bermonsey Recorder and South London Gazette, Dec. 6, 1918.

[20] Richards, Old Soldier, pp. 156-57.

As a second lieutenant, Harrington enjoyed numerous privileges; he received a large rise in salary; he could establish his own residence; and he could enter rigidly orthodox Anglo-Indian society. As one observer of the British in India noted, the lifestyle of the Anglo-Indians was "much closer to the tennis party tradition of the low gentry at home than fin-de-siècle London society."[21]

In general, life in India was often deadly dull. There were few single-Englishwomen (those that went out to India were either married or soon-to-be). Society was male-oriented, revolving around drinks and billiards at the club, polo, pig-sticking, lawn tennis, and occasional hunt and race meetings.[22] If an officer were ambitious, he had to learn Hindustani; for without that language proficiency, only purely regimental jobs were open.[23] If a subaltern really wished to get ahead, he could pass a battery of examinations and become a member of the Indian Staff Corps.

The latter organization provided officers for the Indian Army, or more properly the three Presidential Armies (Bombay, Bengal and Madras) which made up British India's

[21] James Morris, Pax Britannica, The Climax of Empire (London, 1968), p. 219.

[22] A. T. Moore, Notes for Officers Proceeding to India (Chatham, 1904), pp. 27-31; J. E. Power, Vade Mecum for Officers and Civilians Proceeding to India (London, 1912), pp. 145-50.

[23] Power, Vade Mecum, p. 121.

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land forces.[24] The regulations and examinations for admission into the Staff Corps were complex--just like all military undertakings in India. Second lieutenants twenty-five or younger with one year regimental duty in India joined a native corps as probationary officers. They were given three years to pass a higher standard native language examination and a professional examination; thereafter, they became full members of the Staff Corps. The language examination assumed a rudimentary ability to converse in Hindustani, and required proof of a candidate's ability to read and translate Hindustani in both Persian and Hindi characters. In the professional examination, a candidate was tested on strategy, field fortification, topography, and military law and procedure in the Indian Army.[25]

Harrington was both ambitious and capable. He joined the Staff Corps as a probationary officer in 1889 and initially served with the First Bombay Grenadiers.[26] Among officers without private financial resources, transfer to the Indian Army was frequent. The pay was 50% better than in the British Army, and furlough pay for a subaltern (any commissioned officer below captain) was slightly more. For a second lieutenant in the infantry, such as Harrington, the

[24] Morris, Pax Britannica, pp. 410-12.

[25] India List, Civil and Military (London, Jan. 1890), "Regulations for Admission to the Indian Staff Corps," pp. lii-lvi.

[26] Ibid., passim; Southwark . . . Gazette, Dec. 6, 1918.

cost of joining the Indian Army was minimal (uniform and kit was much the same as in the British Army).[27] Once in the Indian Army, a British subaltern found himself in an organization with a vastly different character from the one he left. While the British Army was amateurish and rife with class-consciousness, the Indian was officered mostly by men of the upper-middle class, without private means. To these men soldiering was a job.[28] The army's rank and file were, of course, all volunteers mostly drawn from the traditional warrior castes and peoples of India.

After passing the required examinations in under two years, Harrington became a full member of the Indian Staff Corps and a first lieutenant. In all, he spent over three years in the corps with the Bombay Army. Under the command of the Duke of Connaught, the self-sufficient Presidential Army of Bombay had earned a reputation as one of the weak links in the Indian Army. During the Second Afghan War in 1878, a field force of the army's units broke and fled in disarray when charged for the third time by Afghan swordsmen. The field force then was besieged at Kandahar and had to be relieved from Kabul.[29] Contemporaries cited two reasons for the weakness of the Bombay Army: it was organized

[27] Power, Vade Mecum, pp. 107-10.

[28] Morris, Pax Britannica, p. 410.

[29] Sir Patrick Cadell, History of the Bombay Army (London, 1938), pp. 236-44.

along the old system of mixed castes, and developing industry in Bombay successfully competed for manpower.[30]

During his seven years of military service, Harrington saw no combat--not an unusual state of affairs because the colonial wars of the 1880's and 1890's were few and short-lived. Harrington's most important duty was that of adjutant, or executive officer, with the Fourteenth Bombay Infantry. His career was remarkable for rapid progress through ranks. In 1892, he received what ambitious military men would consider an important assignment, the position of assistant-superintendent for agency police in Kathiawar province. His job was to help suppress dacoitry (an Indian term for armed banditry) by assuming the duties of a Lieutenant Gordon, who had been killed by the dacoits.[31] Here was a challenge the likes of those described so colorfully by Kipling and Henty. Harrington could rid Kathiawar of the scourge of outlaws and avenge the death of Lieutenant Gordon (no relation to General "Chinese" Gordon).

Kathiawar, a peninsula in western India between the Gulfs of Kutch and Cambray, consisted of 188 contiguous native states, whose population totalled about two million

[30] In 1895, as part of a general military reform, the Presidential armies of India were abolished. Bombay Indians were replaced by Sikhs, Gurkhas, and Moslems from the west and northwest frontiers. The reformed regiments of the old Bombay army performed adequately when called to fight in the Somali campaigns of the first decade of the twentieth century and in the First World War. Ibid., pp. 248-50.

[31] The Southwark . . . Gazette, Dec. 6.

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and whose territory was approximately equal to that of Ceylon.[32] The British controlled Kathiawar indirectly through its indigenous rulers, who, as protected princes of India, gave up sovereignty to the British Raj while theoretically retaining independence in internal affairs. In practice, Kathiawar's Indian rulers governed with the advice and consent of the Bombay Political Service. During the first two decades of the nineteenth century, the British East India Company gained suzerainty over Kathiawar. While British indirect rule eliminated the major cause of anarchy in the peninsula, the annual visit of a neighboring army which looted and killed in the name of collection of

[32]Kathiawar's geographic position made it part of the gateway to India; every invasion, except Alexander the Great's, affected the province directly or indirectly. For the British side, it is necessary to pick up the history of Kathiawar in the late eighteenth century, when it consisted of small Rajput and Kathi kingdoms, who were reluctant tributaries to their neighboring power, the Gaekwar of Baroda. The Kathis were fifteenth century immigrants to Kathiawar from Kutch; the Rajuts were a military caste recruited by the Hindus to defend against Mughal invasion. That defence was unsuccessful. Those Rajputs who refused to admit defeat established small kingdoms in Rajputana and Kathiawar during the fourteenth century and after, thus preserving the culture, tradition, and religion of the Indo-Aryan Age. The Gaekwar of Baroda ruled one of the five, largely autonomous dependencies of the Hindu-Maratha Confederacy of the eighteenth century. H. Wilberforce-Bell, The History of Kathiawad from the Earliest Times (London, 1916), pp. 1-7; Sir William Lee-Warner, "Kathiawar," Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, LXI, 3145 (1913), p. 392; Percival Spear, A History of India, v. II (Baltimore, 1956), p. 47; Sir William Barton, The Princes of India (London, 1934), pp. 13-18.

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tribute, armed banditry remained, even grew, in Kathiawar.[33]

Outlawry was a "highly respectable institution" with a long tradition in Kathiawar. During periods of alien domination, Kathi outlaws often provided the only resistance. Despite their acts of murder, looting, and blackmail, these bandits, with the help of a strong oral tradition, inspired the wretched cultivators of Kathiawar who bore the brunt of exploitative systems. The states of Kathiawar, like most of India beyond direct British control, were more freebooting

[33]The cause of the chaos in Kathiawar was the Maratha method of collecting tribute there--the Mulkgiri system. The Gaekwar of Baroda set an undisciplined army into Kathiawar during the harvest to extort all possible tribute. The army had no commissariat, so it lived off the land. Most inhabitants of Kathiawar sought the safety of walled towns; those who remained in the countryside could not meet the Mulkgiri army's demand for tribute. Kathiawar's indigenous rulers offered no resistance. By an unofficial arrangement with the Marathas, they suspended their own internecine wars and retired to their forts until the Mulkgiri army departed after ravaging the province. The East Indian Company had a loose alliance with the Gaekwar of Baroda. In 1807, they sent their agent in Baroda with the Mulkgiri army into Kathiawar with authority to fix reasonable tribute and discover if the march of the predatory army was as bad as reputed. The resident was appalled at the annual invasion of the Maratha forces and, during the next ten years, he labored to fix realistic levels of tribute and security for punctual payment. The East India Company then forced the Maratha Peshaw of Poona, who leased the right of collecting tribute in Kathiawar to the Gaekwar of Baroda, to relinquish his claims in the province. In 1820, the East India Company made clear their intention of becoming the dominant power in fertile and commercially important Kathiawar by prohibiting the Gaekwar from interfering in the province. Wilberforce-Bell, Kathiawad, pp. 179-89; Lee-Warner, "Kathiawar," pp. 394-95. These authors were members of the Bombay administration. It is conceivable they could have overemphasized the destructiveness of the Mulkgiri system in order to justify British takeover of Kathiawar.

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[34] Andrew Wilson, "A

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[35] Wilberforce-Bell,

than British India. The patchwork of different jurisdictions allowed criminals greater scope for escape. Despite substantial expenditures on law enforcement, the police often failed to coordinate their efforts in putting down banditry. Finally, since all sons of rulers of most Kathiawar states were given estates for their maintenance, there were continual family quarrels over the distribution of villages; outlawry acted as the "safety valve of society." A younger son of a ruler, if he felt himself unjustly treated, might become an outlaw with his dependents. His lands were left waste to justify his action.[34]

It was the duty of the British Agency Police to spearhead and to coordinate the police departments of the native states in a campaign against dacoitry. In response to outlawry in both the north and south of Kathiawar during the 1880's, the British resident submitted to the rulers of Kathiawar a scheme for raising a mounted police force from all the states to chase down dacoits. All but one state furnished their quotas for the unit, but even this concerted effort was not enough to end banditry. In early 1892 a group of outlaws, led by Wala Namori, notorious for his daring deeds during the 1880's, began looting throughout the northern part of the province. For almost a year the gang evaded capture.[35]

[34]Andrew Wilson, "A Run Through Kathiawar-Junghar," Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, CXX, no. DCCXXX (1876), pp. 199-200; Lee-Warner, "Kathiawar," pp. 395-96 and Protected Princes, pp. 17-18.

[35]Wilberforce-Bell, Kathiawad, pp. 239-41, 246.

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The political agent, Sir E. C. K. Ollivant, had several explanations for his failure to apprehend Namori and his cohorts. The police of the native states were no match for the outlaws; unless accompanied by a European officer, the indigenous gendarmarie refused to make contact with the bandits because the latter were better shots and better armed. The gang was given food and shelter by the whole Miana population (Namori's native state). Ollivant even suspected that the bandit leader had well-located accomplices in the Mali government with whom he shared his plunder.[36]

In December 1892, Namori's band was cornered by the assistant superintendent for Agency Police, Lieutenant Gordon, and his mounted contingent. The outlaws took cover in a disused watercourse, hoisted a flag, and challenged the police to attack. Gordon rashly decided on a frontal assault. With rifles and swords at the ready, Gordon and his mounted police charged the trench and finished off the outlaws. In the battle, Gordon himself and two of his policemen were killed. But while Namori and his band were eliminated, the roots of dacoitry lingered on in Kathiawar.[37]

Harrington assumed the post of the fallen Gordon in late 1892. He sought to discover and indict those who had collaborated with Namori. The superintendent of Agency

[36]Ollivant to Lee-Warner (let.), Rajkot, July 21, 1892, Western Indian States Agency Records (hereafter WISAR), R/1/2, box 605, ser. no. 145.

[37]Wilberforce-Bell, Kathiawad, pp. 247-48.

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39 E. V. Mackay to
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police reckoned that at least twenty-nine villages had been favorably inclined towards the outlaws. From Rajkot, headquarters of Kathiawar agency, Harrington collected evidence against those who supplied guns, ammunition, food, shelter, and clothing to the outlaws.[38] Two problems hindered his investigation. Firstly, the Agency Police had no jurisdiction over the larger states; Harrington could only ask that they furnish evidence. Secondly, many people hesitated to cooperate with the investigation for fear of retaliation from the outlaws' relatives. If Harrington and the Agency Police were able to construct an air-tight case against collaborators, there was no assurance that the guilty would be brought to justice. The collaborators were almost all subjects of the larger states of Kathiawar, in which British jurisdiction did not apply to criminal cases dealing with complicity in armed robbery or murder.[39] Those who allegedly aided the dacoits were tried in the courts of their various states. As it turned out, Harrington did not remain in Kathiawar long enough to see that his investigations bore less fruit than the British had

[38]E. V. Mackay to A. H. Denys (let.), Rajkot, Jan. 28, 1893, WISAR, R/1/2, box 656, ser. no. 110; G. E. Handcock to C. W. H. Sealy (let.), Rajkot, March 14, 1893, WISAR, R/1/2, box 656, ser. no. 111.

[39]E. V. Mackay to C. W. H. Sealy (let.), Rajkot, Aug. 3, 1893 and Memoranda by Harrington, Rajkot, Aug. 25, 28, 29, 31, 1893, WISAR, R/1/2, box 656, ser. no. 111.

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[41] Sir Edmund C. Cox

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The Kathiawar Agency of the Bombay Political Service had four assistant political agents and five Indian deputy assistants to act as advisors to native rulers and the appointed officials of the smallest political states, often no more than villages. As a member of the Indian Staff Corps, Harrington was eligible for the post of political agent.[41] In 1893, he filled in as assistant political agent in two prants. The bulk of Harrington's time (four months) was spent in Gohelwad Prant in the southeast of the peninsula.

In relation to the native ruler, the political agent had a dual function: to act as the ceremonial representative of the Imperial Government, and to advise and assist the native ruler--especially in the areas of imperial defence and the implementation of economic progress. As a temporary replacement, Harrington was not overly concerned

[40] Such a system of legal jurisdiction highlighted the indirect nature of British control of Kathiawar. There were certain basic restrictions on the sovereignty of indigenous rulers; the British, through the government of Bombay, controlled foreign policy, succession, military affairs, and the amount of money a native state could borrow. Guardianship of princes who were minors and the right of cantonment --including jurisdiction over British subjects and control of communications--were reserved to the Imperial government. The larger states of the peninsula enjoyed virtual internal sovereignty; smaller ones were more closely controlled. Lee-Warner, Protected Princes, pp. 188-98 and "Kathiawar," pp. 396-97.

[41] Sir Edmund C. Cox, My Thirty Years in India (London, 1909), p. 70.

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with long-range problems; his job was to maintain the British presence in the prant and to keep things running as smoothly as possible.

Harrington spent much of his time on the more mundane duties of a political agent. In September, for example, he conducted a survey on hailstorms in Gohelwad which necessitated writing all the rulers and managers of the prant. Although he was fulfilling the duties of a political officer, Harrington was still a member of the agency police, and, thus, involved in its reorganization and amalgamation with the railway security forces.[42]

In general, the scope of British officials in Kathiawar was limited. They promoted the growing of cotton, the peninsula's major export, and the construction of railways. The British founded two small schools to educate the sons and relatives of the native rulers in the belief that an anglicized Indian ruling class was the best means of assuring that Kathiawar would be run by autocrats committed

[42] Harrington to G. E. Handcock (let.), ?, Sept. 30, 1893, WISAR, R/1/2, box 615, ser. no. 145.

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to their nineteenth-century concept of "progress."[43] The court life of the major Kathiawar princes, with its extravagances and eccentricities, was the focus of the small society of Britons who clustered around the principal towns of the province. In Rajkot, where Harrington was stationed for most of his tour, a small, genial European society existed. The staffs of the Agency and Rajkumar College, the postmaster general, and a few missionaries formed a group of bachelors and widowers whose main social entertainment was dining at each other's houses.[44] In general, Kathiawar was thought to be one of the best posts for a member of the Bombay Political Service. Its weather was temperate, famine was infrequent because of the fertility

[43]What exactly was meant by progress was not totally clear to the British themselves. For example, while they encouraged the cotton agriculture of the province and built numerous railways, two-steampowered spinning and weaving mills and a few cotton pressing and ginning factories were the sum total of Kathiawar's industry. Progress in India, in this instance, did not mean competition with the Manchester cotton industry. The princes of Kathiawar were essentially autocrats and the British did nothing to make their rule more responsible to their subjects. Political agents did keep the peace among the different factions of a ruler's family and there were ways of replacing a prince who was guilty of "misgovernment"--usually either a failure to maintain law and order or fiscal irresponsibility. Nonetheless, the Bombay government was usually lenient. In the various states, tiger hunts often took precedence over the details of administration and the purchase of first-class polo ponies might well threaten financial stability of a state. In Kathiawar, the village remained the economic and social unit of life, caste restrictions were stronger, and general social advancement less than in British India. KAAR, 1893-4, pp. 36-39; Wilberforce-Bell, Kathiawad, pp. 222-50; Barton, Princes of India, pp. 46-47.

[44]Wilson, "A Run Through Kathiawar," p. 408.

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of the soil, and its people and features were interesting. For those intrigued by Indian religions and architecture, there was Shethunja Hill, the holy palace of the Jains of India, located in the Palitana state of Gohelwad Prant. Its temples, "half palace, half fortress raised in marble magnificence" were built on the 2,000 foot high summit. Gir Forest, in the southern part of Kathiawar, consisted of 150 rugged square miles of low hills and ridges covered by forest-trees and dense jungle. Big game was plentiful there, including a few of the rare maneless lions of Gujerat, the last of their breed in India.[45]

Harrington enjoyed his year service in Kathiawar, but transfer was frequent in the Bombay Political Service. If an officer wished to advance he had to take the good posts with the bad. By the end of December, Harrington was on his way to one of the least pleasant spots in the vast Indian Empire--Aden Protectorate, a strategically placed jumble of volcanic rocks on the eastern tip of the Arabian peninsula. In ten years Harrington had risen from private to political officer with a commission in the Indian Army. His career was the product of hard work and self-discipline. He must have felt ready for the challenge of Aden.

[45] Ibid., p. 201; "A Short History of Palitana State," WISAR, box 616, ser. no. 164.

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[1] Three Hours in A
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CHAPTER II: ADEN'S BARREN ROCKS, 1894-1895

Even the official government guidebook to Aden, published in 1891, admitted that the view of Aden on approach from the sea was "not enlivening." The guide assured visitors that this forbidding first impression was the cause of Aden's undeserved "bad reputation."[1] Despite its malfamé, Aden was one of the most important transmarine fortresses in the British Empire. As a free port, it was the entrepôt of trade in the Red Sea area. Why was Aden also one of the most generally detested of the Empire's ports-of-call? Its arid climate and a landscape which rivalled the moon for drabness had rightly earned Harrington's home-to-be its vile reputation. Harrington may well have felt some misgivings about his new post. As it turned out, the year he spent in Aden proved an unhappy time for him. All this was in the future when passengers and crew of his ship first sighted Mount Sham Shan, an 1800 foot high jagged peak crowned with a flagstaff--the first of a series of beacons and buoys that guided shipping into Aden's inner harbor.

[1] Three Hours in Aden, Being a Description of the Settlement (Bombay, revised ed., 1902, first published 1891), p. 36.

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[3] Tom Little, South

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Above all else, Aden was a port. Almost completely landlocked, it offered a magnificent anchorage. Aden supplied coal for approximately 1,350 vessels a year, sailors and firemen to replace crews, provisions (especially water and ice) for re-victualing, and hospital accommodation for the sick. A refitting station with a newly constructed floating dock could repair disabled steamers of up to 750 tons.[2] Like so much of the physical plant of the late Victorian Empire, Aden was ungainly but practical.

Britons were not the first to use Aden as a pivot in an imperial system. As a commercial and military center of Pre-Islamic Southern Arabia, Aden had been the nucleus of various kingdoms and empires. Furthermore, Aden had been in contact with the great empires of the ancient world; Egyptians, Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans in turn traded in Aden for frankincense and myrrh. Aden remained an emporium of eastern trade until the decline of the Incense route, which culminated in the tenth century and reduced the proud port to little more than a fishing village. Despite its changed commerical status, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, Aden was coveted by both the Portuguese and Ottoman Empires for strategic reasons. The Turks took Aden, held it for about a hundred years and then withdrew in the mid-seventeenth century.[3] Once more an insignificant port on

[2] Three Hours in Aden, pp. 15, 38-39.

[3] Tom Little, South Arabia, Arena of Conflict (London, 1968), pp. 8-10.

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4 Reginald Coupland,
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the Red Sea Route to India, Aden languished as an adjunct to the virtually independent Sultanate of Lahej on the South Arabian coast. During the nineteenth century two technological achievements--the advent of ocean going steamships and the opening of the Suez Canal--spurred on British interest in the ancient port and laid the foundation for a revitalized Aden.

In 1829, after coal was landed at the port with the consent of the ruler of Aden, the Sultan of Lahej, the steamship Hugh Lindsay sailed from Bombay to Suez in the then surprisingly short time of one month and three days.[4] This feat highlighted the beginning of a gradual diversion of trade towards the Red Sea route to India and the Far East and away from the all-water Cape route, previously favored since its discovery by the Portuguese in the fifteenth century. Proof of London's intention to secure Aden as a coaling port and a vital link in the lines of communication with India was the appearance of British warships carrying 700 European and Indian troops of the East India Company. The pillage of a wreck of an Anglo-Indian ship and the attempted ransom of its crew and passengers by local Arabs provided the pretext of this punitive expedition. Aden had been used as a pirates' base, but by a kind of gentleman's

[4] Reginald Coupland, East Africa and Its Invaders (Oxford, 1956), p. 464, as quoted in Information Service of the Somali Government, The Somali Peninsula, A New Light on Imperial Motives (St. Albans, Herts., 1962), p. 17.

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agreement reinforced by an 1802 "Treaty of friendship and commerce," the Sultan of Lahej did not usually molest British shipping. In 1837, the Arab architect of the agreement with the British died and was succeeded by his nephew, al-Muhasin, who felt no need to give British shipping any preferential treatment. Two years into Sultan al-Muhasin's reign the British sent in the marines.

The occupation of Aden was swift, but with intense street-to-street fighting. By force of arms the Sultan of Lahej was induced to cede the Aden Peninsula to India for an annual stipend of 6,000 Maria Theresa dollars. Aden thus became the first addition to the Empire under the reign of Victoria.[5] From 1839 to 1857, the British--more properly the Indian--hold on Aden was precarious. Captain Stafford Bettsworth Haines, who became the first resident under the Presidency of Bombay, fought off three determined attempts by Sultan al-Muhasin to oust him from the rocks of Aden. Only after the British conquered and occupied the capital of the sultanate of Lahej, Sheikh Othman (opposite Aden on the Southern Arabian coast), did the British grasp on Aden become secure.

The occupation of Sheikh Othman in 1857 initiated the gradual extension of British influence in the Arabian coast

[5]James Lunt, The Barren Rocks of Aden (London, 1966), pp. 39-40; Little, South Arabia, pp. 9-10. For an extensive study of Haines' conquest and administration of Aden see G. Waterfield, Sultans of Aden (London, 1968), pp. 39-40.

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neighboring Aden. Although no formal boundaries were delineated, the Ottoman government, which still laid claim to the area, accepted de facto British control of the territory of the nine Arab clans adjacent to Aden.[6] This fluid state of affairs was regularized in 1887 as a part of a general tidying-up operation in Africa and the Middle East. The Salisbury government secured a treaty from the Sultan of Lahej making his sultanate a protectorate under the government of Bombay, directly supervised by British officials in Aden. This formal protectorate was part of a policy of subsidy and protection devised as a counter to increased Turkish influence in the Yemen.[7] With the exception of a few minor additions, the Aden Protectorate of 1894 was the same seventy odd square mile area won by a combination of Anglo-Indian force and diplomacy during the years of consolidation, 1839 to 1887.

What had changed was the port of Aden itself: the insignificant fishing village of 1839 became a "Gibraltar of the East" in British strategic thinking and once again an entrepôt of trade. The catalyst of this revival was the 1869 opening of the Suez Canal, which assured the dominance of the Red Sea over the Cape route. While such a development brought prosperity to Aden, the eventual price was

[6]They were called in diplomatic language, "The Nine Cantons," Little, South Arabia, pp. 14-15.

[7]Lunt, Barren Rocks of Aden, pp. 41-42.

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The Red Sea area, in comparison to the sedate and secure India he was leaving, must have seemed a front line of imperial conflict to a young subaltern in the Bombay Political Service like John Harrington; perhaps that was how he put aside reservations he might have had about the notorious drawbacks of a posting to Aden. Although to the navies of Europe the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden were virtually a mare clausum of the British Empire, there was an extensive local gun-running trade that defied suppression. Moreover, Turkish activities along Aden Protectorate's undefined boundaries remained a potential threat. The Anglo-Indian authorities were also concerned about their slender establishment on the Somali Coast. The combination of Mahdism in the Sudan, a militant Ethiopia, and European interest in the Horn of Africa began to draw the government of Bombay's protectorate on the Somali Coast into the vortex of great-power diplomatic and imperial rivalry.

Harrington's appointment as acting sixth assistant resident in Aden made him the junior man on an administrative staff of six Indian army officers who assisted the political resident, himself a military man. Hardly a proconsulship, it was, for Harrington, a step in his rise to responsibility. On January 11, 1894, he took up his charge

[8]Information Service, Somali Peninsula, p. 19.

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as collector of abkari (revenue on spirits), salt, and opium duties and assistant-superintendent of the Aden Police.[9] Over a month later the Government of Bombay formally invested Harrington with the judicial powers of first-class magistrate for Aden and its dependencies and justice of the peace and judge of small cases for all territories subject to Bombay other than the presidency town of Bombay.[10] Despite the length of his official titles, Harrington was engaged in small fry judicial work; he could normally dispose only of civil suits not exceeding fifty Rupees in value, brought by or against Europeans. In criminal work, Harrington was precluded from hearing cases against Europeans. A number of small administrative duties such as the management of estates of deceased persons and minors, the function of public notary, or the task of visitor to Aden's schools and jails were also part of Harrington's position.[11] The official records of the Aden Residency give the impression that despite a staggering amount of time spent on paperwork--a state of affairs endemic to Anglo-Indian administration--business was completed fairly

[9]Harrington to Jopp (let.), Aden, Jan. 11, 1894, Aden Residency Records (hereafter ARR), R/20/A.I.A./179.

[10]Hill to Jopp (let.), Bombay, Feb. 13, 1894, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./1171.

[11]Memorandum by Sealy, Aden, Feb. 15, 1895, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./1204.

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[14] R. L. Playfair,
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Journal, CXXI, 1 (1955

smoothly, if slowly.[12]

Aden was (and still is) a compact piece of real estate. In 1894, it consisted of two small rocky peninsulas, Aden proper to the east and sparsely-populated Little Aden to the west, separated by a bay and a narrow strip of the Arabian cost, for a total area of seventy square miles. The inhabited and fortified part of the settlement was on the eastern peninsula, jutting out into the sea like a swollen boot with a spur attached. The foot of the boot, a promontory of jagged hills--bare and lifeless brown rock--is dominated by two geographical phenomena: Mount Sham Shan and an extinct volcano known as the Crater.[13] An umbilical cord of salt marsh and sand connects Aden to the mainland.

Aden is a natural fortress. "Every commanding point and almost every mountain summit," wrote a nineteenth century historian of Southern Arabia, "is crowned with the ruins of a fort."[14] All of Aden's masters--ancient, medieval, or modern--used the semi-circular ring of volcanic

[12]James Morris notes this phenomenon and offers an explanation: frequent transfers necessitated writing down everything to assure administrative continuity. See his Pax Britannica, The Climax of Empire (London, 1968), p. 271.

[13]Local legend maintains the Crater is the mouth of Hell; its opening will herald the end of the world. Paul Nizam, Aden Arabie, trans. by Joan Pinkham (New York, 1968), p. 93.

[14]R. L. Playfair, The History of Arabia Felix (? /Bombay/, 1859), quoted in H. T. Norris and F. W. Penhey, "The Historical Development of Aden's Defences," Geographical Journal, CXXI, 1 (1955), p. 11.

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[17] F. M. Hunter,

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cliff, which surround the ancient town in the Crater on three sides, as the basic defense of the settlement and harbor. The East Indian Company added two refinements; a fort at the western end of the peninsula to protect against a hostile naval force, and a fortified position facing the town to insure against a rising of the Crater population.[15]

When Harrington arrived in 1894, Aden's fortifications had not been challenged for almost forty years; still, a siege atmosphere lingered around the crumbling battlements and permeated the settlement below. In the years of peace and prosperity the population had increased to over forty thousand people of various nationalities.[16] One observer noted that seventeen different languages were heard quite frequently in Aden's streets; English, Arabic, Hindustani, and Somali were more or less official tongues, while French was one of the principal languages of commerce.[17] Arabs and Somalis--two groups of almost equal size--made up the great bulk of the population. According to the official guidebook to Aden, Arabs were laborers, coaling coolies, firemen on steamers, shopkeepers, and occasionally merchants; Somalis were boatmen, hack-carriage drivers, or "anything

[15]Norris and Penhey, "Aden's Defences," pp. 11, 19-20.

[16]Three Hours in Aden, p. 9. The figure is based on the 1891 census.

[17]F. M. Hunter, An Account of the British Settlement of Aden in Arabia (London, 1877), p. 173.

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affording scope for their vagabond instincts."[18] This was something of an over-generalization. Somalis were a floating population attracted by the jobs of Aden. In any given week up to a thousand Somalis travelled to and fro between Aden and their native Africa. As transients they took what work they could get.

A sprinkling of Turks, Persians, Egyptians, Chinese, Jews, Hindus and Parsees made up the rest of the non-European population. These peoples, although numerically insignificant, formed the majority of the important merchant community of Aden. They ranged from petty traders like the orthodox Jews, who cornered the trade in ostrich feathers, to an Europeanized Parsee family whose firm was the largest steamship company in Aden.[19] The only resource of Aden beyond salt and water condensed from the sea was its trade. An observant visitor to Aden, the Vicaire Apostolique of Gabon, remarked that the settlement was exactly what the Romans had called an emporium: nothing was produced and everything was sold.[20] Aden acted as a magnet for the products of the surrounding areas. Hides and skins came from the Somali Coast, shells and pearls from the Red Sea and the Persian

[18] Three Hours in Aden, pp. 10-11.

[19] The feathers came from the Somali Coast through Zeila and Berbera. Ostrich boas were in fashion and graced the neck of many a Victorian beauty.

[20] Mgr. Le Roy, D'Aden à Zanzibar (Tours, 1894), p. 111.

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The European merchant community was also a diverse lot. Frenchmen dominated the coffee trade, Italians developed the salt works and water condensers at Shiekh Othman, Greeks took advantage of Aden's status as a free port to manufacture cut-rate Turkish cigarettes, and Englishmen imported coal. Even with its moderately small population, Aden had an elaborate system of social distinctions and divisions. Men were grouped by a host of different criteria--nation, vocation, religion, skin color and clan. A coolness developed between the British officials of the administrative and military establishment and their European colleagues of the merchant community.[22] But between Britons and non-Europeans there was a wide social chasm. As was the custom in India, British civil servants and soldiers lived apart on a series of hills at Steamer Point, above an Adeni village of just under five thousand. Most of the European consulates, business houses, banks, hotels and the Post and Telegraph Office were nearby at the landing. Five miles to the east, at the other end of the peninsula, the mass of Aden's

[21] Three Hours in Aden, p. 16.

[22] This coolness was later to manifest itself in the hostility between members of the Union club for Britons and the International club which admitted Greek cigarette manufacturers and Italian engineers from the salt works at Sheik Othman. Nizam claims no British officer could mention the club without a sneer, see Nizam, Aden Arabie, p. 99.

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non-European populations lived in the Crater. A more striking illustration of what has been called the "cantonment philosophy" would be difficult to find.[23]

Such a state of affairs was to be expected. First and foremost, Aden was an Indian garrison town; Harrington, with five years of military and civil service in India, could feel at home in his new post. If he found the social patterns of Aden compatible, the same cannot be said for the climate. In spite of protestations by old Aden hands that the climate was invigorating, most found it almost unbearable. Average annual rainfall was only three inches, and locals claimed it usually rained only every other year. During the season from May to September the temperature soared to 100 degrees F. with no hint of a breeze. The so-called "cool season," from October to April, earned its misnomer only because the hot season was so oppressive; a slight drop in temperature in the winter months brought a prevailing wind that swirled dust everywhere. The trusty guidebook to Aden warned of the most common ills--malaria, "sun-fevers," dysentery, neuralgia, heatstroke and chills after exercise in the cool season. The key to health, according to the guide, was the use of sun-topee, umbrella and gauze underclothing beneath flannel or white drill outerwear.[24]

[23] Morris, Pax Britannica, p. 131.

[24] Three Hours in Aden, pp. 23-24.

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[26] Assistant Resi

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Shortly after arriving in Aden, Harrington was hospitalized for some weeks with a high temperature and fever. Although he went back to his duties, he never fully recovered. At the end of May, just as the hot season commenced, Harrington again was placed on the sick list. The residency doctor described his malady as "severe Intermittant fever. . . . with sluggish liver and a greatly disordered stomack" complicated by an enlarged spleen. The doctor recommended an immediate "change of air."[25] According to regulations, Harrington was entitled to three months leave; he proposed to take a steamship voyage to Australia. The government of Bombay granted the request. On June 11, 1894, he left Aden's barren rocks for Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.[26] The voyage and tour provided the necessary change of climate, and Harrington returned to duty in Aden at the beginning of September a restored man.

On arrival, much to his dismay, Harrington found that his bungalow, rented from the Aden administration, was in an even more disgraceful condition than when he had left. When the yearly rain came, Harrington's roof leaked and the house retained the damp. Many of his books were ruined. The bungalow was hot, its verandas were always in the sun, and only three rooms were habitable. Worst of all, the

[25]Carson to the First Assistant Resident (let.), Aden, May 30, 1894, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./1179.

[26]Assistant Resident in charge of Police to First Assistant Resident (let.), Aden, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./1179.

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bathroom was so exposed to the wind that a health danger existed--severe chills. Harrington asked permission to make his own living arrangements rather than pay high rent for bad, even unhealthy, quarters.[27] As if to prove his point, he collapsed with a bout of fever in early December. Harrington was not to get different quarters until he was reassigned as Assistant Resident at Zeila on the Somali Coast. He was considerably rankled and blamed the faulty construction of his bungalow--indirectly indicting its builder, the chief engineer at Aden--for his persistent attacks of fever.[28]

Beyond a natural irritability due to his illness and the trying conditions in Aden, there is an almost churlish quality to the limited correspondence and memoranda of Harrington in the Aden Residency Records of 1894-5. It is safe to assume that he did not find life in Aden entirely to his liking; perhaps, he felt trapped by Aden's smallness. His work was necessary, but hardly all-engrossing. Even when Harrington had sole charge of the Aden Police Department, as he frequently did, he usually dealt with such problems as investigating petty theft, keeping the European prostitutes out of Steamer Point or poisoning stray dogs in the

[27]Harrington to Abud (let.), Aden, Nov. 30, 1894, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./1179.

[28]Harrington to Ferris (let.), Aden, April 22, 1894, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./1189.

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Crater.[29] But Aden had its compensations: the comraderie of fellow officers, a European society with numerous "At Homes," the Union Club which admitted ladies, private theatricals at the Garrison Theatre and an occasional performance by a travelling company on the Empire tour. For Harrington, who was a sportsman, the Gymkhana Club was a natural focus. There was polo every other week, a race meeting twice a year, golf, tennis, cricket, football, field hockey, boating and sailing. Aden's sporting facilities were proof of the axiom that wherever British imperialists went they took their games; or as one present-day enthusiast of Empire succintly phrased it, "Sport was their chief spiritual export, and was to prove among their more lasting memorials."[30]

It would be a mistake to leave the "Gibraltar of the East" with the impression of old public school boys on the playing fields of Aden. There was an unseemly side to the British administration which is vividly illustrated in a confrontation between the Aden administration and the Howard Association, a humanitarian-utilitarian society for the promotion of the best methods for the treatment and prevention

[29] European prostitution was part and parcel of Aden as a seaport and garrison town. The most the Aden authorities could do was to keep it out of Steamer Point and limit the brothels to the native quarters of the Crater.

[30] Morris, Pax Britannica, p. 284.

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of crime.[31] The controversy broke out just after Harrington left for the Somali Coast, but it concerned his tour of duty in Aden. A member of the association's executive committee, after an anti-slavery mission to East Africa, returned home via Aden. There he witnessed what he described as "barbarous and un-English" corporal punishment. In a formal complaint to Joseph Chamberlain at the Colonial Office, he claimed that small boys and grown men were tied to a post and lashed; even some "tender boys" were given fifty lashes. A Somali was thrown down some stairs, his leg broken, and his molester went unpunished.[32] The Howard Association marshalled its forces and began a publicity campaign against the "Aden Cruelties" publishing articles in such journals as the Anti-Slavery Reporter. The government of Bombay weakly countered with a state paper signed by its governor, Lord Sandhurst, which questioned the veracity of some of the details of the accusation and brought forth the Indian Penal Code to support its action. The paper was a miscalculation. In an announcement in The Times, the Association tossed aside the quibble over details and went to the heart of the matter: by what right did the Aden authorities apply the Indian Penal Code to Somalis? Somalis were

[31] The Howard Association had among its patrons and members Sir T. Fowell Buxton, John Bright, Sir Joseph Lister and numerous Members of Parliament and former M.P.s.

[32] Copy of letter of protest of William Tallack, Secretary of the Howard Association, to Joseph Chamberlain, London, Aug. 1, 1895, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./1212.

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[33] Copy of Howard

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protected, not conquered, people. The Association demanded an end to "invidious race distinctions in modes of punishment" not only on humanitarian grounds, but also because it eroded Imperial loyalty and unity among Great Britain's native subjects.[33] The controversy dragged on for over a year. The new resident at Aden regretted the adverse publicity, but neither he nor Bombay took any action.[34] As the Howard Association had predicted, their grievance was relegated to the "Circumlocation Office"--destined to die a slow death in official channels between London, Calcutta, Bombay, and Aden. Long before this controversy petered out, Harrington was at his new post at Zeila.

As he booked passage on the rickety, eighty-ton steamship Tuna, which ran a regular service between Aden and the ports of the Somali Coast, Harrington probably had few regrets about leaving Aden. During his year of duty on Aden's barren rocks he had been unwell and depressed. While Zeila's climate was little better than the one he was leaving, the new post was a welcomed change from the cramped and claustrophobic atmosphere of Aden. On the Somali Coast, Harrington's career would receive a great stimulus; he would be the right man in the right place.

[33]Copy of Howard Association's announcement in The Times, London, Jan. 26, 1896, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./1212.

[34]Cunningham to Vidal (let.), Aden, Dec. 5, 1895, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./1212.

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CHAPTER III: ZEILA AND THE SOMALI COAST PROTECTORATE, 1895-1898

The Tuna steamed across the Gulf of Aden at under five knots. Passengers, crew, and live cargo shared the crowded decks, since the tiny cabin had been abandoned long ago to cockroaches. The first port-of-call was Zeila, with its low white buildings shimmering in the heat, hardly discernible amid the white sands of the coast. Harrington disembarked in Zeila in March 1895, and took charge of the residency there, a ramsackle remnant of the preceding Egyptian occupation. As assistant resident and vice-consul at Zeila, Harrington was one of the three Englishmen who made up the permanent Indian establishment within the Somali Coast Protectorate. With local Arab and Indian assistants, the three men were responsible, at least in theory, for an area of about 60,000 square miles.

The official name, Somali Coast Protectorate, belied the true nature of the government of Bombay's control in the Horn of Africa. While the government in Whitehall had defined the protectorate's boundaries vis-à-vis the other colonial powers in the vicinity, France and Italy, in practice, the writ of the administration extended only a few miles beyond the three occupied ports--Zeila, Bulhar, and

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Berbera--where assistant residents, backed by small detachments of troops, were stationed. "A tradition of parsimony" was one historian's apt characterization of the philosophy behind Anglo-Indian administration of the protectorate.

The utilitarian relationship of the Somali Coast to Aden was the origin of this pinch-penny approach: the garrison and settlement at Aden depended for its supply of fresh meat upon imports from Somaliland. The large Somali population in Aden and a substantial Aden-Somali trade in goods other than livestock made the connection between the Protectorate and Aden administratively convenient.[1] In the minds of cautious Anglo-Indian administrators, such a relationship justified only a limited policy in the Horn of Africa.

During most of the nineteenth century Great Britain had recognized Bulhar and Berbera as independent Somali ports, while Zeila was considered to be under Turkish suzerainty. British warships blockaded and bombarded Berbera and Bulhar when Somalis strayed from the British conception of free trade.[2] Such procedures insured Aden's meat supply from the Somali Coast. Beginning in 1870, Egypt, under the expansionist Khedive Ismail, occupied and garrisoned Berbera and

[1] I. M. Lewis, The Modern History of Somaliland, From Nation to State (London, 1965), pp. 40-41.

[2] Somali Coast Decennial Report for 1892-3 which is bound with the Kathiawar Administration Reports--an obvious case of misfiling.

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[3] Lewis, Somaliland

[4] H. G. C. Swayne, and a Visit to Abyssini

Bulhar and laid formal claim to Zeila. The government of India opposed the Egyptian takeover and suggested that Somali independence should be preserved--by force if necessary. But the home government was confident that Egyptian rule would be compatible with Aden's provisioning requirements; it vetoed any opposition to the Egyptian occupation of Bulhar and Berbera and eventually acknowledged the Khedive's right to Zeila.[3] Egyptian control of the three Somali ports and also Harar, an entrepôt of southern Ethiopian trade, was abruptly ended in 1884 by an Anglo-Egyptian decision to retire and retrench because of the revolt of the Mahdi in the Sudan. The withdrawal threatened the future of the lifeline of trade between Aden and the northern Somali ports.

The British government acted characteristically: it compromised. Although an independent emir was left in power, Harar was for all practical purposes abandoned to Ethiopia. Ill armed and with no prospect of British support, the hapless emir merely marked time until King Menilek of Shoa conquered his emirate in 1887.[4] Between 1884 and 1886, on the other hand, the British government laid the groundwork for a protectorate on the northern Somali Coast. The first step, in 1884-5, was a series of treaties with

[3] Lewis, Somaliland, p. 42.

[4] H. G. C. Swayne, Seventeen Trips Through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia (London, 1903), pp. ii-vii.

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some of the Somali clans of the coast. The gist of these agreements was a simple bargain: the Somali clans would not "cede, sell, mortgage or otherwise give for occupation, save to the British Government" any of their territory; the clans should also accept free trade, the prohibition of slavery and the appointment of British agents. In return, Great Britain promised to maintain the independence of the Somali clans and preserve order. In 1886 the government at Westminster took another step; formal protectorate treaties were signed with some of the Somali clans. Finally, in 1887, Great Britain communicated the existence of the new protectorate (to be under the immediate jurisdiction of the government of Bombay and Aden) to France and the other Powers.[5]

When Harrington arrived at Zeila in 1895, ten years of Anglo-Indian occupation of the three ports had left little mark beyond the narrow confines of the ports themselves. Pacification of the Somali warrior-nomads had made no visible progress, despite occasional punitive expeditions by the Anglo-Indian troops.[6] By contrast, the decade or so of Egyptian occupation of the Somali Coast accomplished more

[5]Somali Coast Decennial Report for 1892-3. For representative copies of these treaties see The Somali Peninsula, Appendix VIII (a,b), pp. 99-100. I have underlined the word "some" because the British were haphazard in treaty making. There were no treaties at all with the Dulbahante and no 1886 protectorate treaties with either the Esa or Gadabursi clans of the Zeila area.

[6]See Somali Coast Decennial Report for 1892-3, Somali Coast Administrative Reports, 1891-2 to 1894-5.

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[7] Lewis, Somalil

[8] Proceedings of

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than the first ten years of British control. In the political realm, the Egyptians used a system of akils or headmen to act as intermediaries between the clans and their administration, and they tried (not always successfully) to manage the appointment of clan leaders. On another level, they embarked on an ambitious program of public works by corvée, and they encouraged the building of mosques and Islam in general.[7] The British did not even match that modest record.

Harrington's first order of business after settling in at Zeila was something of an anti-climax. He returned to Aden at the beginning of April to take the departmental examination for political officers in the Bombay Political Service. He wrote six papers--two to three hours per paper was the allotted time--in under a week. The test was the same as the one given in Bombay; it ranged from papers on set reference works, such as Lee-Warner's Protected Princes, to drawing up a practice political report on a given subject.[8] Such exercises were stepping stones to promotion; if a political officer failed the examinations prescribed by regulation, he was docked ten percent of his salary. No doubt Harrington was glad to hear later that he had passed.

When Harrington returned to Zeila the pace of events already had begun to quicken. During 1895, little-noticed

[7] Lewis, Somaliland, pp. 43-44.

[8] Proceedings of the committee to examine John Lane Harrington, April 9, 1895, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./1204.

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[11] Lewis, Somaliland,

Zeila came to the attention of the Foreign Office because of the diplomatic campaign of the Crispi Government (returned to power in Italy in 1893) to gain possession of Zeila as a means of making good the Italian protectorate over Ethiopia.[9] Of more local interest was a punitive expedition, in which Harrington was second in command, against one section of the Jibril Abokor sub-clan of the Habar Awal Somali. The raid vividly illustrates the major problems encountered by the hopelessly understaffed and underfinanced protectorate establishment.

The Somalis within the nebulous limits of the protectorate were part of a segmentary society with a distinctive, nomadic way of life, and with its own language and culture.[10] The most characteristic feature of the Somali political constitution was the lack of almost any stable hierarchy of political units. As one specialist on Somali society noted, "a hierarchical pattern of authority is foreign to pastoral Somali society which in its customary process of decision-making is democratic almost to the point of anarchy."[11] The

[9]For an extensive examination of Anglo-Italian relations placing the Zeila question in its European context, see Arthur Marsden, "Salisbury and the Italians in 1896," Journal of Modern History, XL, no. 1 (1968), pp. 91-117 and C. J. Lowe, Salisbury and the Mediterranean (London and Toronto, 1965).

[10]For a comprehensive and authorative anthropological study see I. M. Lewis, A Pastoral Democracy, A Study of Pastorialism and Politics Among the Northern Somali of the Horn of Africa (Oxford, 1961).

[11]Lewis, Somaliland, p. 10.

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12 Lewis, Pastoral De
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13 Ibid., pp. 246-247

14 Somali Coast Admin
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Anglo-Indian Sarkar, or administration, had little on which to graft its rule; leaders of clans or sub-clans had almost no intrinsic power, and the akils inherited from the Egyptians were, in the eyes of the Somalis who nominated them, only emissaries to the protectorate officials.[12] Another characteristic of Somali society was almost constant feud and warfare, a product of both mutual dependence on limited pasturage and water and the tradition that clan-fighting was the means by which the relations of different groups were regulated. War was chronic and Somali society went through "a perpetual cycle of aggression and conciliation" where settlement by compensation was rarely a "final solution."[13]

When life was particularly harsh, as during a drought, strife could be touched off by any trivial incident. Since 1893, the protectorate had suffered a prolonged drought with its grim companions, cattle disease and famine. Raiding and looting--even of the usually sacrosanct religious centers--were reaching alarming proportions.[14] One secion of the Habr Awal, the Rer Hared, distinguished themselves by the effectiveness of their raids. They threw the country around Zeila into panic and threatened the security of trade routes to Zeila and Bulhar. The protectorate administration tried

[12] Lewis, Pastoral Democracy, pp. 200-203. Indirect rule was never a viable system in British Somaliland.

[13] Ibid., pp. 246-247.

[14] Somali Coast Administrative Reports, 1893-4 and 1894-5.

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to starve the Rer Hared into submission by closing the ports to them; but the Rer Hared defeated this move by smuggling their camels and livestock into the ports in other clans' caravans. The Rer Hared's success in defying the protectorate administration gained them allies and adherents among other pastoral Somalis. Protectorate officials warned their superiors in Aden and India that unless the Rer Hared were disciplined, the Sarkar would lose its prestige and forfeit the faith that most coastal clans had in Anglo-Indian rule.[15]

In early February 1895, an ultimatum was issued to the Rer Hared and to their principal allies and kinsman by intermarriage, the Rer Nur of the Gadabursi clan. Most of the Rer Nur gave in and offered compensation for their raids. The Rer Hared answered with further raiding. After deliberating for three months, the Somali coast officials played their last card--they obtained the sanction of the Resident at Aden for a punitive expedition, to be led by Captain Cox, the Assistant Resident in charge of Berbera and Bulhar, and seconded by Harrington, the only other

[15]Ferris to Cunningham (let.), Aden, July 16, 1895, enclosed in Rodd to Salisbury (let.), Cairo, Aug. 24, 1895, FO/403/221; Somali Coast Administration Report, 1895-6, pp. 1-4 are the principal sources for the following account of the little-known 1895 expedition.

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[17] Harrington's next
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European officer with the unit.[16] The nucleus of the force was twenty-six Camel Sowars of the Protectorate police and an equal number of Baladiyas, or caravan escorts, also mounted on camels. Both were armed with Snider rifles. This mobile strike force was joined by approximately 2,000 Somali recruits from the coastal clans which had borne the brunt of the Rer Hared's previous raids.

The expedition was a potential filibustering fiasco: the Somali irregulars were bent on revenge and expectant of loot. Neither Cox nor Harrington could be sure of the allegiance of their Somali recruits, but once the decision to advance with the Somali allies was made, Harrington threw himself enthusiastically--if apprehensively--into his first campaign.[17] The Rer Hared were in their summer pastures in the Ogo, the highlands to the interior, south of the Guban, or maritime plain. An attack on the Rer Hared in their easily-defended mountain retreat had been previously regarded

[16]The Government of Bombay's authorization was never obtained. Colonel Ferris, the Political Agent and Consul for the Coast, argued that reference to Bombay would have taken months and the time to act was at hand. Since no Indian troops were to be used, Ferris felt no need to inform Bombay. The Government of Bombay disagreed. The use of "friendlies," Somali allies, necessitated their sanction. Ferris countered that the "friendlies" would have come along anyway and by putting them under Cox and Harrington, he avoided "promiscuous looting" and the killing of women and children. Ferris's fait accompli was accepted by the Indian authorities. Somali Coast Administrative Report, 1895-6, pp. 2-3.

[17]Harrington's next campaign was with the British Expeditionary Force in France during the First World War.

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as impractical; it was a gamble which the political agent and consul for the coast and his assistants decided was worth the risk. A victory would counteract the general Somali belief that the Ogo was a permanent refuge from the authority of the Sarkar. The two young officers, fifty odd mounted riflemen, and the nearly 2000 Somalis with camp-followers, set off on June 5th against a foe estimated at from 1500 to 3000 fighting men.

For weeks the protectorate force and its allies chased their adversaries, making contact mostly with the Rer Hared's flocks of sheep and herds of cattle and goats.[18] Large numbers of animals were captured. Those Rer Nur still allied to the Rer Hared surrendered and received back their captured livestock in return for a promise of assistance against their former allies. As it turned out, the Rer Nur drove off their flocks and herds and were never seen again. The protectorate forces doggedly pursued the Rer Hared, and although they never quite made contact, they accumulated more and more captured livestock. The defiant clan filled in the wells to deny their enemies water. Still, Cox and Harrington pursued them through the desolate highlands. The two Englishmen finally realized they could not make the elusive Rer Hared

[18] Somalis had a dual system of herding. Unmarried men and boys move the far-ranging camels; the rest of the family move the sheep, goats and cattle. When pursued by enemies Somalis tried to keep their livestock together; but the slower-moving sheep, goats and cattle herded by the women and girls could not always keep up the pace. Lewis, Somaliland, pp. 7-8.

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T. O. Ranger, "Connections
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stand and fight. They called off the chase and divided up the loot--their Somali irregulars got their share, and the rest was earmarked to pay off fines levied on the Rer Hared for their raiding by the Protectorate Administration.

To Cox and Harrington's satisfaction the Rer Hared finally sent a deputation to discuss terms of peace. A simple admission of guilt and acceptance of their losses in livestock as punishment was all that was required from the Rer Hared. One of the deputation, Kalamleh Bulaleh, was taken into custody and sent to Berbera as a political prisoner.[19] For the British, the major consequence of the expedition was the realization that the only way for the protectorate to fight recalcitrant Somalis was with Somali irregulars. In the desolate and waterless tracts of the northern Horn of Africa, regular Indian or British troops were worthless.

[19] Kalamleh, an Esa married to a Hared wife, had been a leading member of an earlier Esa resistance movement, which in 1890 necessitated another Anglo-Indian punitive expedition. As Kalamleh's purpose was to forge a Jibril Abokor-Gadabursi-Esa Somali alliance against Anglo-Indian rule, he was too formidable an adversary to allow to go free. The question remains: to what extent were the Rer Hared's actions motivated by what one historian has called "primary resistance" to imperialism, and to what extent were they part of one of the main dynamics of Somali history--the conflict between the Arab emporia on the coast and the pastorialists of the interior. Given the limited and one-sided sources available it is impossible to answer. Inherent in the Rer Hared's resistance was a dislike of the British administration, which sought to limit their raiding by infringement of trade at the coast. The Rer Hared were also undoubtedly glad to settle old scores with coastal clans. T. O. Ranger, "Connections Between 'Primary Resistance' Movements and Modern Nationalism in East and Central Africa, part I," Journal of African History, IX, 3 (1968), pp. 437-53.

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For that reason the punitive expedition of 1895 owed its inspiration to traditional Somali warfare rather than the training manuals of Europe.[20]

On July 1, 1895, Cox and Harrington arrived at Berbera with Kalamleh Bulaleh. In a report to the India and Foreign Offices, the political agent and consul for the Coast described the campaign as "a most successful little expedition"; there were almost no casualties--there had been little real fighting--and, more importantly, the Rer Hared had been forced to make peace at no extra cost to the Indian Exchequer. The livestock taken from the Rer Hared was more than adequate compensation for both fines due and rewards for the Somali allies and protectorate troops. Beyond being a successful raid, what were the results of the expedition?

Not surprisingly, in the next administration report, the assistants claimed that all was quiet in the interior.[21] Certainly the protectorate officials had earned a temporary lull for the trouble of their expedition; but, as both Cox and Harrington knew, the task of keeping order in even a

[20]Five years later Harrington gave similar advice to the Salisbury Government, then deliberating on how best to deal with the so-called "Mad Mullah" of Somaliland, Sayyid Muhammed 'Abdille Hassan, the charismatic leader of the Dervish Movement. According to Lewis, A Pastoral Democracy, p. 242, the aim of traditional Somali warfare is to establish political ascendancy, not subjugate enemies; raids are to seize livestock, not captives, and pitched battles are to be avoided. Such is an excellent description of the 1895 Expedition.

[21]Somali Coast Administration Report, 1895-6, pp. 3-4.

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[23] Memorandum by Seal
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modest portion of the 60,000 square miles of the Somali Coast Protectorate was hopeless with the minimal means allowed by the government of India. Punitive raids brought only temporary respite. At the heart of the matter was a basic dilemma: "the accepted paper policy, . . ." to use Cox's own words, was "interference in raids on caravans" on the part of protectorate officials and "non-interference in inter-tribal quarrels." In theory, the distinction seemed clear; in practice it was almost impossible to work for the simple reason that raids on caravans--especially at wells--was part and parcel of Somali inter-clan warfare.[22]

Cox's arguments were part of a general campaign of those directly responsible for the Somali Coast--from subaltern Harrington to Brigadier General Cunningham, resident at Aden--for a forward policy in the protectorate. The broad outlines of the policy were the establishment of police posts in the interior and an enlarged Protectorate Camel Corps to insure law and order conducive to trade. The money to pay for this effective occupation was to come from an expected surplus in customs revenue and increased taxes in Berbera and Bulhar.[23] The government of India quickly scotched any notion of a forward policy on the Somali Coast.

[22]Cox to Sealy (let.), Berbera, Feb. 24, 1895, enclosed in India Office to Foreign Office (let.), London, Jan. 25, 1896, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/12.

[23]Memorandum by Sealy, Aden, Feb. 14, 1895, enclosed in India Office to Foreign Office (let.), London, Jan. 25, 1895, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/12.

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They soberly reminded the optimistic officials of the coast that from 1885 to 1895 the protectorate had been operating at a loss, and that any surplus would go towards repaying the Indian exchequer. They lectured the coast officials on priorities: Indian interests were limited to securing the regular supply of food for Aden; the best way to secure provisions was to exclude offending Somali clans from trading through the ports. A forward policy was out of the question; but increased taxes were a good idea.[24] The reasoned arguments of the men-on-the-spot were tossed aside by the Viceroy and his Council.

The flat refusal by India to spend any additional money on the protectorate discouraged Harrington; in time it would infuriate him. Still, he had much to do to keep from brooding. Although the protectorate government rested lightly on the Somali pastoralists, its judicial system offered an alternate means of settling disagreements between Somalis beyond the traditional method of feud, war, and negotations leading to the payment of blood-money as compensation. Increased litigation by some pastoral clans, added to the normal judicial load arising out of Zeila's commerce, made Harrington's work at the courthouse at Zeila heavy. All assistants on the coast found they were tied to paperwork until dark and had to forego supervision of the musketry

[24]Gov't of India to Gov't of Bombay (let.), Calcutta, March 29, 1895, enclosed in India Office to Foreign Office (let), London, Jan. 25, 1896, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/12.

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[26] Harrington to Ferr
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training of the police and Camel Corps.[25]

In November, Harrington was sent to the interior for a tour of the "jungles"--in Somali Coast administrator's parlance, the clans of the interior who rarely saw a protectorate official--to lay the groundwork for cordial relations between the Sarkar and the Somali clans whose protection was contracted by treaty ten years earlier.[26] As an impetus to commerce, Harrington, with the help of a lieutenant in the Royal Engineers turned missionary, attempted to drill new wells along a stretch of the Zeila-Gildessa trade route to Harar. The two Englishmen were using an old boring plant that continually broke down. Harrington and the engineer were so frustrated with the old machine and so sure they would strike water, that they offered to buy a new plant out of their own pockets, to be reimbursed if they found water. The government of Bombay, often profligate in large schemes, seemed miserly in small ones; Harrington's offer was not taken up.[27]

Not all was hard work. The ugas (clan head) recognized by the Esa Somalis of French Somali Protectorate paid a visit to Zeila to be recognized and honored by the Esas of

[25] Cox to Sealy (let.), Berbera, Feb. 24, 1895, enclosed in India Office to Foreign Office (let.), London, Jan. 25, 1896, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/12.

[26] Harrington to Ferris (let.), Zeila, Nov. 15, 1895, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/10.

[27] Somali Coast Administrative Report, 1895-6, p. 13ff.

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[28] Ibid., pp. 5-6.

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the Anglo-Indian protectorate with all due ceremony.[28] The installment of the ugas was the most colorful and most widely enjoyed public ritual of Somali life. Despite his limited power, the ugas was responsible, at least ritually, for the prosperity and good fortune of his people. He was the symbol of clan solidarity and, in theory, both a peacemaker among his fellows and their principal spokesman in external relations. The basic ingredient of the ceremony was public acclamation and acknowledgement; it was represented symbolically when a clan member, known to be lucky, placed fresh, green leaves on the leader's head. Elders and wadoahs (religious teachers) next greeted the ugas with a handshake and presented gifts; cavalry displays, general feasting, dancing, and animal sacrifices to secure the blessings of God and the Prophet usually followed. This ceremony was always held in conditions of plenty. Large numbers had to assemble in one place and live there for some time, and the abundance that made the ceremony possible was considered a portent of the reign to come.[29]

By 1896, better times had returned to the Zeila countryside; the drought that parched the protectorate and exacerbated raiding was over. As he watched the Somali celebration,

[28] Ibid., pp. 5-6.

[29] Lewis, Pastoral Democracy, pp. 203-208. The limits on the power of the ugas were formidable: he had no court, no emissaries, no soldiers, and no source of revenue. The ugas was given gifts, but was expected to show hospitality in return.

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[31]Clare Ford to Rose
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Harrington hoped that the installation of the ugas of the Esa would herald good times for Zeila. Harrington had no way of knowing--he was not privy to the official correspondence between the Foreign and India Offices--that the Italians had begun a fresh diplomatic campaign to acquire Zeila. The repercussions of this development were to cause Harrington considerable trouble and confusion.

The Italian quest for Zeila began sedately enough as part of an attempt by Baron Blanc, the Italian Foreign Minister, to revive the Anglo-Italian working agreement in international relations formulated during the previous decade.[30] For the Italians, Zeila was primarily a means of becoming co-occupier with Great Britain of former Egyptian territories. As Blanc admitted, Zeila was the block on which to build an "Anglo-Italian alliance and a general guarantee in the Mediterranean."[31] The Rosebery Government received and passed on to India an Italian request for Zeila early in 1894. Lord Kimberley, then Secretary of State for India, declined to entertain the Italian proposal for

[30]The Anglo-Italian understanding rested upon common opposition to the French and Russians and also the legacy of British goodwill left over from the Unification of Italy. Italy was the practical link between Great Britain and the Triple Alliance. As long as Anglo-German collaboration retained a central place in British foreign policy, the associated Anglo-Italian co-operation was workable. Marsden, "Salisbury and the Italians," pp. 91-96.

[31]Clare Ford to Rosebery (let.), Rome, Jan. 31, 1894, The History of the Times (London, 1947), III, p. 252, n. 233 as quoted in Marsden, "Salisbury and the Italians," p. 96.

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[32]Kimberley to Forei
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[33]Memorandum by Poli
Office, London, March 19,

reasons which were, for the next two years, the core of India's objections to Italians in Zeila: India wished to retain control of one of Aden's principal sources of livestock, Ethiopia would regard the cession as an unfriendly act (the India Office was not playing the game of considering Ethiopia to be an Italian protectorate), an Italian settlement at Zeila would be too close to French Jibuti for the maintenance of tranquility in the Somali Coast, and finally the dormant rights of Turkey to the port were deliberately put forth as a stumbling block to a possible cession.[32]

The Italians were not deterred by the objections of the India Office. During the Anglo-Italian conference at the Foreign Office held in March 1894 to determine boundaries of their respective Somali protectorates, the Italians offered the Mijertein country at the tip of the Horn of Africa in exchange for Zeila. Sir Thomas Sanderson, the permanent undersecretary of state for foreign affairs, refused to discuss ceding of Zeila because it went beyond his instructions.[33] At the beginning of 1895, Blanc strongly underlined the Italian position: "This Protectorate /over Ethiopia/ will never be a real one to the Abyssinians so long as Zeila, which is the natural port of Shoa and Harrar,

[32]Kimberley to Foreign Office (let.), London, Feb. 15, 1894, L/P&S/18/B.69.

[33]Memorandum by Political and Secret Department, India Office, London, March 19, 1895, L/P&S/18/B.69.

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and the most direct and easy route from that port to regions protected by us, is closed to Italy." Blanc stressed that unless Italy received and developed Zeila, the French Jibuti route to Harar and Shoa would continue to be the most important trade outlet. Then, Blanc continued, there would be "no pacific way" to make good the Italian protectorate over Ethiopia. Again, Rome requested cession of Zeila.[34]

The Political and Secret Department of the India Office was opposed to Italy as possessor, tenant, or joint-occupant of Zeila given the deterioration of Italo-Ethiopian relations. Cession would offend Paris and demonstrate overt British sympathy for Italian designs on Ethiopia. So far as Indian officials were concerned, the French at Jibuti were better neighbors than the Italians. French predominance in Ethiopian trade via Jibuti was "a legitimate exercise of their unquestioned right" to develop their settlement, hardly an aggressive action as Blanc had insinuated. Kimberley dressed up these objections in diplomatic garb and instructed Sir Clare Ford, the British Ambassador in Rome, to inform the Crispi Government that a cession of Zeila was impossible. The Foreign Secretary attempted to soothe Italian disappointment with two compromising gestures: he would send a British mission to Harar, the government of

[34] Translation of Blanc to Silvestrelli (let.), Rome, Jan. 16, 1895, enclosed in Clare Ford to Kimberley (let.), Rome, Jan. 21, 1895; Clare Ford to Kimberley (lets.), Rome, Jan. 20, 25, 1895, ARR, R/A.I.A./C/9.

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India willing, as evidence of British interest there, and he would allow the Italians an unofficial agent at Zeila.[35]

Upon learning of Kimberley's plans, the political agent for the Somali coast immediately sent a protest to the government of Bombay, which became the substance of the governor general of India's objection to the possibility of a resident Italian at Zeila. If an Italian agent was allowed at Zeila, India argued that the French would demand a similar privilege, which would be difficult to deny. Zeila could become a point of Franco-Italian rivalry. Moreover, Ras Makonnen was sure to interpret the presence of the agent as proof of British support of Italian designs on Ethiopia. Anglo-Ethiopian relations and trade would be impaired. When the Italians insisted that their agent needed to fly the Italian standard to make an impression, the resident at Aden protested that, since "Italian influence in Abyssinia is extinct," it was not timely for the government of India to jeopardize its neutrality in the Ethio-Italian conflict by allowing Italian flags at Zeila.[36] Kimberley accepted these objections, and the India Office was assured that the Italian agent at Zeila and the British mission to Harar had

[35] Memorandum by the Political and Secret Department, India Office, London, March 19, 1895, L/P&S/18/B.69; Kimberley to Clare Ford (let.), London, Feb. 6, 1895, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/9.

[36] Governor-General of India in Council to Fowler (let.), Calcutta, March 27, 1895, FO 403/221; India Office (hereafter I.O.) to Foreign Office (hereafter F.O.) (let.), London, March 29, 1895, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/9.

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been dropped "on grounds of Imperial policy."[37]

The Rosebery government had another, better opportunity to soften its rejection of the Italian request for Zeila. In mid-March of 1895, Ras Makonnen asked the resident at Aden for permission to tranship 4,600 rifles from Aden via Zeila. The Foreign Office immediately reported the request to the Italians and sought their advice. After some preliminary confusion, the Italians demanded that the British government intercept and seize the rifles.[38] The Rosebery government did not go that far; but it did place an embargo on the rifles in Aden on the grounds that the arms might be used against a "friendly power"--Italy.[39] The new political agent

[37]Neither the I.O. nor the Italians could see much advantage to an Anglo-Indian mission to Harar. For the Italians, it would be an embarrassing confession that their protectorate over Ethiopia was, in reality, only a figment of their aspirations. F.O. to I.O. (let.), London, April 5, 1895, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/9.

[38]Gen. Baratieri, Governor of Eritrea, proposed that Italy should handle the arms deal--rather an incongruous solution as Ethiopia and Italy were currently at war. In demanding that the British intercept the rifles, Baratieri argued that Ethiopia was contravening the Brussels Act of 1890 which prohibited the export of firearms to Africa. The General forgot that Italy had sponsored Emperor Menilek's membership to the Brussels General Act, thus allowing Ethiopia to import arms. Quicker minds at the Italian Foreign Ministry realized Baratieri's mistake and began a campaign to prove Ethiopia had forfeited its rights under the Brussels Act by flagrant encouragement of the slave trade. Dufferin and Ava to Kimberley (let.), London, May 24, 1895 and Jopp to Fowler (tel.), Aden, March 16, 1895, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/9.

[39]Kimberley to Clare Ford (tel.), London, April 10, 1895, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/9; Fowler to Jopp, April 11, 1895 as quoted in H. G. Marcus, "A Background to Direct British Diplomatic Involvement in Ethiopia, 1894-1896," Journal of Ethiopian Studies, I, no. 2 (1963), p. 125.

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and consul for the Somali Coast, Major W. B. Ferris, had advised the Foreign Office to be wary of accommodating the Italians too readily. From his intelligence sources, he believed that Emperor Menilek had ordered Ras Makonnen to attempt to tranship the fire-arms to test the French contention that Great Britain gave unqualified support to Italy's policy of aggression. Both Ferris and the resident at Aden hoped that Makonnen would obtain the first consignment of 660 rifles, since such a small number of weapons would matter little during the present war, and they might buy the British some goodwill in Ethiopia. The two local officials, however, were disappointed.[40]

The Crispi government, encouraged by London's refusal to allow the rifles to be shipped to Harar, saw new hope in the fall of Rosebery's ministry and its replacement by Lord Salisbury's third government in the summer of 1895. Perhaps Anglo-Italian collaboration could be made to work once again? By gradually lowering their requirements, the Italians finally obtained permission to place a private and unofficial observer in Zeila to report on Ras Makonnen and events in Harar, an assignment which could only be carried out through a network of spies. Since Harrington was instructed to provide the necessary facilities for the Italian agent, the British government was officially supporting this Italian

[40] Memorandum (hereafter memo.) by Ferris, Aden, N.D., with a minute by Jopp, enclosed in Jopp to I.O. (let.), Aden, April 24, 1895, communicated to F.O. May 4, 1895, FO 403/211.

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42 Ferris to Cromer
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intelligence gathering operation. Neither Harrington nor Ferris liked the arrangement. Ferris directed his criticisms to Lord Cromer, the powerful British agent who virtually ruled Egypt and who was one of the most important strategists of the British Empire.

The crux of Ferris's argument was clear. There was no way of keeping secret the identity of a European in a small African town like Zeila, where probably the only other westerner would be Harrington himself. Further to complicate matters, Dr. Cesare Nerazzini, who had been expelled from Harar immediately preceding the outbreak of hostilities between Ethiopia and Italy, was selected by the Italians to be the observer in Zeila.[41] It would not be long before Menilek learned of Nerazzini's residency in Zeila and realized his function there. The emperor would not be pleased and he was in a position to make his displeasure felt: he could divert even more of Harar's rapidly increasing trade through Zeila to the French port of Jibuti.[42]

Ferris had more on his mind than merely warning Cromer; he hoped to use the latter's immense influence to modify

[41] Nerazzini, a retired surgeon in the Italian navy, served on a number of diplomatic and intelligence missions to Africa and was twice Italian agent at Harar. After the Italian defeat at Adwa, he negotiated the return of Italy's prisoners-of-war and the general peace with Ethiopia. Translation of article in L'Escripto Italiano (military newspaper) enclosed in Needham to Clare Ford (let.), Rome, Nov. 27, 1896, communicated by F.O. to I.O. Dec. 10, 1896.

[42] Ferris to Cromer (let.), Aden, July 31, 1895, enclosed in Cromer to F.O. (let.), Cairo, Aug. 14, 1895, FO 403/221.

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British policy in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. As political agent for the Somali Coast, Ferris was responsible to the Indian government; but as consul he reported directly to Cromer. On the one hand, Ferris hoped to convince Cromer to arrange for the Somali Coast to come under the more benign and less restrictive administration of a Foreign Office-Cairo regime. On the other, he warned Cromer that the pro-Italian course of the Foreign Office could only destroy Zeila's trade and harm British interests both on the Somali Coast and in the Nile Valley. Ferris maintained that a pro-Italian policy did nothing to aid the Italians and much to further French aims in Ethiopia.[43] For his part, Harrington was in full agreement with Ferris. Proof of his knowledge, if not complicity, in Ferris' game survives as a cryptic reference in a semi-private letter. Harrington congratulated Ferris on taking the first step towards "independence on the Coast" by writing to Cromer.[44]

In October, Ferris and Harrington presented Cromer with something more than vague warnings. Trade in Zeila had come to a standstill. Harrington felt the reason was simple: the Aden and Zeila mercantile houses, which financed in

[43]Ferris's letters are not among the Cromer Papers (hereafter CP), but Cromer mentions them when writing to others on Ferris's behalf. See Cromer to Barrington (priv. let.), Cairo, June 18, 1895 and Cromer to Edwards (priv. let.), Cairo, Oct. 21, 1895, CP, FO 633/5/nos. 618 and 623.

[44]Harrington to Ferris (let.), Zeila, Nov. 15, 1895, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/10.

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[47] Cromer to Edwards
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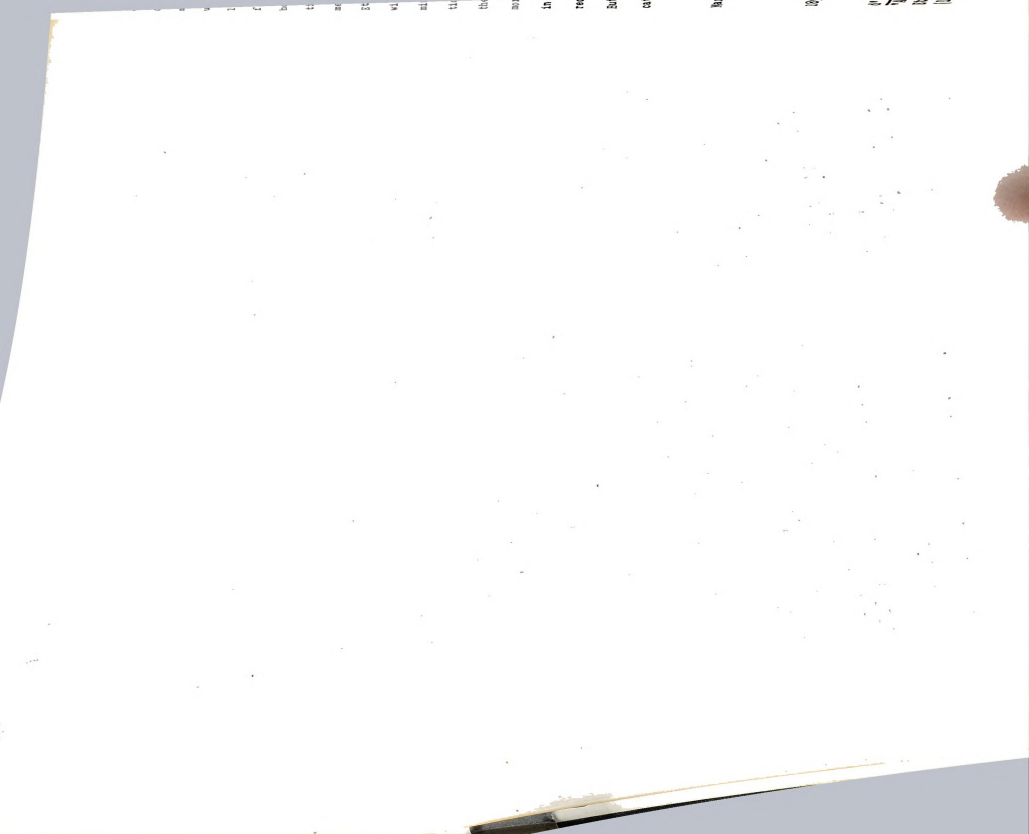
advance local trade to and from Harar, feared that Zeila's cession to Italy was imminent and stopped all credit to the port.[45] Harrington considered the problem to be grave, because customs revenues at Zeila provided about half of the funds for the entire Somali Coast Protectorate's budget. Harrington asked whether the Imperial Government recognized the commercial importance of Zeila and the Somali Coast in general. He pointed out that the total annual trade of Zeila alone was almost four times as large as that of British Central Africa (Malawi).[46]

Cromer realized the essence of the problem: "the Foreign Office . . . wish to do everything they can to be friendly to the Italians. The local authorities find that in the execution of this very wise English policy local interests suffer severely. Hence a clash."[47] He was

[45] Harrington contended that bazaar rumors about cession abounded; merchants talked of the Italo-Ethiopian conflict spreading to the south and even the possibility of a French preventive occupation. Nerazzini, whom everyone knew to be a secret agent, arrived in a man-of-war, which was then placed at his disposal. More fuel was added to the fire when an Egyptian paper circulated in Zeila speculated on the cession. The result, according to Harrington was the total stagnation of Zeila's trade. What Harrington did not mention was that the Somali port's trade had always been seasonal and the Italo-Ethiopian war probably interrupted trade from Harar and Shoa. Harrington as quoted in Ferris to Cromer (let.), Aden, Oct. 30, 1895, enclosed in Cromer to Salisbury (let.), Cairo, Nov. 8, 1895, FO 403/221; Harrington to Ferris (let.), Zeila, Oct. 25, 1895, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/10.

[46] Harrington as quoted in Ferris to Cromer (let.), Aden, Oct. 30, 1895, enclosed in Cromer to Salisbury (let.), Cairo, Nov. 8, 1895, FO 403/221.

[47] Cromer to Edwards (priv. let.), Cairo, Oct. 21, 1895, CP, FO 633/5/no. 623.



sympathetic, but he would not attempt to alter the policy of the Foreign Office. He did privately press the India Office, however, to allow the authorities on the Somali Coast more resources and arranged for the Foreign Office to request unofficially that Nerazzini act discreetly. But for the larger issue of the contradiction between maintaining Italian friendship and seeking Ethiopia's goodwill, Cromer could only hope that Ferris might be able to bring about a reconciliation between Ethiopia and Italy.[48] It was obvious to the men-on-the-spot that Italy's role as British "watchdog" over Ethiopia was ending.[49] The necessity for coming to terms with Ethiopia was clear to them, but not to the men in Westminster. Occupied with other diplomatic and imperial questions (the Transvaal, the Venezuelan and Armenian crises), the men who directed British policy were unmoved. Something more dramatic than a low-keyed campaign of local officials in a far corner of the empire was needed to make Whitehall recognize that Ethiopia was a significant East African power. But the outcome of the Italo-Ethiopian war would provide the catalyst for a change in British policy.

The Italians, under General Baratieri, invaded Tigré in March of 1895. After initial, easy victories, Baratieri's

[48] Cromer to Barrington (priv. let.), Cairo, June 18, 1895, CP, FO 633/5/no. 618.

[49] Leo Silberman, "Why the Haud was Ceded," Cahier d'Etudes Africaines, II, no. 5 (1961), p. 63; H. G. Marcus, "A Background to Direct British Diplomatic Involvement in Ethiopia, 1894-1896," Journal of Ethiopian Studies, I, 2 (1963), p. 121.

forces suffered their first setback in December at Amba Alagi. Over 1,200 Italian troops were surrounded by 20,000 Ethiopians. A six-pronged Ethiopian attack shattered the vulnerable column; only three Italian officers and 300 men escaped the disaster. Ras Makonnen, commanding the Ethiopian forces, pursued the three hundred to the Maqalé fortress and began a siege.[50] Within days of the battle General Baratieri sought London's permission for Italian troops, munitions and provisions to pass through Zeila into Ethiopia. Salisbury's initial response was favorable so long as the Italians remained for only two weeks.[51] The India Office, however, reiterated its familiar objections to the Italians in Zeila, with the additional observation that the landing of an Italian force with adequate supplies for a march into the interior would be logistically difficult and certainly would necessitate Italian occupation of Zeila for more than two weeks. The undersecretary of state for India also pointed out that French goodwill was almost a prerequisite because of the terms of the Protocol of 1888.[52]

[50]For a good account of the opening stages of the war see George F. H. Berkeley, The Campaign of Adowa and the Rise of Menelik (London, 2nd Edition, 1935), pp. 80ff; Harold G. Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek II: Ethiopia, 1844-1865 (mss. in press with Clarendon Press, Oxford).

[51]Lord George Hamilton to the Viceroy of India (tel.), London, Dec. 13, 1895, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/9.

[52]I.O. to F.O. (let.), London, Dec. 16, 1895, FO 403/221.

Of course, French acceptance of an Italian diversionary attack on Harar and southern Ethiopia was a virtual impossibility. The India Office knew it, as did Salisbury. Any doubts Salisbury might have had about Paris's attitude were eliminated by the prompt protests of the French ambassador, who claimed that the passage of Italian troops through Zeila was contrary to the 1888 Anglo-French Agreement on the status of Harar and, moreover, that France could not allow Italy to cut off the Jibuti interior and its supplies by occupation of Harar.[53] The 1888 agreement was a mutual, self-denying treaty; neither France nor Great Britain would occupy Harar. The French implied that they would not allow Italy to occupy Harar and thereby open a second front in Ethiopia. Salisbury disagreed; nothing said in 1888 prohibited London from offering facilities to a third power for the conquest of Harar. Salisbury did admit, however, that the use of Zeila as a base for operations against Harar would be "contrary" to the "tenor" of the agreement. The prime minister-foreign secretary (he held both posts) therefore informed Rome that troops could land in Zeila only after Paris agreed to the scheme.[54] That was the coup de grace--the French had already made known their determined opposition to the proposal.

[53]The French stated they might occupy Harar to prevent the Italians from doing so. Salisbury to Dufferin and Ava (lets.), London, Dec. 19, 31, 1895, FO 403/221 and ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/9.

[54]Salisbury to Ferrero (let.), London, Jan. 2, 1896, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/11; Marsden, "Salisbury and the Italians," pp. 97-98.

From Salisbury's point of view, authorization for Italian troops to land in Zeila, hedged with impossible conditions, was not intended for serious consideration in Rome. Confiding to Cromer, he noted that "the matter is purely an academic one, except for Parliamentary purposes in Rome, as it would not be possible to send an expedition through Zeila which would produce any useful effect."[55] What Salisbury did not realize was that, as Italy's military position in Tigré worsened, the Italian foreign minister, Blanc, whose government had staked its reputation and political life on the outcome there, would clutch at straws. In early January 1896, both Blanc and Baratieri believed that if they could land merely 200 troops at Zeila, the "moral effect" would improve the situation in Tigré--where the Italian garrison at Maqalé was doomed to surrender--and cause a considerable diversion of Ethiopian troops to the south.[56] But Salisbury's conditions for the use of Zeila remained. Blanc became increasingly sensitive and berated the British ambassador for London's insistence on French approval of an Italian landing on the Somali coast. French arms shipments and diplomatic support of Menilek made France, in Blanc's

[55]Salisbury to Cromer (priv. let.), London, Jan. 22, 1896, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/11; Marsden, "Salisbury and the Italians," p. 99.

[56]Salisbury to Clare Ford (let.), London, Dec. 17, 1895, FO 403/221; Clare Ford to Salisbury (let.), Rome, Jan. 11, 1896, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/11; Marsden, "Salisbury and the Italians," p. 98. Actually, the troops already had been diverted. Under the command of Dejatch Tessemus Wado, they protected Menilek's flank.

opinion, practically an ally of Ethiopia.[57]

Salisbury offered Blanc "friendly advice"; it would be extremely foolish for Italy to involve itself in a quarrel with France over Ethiopia, whatever the objectives of the Italo-Ethiopian war. Italy's African policy was a potential military and financial disaster which could sap Italy's national strength and seriously affect the alignment of European powers. A quarrel with France over Ethiopian territory neither country possessed only would compound Italy's troubles.[58]

Salisbury's lecture on national priorities should have convinced the Italians that the British were neither going to put Italy's friendship above that of France, nor allow a few hundred Italian soldiers to act as decoys for an Ethiopian attack on the British Somali Protectorate.[59] Blanc was hurt, bitter, and desperate as he surveyed the wreckage of Rome's policy for an Anglo-Italian second front against Ethiopia.

Nerazzini was another Italian whose career seemed to hinge upon the success of the same policy. The doctor needed a personal triumph; he was out of favor with the Crispi

[57]Clare Ford to Salisbury (lets.), Rome, Jan. 11, Feb. 6, 1896, FO 403/239 and ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/11.

[58]Salisbury to Clare Ford (let.), London, Feb. 26, 1896, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/11; Marsden, "Salisbury and the Italians," p. 99.

[59]Marsden, "Salisbury and the Italians," p. 99.

government, and General Baratieri, dissatisfied with his intelligence gathering, sought his recall.[60] Nerazzini therefore also believed his political fortune depended on obtaining British permission for Italian troops to land somewhere in the Somali Coast Protectorate.[61] The virtual refusal of Lord Salisbury to allow the passage of Italian forces through Zeila was a setback for him; he could not allow British recalcitrance to cause his political downfall.

As assistant political agent and vice-consul at Zeila, Harrington was a newcomer to the intrigues of European imperialism in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. Nerazzini had been active in northeast Africa since 1882. It was not long before Nerazzini used Harrington for his own ends. At the beginning of February 1896, Nerazzini informed Harrington that Italy was sending a survey ship to Dongarita, an unoccupied harbor southeast of Zeila, and that he intended to go overland to meet it there. Harrington had no idea what his own government's policy was to this new suggestion. He was not privy to previous official correspondence, and there was no telegraph link with Aden with which to wire for further instructions. Harrington dared not forbid Nerazzini and the Italian ship from surveying the harbor, but he did suggest

[60]Nerazzini was associated closely with Crispi's rival and successor as Prime Minister after Adwa, the Marquis di Rudini; in April 1896, Nerazzini was sent by Rudini to arrange peace with Menilek.

[61]Harrington to Ferris (let.), Zeila, Jan. 1, 1896, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/10.

that Nerazzini get permission at Aden. Nerazzini shrugged the suggestion off by stating he would go to Aden after the preliminary survey. Nerazzini then disingenuously informed the Italian government that Harrington considered Dongarita a possible alternative landing spot for Italian troops.[62] He had played fast and loose with Harrington; he had rushed the young Bombay political officer into allowing an unauthorized survey of Anglo-Indian territory and placed the red herring of Harrington's semi-official approval of his scheme on file with the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The damage was not great. The Foreign Office soon obtained an official denial by Harrington of Nerazzini's claim, and Salisbury allowed Nerazzini belated permission to survey Dongarita; but he threw cold water on the plan by stating he still preferred Zeila for a temporary cession, with the usual negating qualification of French consent.[63]

Harrington had been abused, and he realized it. His immediate superior, Ferris at Aden, consoled him: looking after British interests in Zeila was a difficult game to play, and the other side was frantic. Ferris suggested that

[62] Harrington to Ferris (let.), Zeila, Feb. 12, 1896 and Ferris to Harrington (let.), Aden, Feb. 7, 1896, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/10; George Hamilton to Cunningham (let.), London, Feb. 6, 1896, enclosed in I.O. to F.O. (let.), London, Feb. 19, 1896, FO 403/239.

[63] Harrington to Ferris (let.), Zeila, Feb. 12, 1896, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/10; Cunningham to George Hamilton (tel.), Aden, Feb. 17, 1896 and Salisbury to Clare Ford (tel.), London, Feb. 19, 1896, FO 403/239.

in the future Harrington had best be less trusting.[64] Despite his chagrin over the Dongarita incident, Harrington had learned a useful lesson. He had his first real taste of the local intrigue of European imperialism--it was increasingly to become his daily fare for the next thirteen years. By contrast, the mundane responsibilities of his post must have seemed a comfort after the schemes of Dr. Nerazzini.

Zeila's trade required supervision. During the last three years the value of the port's commerce had trebled. The natural outlet for Harar, Zeila's commerce grew as the inland city established itself as a major entrepôt of southern Ethiopia. The three years that Harrington resided in Zeila were boom times. The Jibuti-Harar railway was only in the planning stages. Without the advantage of the rail-link into Ethiopia, Jibuti's trade route to Harar was inferior to Zeila's.[65] Like Aden, Zeila was an ancient port in an era of commercial revival. The better-off traders were building masonry houses and the government of Bombay had authorized the construction of a new residency to replace the old Egyptian building. Harrington and Ferris hoped for funds to improve Zeila's port facilities--the existing pier allowed for discharge of cargo only at high tide. When the tide was

[64] Harrington to Ferris (let.), Zeila, Feb. 12, 1896 and Ferris to Harrington (let.), Aden, Feb. 24, 1896, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/10.

[65] Somali Coast Administration Report, 1895-6 (hereafter SCAR), pp. 16-23; H. Le Roux, Ménélik et Nous (Paris, n.d. [1902]), p. 45.

low, a mile of sand and mud separated the pier from the sea. There were always ample administrative duties for Harrington in a town the size of Zeila--about 20,000 to 30,000 people in the winter months.[66] Still, Zeila was hardly a plum post of empire. Among the travellers and sportsmen who came to explore or shoot game in the interior, Zeila had a poor reputation; the climate was almost as bad as Aden's and the town itself offered no amusements.[67]

The summer of 1896 in Zeila, one of the hottest in living memory, was a season of discontent for Harrington. He suffered greatly from prickly heat and went through agonies wearing clothes. In this physical state of being, he spoke his mind to Ferris:

> At times I really feel that were it not that I have great hopes of giving Zaila a hoist, I should cut and run. The only reason I stick on here, is I like the work and I feel there is a chance of getting on here, but if the Government perservere in their policy of indifference to this place, it won't be much use sticking on.

Harrington realized that, despite his many schemes for increasing Zeila's trade, the home government was not interested in the Somali Coast Protectorate. Why did the

[66] SCAR, 1895-6, pp. 16-20; for the best near-contemporary description of Zeila see R. E. Brockman, British Somaliland (London, 1912).

[67] The Somali Coast Protectorate's interior was one of the most popular haunts of late-nineteenth century big game hunters. Game was plentiful (it was later depleted by overshooting) and access through Suez and Aden was easy. During the administrative year 1895-6, forty-five sportsmen visited Zeila on their way into the interior. SCAR, 1895-6, p. 13.

government plan to spend three million pounds on the Uganda railway to divert a trade route and tap a "problematic market," Harrington remarked, when it refused to spend even a few hundred pounds to dig wells along the centuries-old Zeila caravan route to the established market of Harar and south Ethiopia? Harrington warned--one of the first of many dire prophecies--that once the French finished the Jibuti-Harar railway, the British government would have to spend vast sums in Zeila and the protectorate to recover the trade and revenues lost to Jibuti.[68]

The question of the commercial future of Zeila was just one of the magnets that drew Harrington's interest towards Ethiopian affairs. As a young soldier, he could hardly fail to be fascinated by the course of the Italo-Ethiopian war and surprised by the resounding Ethiopian victory at Adwa in March of 1896. Furthermore, he was expected to gather information on Ethiopia. Harrington organized a network of informers who provided him with intelligence on affairs in Harar, Addis Ababa, and Jibuti. Harrington's information, if important enough, travelled from Ferris through Cromer to

[68] Harrington to Ferris (priv. let.), Zeila, June 24, 1896, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./1228.

Salisbury.[69] Gradually Harrington built up a fair knowledge of Ethiopian affairs. During the last half of 1896, he had further chances to extend and use his developing expertise.

Harrington came face to face with the victors at Adwa over the right to control strategic wells of the Gadabursi clan's winter pastures in the Haud--a great wilderness of arid scrubland which, after the rains, held surface water and provided grazing. This particular incident of Anglo-Ethiopian relations has been treated in some detail by scholars of Ethiopian diplomacy.[70] Harrington's role in the incident rightly has attracted less attention. As the man-on-the-spot, Harrington seemed only the instrument of British policy; on closer inspection it is clear that Harrington's initial concern about the Ethiopian "encroachment"--to use the British term--characterized the official Anglo-Indian reaction to the Ethiopian advance in the Haud.

While on tour in the Esa and Gadabursi country in order to arrange peace between two Somali clans, Harrington discovered, at the hot springs of Alalo, Ethiopian-type

[69] See for example, Harrington's reports of 25, 26 Feb., enclosed in Cromer to Salisbury (lets.), Cairo, March 11, 1896, FO 403/239, in which Harrington reported that the Ethiopians feared an Italian landing at Zeila; that they had organized spies to give warning of it; and that they were preparing for the defence of Harar. Harrrington's spies were a diverse lot; a Havaldar (sergeant in the protectorate forces), Greek merchants in Harar and Jibuti, an Arab on good terms with the Ethiopians at Harar, and even an employee of the French firm, Messageries Maritimes.

[70] Marcus, "Background to Direct British Diplomatic Involvement," pp. 130-31.

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dwellings surrounded by a thorn enclosure. Harrington reported that the springs at Alalo were evidently used as a health spa by Ethiopians and added that the settlement, undoubtedly in the British sphere as defined by the 1894 Anglo-Italian protocol, should not have been built without British consent.[71] Ferris made a formal, but friendly, protest to Ras Makonnen along lines suggested by Harrington. Makonnen's reply was equally amiable, but it refused to acknowledge British sovereignty over Alalo.[72] Further information from Harrington of reports of an Ethiopian flag at Alalo, plus a reference to the standard in Makonnen's letter, convinced Ferris that the ras was attempting to establish a claim over Alalo.[73] Harrington had warned Ferris that the permanent occupation of Alalo by the Ethiopians "would be a fatal blow to our prestige and influence in our Somali Coast Protectorate." Ferris agreed and immediately wrote to Rennell Rodd, Cromer's first secretary in Cairo, warning that if Makonnen's "encroachment" went unchallenged, many more

[71]Portion of the Journal of Harrington, May-June 1896; Extract from Notes on Abyssinian Influence, and etc., by Harrington, appendices A and B of Ferris to Rodd (let.), Aden, Sept. 1, 1896, enclosed in Rodd to Salisbury, Sept. 1896, FO 403/239.

[72]Ferris to Makonnen (let.), Aden, Aug. 1, 1896 and Makonnen to Ferris (let.), Harar, Aug. 27, 1896; appendices C and D of Ferris to Rodd (let.), Aden, Sept. 1, 1896, enclosed in Rodd to Salisbury (let.), Cairo, Sept. 11, 1896, FO 403/239.

[73]Ferris to Rodd (let.), Aden, Sept. 1, 1896, enclosed in Rodd to Salisbury (let.), Cairo, Sept. 11, 1896, FO 403/239.

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would occur because Makonnen ignored the Anglo-Italian delimitation of 1894.[74]

Upon the advice of Harrington, Ferris, and the resident at Aden, the cautious India Office suggested that the Ethiopian flag should be removed, but only without resort to force. The India Office had no desire to back up its officials on the Coast if they ran into Ethiopian resistance. Salisbury agreed with a slight modification: he ordered the flag to be hauled down without collision with a superior Ethiopian force--an action which would denote a protest and an assertion of Great Britain's claim of title.[75] The Alalo incident was to take on comic proportions. Ras Makonnen had entrusted the flag to one Ahmed Idris, with orders to fly it occasionally. Whenever Harrington or his emissaries were nearby, the custodian refrained from flying the Ethiopian colors.[76] Since his instructions from Salisbury did not seem to apply, Ferris ordered the huts and the flagstaffs burnt. The job was done without incident; the Ethiopians

[74]Harrington to Ferris (let.), Zeila, Aug. 31, 1896, appendix E of ibid.

[75]I.O. to F.O. (let.), London, Sept. 10, 1896 and F.O. to I.O. (let.), London, Sept. 14, 1896, FO 403/239.

[76]Harrington to Ferris (let.), Zeila, Sept. 15, 1896 and Ferris to Cromer (let.), Aden, Sept. 21, 1896, enclosed in Cromer to Salisbury (let.), Cairo, Sept. 30, 1896, FO 403/239. Another reason the flag was not constantly flown was that the rope used to hoist it was often stolen by passing caravan men.

had discreetly withdrawn.[77]

Lord George Hamilton, secretary of state for India, was considerably annoyed at the way Ferris and Harrington had nonetheless stretched the limits of their orders. The destruction of the Alalo settlement constituted a much more decisive action than the men of the India Office had envisaged. The resident at Aden, who had allowed Ferris and Harrington a free rein, was held responsible.[78] Lord George Hamilton regretted such headstrong action at a time when the government of India had hopes of sending a modest mission of its own to Ethiopia to arrange boundaries, control the clans of the frontier, and maintain the trade routes between the coast and Harar.[79] So far as Lord George Hamilton was concerned, the problem was not merely one of over-zealous authorities on the Somali Coast, but rather a question of the divided allegiance the men there owed to Bombay and London. Lord George Hamilton insisted, and Salisbury concurred, that the consular duties of the consul and political agent for the coast and his assistants (Harrington especially) must

[77]Cunningham to George Hamilton (tel.), Aden, Nov. 10, 1896, enclosed in I.O. to F.O. (let.), London, Nov. 10, 1896, FO 403/239.

[78]George Hamilton to Cunningham (let.), London, Nov. 11, 1896, enclosed in I.O. to F.O. (let.), London, Nov. 11, 1896, FO 403/239.

[79]The anticipated mission under the auspices of India was superceded by the Rodd mission of 1897 on behalf of both London and Calcutta. Governor General of India to George Hamilton (let.), Calcutta, Oct. 28, 1896, enclosed in I.O. to F.O. (let.), London, Dec. 15, 1896, FO 403/239.

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be supplemental to their executive and administrative functions under the resident at Aden and India.[80] In simple terms, Ferris and Harrington were to worry less about Ethiopian "encroachments" against the Gadabursi in the far interior of the protectorate and more about assuring that the Somali ports fulfilled their utilitarian function of supplying Aden's provisions.

The reasons for the extreme concern of Ferris and Harrington about Ethiopian advances are worthy of further examination. Neither saw the Alalo incident as an isolated phenomenon, but rather as part of a long-term campaign of Ethiopian aggrandizement. Ras Makonnen's actions seemed more sinister to the Coast officials because they were unaware of Menilek's circular letter of 1891 to the European powers--it had been forgotten and filed away--claiming a good portion of the Anglo-Indian protectorate as part of the Ethiopian Empire.[81]

In September of 1891, Makonnen built a small fort at Biyo-Kabobo and garrisoned it. Despite British protest, both directly and through the Italians, the Ethiopians

[80] F.O. to I.O. (let.), London, Nov. 12, 1896, FO 403/239.

[81] Neither Ferris, Harrington nor Cunningham was aware of Menilek's letter to the Powers of April 10, 1891. When Makonnen made reference to it as justification of his action none of the officials on the coast or in Aden knew what he was talking about. See Letters from Aden, vol. 7, Ferris to Cunningham, Dec. 23, 1896, as quoted in The Somali Peninsula, p. 48.

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remained in their enclosure. Since 1891, Ethiopian attention had been directed towards raiding and subduing the Ogaden and, later, towards the Italo-Ethiopia war in the north. Nevertheless, in August 1895, Makonnen wrote to the Habr Awal clan around Hargeisa claiming they were Ethiopian subjects and calling upon them to destroy a shooting camp set up by Lord Delamere (of Kenya fame). The camp was destroyed, and British protests again ignored.[82] In this context, the Alalo incident assumed an infinitely greater importance in the minds of Ferris and Harrington. A sketch map drawn by Harrington and sent to Cromer illustrated how a potential Ethiopian post at Alalo in connection with the existing one at Biyo-Kabobo virtually cut off the southwest corner of the protectorate and placed a large portion of the Zeila-Harar caravan route (Biyo-Kabobo to Gildessa) entirely under Ethiopian control.[83]

There was always considerable hyperbole when late nineteenth century imperialists drew lines on the map of Africa; but it would be a mistake to discount the arguments of Ferris or Harrington as alarmist rantings. The Ethiopian post at Biyo-Kabobo was hardly a strategic fortress by European standards. One of the members of the 1897 Rodd Mission to Menilek disparagingly described it as "a fragile blockhouse, . . .

[82]Ferris to Cromer (let.), Aden, Sept. 21, 1896, enclosed in Cromer to Salisbury (let.), Cairo, Sept. 30, 1896, FO 403/239.

[83]Harrington's sketch map enclosed in Ferris to Cromer (let.), Aden, Sept. 21, 1896, L/P&S/9/7.

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enclosed in a thorn fence, on the top of a small conical hill overlooking the wells; it is garrisoned by seven men . . . a nondescript and ragged riff-raff of Somali and Sudanese."[84] Such an appraisal missed the nature of power in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. The Ethiopian post and garrison might not have measured up to European drill ground standards, but in the arid expanses of the Haud it fulfilled its purpose, especially when one remembers that the nearest Anglo-Indian garrison was on the coast almost one hundred miles away.[85] Ferris warned his superiors that to rely only upon the 1894 Anglo-Italian demarcation of the protectorate's interior boundary with Ethiopia was "to rest on a broken reed and lay ourselves open, sooner or later, to having our territory violated." A supporting argument by Harrington raised the spectre of a "costly expedition" in the future "to put things right" if action was not taken.[86]

The words of Ferris and Harrington were hardly novel ones; the Foreign Office had heard similar warnings before and most certainly would hear them again. What gave the arguments of the two protectorate officials substance was

[84] Capt. Count Gleichen, With the Mission to Menilek, 1897-98 (London, 1898), p. 27.

[85] The closest British garrison was in Zeila. It consisted of one native officer, one Havaldar and fifty-four of the rank and file of the Bombay Light Infantry. SCAR, 1896-7, p. 5.

[86] Ferris to Cunningham (let.), Aden, Oct. 28, 1896, enclosed in I.O. to F.O. (let.), London, Nov. 10, 1896, FO 403/239.

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the confluence of larger events which, in 1896, placed Ethiopia and the adjacent Nile Valley in the forefront of European diplomacy. The outcome of the Italo-Ethiopian war altered the existing status quo. The British decision to reconquer the Sudan made the possibility of Ethiopian military aid to the Mahdists a primary concern of Anglo-Egyptian policy. Finally, the French quickly moved to become a beneficiary of the Ethiopian victory over the Italians. A French mission headed by Léonce Lagarde, Governor of Jibuti, travelled to Addis Ababa to induce Menilek to aid French expansion into the Nile basin.[87] As Salisbury remarked to Cromer, "the Nile Valley is on the diplomatic market, and, considering how much Egypt depends on the Nile, we can hardly keep her from bidding at the sale."[88] Ferris' and Harrington's primary concern, settlement of the Ethiopian-Somali Coast Protectorate boundary, was to become part of a larger Anglo-Egyptian-Ethiopian rapprochement.

Before this understanding could be achieved, diplomatic bridges had to be built; Anglo-Ethiopian relations were a

[87]The British Cabinet decided to reconquer the Sudan in March 1896, Philip Magnus, Kitchener, Portrait of an Imperialist (New York, 1968), p. 89; Marcus, "A Background to Direct British Diplomatic Involvement," pp. 127-28.

[88]Salisbury to Cromer (priv. let.), London, April 1, 1896, CP, FO 633/7/no. 173. Leopold of Belgium wished to lease part of the Sudan; the Russians hoped to exploit the similarities between their Orthodox Church and the Ethiopian Church as the basis of an African policy. See Czeslaw Jesman, The Russians in Ethiopia, An Essay in Futility (London, 1958).

torrent of suspicion. The first British official to try to bridge that river of mistrust was John Harrington. At the end of November of 1896, Harrington visited Jibuti for the purpose of making informal contact with Alfred Ilg, Menilek's foreign policy advisor, who was in transit at the French settlement.[89] The initiative for this modest preliminary contact between Ethiopia and Great Britain seems to have come entirely from Harrington. At first Ilg was unaware of Harrington's official position and their interview followed general lines; Ilg remarked that Menilek desired peaceful, commercial relations with all of Europe as the foundation stone of his modernizing program. When Ilg learned of Harrington's official position, the discussion became more specific. Harrington asked about Menilek's opinion of England, and Ilg answered frankly that it had deteriorated rapidly. The reasons were fourfold; London's acceptance of the Wichalé Treaty of 1889; its formal permission to allow Italian troops to pass through Zeila; the Dongarita affair; and the emperor's belief that Great Britain had supported Italy's aggression financially.

In the course of his talks with Ilg, Harrington turned to the question that became almost a preoccupation with him--

[89] Alfred Ilg was a Swiss engineer, a graduate of the famous polytechnical school of Zurich, who came to Ethiopia during the 1870's. He became Emperor Menilek's principal consultant on European affairs and commercial and engineering enterprises. Ilg was one of the concessionaires of the Jibuti-Harar Railway. Outwardly self-effacing, Ilg was a tenacious in-fighter when his interests were at stake.

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the effect of the planned Jibuti-Harar railway upon Zeila's trade and European influence in Ethiopia. Ilg assured him that the railway was not to be a means of gaining French political dominance in Ethiopia.[90] Despite Ilg's assurances, Harrington's negative opinion of the project did not alter. He continued to believe that "we shall certainly see this railway made--the prize--ie. political supremacy over Harrar & Shoa is worth the expense, to say nothing of the commercial supremacy which will ensue . . . Me thinks the writing on the wall, foretelling ruin to Zaila is visible now."[91] When Harrington wrote of his concern about the French railway, he could hardly have imagined that this enterprise was to haunt him like a ghost for many years.

Beyond the statement of Ethiopian grievances and Ilg's denial of a political purpose for the railway, the Ilg-Harrington interviews produced one crucial result--the key to reopen direct Anglo-Ethiopian relations. Ilg mentioned that since Ethiopia had secured its sovereignty, he expected future international relations to be smoother and added that much depended on how the European nations responded to Menilek's correspondence, written after the battle of Adwa, explaining the Ethiopian version of the causes of the

[90]Harrington to Ferris (let.), Aden, Nov. 29, 1896, enclosed in Cromer to Salisbury, FO 403/239.

[91]Harrington to Ferris (let.), Zeila, Nov. 10, 1896, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/13.

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conflict.[92] The men at the Foreign Office interpreted Ilg's general references to European nations to mean Great Britain. Ilg was offering them a timely means of making contact with Menilek, and they quickly took up the invitation. In December of 1896, Rennell Rodd, Cromer's capable chief assistant in Cairo, was chosen to head a joint Anglo-Egyptian mission to Addis Ababa to answer Menilek's letter.[93]

The decision undoubtedly came as a relief to Harrington at Zeila. He could justly feel that his warnings and advice had played a part in moving the Imperial government to action. At last the British Empire accepted Ethiopian independence and recognized its importance to British interests in the Nile Valley. The course of events had finally taken a turn for the better in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. Harrington also could reflect with satisfaction on the course of his own career.

In India and Aden, Harrington had been engaged, both as a soldier and political officer, in mundane administrative duties. By contrast, as an official of the Somali Coast Protectorate, he began to play an increasingly important role as one of the few Britons knowledgeable of Ethiopian affairs. In time, such expertise was to serve as his passport to promotion and power.

[92]FO 403/239, Harrington to Ferris (let.), Zeila, Nov. 29, 1896, enclosed in Cromer to Salisbury (let.), Cairo, Dec. 8, 1896 and for Menilek's letter see Menilek to Victoria (let.), Addis Ababa, Mar. 31 or Apr. 1, 1896, FO 403/239.

[93]Salisbury to Cromer (let.), London, Dec. 28, 1896, FO 403/239.

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CHAPTER IV: BRITISH MISSIONS TO ADDIS ABABA, 1897-1898

London's decision to send a mission to Ethiopia inaugurated direct Anglo-Ethiopian relations and ended once and for all the cumbersome system of relying upon Indian officials in Aden and the Somali coast for information and informal contacts with the Ethiopian empire. Significantly, all members of the 1897 Rodd mission were drawn from either Egyptian or British military or governmental services.[1] Given the importance of an independent Ethiopia to British imperial strategy in northeast Africa, Whitehall realized the need for more efficient means of communication with Addis Ababa. From the officials on the Somali coast and in Aden there came signs of genuine relief. The slender Anglo-Indian establishment in the Somali ports had more than enough to do without worrying about developments in Ethiopia. Harrington especially hoped that the decision to open diplomatic contact would reduce tension in the Gadabursi country.

In late December 1896, the Alalo controversy flared once again. Somali Coast officials received a communication in both French and Amharic from Ras Makonnen. The French

[1] Rennell Rodd, Memories, pp. 115-16.

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version was translated first; from its tone the resident at Aden concluded that the Alalo situation had reached "an acute phase." Cunningham predicted that Ethiopian "foraging" expeditions would visit Alalo and the surrounding country to substantiate Ethiopia's "historic" claim to the area. He advised Indian authorities to counter the expected Ethiopian moves; but Lord George Hamilton, the secretary of state for India, acted in a conciliatory fashion. With the concurrence of the Foreign Office, Hamilton instructed the authorities on the coast to avoid collision with the Ethiopians in the Gadabursi country, and to ask Ras Makonnen to refrain from action until the Rodd Mission could discuss the matter with the emperor in Addis Ababa. These instructions were passed on to Harrington, who warned the Gadabursi akils in Zeila against confrontation with the Ethiopians in the disputed territory. Harrington also dispatched a personal emmissary to Gadabursi country to alert clan elders.[2]

The second Alalo crisis proved a tempest in a teapot. When the Amharic version of Makonnen's communication was translated, two weeks later, its tone was found to be much less menacing than the French version. The ras objected to the two burnings of the settlement at Alalo, but tactfully assumed that the fires were started by local Somalis, not by

[2]Ferris to Cunningham (let.), Aden, Dec. 23, 1896; I.O. to F.O. (let.), London, Jan. 5, 1897; and Cunningham to Bombay government (let.), Aden, Jan. 24, 1897, enclosed in I.O. to F.O. (let.), London, Feb. 17, 1897, FO 403/255.

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British initiative. Makonnen nonetheless declared his intention "to maintain the rights of the Emperor, My Sovereign, in order to re-establish it [the Alalo settlement] as before, and to prevent for the future all aggressions on this post . . . nevertheless, I hope you will not wish that there should be any trouble in connection with this desert tract at our frontier."[3] Notwithstanding its conciliatory tone, the ras's letter represented a strong claim to territory which London assumed to be part of its Indian protectorate on the Somali Coast.

Makonnen continued to press Ethiopia's sovereignty over Gadabursi country by later demanding the extradition of an Esa Somali murderer sentenced to death by Ferris. Menilek's agent maintained that the crime was committed by an Ethiopian subject within Ethiopian territory. So far as Ferris was concerned, the murderer was a British-protected person, and the crime had been committed in the interior of the Somali Coast Protectorate. Ferris warned Lord Cromer that the combined effect of the surrender of the Esa murderer and *de facto* acceptance of the Ethiopian claim to Alalo would seriously compromise the British position in the hinterland

[3]The second destruction of Alalo was solely on Gadabursi initiative. Ferris to Cromer (tel.), Aden, Jan. 10, 1897, enclosed in Cromer to Salisbury (tel.), Cairo, Jan. 20, 1897, FO 403/255; Translation of Makonnen to Ferris and Cunningham (let.), Harar, Jan. 10, 1897, enclosed in I.O. to F.O. (let.), London, Jan. 13, 1897, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/12. This letter was an important communication and should have been sent to Whitehall by telegraph--an example of the inefficiency of Indian control of diplomatic relations with Ethiopia.

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The Somali Coast officials regarded Ethiopia's actions as a French attempt to disrupt any Anglo-Ethiopian rapprochement.[5] French agents in Harar doubtlessly approved of Ras Makonnen's probes to determine how strongly the British would support the 1894 boundary. But Ethiopia's major consideration was British proximity to Harar; Ras Makonnen was attempting to bolster the empire's "historic" claims to the Ogaden.[6] As a result of the lengthy Alalo controversy, both Menilek and Makonnen had learned that London had limited objectives in the Somaliland interior. Such knowledge was valuable in the negotiation for a new Ethiopian-Somali Protectorate frontier later in 1897.

Rodd and his mission arrived in Zeila in March 1897, and were sped on their way by Harrington's efficient travel preparations. Rumors of both Mahdist and French alliances with Ethiopia, and the presence of a French diplomatic mission to Ethiopia, under Léonce Lagarde, the Governor of Jibuti and Obok, hastened Rodd and his colleagues on to the

[4]Cromer to Salisbury (tel.), Cairo, Jan. 11, 1897, FO 403/255 and ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/12.

[5]Ferris to Cromer (tel.), Aden, Jan. 10, 1897, enclosed in Cromer to Salisbury (tel.), Jan. 20, 1897, FO 403/255.

[6]Harold G. Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., p. 326.

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[4]Cromer to Salisbury (tel.), Cairo, Jan. 11, 1897, FO 403/255 and ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/12.

[5]Ferris to Cromer (tel.), Aden, Jan. 10, 1897, enclosed in Cromer to Salisbury (tel.), Jan. 20, 1897, FO 403/255.

[6]Harold G. Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., p. 326.

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Ethiopian capital.[7] At the end of March, new visitors arrived at Zeila: the first party of more than 1,200 Italian prisoners-of-war released by Ethiopia after the conclusion of peace negotiations. Harrington provided accommodation, entertainment for the officers, and help in repatriation.[8] From them he learned that Ethiopian-Mahdist relations were good, and that envoys from the Khalifa had been in Addis Ababa. He forwarded this important news to London, where it corroborated similar intelligence.[9]

Ethio-Sudanese relations greatly concerned British imperial policy makers in 1897. The possibility of an arms trade in captured Italian weapons disturbed Cairo, which had strongly urged a British mission to Menilek. Lord Cromer expressed his feelings to Lord Salisbury:

> I do not much believe in Abyssinian troops coming down into the plains [The Sudan], but it is exceedingly probable that Abyssinians, acting under Franco-Russian influence, will supply the Dervishes with arms, and if they do so the Egyptian

[7] Rodd, Memories, pp. 120-21.

[8] Harrington's leading guest was General Abertone, the highest ranking prisoner-of-war. The resident for the Somali Coast joined Harrington in Zeila to welcome officially the general and his officers. In all, Harrington spent over 2,000 rupees on entertainment and accommodation for the Italians. The Bombay Political Service refunded Harrington that amount--he was in no position to pay it himself--but the government at Calcutta tried without success to obtain reimbursement from London. Government of India to George Hamilton (let.), Calcutta, Feb. 17, 1898 and Hamilton to Elgin (let.), London, March 31, 1898, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./1287.

[9] I.O. to F.O. (let.), London, April 13, 1897, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/12.

> advance against the Mahdists will be . . . made at much greater sacrifice of life than would otherwise be the case.[10]

Ethiopian neutrality seemed so important that both Rodd and Cromer were prepared to offer Menilek territorial access to the Nile in exchange for non-support of the Khalifa.[11]

After Rodd had talked to the emperor, he realized this projected concession would be of little value because Menilek's circular letter of 1891 had included the left bank of the Nile within Ethiopia. Until the Anglo-Ethiopian force under General Herbert Kitchener actually controlled the Nile, Rodd believed it would be a mistake to offer an advantage de jure to the Ethiopians. The British plenipotentiary correctly assumed that France and Ethiopia were official allies. Concessions to Menilek would only assist Paris's campaign to control the Upper Nile.[12] What Rodd did not, and could not, know was that Menilek had no intention of living up to the

[10] Cromer to Salisbury (priv. let.), Cairo, Dec. 5, 1896, Salisbury Papers (hereafter SP), A/109/109. See also Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., p. 323.

[11] Rodd to Cromer (let.), Cairo, Jan. 17, 1897 and Cromer to Salisbury (tel.), Cairo, Jan. 17, 1897, FO 403/255 and ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/12.

[12] Rodd to Cromer (let.), Addis Ababa (hereafter AA), May 15, 1897, SP, A/110/36; Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., p. 324.

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The Rodd Mission did obtain two concessions, important to London, but really insignificant from Addis Ababa's vantage; Ethiopia would cede no claimed territory in the Nile Valley to another power; and Ethiopia would not ship arms to the Mahdists. Menilek's readiness to agree to an arms-trade injunction suggests, according to Menilek's biographer, that the negus probably never intended to supply the Mahdists in the first place.[14] Beyond these limited successes, Rodd settled none of the outstanding Anglo-Egypto-Ethiopian issues in the Sudan. The task of definitive settlement of the frontier was to trouble Rodd's successor, John Harrington, for almost four years.

Rodd had more success, however, in settling the Ethiopian-Somali Coast Protectorate boundary, an important objective of his mission. As the official on-the-spot, Harrington had witnessed, even contributed to, the annoying territorial disputes between the Ethiopian administration in Harar and the Anglo-Indian Somali establishment. Negotiations over the Ethiopian-Somali border began in Addis Ababa, but soon

[13]Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., pp. 321-22 and "The Foreign Policy of the Emperor Menilek 1896-1898: A Rejoinder," Journal of African History, VII, I (1966), pp. 117-20. See also Harold G. Marcus, "Ethio-British Negotiations Concerning the Western Boundary with Sudan, 1896-1902," Journal of African History, IV, I (1963), pp. 81-94 and G. N. Sanderson, "The Foreign Policy of the Negus Menelik, 1896-1898," Journal of African History, V, I (1964), pp. 87-97.

[14]Rodd to Salisbury (let.), AA, May 14, 1897, FO 1/32; Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., pp. 324-25.

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were deadlocked. Menilek believed Ethiopian occupation of key points in the north-west interior entitled him to the Ogaden. When Rodd was unwilling to concede that much, the emperor professed geographical ignorance of the disputed area. The Ethiopian monarch wished to call Ras Makonnen to his capital to assist him, but Rodd was anxious to return to England. He therefore suggested that the frontier be settled by direct discussions between Ras Makonnen and himself in Harar, and that the formal agreement could be annexed to the treaty.[15] This arrangement has been aptly characterized as "clever, unusual and dangerous; clever because Makonnen would not dare to upset the whole treaty . . . unusual because no treaty that London had ever heard of had a frontier agreement appended as an annex . . . , and dangerous because Makonnen at Harar was more interested in pushing the frontier east than was Menilek in Addis Ababa."[16] Menilek agreed to this peculiar arrangement because he completely trusted Ras Makonnen.

Cromer directed Harrington to travel to Harar and assist in the negotiations. Obviously keen to be involved, the latter arrived on May 26, 1897, a day earlier than expected, and four days ahead of the Rodd Mission. Dressed formally, Harrington visited Ras Makonnen, who impressed the young

[15]Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., p. 326.

[16]L. Siberman, "Why the Haud Was Ceded," Cahier d'Etudes Africaines, II, 5 (1961), p. 57.

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Englishman with his courtesy and intelligence. This cordial first meeting between Makonnen and Harrington was the start of a friendship which continued until the ras's premature death in 1906.[17]

The Rodd Mission reached Harar on May 31; negotiations began the following morning, and continued for four weary days of hard bargaining.[18] The British plenipotentiary catalogued the difficulties he encountered: the problem of working through interpreters; Makonnen's contention that the dependencies of Harar extended to the sea; and his lack of "moral pressure" because Lagarde had already accepted a substantial reduction of Paris's claims on the Somali Coast (what Rodd did not know was that Lagarde's action was a concession in return for an inland alliance with Ethiopia).[19] At first, Ras Makonnen offered a frontier running parallel to the coast and approximately 100 kilometers from it. When Rodd responded negatively, the ras then offered to split the difference between his first 100 kilometer line and the boundary defined by the Anglo-Italian Protocol of 1894. Again Rodd balked because the second proposal ignored Somali

[17]Harrington to Ferris (let.), Harar, May 27, 1897, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/13.

[18]The course of the Rodd-Makonnen negotiations has been analyzed by a number of specialists interested in the origins of the continuing Somali-Ethiopian dispute over territory in the Horn of Africa ceded by European nations to Ethiopia. See Silberman, "Haud"; The Somali Peninsula; and Harold G. Marcus, "The Rodd Mission of 1897," Journal of Ethiopian Studies, III, 2 (July, 1965), pp. 25-35.

[19]Rodd to Salisbury (let.), Harar, June 4, 1897, FO 1/32; Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., p. 327.

clan territorial limits and geographical considerations, and would have halved the Somali protectorate as the British defined it. The negotiations were deadlocked until Rodd promised to try to accommodate Makonnen's line at the western end of the Protectorate.

Rennell Rodd then consulted both Harrington and Captain H. G. C. Swayne, a member of the mission with previous service in the Somali protectorate administration. Harrington was, in Rodd's words, "adverse to any arrangement which could interfere with /British/ control over the Esa camel holders who came to load up at Zeyla, and . . . any tribes who had been entitled to look for British protection, however indirectly exercised." Rodd, on the other hand, considered his first duty to be the conciliation of Ethiopia during the difficult days of the Anglo-Egyptian reconquest of the Sudan. He was unable, therefore, to follow much of Harrington's advice. One of Harrington's specific recommendations was, however, incorporated in the final exchange of notes; a commercially convenient starting point of the frontier, 20 miles south of Makonnen's suggested location. The hard-fought negotiations continued for two more days, but Harrington left before the conclusion of the talks to make preparations for the mission's final march from Harar to Zeila.[20]

[20]Rodd to Salisbury (let.), Harar, June 4, 1897, FO 1/32; Rodd, Memories, pp. 181-83.

After Harrington's departure, both Ras Makonnen and Rennell Rodd threatened to break off discussions. The British official announced his departure date before negotiations were concluded, knowing that his Ethiopian counterpart could not take the responsibility for indefinitely blocking the frontier settlement. Eventually, Rodd was forced to abandon considerable territory because of Ethiopian control of Biyo-Kabobo, Alalo (here occupation was sporadic), and the total absence of any British presence in the interior; moreover, London believed it now needed Ethiopian friendship. The Rodd-Makonnen settlement reduced the Somali Coast Protectorate by approximately 13,500 square miles, but the concession carried the proviso of free access to water and grazing land for Somalis on either side of the frontier. In defence of the settlement, J. C. Ardagh, Director of Intelligence, pointed out that the territory was mainly barren, "a trifling concession," and Rodd characterized the ceded areas as "temporary grazing grounds not under permanent occupation."[21] Neither man realized the nature of the land that Great Britain had conceded. The tract included a good portion of the Haud (in northern Somali, "the south"), a vast expanse of rolling plains covered by tall grass after the rainy season, which provided important seasonal grazing

[21]Memorandum by Ardagh, Intelligence Division to F.O. (let.), London, July 30, 1897, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/12; Rodd to Salisbury (let.), Harar, June 4, 1897, FO 1/32.

for northern Somali herds.[22] When the treaty and boundary annex was made public, there was some parliamentary and public opposition to the concession. The government at Westminster defended Rodd's action on the grounds that the removal of a potential stumbling block to Anglo-Ethiopian friendship was an imperial priority more important than local considerations; and, in any case, the territory ceded was of little apparent value.[23]

Harrington's assistance was acknowledged by Rodd and his colleagues in their official reports and published accounts of the diplomatic mission.[24] He had efficiently

[22] I. M. Lewis, A Pastoral Democracy (Oxford, 1961), pp. 33-35.

[23] In Parliament, Sir Charles Dilke, called by Rodd "the universal dissenter," and Alfred E. Pease, who had visited the Somali Protectorate, were the spearhead of a small opposition to the concession. See Rodd, Memories, p. 199 and Alfred E. Pease, "Some Account of Somaliland, With Notes on Journeys Through the Gadabursi and Western Ogaden Countries, 1896-1897," The Scottish Geographical Magazine, V, 16 (1898), pp. 59-60. A few British sportsmen and adventurers, with Somali experience, publicized their opposition to the boundary in their travel books. See F. B. Pearce, Rambles in Lion Land (London, 1898), p. 163 and Augustus B. Wylde, Modern Abyssinia (London, 1901), pp. 62-64. Finally, the government of India peevishly noted that the new frontier gave Ethiopia "a strong position, from which she can dominate Gadabursi and Zeyla routes, and have the opportunities of interfering with the Habr Awal and the route to Berbera." India accepted the settlement of the boundary because it realized Imperial considerations took priority over local concerns. Typically, India asked London to pay for any expense arising out of the new Ethiopian-Protectorate frontier. Government of India to Hamilton (tel.), Simla, July 28, 1897, enclosed in I.O. to F.O. (let.), London, Aug. 7, 1897, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/12.

[24] Captain Count Gleichen, With the Mission to Menelik, 1897 (London, 1898), pp. 298-99; Rodd, Memories, p. 121; Rodd to Salisbury (let.), Zeila, March 9, 1897, FO 1/32.

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facilitated the journey to Addis Ababa; he impressed Rodd by his manner of dealing with Somalis; and he provided transportation and amenities for the mission's return journey to Zeila.[25] Rodd officially recommended for Lord Salisbury's favorable consideration "the ability for organization and zeal displayed by this most capable officer."[26] Short of gross incompetence on the part of an official, this kind of recommendation was pro forma for late-nineteenth-century diplomatic reports. A far more revealing appraisal appears in Salisbury's private papers: Rodd complained to Cromer that Swayne's advice and opinions were of little use to him, and that Harrington would have been a better member of the mission.[27] Cromer sent this evaluation to Salisbury, through the prime minister's private secretary, Edward Barrington. Cromer added that he thought Swayne's telegrams were "muddle-headed," and that "Swayne did not appear to have been a success."[28] Notwithstanding the captain's experience in Somaliland and his interest in Ethiopia, his poor performance as a member of the Rodd mission eliminated him as a potential candidate for the post of British representative

[25]Two days journey from Zeila, Harrington arrived at the returning mission's camp with tents, soda-water, lager beer, and a mail bag full of ice. Gleichen, Mission to Menelik, pp. 309-10.

[26]Rodd to Salisbury (let.), Cairo, July 20, 1897, FO 403/255.

[27]Rodd to Cromer (priv. let.), Harar, April 7, 1897, SP A/110/27.

[28]Cromer to Barrington (priv. let.), Cairo, May 6, 1897, SP A/110/25.

to the court at Addis Ababa. If Rodd could convince Salisbury of the need for a British agent in Ethiopia, then Harrington was the likely choice.

After leaving Harar in June 1897, Rodd proposed creating a British diplomatic agent, explaining to Salisbury the need for some semi-permanent British presence in Ethiopia. Rodd argued that the government of India failed to provide the Foreign Office with reliable information about Ethiopia, and no improvement seemed likely. Rodd's initial scheme was limited: Harrington as assistant political resident at Zeila should be made consular agent for Harar. He could make two or three trips annually to Harar to dispose of current business and to obtain information on Ethiopian affairs. Rodd tentatively had proposed this expedient to Ras Makonnen, who favored the plan, and felt that Menilek also would approve. Rodd suggested Harrington as the best man for the job for three reasons: one, Harrington was already in Zeila, and the cost of his extra duties as Consular Agent for Harar would be only an additional £100 a year; two, Ras Makonnen liked and trusted Harrington; three, the settlement of the Ethiopian-Somali Coast Protectorate frontier was likely to cause a few small problems which Harrington easily could settle with Ras Makonnen.[29]

After Rodd arrived in London, he had a long interview with Salisbury. The prime minister-foreign secretary sat

[29]Rodd to Salisbury (priv. let.), Harar, June 3, 1897, FO 1/34.

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"huddled at his table with a rug on his knees" while Rodd and F. R. Wingate, Director of Military Intelligence of the Egyptian Army and a member of the mission to Menilek, clarified the apparent situation in the Upper Nile and Ethiopia. Salisbury appeared unconcerned with Ethiopian expansionism and unduly fatalistic about the French threat to the Upper Nile. The prime minister placed his hopes on the ill-fated MacDonald expedition from Uganda.[30] Rodd's one success was to convince Salisbury that Harrington should go to Ethiopia as Great Britain's representative.

The arguments in favor of Harrington's appointment were reinforced by developments in the Nile Valley. By November 1897, Salisbury knew that the MacDonald expedition would not reach Fashoda before Marchand; thus the thrust into the Sudan from the south, including the expensive Uganda Railway, was useless. Kitchener's army, inching its way up the Nile, was the only remaining means of countering the French. In November, both Cromer and Michael Hicks-Beach, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, opposed the advance to Khartum for financial reasons.[31] In this crucial month, the Foreign Office received disturbing news from Harrington at Zeila: large-scale military preparations, including large shipments of Maria Theresa dollars and ammunition, were being dispatched to Shoa. The new political agent and consul for the Somali

[30]Rodd, Memories, pp. 187-88.

[31]Robinson and Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians, p. 363.

Coast, F. W. Wodehouse, became convinced that an Ethiopian expedition intended to occupy a post on the White Nile somewhere between Gondokoro, just south of Lado on the Bahr el Jebel, and Fashoda.[32] In December 1897, Harrington's reports were corroborated by a letter from Makonnen explaining that he had been ordered to campaign against Ethiopian subjects engaged in internecine warfare in Bani Shangul. In reality, this 80,000 man Ethiopian expedition in the direction of the White Nile was in reaction to the "implied menace of the MacDonald Expedition" and the power vacuum caused by the decline of Mahdist administration in the gold-producing Bani Shangul area.[33] MacDonald's failure, the Marchand Mission's unexpected progress in the direction of Fashoda, and the Ethiopian military movement to the White Nile, comprised the background to Harrington's new diplomatic position.

In placing Harrington's appointment in the immediate context of British interests in the Nile Valley, it is important to remember that Ethiopian advances towards the Nile were not initially the foremost concern of British policy-makers. As Salisbury wrote to Cromer:

> I suspect that all these comings and goings to the Court of Abyssinia have in view the opening of some communication with the White Nile through

[32] Wodehouse to Cunningham (let.), Aden, Nov. 27, 1897, FO 403/255.

[33] Makonnen to Cunningham (let.), Harar, Dec. 11, 1897, FO 403/255; Cromer to Salisbury (tel.), Cairo, Jan. 18, 1898, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/15; Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., pp. 327-30.

> Abyssinia; but such an idea need not worry us, for if we capture Khartoum next year, we should be in ample time to prevent any invasion of the river banks from the east.

For his part, Cromer believed that once Khartum was reached, the course of events would favor Britain and Egypt, but, "above all," he sought to avoid any "collision with the Abyssinians."[34] Final confirmation of the desirability of a British agent in Ethiopia was a telegram from Ilg regretting that Menilek had learned of the MacDonald Expedition and the transfer of Kassala through newspaper reports.[35] The need for an agent at the Ethiopian capital was plainly evident.

In November of 1897, the Foreign Office requested Treasury authorization of Harrington's new post with the brief explanation that "recent events" and the "action of the other Powers in accrediting Representatives" had convinced Lord Salisbury that Harrington should be appointed for the protection of British interests.[36] Although the memorandum did not mention it, Salisbury felt that there was one risk in appointing Harrington: the British proposal to send a permanent representative might not be acceptable to the emperor, who could then show his displeasure by refusing

[34] Salisbury to Cromer (priv. let.), London, Oct. 29, 1897, and Cromer to Salisbury (priv. let.), Cairo, Jan. 28, 1898, Cromer Papers (hereafter CP), FO 633/7/no. 189 and FO 633/6/no. 297.

[35] Cromer to Salisbury (tel.), Cairo, Dec. 10, 1897, FO 1/35.

[36] Maxwell to Treasury (let.), London, Nov. 9, 1897, FO 1/35.

to ratify the 1897 Treaty and boundary annex negotiated by Rodd.[37] Cromer believed that such a risk was worth taking since the alternative was to leave Menilek "exposed without any antidote to constant misrepresentations of British policy." Cromer also reminded the prime minister that the treaty had been ratified by both sides; only the Somali protectorate boundary annex remained unfinished. To Cromer's mind, there was more danger from "hostile elements" blocking this remaining ratification, than from any offense Menilek might take from the proposal of a permanent representative.

Rodd thereupon submitted a plan which took account of the misgivings of Cromer and Salisbury. He suggested that Harrington should be accredited to Menilek for the transaction of business, with the proviso that the emperor should decide whether Harrington would reside at Zeila or Addis Ababa. In that form, the danger of Menilek's objecting was considerably reduced. Cromer thought this was a reasonable suggestion and he recommended it to the prime minister.[38]

By the end of November, the Treasury and Queen Victoria had approved the principle of the Ethiopian diplomatic appointment. Harrington's mission was to be a "special" one; he was to go to Addis Ababa for two to three months as British agent, while still retaining his posts at

[37]Salisbury to Cromer (tel.), London, Nov. 23, 1897, FO 403/355.

[38]Cromer to Salisbury (tel.), Cairo, Nov. 24, 1897, FO 403/255.

Zeila.[39] In effect, Harrington was to work for the Foreign Office as a member of the diplomatic and consular corps and still act as a political officer for Zeila. Cromer instructed Rodd to inform Addis Ababa that London soon would propose officially the appointment of John Harrington. Menilek was duly notified and replied that Ethiopia was glad that "a means of communication and mutual understanding and settling of affairs" shortly would open.[40]

Harrington was delighted with his new responsibility: he wrote that "of course it goes without saying that the appointment was agreeable to me." His only problem was how to estimate his expenses since he had never been beyond Harar. After some guess-work, Harrington arrived at the modest figure of £1000 for his mission.[41] Nevertheless, there was considerable bureaucratic squabbling between the Foreign Office and the government of India about proportional payment of Harrington's salary and expenses. The secretary of state for India believed, for administrative and political reasons, that it was unwise to leave Zeila without a British officer for even a few weeks, let alone a period of months. The India office therefore asked the

[39] Sanderson to Harrington (let.), London, Feb. 28, 1898, FO 1/34; Maxwell to Treasury (let.), London, Nov. 9, 1897, FO 1/34; see also accompanying minutes and memoranda.

[40] Menilek to Political Resident at Aden (let.), Jan. 28, 1898, FO 1/35.

[41] Harrington to Wodehouse (let.), Zeila, Nov. 29, 1897, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/15.

Foreign Office to defray the expenses of the Harrington mission, provide a substitute officer at Zeila, and also pay Harrington's salary and ordinary allowances while he was employed in Ethiopia. Such a request confirmed Salisbury's growing disenchantment with the government of India's control of the Somali Coast Protectorate. "It is very desirable to hasten on the transfer of the Somali Coast [to the Foreign Office]," Salisbury noted, "pecuniary transactions with the I.[ndia] O.[ffice] are seldom satisfactory." Yet Salisbury was not prepared to make Harrington a full-fledged member of the diplomatic corps; he yielded to demands of the India Office and insisted, despite Treasury objections, that the Imperial government totally support the Harrington mission.[42]

The government of India's unwillingness to promote British imperial policy out of its own resources was the major reason for the decision to transfer control of the Somali Coast Protectorate from the government of Bombay to London. Salisbury's belief that the time had come for change was confirmed by the difficulties over financing the Harrington mission. Almost two years earlier, the government of India had agreed in principle to the transfer of the Coast, although not of Aden, "practically an Indian garrison town." India believed it already was involved in a more active

[42]Godley (at the direction of Hamilton) to Sanderson (let.), Bombay, Jan. 10, 1898, with a minute by Salisbury, FO 1/34; Mowat to Sanderson (let.), London, Feb. 5, 1898, FO 1/35.

policy in the Somali Protectorate than was warranted by its own interest--maintaining food supplies to Aden; moreover, the rapid growth of Ethiopia as "a formidable military power" meant that Bombay and Calcutta would find it increasingly difficult to resist the demands of their officials on the coast for police posts in the interior. The viceroy and his council pointed out, with justification, that imperial policy in the protectorate was directed by the Foreign Office, while London contributed nothing toward the expenses of the Somali Coast administration. Calcutta concluded that "the present system involves disseverance of the political and the financial responsibility which is clearly dangerous and unsound."[43]

With India's prior approval, the transfer was only a matter of timing. In October 1897, almost simultaneously with Harrington's appointment, Salisbury acted. Sir Thomas Sanderson wrote his India Office counterpart that the prime minister was:

> inclined to the opinion that, in view of the importance which now attaches to our relations with the Abyssinian Sovereign, at whose Court it will probably be necessary to establish a permanent legation, and the bearing which these relations have on the political situation in the Valley of the Nile, it will be desirable that the administration of the British Protectorate on the Somali Coast should be transferred to the Imperial Government . . . under the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.[44]

[43]Government of India to George Hamilton (let.), Calcutta, April 22, 1896, enclosed in I.O. to F.O. (let.), London, Jan. 25, 1897, FO 403/225.

[44]F.O. to I.O. (let.), London, Oct. 5, 1897, FO 403/255.

Before taking up his post as semi-permanent British agent in Ethiopia, Harrington took 90 days leave. He returned to London, stopping first in Italy, where he was given a cordial reception for his assistance in the repatriation of Italian prisoners of war.[45] By September of 1897, Harrington was back in Zeila, where he prepared the groundwork for his new post in Ethiopia and helped ready the protectorate for administrative transfer to the Foreign Office.

The Somali Coast was self-sufficient; its revenues, derived from customs duties, paid for its modest administration. Nevertheless, income was declining because of increased competition from Jibuti for the trade of southern Ethiopia.[46] Colonel Hayes Sadler, the consul general-designate of the reorganized protectorate, and Harrington formulated a plan to insure solvency for the Somali Coast. Hayes Sadler concentrated on economizing where possible and replacing Indian military forces with local police and camel corps.[47] Harrington proposed lowering the Zeila ad valorem duty of five per cent on imports and seven per cent on exports to an average duty on all trade of two and one-half per cent. With cheaper duties and its shorter and easier

[45]Harrington to Sadler (let.), Zeila, April 19, 1897, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./1252; SCAR, 1896-7, pp. 20-21.

[46]Harrington to Sadler (let.), Zeila, Oct. 18, 1897, FO 403/274.

[47]Sanderson to Sadler (let.), Berbera, June 8, 1898; F.O. to Treasury (let.), London, May 6, 1898, FO 403/274.

route to Harar, Zeila could compete with Jibuti, now virtually a free port. Salisbury, who supported the revisions for political as well as commercial considerations, hoped that the reduced tariffs would return Zeila to its normal position as Harar's debouche. The increased trade at Zeila would more than compensate for the initial reduction in revenues.[48]

Harrington also believed that if London wanted to "commercially starve" Jibuti, the importation of arms to Ethiopia must be permitted under the same loose restrictions as those in Jibuti, and imported spirits should pay a minimum duty of one per cent.[49] After the transfer of the protectorate, the Salisbury government accepted these tariff revisions, with two important exceptions: the duty on spiritous liquors was not lowered to compete with Jibuti, and the importation of arms was allowed only under strict license and registration which compared unfavorably with Jibuti's easier regulations.[50] Still, most of Harrington's recommendations were accepted and it seemed Zeila once again might capture most

[48]Harrington to Sadler (let.), Zeila, Oct. 18, 1897, FO 403/274; F.O. to I.O. (let.), London, July 29, 1897, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./C/12.

[49]Harrington to Sadler (let.), Zeila, Oct. 18, 1897, FO 403/274.

[50]Whitehall feared that arms ostensibly destined for Ethiopia would fall into the hands of the unruly Somalis of the interior. The importation of liquor was always a controversial step in a Muslim nation. F.O. to Sadler (let.), London, Nov. 8, 1898, FO 403/275.

of Harar's commerce. Unfortunately for Zeila's traders, however, the construction of the Jibuti-Diré Dawa railway in the next few years undermined the effectiveness of Harrington's reforms.

The tariff revision was Harrington's last major concern before taking up his duties as agent to Ethiopia. In February 1898, he left for Cairo to receive a briefing and instructions from Lord Cromer, perhaps the British Empire's most important official-in-the-field. The aloof and austere Evelyn Baring, the first Lord Cromer, was called, sometimes less-than-affectionately, "the Lord" or "Over Baring." He ran Egypt with a small, select staff, mostly men with Indian experience, that operated on a highly individualist basis. Rodd recruited Harrington into Cromer's orbit knowing that the young assistant resident was already on friendly terms with many of the Englishmen in the Egyptian government.[51]

Prior to Harrington's trip to Cairo, Salisbury, in conjunction with key advisors, had drafted instructions for the mission to Ethiopia.[52] Cromer first suggested that Harrington make it clear to Emperor Menilek that previous Ethiopian-Egyptian agreements or treaties were, for all practical

[51]Cromer to Salisbury (tel.), Cairo, Jan. 7, 1898, FO 1/35; Rodd, Memories, p. 195; Morris, Pax Britannica, pp. 208-209.

[52]The advisors were Sanderson, permanent undersecretary of state for foreign affairs, Arthur Balfour, Salisbury's nephew and unofficial aide who later became prime minister, and Cromer, who kept in touch by telegram from Cairo.

purposes, tantamount to engagements made with Great Britain. This statement was necessary, according to Cromer, because Menilek was being advised by Paris that agreements with Egypt required not only British, but also international sanction. Harrington was next to remind the emperor that before the Sudanese revolution, the whole Nile Valley had been Egyptian territory; the withdrawal of Khedival garrisons was merely temporary, and did not constitute abrogation of Cairo's sovereignty in the Sudan. Such pronouncements were, of course, the formalities of diplomacy; only reconquest and occupation of the Sudan could reestablish Anglo-Egyptian control. Cromer therefore suggested authorizing Harrington to offer "a considerable extension" of Ethiopian rule towards the Nile and facilitation of Ethiopian-Sudanese trade via the Nile in return for Ethiopian friendship during the reconquest of the Sudan and during any potential confrontation with the French.[53]

When Salisbury became ill, Sanderson, George Curzon (the parliamentary undersecretary of state), and Arthur Balfour took on the task of evaluating Cromer's proposed instructions to Harrington. They approved of Cromer's first two points but removed the mention of territorial concessions because such statements might imply "the possibility

[53]The French bitterly resented being ousted from the Dual Financial Control of Egypt in early 1883. Their advice to Menilek was, according to Cromer, proof of that resentment. Cromer to Salisbury (tel.), Cairo, March 5, 1898, FO 1/35.

of admitting the Emperor Menilek's claim to occupy the right bank of the Nile . . . , and as apparently authorizing H.[er] M.[ajesty's] Agent to promise concessions to Abyssinia . . . which might afterwards prove inconvenient to make."[54] So far as Egypt's interests in the Sudan were concerned, Harrington was to hold "a watching brief," avoiding any recognition of Ethiopian claims in that region. If a definite claim should be placed before him, he must refer the matter to London before giving an answer. He was put on a tight leash, and could do little on his own initiative.[55]

The instructions as finally sent by the Foreign Office told Harrington to assure Menilek that neither the Macdonald expedition nor Kitchener's army was directed in any way against Ethiopia. For his part, Macdonald had been instructed to avoid collision with Ethiopian forces; and Harrington was told to suggest that Ethiopian troops be directed to follow the same line of conduct. Concerning the Gedaref, the new agent was to assure the Ethiopian monarch that British forces attacking from Kassala also had been ordered to avoid contact with Ethiopian units. Intelligence about effective Ethiopian occupation of territory towards the Nile was Harrington's next task; and, finally, he was instructed

[54]Minutes to Cromer to Salisbury (tel.), Cairo, March 5, 1898 and Sanderson to Cromer (tel.), London, March 6, 1898, FO 1/35.

[55]Cromer to Harrington (let.), Cairo, n.d. [c. March 7], 1898, FO 1/35.

to promote British trade and commerce in Ethiopia, although this undertaking was the least important of his assignments.[56]

On March 17, 1898 the mission left Zeila for Harar; Harrington was accompanied by his friend, Herbert Weld-Blundell, a sportsman-adventurer who travelled at his own expense.[57] The caravan made slower progress than expected; a continuing drought limited grazing along the route. During the difficult journey, Harrington was thrown from his mule and landed face first on the stony ground. His face gashed, his knee and ankle twisted, he limped into Harar at the end of March. There he was received cordially by Ras Makonnen's second-in-command, Dejazmach Banti, a hero of Ethiopian wars, who was more soldier than administrator or statesman. The Europeans rested a few days in the walled town, where Harrington sought to discover what he could about recent developments in Addis Ababa and the rest of Ethiopia. As usual Harar was rife with rumors: reportedly Marchand was already at Fashoda (he was not) and had joined hands with the Ethiopians across the Nile (again, untrue).

[56] Ibid.

[57] Harrington requested that his friend be allowed to accompany the mission, explaining that Weld-Blundell would bring a medical practitioner--doctors were highly regarded in Ethiopia--and that a second Englishman would add importance to the mission. There was no problem of obtaining Ethiopian authorization because the treaty of 1897 opened the empire to English travellers. Harrington to Rodd (priv. let.), Zeila, Feb. 9, 1898, FO 1/35.

Since similar tales had circulated in Paris for almost a year, Harrington did not officially report this intelligence to London. Instead, he privately alerted Rodd.[58] Nonetheless, the new British agent to Ethiopia realized that a potential crisis was imminent on the Upper Nile.

Harrington's presence in Addis Ababa was urgently needed to ascertain Ethiopian policy in the complex struggle for power on the Upper Nile. On April 3, Harrington's mission left Harar; it arrived in Addis Ababa sixteen days and 260 miles later. The first appearance of the British Empire's representative was not impressive. Harrington and Weld-Blundell had pushed on ahead of the caravan. They "arrived like a flock of half-drowned hens wading through a sea of mud," a product of "a continuous sheet of water (a sample of what are flippantly called the 'light rains')." Harrington was obliged to ask the emperor for time to dry out his sodden clothes and luggage.

The official reception was scheduled three days later, for nine in the morning; but at dawn the British compound was filling with the Ethiopian escort. The soldiers were dressed in flowing white shammas (toga-like garments) decorated with a broad, red stripe; they were armed with a mixture of modern rifles and ancient muskets. Led by mule-mounted officers who carried brocade shields overlaid with

[58]Harrington to Rodd (priv. let.), Harar, April 5, 1898, FO 1/34; See also G. N. Sanderson, England, Europe and the Upper Nile (Edinburgh, 1965), p. 256.

gold and silver, the escort formed two single-file columns flanking Harrington, Weld-Blundell, the official British interpreter, and Alfred Ilg, Menilek's councillor-of-state. A band of trumpeters brought up the rear. This impressive host marched to the Imperial Gibbi, an agglomeration of Ethiopian and European style structures which made up the emperor's residence. Menilek and his court, in formal regalia, received Harrington in a short official ceremony similar to the welcome accorded the French and Russian representatives. Harrington delivered his credentials and answered the emperor's questions about Queen Victoria, European affairs, and members of the Rodd Mission. After the exchange of a few further courtesies, a captured Italian cannon boomed a salute ending the ceremony marking the establishment of Anglo-Ethiopian relations on a regular basis.[59]

Four days after the formal reception, Harrington met privately with Menilek and Alfred Ilg. As instructed, Harrington delivered assurances that the MacDonald expedition had been warned to avoid a collision with Ethiopians or any incident which might endanger good relations. The negus replied that he had ordered his officers in the south to follow a similar line of conduct. Next, Harrington, at the request of the Aden and Somali Coast authorities, expressed

[59]Harrington to Salisbury (let.), AA, April 23, 1898, FO 1/34. The description of the official march and reception is based on Herbert Weld-Blundell, "A Journey Through Abyssinia to the Nile," The Geographical Journal, XV, 2 (1900), pp. 98-100.

a desire for a joint policy to deal with Somalis on both sides of the Ethiopian-Somali Protectorate frontier and to prevent endless questions arising from minor infractions. The emperor arranged for Harrington to discuss this issue in the future with Ras Makonnen.[60] Menilek waited until the end of the interview to ask a few subdued questions about Kitchener's army's progress against the Mahdists--a matter of vital concern to Ethiopian interests.[61]

When Harrington had arrived in Addis Ababa, Ethiopian diplomacy was a tangle of intrigue and double purpose defying total comprehension by anyone not privy to the secret treaties and understandings between Ethiopia and France and between Ethiopia and the Sudan.

Since 1896-7, Menilek had achieved a remarkable detente with the Khalifa 'Abdullahi, the leader of Ethiopia's traditional Muslim enemy in north-east Africa. Common interest

[60] Rodd handled the negotiations for the frontier; but Harrington had to make the boundary work. He proposed a joint Anglo-Ethiopian policy for those Somalis whose grazing lands were divided by the new frontier. In May 1898, Harrington and Makonnen devised an agreement prohibiting interclan fighting across the frontier and interference with caravans of the Zeila-Harar trade route. Infractions would be punished by an Anglo-Ethiopian blockade of markets, not lifted until fines and restitution were paid by the offenders. The agreement was a partial answer to continued raiding of the Gadabursi and Esa, hereditary enemies on either side of the boundary line. Still, force and feud was endemic to Somali society. The Anglo-Ethiopian understanding was a start. Harrington to Salisbury (let.), Harar, May 17, 1898, FO 1/34.

[61] Harrington to Salisbury (let.), April 27, 1898, FO 1/34.

in preventing the British advance into the Sudan, as well as an uneasiness about French activity directed from the upper Ubangi River, united Menilek and the Khalifa. After Adwa, the two African leaders exchanged information, envoys, and assurances of good intentions. During the month of Harrington's arrival in Addis Ababa, an Ethiopian diplomatic mission received an unusually cordial reception at Omdurman, indicative of the new relations between the two African states. The substance of the Mahdist-Ethiopian detente focused on mutual commerce and frontiers, but the important part of the understanding was a circumspect promise of mutual aid in the face of the European threat to north-east Africa.[62] London and Harrington were aware, of course, of Ethiopian-Mahdist contacts; but Menilek's blustering to Rodd about the Solomonic empire's unalterable opposition to any alliance with the Mahdists threw Harrington and London completely off the scent of the true nature of the understanding between Menilek and 'Abdullahi.

Equally unknown to Whitehall was the secret March 1897 "Convention of the White Nile," signed by Menilek and the French representative in Ethiopia, Léonce Lagarde. In return for a large part of the French Somali protectorate, Lagarde obtained Menilek's promise of virtually unconditional support for French political aspirations on the Upper

[62] Sanderson, Upper Nile, pp. 296-98; Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., pp. 319-30; and Holt, The Mahdist State, p. 209.

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Nile. The first article of this alliance extended Ethiopian authority to the right bank of the White Nile south from the fourteenth parallel north latitude. With Menilek's assistance and authority, France was to control the left bank of the Nile and the corresponding hinterland from the fourteenth parallel to the fifth parallel thirty minute north latitude. The Nile convention reflected Lagarde's over-ambitious expectations for French policy in the Upper Nile. Above all, the plan depended upon realistic Ethiopian support.[63]

But Menilek had adroitly hedged his bets. The emperor already had also agreed, at Rodd's request, not to ally Ethiopia with the Khalifa nor to supply the Mahdists with arms. The negus played the same double game, but more subtly, with Paris. The French were allowed to organize their two expeditions from Ethiopia; yet Menilek made sure that none of these thrusts would succeed. The negus secretly and deliberately ordered local authorities to obstruct the French efforts to join hands with Marchand on the White Nile. In response to French complaints of this local harassment, Menilek apologized for those "imbeciles who disobeyed him," and promptly issued new letters of authorization to the French, which again proved to be useless. Menilek, nonetheless, had been accommodating enough towards Paris to be

[63]Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., pp. 320-21; Sanderson, Upper Nile, pp. 293-94.

able to exploit to Ethiopia's advantage the unlikely possibility of French success on the Upper Nile.[64]

From Addis Ababa Harrington had difficulty in tracking down the various Ethiopian and Franco-Ethiopian expeditions. Officials from the negus on down were tight-lipped during this crucial phase of Ethiopian diplomacy. Furthermore, Harrington had been in Addis Ababa for only a matter of weeks, hardly time to build up an effective network of intelligence. Finally, to make matters worse, the main source of information in Ethiopia, the merchants, were prohibited by the emperor from travelling beyond the limits of effective Ethiopian control.[65] Given such difficulties, the essential accuracy of Harrington's reportage is a testimony to his abilities.

On April 30, Harrington personally told Menilek about Kitchener's victory over the Mahdists at Atbara, which opened the way to Khartum. The emperor took this news calmly, but in an obvious case of tit for tat, told Harrington that he was obliged to strengthen his garrisons in the north to counter the Mahdist threat from Matamma. Harrington considered the Ethiopian monarch's stated fear "a mere blind"; Menilek's "real object was to take advantage of our

[64] Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., p. 322; Sanderson, Upper Nile, pp. 294-96; Charles Michel, Vers Fachoda (Paris, n.d.), p. 241.

[65] Harrington to Salisbury (let.), AA, May 15, 1898, FO 1/34.

move against the Dervishes to occupy territories formerly administered by Egypt, which he claims in his proclamation of 1891."[66]

Anyone familiar with the subsequent course of negotiations for the Sudan-Ethiopian frontier will realize that the northern reinforcement was part of an Ethiopian campaign to obtain the country along the Blue Nile to Roseires and the Matamma-Gallabat region. Certainly Menilek moved cautiously and only after the collapse of the Mahdist regime. It was only common sense to do so. Both Rodd and Harrington continually assured the Ethiopian sovereign that British policy in north-east Africa was essentially defensive; the emperor, therefore, saw no reason to establish his claims in the north until Mahdist forces had collapsed. When the territories became virtual no-man's-lands, the emperor dispatched small diplomatic missions, rather than large-scale military expeditions.[67]

G. N. Sanderson, who has added significantly to knowledge of the last years of the reign of Khalifa 'Abdullahi and of European rivalry in the Upper Nile, has seen these "pacific and unprovocative" moves as evidence that Menilek was faithful to the "central feature" of his diplomacy--the Mahdist entente--down to the collapse of the Mahdist

[66]Harrington to Salisbury (let.), AA, April 30, 1898, FO 1/34.

[67]Sanderson, "Foreign Policy of Negus Menelik," p. 90; Marcus, "Rejoinder," p. 121.

move against the Dervishes to occupy territories formerly administered by Egypt, which he claims in his proclamation of 1891."[66]

Anyone familiar with the subsequent course of negotiations for the Sudan-Ethiopian frontier will realize that the northern reinforcement was part of an Ethiopian campaign to obtain the country along the Blue Nile to Roseires and the Matamma-Gallabat region. Certainly Menilek moved cautiously and only after the collapse of the Mahdist regime. It was only common sense to do so. Both Rodd and Harrington continually assured the Ethiopian sovereign that British policy in north-east Africa was essentially defensive; the emperor, therefore, saw no reason to establish his claims in the north until Mahdist forces had collapsed. When the territories became virtual no-man's-lands, the emperor dispatched small diplomatic missions, rather than large-scale military expeditions.[67]

G. N. Sanderson, who has added significantly to knowledge of the last years of the reign of Khalifa 'Abdullahi and of European rivalry in the Upper Nile, has seen these "pacific and unprovocative" moves as evidence that Menilek was faithful to the "central feature" of his diplomacy--the Mahdist entente--down to the collapse of the Mahdist

[66] Harrington to Salisbury (let.), AA, April 30, 1898, FO 1/34.

[67] Sanderson, "Foreign Policy of Negus Menelik," p. 90; Marcus, "Rejoinder," p. 121.

state itself.[68] Certainly the emperor's circumspect action did not disturb the Ethiopian-Mahdist understanding during the Khalifa's crucial test with Kitchener. It is equally obvious that in the north-west buffer zone between Ethiopia and the Sudan, the emperor, to use Harrington's words, was "thoroughly aware of the fact that effective occupation is the card to play in Africa"; if missions engaged in making treaties and planting flags were accepted as basis for European claims to vast stretches of Africa, similar activities were good enough for Ethiopia. Notwithstanding Menilek's tactics in the Gedaref-Gallabat region, in Roseires, or Bani Shangul, one only can agree with Harrington's conclusion that the emperor was "slowly but surely seeking to carry out his dreams [of making the frontiers of Ethiopia conform as closely as possible to the historic boundaries of his proclamation of 1891]."[69]

Later in the audience with Menilek on 30 April, Harrington asked whether the rumors of Ethiopian expeditions to Fashoda and Lado were true.[70] Menilek's affirmative, if exaggerated, response alarmed Harrington, and he sent off a series of dispatches warning against an attempt by Menilek

[68] Sanderson, "Foreign Policy of Negus Menelik," pp. 90-92.

[69] Harrington to Walker (let.), AA, May 11, 1898, FO 1/34.

[70] Harrington to Salisbury (let.), AA, April 30, 1898, FO 1/34; Sanderson, "Foreign Policy of the Negus Menelik," p. 89.

to push on to the White Nile.[71] But it is unfair to say, as Sanderson has done, that Harrington "swallowed this deception whole," and that he was plainly and totally mistaken, so far as the Sobat basin was concerned, when he concluded that Menilek was "straining every effort to bring under his sway all the countries he lays claim to in his proclamation of 1891."[72] Harrington believed Menilek was actively following a policy of effective occupation in the south-west, but he did qualify his conclusion; "from what I have seen of the Abyssinians & heard of the difficulties of the country between them and the White Nile [i.e., the Sobat Basin], should the Abyssinians reach any point on the Nile, I doubt they will be able to retain it for any length of time as they will be obliged to retire to reprovision themselves."[73] Without appreciation of Harrington's clarification, his remarks point to gullible acceptance of Menilek's obvious

[71]Harrington to Walker (let.), AA, May 11, 1898; Harrington to the Resident at Aden (let.), AA, substance sent to F.O. (tel.), May 2, 1898; and Harrington to Salisbury (lets.), AA, May 15, 1898, FO 1/34.

[72]Sanderson, "The Foreign Policy of the Negus Menelik," pp. 89-90.

[73]Harrington to Salisbury (copy to Cromer) (let.), AA, May 15, 1898, FO 1/34. It is interesting to note that immediately after quoting Harrington out of context Sanderson goes on to make essentially the same point Harrington made in his own qualification: "The Sobat basin is an unproductive and very unattractive region . . . distasteful and unhealthy to Ethiopian highlanders. . . . Dejazmach Tassama knew it, the Negus knew it too." Sanderson fails to mention that Harrington was also aware of the nature of the country. Sanderson, "The Foreign Policy of the Negus Menelik," p. 90.

attempt to bolster a weak claim in the Sobat Basin; quoted in context, however, Harrington's assessment of the situation is perceptive.

In May 1898, the British agent reported to London on Ethiopian troop movements. Makonnen and his army had returned to the Ethiopian capital from Bani Shangul. Harrington remained skeptical of Ethiopian statements that the expedition had been a resounding success. Continuing, he noted that Ras Walda Giorgis, who had recently conquered the Kingdom of Kaffa, now was leading a large, well-organized force engaged in subjugating the northern Boran Galla country between Lake Rudolf and the Juba River. While Giorgis's expedition was meant to counter MacDonald in the south, it was essentially a campaign of effective occupation. Finally, Harrington mentioned that Dejazmach Tassama Nado's expedition in the Sobat Basin was an apparent failure. He assumed that the expedition's goal had been Fashoda and was gratified to discover that the heavy rains in the swampy lowlands of the Sobat-Baro-Pibor area had stalled the expedition well short of the White Nile. Two smaller expeditions were cooperating with Makonnen and Giorgis respectively, but Harrington learned little about them.[74]

[74]So far as Makonnen's campaign was concerned, Harrington noted that the semi-independent Shaikh 'Abd al-Rahmân Khôjali had not been captured. Makonnen's army had seen little fighting beyond one skirmish and one siege; inevitably, disease had taken a heavy toll on Makonnen's force of highlanders. Harrington concluded that thorough subjugation of Bani Shangul had eluded the ras. Harrington to Salisbury (let.), AA, May 15, 1898, FO 1/34.

Taken together, these troop movements indicated a concerted effort to make good Ethiopian claims in north-east Africa. In areas held by the Mahdists, Menilek waited until the "complicated situation" in the Sudan "ran its course."[75] In the south, where the Mahdist power was never established, as in Boran Galla country, Menilek moved more quickly. Naturally, the emperor did his utmost to convince Harrington of the extent of Ethiopia's control of the buffer areas surrounding his empire. Equally, the Englishman did not completely accept the negus's claims of effective occupation. Still, the extensive military activity on the fringes of Ethiopia's domains inevitably led Harrington to the conclusion that "Menilek was playing the game of effective occupation . . . ," and that Menilek was "fully cognizant of the fact that in territorial questions so far as Africa is concerned, effective occupation constitutes ownership according to international law." Never at a loss for ideas, Harrington submitted both formal and informal plans to counter this Ethiopian expansionism.[76]

[75]Marcus, "Rejoinder," p. 117.

[76]Wingate received a private letter from Harrington recommending a series of moves to counter Ethiopian expansion. Wingate sent Harrington's letter on to the Intelligence Division in Whitehall. G. F. Walker, director of Intelligence, considered Harrington's plans "rather a big order"; he suggested postponing any British action until Harrington returned to London to explain his views. Walker to Fairholme (let.), London, July 6, 1898, FO 1/34. In a formal telegram to the Foreign Office, Harrington suggested pushing forward British outposts between Lake Rudolf and the Webi Shebelli River. Harrington to Resident at Aden, substance forwarded to F.O. (tel.), Aden, May 2, 1898, FO 1/34.

In order to argue his views more effectively, Harrington requested and obtained leave to return to London.[77] On May 14, 1898, a day before leaving Addis Ababa, Harrington broached to the negus the question of Franco-Ethiopian cooperation on the White Nile. The emperor replied "rather forcibly" that no one would be allowed to pass through his territory in order to hoist any flag but the Ethiopian colors. As he left his post, Harrington discounted the possiblity of an effective Franco-Ethiopian attempt to join forces in the Upper Nile Valley. When he stopped in Harar, Harrington heard, but did not credit, rumors that the Ethiopians had reached the White Nile.[78] In fact, the reports were accurate. Initially, a French expedition under the Marquis de Bonchamps had been unable to establish posts on the White Nile because of the obstructive tactics of the Governor of Gore, Dejazmach Tassama. After soliciting the personal intervention of the emperor, two of Bonchamps' party, accompanied by a member of the Russian mission to Ethiopia, joined an 800-man Ethiopian reconnaissance expedition to the confluence of the White Nile and the Sobat Rivers. The French members of the party were physically unable to swim

[77] Cromer was surprised that Harrington was leaving his post so soon; the proconsul expected him to remain in Addis Ababa until the capture of Khartum. Cromer to Sanderson (let.), Cairo, CP, FO 633/8.

[78] Harrington to Salisbury (lets.), AA, May 14, 16, 1898, FO 1/34.

across to the west bank of the Nile to plant the Tricolor, so their Russian companion did it for them. The Ethiopians raised their standard on the eastern side of the Nile and then hastened to return to the highlands, despite the Frenchmen's pleadings to stay. Sixteen days later, on his way to Fashoda, Marchand passed the French colors.[79] This solitary flag was the sole tangible result of the "Convention for the White Nile."

The Foreign Office in London, Cromer and Rodd in Cairo, and Harrington in Addis Ababa had been skeptical of any Franco-Ethiopian cooperation at Fashoda. Cromer had assured Salisbury in November 1897 that the capture of Khartum, not Fashoda, was the real key to strategic control of the Nile north of the sudd.[80] By far the easiest way to Fashoda was by steamboat from Omdurman; the French not only had to reach Fashoda, they had to hold it against an Anglo-Egyptian advance from down the Nile. As Cromer pointed out, Kitchener always could reach Khartum before anyone else.[81] Menilek had assured Harrington that he was not going to cooperate with the French; of course, he did not tell the British representative that he had contracted to do so. The emperor was far too clever to commit himself in the race for the

[79]Sanderson, Upper Nile, p. 295.

[80]The sudd was a mass of floating vegetation which choked off navigation of the White Nile south of its confluence with the Sobat.

[81]Cromer to Salisbury, Nov. 5, 1898, SP, Cabinet Memorandum, as quoted in Sanderson, Upper Nile, p. 263.

Upper Nile. As Wingate phrased it when writing to Kitchener, "I have quite sufficient confidence in that astute old Monarch's /Menilek's/ intelligence to feel he will now side with the strongest and will see that his best policy is to be more friendly with us and less friendly with the French."[82]

Harrington returned to London in late July with a number of issues to settle, not the least of which was the status of his appointment. He had gone to Addis Ababa as a part-time representative, but Menilek wanted him to reside permanently in the capital.[83] From the British point of view, the importance of the issues now warranted a full-time representative. Therefore, Harrington prepared his estimate for expenses for a permanent diplomatic mission on the premise that while British expenditures should be modest, the other European representatives should not be able to exploit an inferior British establishment. The proposed legation staff included an assistant surgeon, two interpreters, a permanent military escort of four Aden Sowars (mounted troopers) "properly turned out," in Harrington's words, "rather than the numerous rag tag and bobtail that accompanies M. Lagarde, the French Minister," and finally a number of sentries and servants recruited locally or in Egypt. Beyond salaries for the staff, the greatest costs were for

[82]Wingate to Kitchener (let.), Cairo, Nov. 14, 1898, SP, A/102/81.

[83]Harrington to Salisbury (let.), AA, May 14, 1898, FO 1/34.

construction of a residency, creation of an exclusively British mail service between Harar and Zeila--dispatches that went via Jibuti were invariably read by French authorities--and a fund for gifts for Ethiopian officials. This fund was padded to provide a reserve for secret service money to be used at Harrington's discretion.[84] The total first year's cost just exceeded £5000. Salisbury recommended the estimate to the Treasury on the grounds that "the political importance" of British relations with Ethiopia "in the present conditions of affairs" necessitated acceptance of the proposal.[85] The Treasury agreed; Harrington was notified that he was British agent to Ethiopia, the first permanent representative to the court at Addis Ababa.[86]

Harrington's appointment was a considerable promotion. As an agent he jumped from the lower ranks of the Indian political service and the British consular service to a position of responsibility in the diplomatic corps. Harrington's rise is impressive because it was almost solely a product of his own merit. His ability, force of character, and knowledge of Ethiopian affairs favorably impressed Rodd, who recommended him to Salisbury and Cromer. In his rise to new

[84] Harrington to Salisbury (let.), London, July 28, 1898, FO 1/34.

[85] Sanderson (for Salisbury) to Treasury (let.), London, Aug. 10, 1898, FO 1/35.

[86] Mowatt to Sanderson (let.), London, Aug. 13, 1898; Tilly to Harrington (let.), London, Aug. 19, 1898, FO 1/35.

responsibility, Harrington had another benefactor; he was the right man in the right place in 1898. The resurgence of an expansionist Ethiopian empire, the British reconquest of the Sudan, and French interest in the upper Nile Valley combined to stimulate European interest in Ethiopia, which, in turn, led to formal diplomatic relations with the Solomonic empire by the powers of Europe. Had the play of these forces not resulted in the 1897 mission to Addis Ababa, Harrington, in Rodd's words, "might have been left on that /Zeila's/ low-lying shore until his constitution had been completely undermined by the prevalent fever."[87] Instead, for the next decade, Harrington became Whitehall's expert on Ethiopian affairs, and held the post of senior British diplomat in the Ethiopian capital.

[87] Rodd, Memories, p. 122.

CHAPTER V: FASHODA AND THE ETHIO-SUDANESE FRONTIER, 1898-1902

Harrington's second mission to Addis Ababa took place within the context of European diplomatic rivalry in 1898. In July and August of that year, Lord Salisbury's pre-occupation with the French threat on the upper Nile dominated Anglo-Ethiopian considerations. The prime minister sought to isolate France in the event of a diplomatic confrontation over control of the head waters of the Nile. In June 1898, he settled the Niger question with Paris, thus assuring that West African differences would not complicate the controversy over the Nile. Earlier in 1898, the British colonial secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, advised the high commissioner in South Africa, Sir Alfred Milner, that the time was inopportune for a confrontation with the Transvaal Republic. In the Far East, Salisbury also acted with an eye on the French. He acquiesced in the Russian occupation of Port Arthur, notwithstanding his government's earlier promise to resist by force such a move. His reasons were practical: London did not "carry enough guns to fight [the Russians] and the French as well." Salisbury believed that "in six months time . . . we shall be on the verge of war with France"; he could not "afford to quarrel with

Russia."[1] The Germans were the final key to the isolation of France. At the insistence of both Chamberlain and Balfour, the prime minister-foreign secretary locked the door to the unlikely possibility of Franco-German co-operation over Paris's challenge to London on the Upper Nile. In August 1898, Whitehall agreed to give Berlin an option on Portugal's African empire, should Lisbon falter. The distasteful task of "putting the knife" to a traditional ally completed the diplomatic groundwork preceding Fashoda.[2]

Salisbury, with help from Cromer, then decided how Kitchener should deal with the Sudan and the French after the defeat of the Mahdists. In June, they chose the "two flags" policy--Kitchener was to hoist both the British and Egyptian colors at Khartum to demonstrate that London had a "predominant voice" in the Sudan. Then, he was to reconnoitre the Blue and White Niles. Should he meet French or Ethiopian "authorities," the Sirdar was to do nothing which might imply recognition of their right to the Nile Valley. If he came across a "French force" he could act at his own discretion; but he was to avoid, "by all possible means,

[1]Sanderson, Upper Nile, pp. 323-26, memorandum quoted by Lady G. Cecil on p. 324.

[2]Salisbury to Balfour, August 13, 19, 1898, SP, as quoted in J. A. S. Grenville, Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy (London, 1964), pp. 193-94; Sanderson, Upper Nile, p. 326.

any collision with the forces of the Emperor Menelek."[3] The virtual prohibition against confrontation with Ethiopia is puzzling; one specialist has concluded, mistakenly, that Salisbury and Cromer feared war with Ethiopia more than war with France.[4] Salisbury's and Cromer's aversion to a local conflict with Ethiopia came not from their fear of Ethiopia's military power--of limited effectiveness in the swampy lowlands of the Nile Valley--but from a natural concern not to complicate the "showdown" with France. Harrington, the only British official to have been in Ethiopia during the past year, reported that Franco-Ethiopian cooperation was a chimera, thus reinforcing Cromer's belief that Khartum was the key to strategic control of the Upper Nile.

On still another plane, both Cromer and Salisbury were well aware that Kitchener had no love for the Ethiopians, whom he characterized as "an idle, warlike people, fond of raids . . . fanatical christians /who/ treat any Mahommedans who come under their power (such as the Gallas) extremely badly." Kitchener was convinced that Menilek had signed a treaty of friendship with the Khalifa. The Sirdar earlier had fired off a memorandum proposing boundaries for the

[3]Cromer to Salisbury, no. 163, secret, Aug. 2, 1898 FO 78/5050, G. P. Gooch and H. W. V. Temperley, eds., British Documents on the Origins of the War, I, no. 185 (London, 1927ff.), as quoted in Robinson and Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians, pp. 168-69 and Sanderson, Upper Nile, p. 332.

[4]Sanderson, Upper Nile, p. 332.

reconquered Sudan which conflicted with Menilek's territorial claims in the Upper Nile, but not with the limits of Ethiopian effective occupation as ascertained by the Rodd Mission.[5] Undoubtedly, Salisbury and Cromer did not wish Kitchener to clash with Ethiopians, and thereby demonstrate contempt for the Solomonic empire's claims in the Sudan. Such a state of affairs would complicate immeasurably the situation in Addis Ababa. Had Salisbury been impressed by the danger of war with Ethiopia, he would surely have issued Harrington contingency instructions, or at least have mentioned the imminent danger of Anglo-Ethiopian hostilities. As it was, Harrington went to Addis Ababa without any such orders and, once in Ethiopia, was forgotten during the initial stages of the Fashoda confrontation.

After preparing a budget for his mission, Harrington left for Ethiopia in July. He arrived at Zeila in early September, but ran into a delay because his baggage, some two hundred and ninety pieces, had been misnumbered and misplaced. While in Zeila Harrington was notified of the fall of Khartum. He immediately forwarded the news of Kitchener's victory to Menilek in Addis Ababa and to Makonnen in Harar. The latter replied for Ethiopia with an urbane, yet hardly frank, statement: he was glad that "civilized government" had been established on the Ethiopian frontier. Harrington left forthwith for the Ethiopian capital.

[5]Memo. by Kitchener, Halfa, Jan. 29, FO 403/274.

In under two weeks, the Harrington caravan reached Harar, where he reported "a most marked difference in the reception given me this time--Salute fired etc.--and the Ras has paid me so much attention that it has afforded matter for much speculation. . . . The fall of Khartoum has thoroughly startled them all /Ethiopians/ in favor of friendship with England." In Harar, he stayed with a leading Greek merchant, John Gerolimato, not only a personal friend, but also an unofficial British agent. Gerolimato had already warned Makonnen that an Ethiopian advance towards the White Nile would embroil the Lion of Judah with its British counterpart. He pointedly recounted an Arab proverb: "When two wise men see a snake in the road, they call a fool to remove it," and advised Makonnen not to let France and Russia cajole Ethiopia into trying to remove Kitchener's formidable presence from the Nile. Makonnen's messenger returned with an unofficial communication for Harrington and Gerolimato: if London insisted, Ethiopia would retreat from the Sudan.[6]

While in Harar, Harrington and Makonnen held informal discussions of an extraordinary nature. Menilek has been aptly described as having "an almost Bismarckian capacity for keeping several irons in the fire"--that was the essence of his foreign policy.[7] While the emperor could direct a

[6]Harrington to Rodd (priv. let.), Harar, Aug. 29, 1898, FO 1/35. Makonnen was fishing; Ethiopian troops never ventured deep into the Sudan, and never stayed for long.

[7]Sanderson, "The Foreign Policy of the Negus Menelik," p. 93.

complex and farsighted foreign policy, he needed skillful subordinates to aid him. Ras Makonnen displayed an almost Tallyrandesque ability to chart new courses for Ethiopian diplomacy as circumstances required. In his discussion with Harrington, Makonnen expressed a desire for friendship with London. He then startled the British agent by announcing that Ethiopia wished to have a seaport, which only London could arrange. Harrington pointed out that Whitehall would want a quid pro quo, and that, in any case, a port was of no value to Ethiopia since any power with a man-of-war could blow the place to pieces in wartime. Makonnen replied that Ethiopia wanted the port to be under British protection even if it meant full British control of Ethiopia's foreign affairs. Harrington realized that Makonnen was fishing to discover whether the British, like the Italians before them, aspired to a protectorate over Ethiopia; therefore, he disclaimed interest in the idea.[8] These Makonnen-Harrington conversations were the preliminary rounds of the normalization of Anglo-Ethiopian relations. Makonnen was measuring the European power with which Ethiopia would have to come to terms.

Just before leaving Harar, Harrington received a telephone call from Ilg (on the French-built Harar-to-Addis Ababa line) who, at the emperor's request, asked if Harrington

[8]Harrington to Rodd (priv. let.), Harar, Aug. 29, 1898, FO 1/35.

could confirm or deny reports of British forces on the Sobat River. Harrington had no news from the Foreign Office--a constant complaint during August and September of 1898--but told Ilg that the British were undoubtedly part of Kitchener's force. Ilg then asked how London would deal with Marchand at Fashoda. Harrington answered cavalierly that Kitchener would "cut off his supplies or kick him out."[9] Menilek and his advisors were "ravenous for news" of developments on the Upper Nile. The French legation at Addis Ababa had tried to obscure the totality of Kitchener's destruction of the Mahdist power on the plains of Kerreri on September 2nd; but a five-hour attack by 60,000 Mahdists against entrenched Anglo-Egyptian machine guns and rifles, resulting in almost 50% casualties for the forces of the Khalifa, could hardly be concealed for long. The Mahdists were a courageous adversary--Wingate wrote, "I never saw the Dervishes fight better"--but their fanatical bravery could not overcome the technology of a large, well armed army.[10]

For the first time in his brief diplomatic career, Harrington occupied in Addis Ababa a position of strength. Despite Lagarde's statements that Marchand was holding firm at Fashoda, the emperor realized that Kitchener held the

[9]Harrington to Rodd (priv. let.), Camp Haramaya, Oct. 6, 1898, enclosed in Rodd to Sanderson (let.), Cairo, Nov. 12, 1898, FO 1/35.

[10]Roland Wingate, Wingate of the Sudan (London, 1955), pp. 116-17. The classic description of the battle is in Winston Churchill's The River War (London, 1899).

balance of military power on the White Nile. Now Harrington could negotiate effectively; the only problem was that he had no authorization to do so. In fact, he was receiving virtually no communications from the Foreign Office: in over two months only two telegrams came from Whitehall (one, announcing the fall of Khartum, reached him three days after it was carried by the Reuter's news service in Harar). Harrington complained that the Foreign Office had "utterly forgotten" him. By treating him "somewhat shabbily in the way of news," Whitehall placed him at a diplomatic disadvantage. Harrington put a fair face on his difficult situation by receiving all good or bad news of the Upper Nile which filtered into Ethiopia with an air of calm indifference; understandably, he took no initiatives in his discussions with Makonnen and, later, Menilek.[11]

Harrington's first audience with the emperor after the fall of Khartum was particularly notable for what was left unsaid. At seven in the morning of October 26, Harrington donned evening dress (de rigeur for royal audiences at any

[11] Harrington to Rodd (priv. lets.), Aug. 29, Harar, Oct. 6, Camp Haramaya, 1898, FO 1/35. Telegrams sent to Harrington at Addis Ababa through Aden were either considerably delayed or never reached their destination. The Foreign Office decided to send telegrams to Harrington via Jibuti until the British agent organized a better means of rapid communication. Sanderson to Resident Aden (tel.), London, Oct. 15, 17, 1898, FO 1/35.

time of day) and set out for the Gibbi.[12] He presented the negus with a recorded message from Queen Victoria reproduced upon a wax-cylinder phonograph. Menilek examined the phonograph and listened to it until he grasped the principle of recording. Beyond a few casual enquiries about the battle at Omdurman, the Harrington-Menilek conversation revolved around horses, dogs, and polo. The two men never mentioned politics, and several times the emperor asked Ilg in Amharic if Harrington had come on business or pleasure. Finally, the negus enquired about reports of British military movements around Berbera and the Juba River. Harrington brusquely replied that London never acted underhandedly on the East coast of Africa. The emperor was taken aback, and the interview ended abruptly.[13]

Given the possibility of Anglo-Ethiopian conflict in the Sudan, Harrington remained uncertain of his reception at Addis Ababa and uncertain as to how he should respond. At the princely courts of India, the pukka-sahib demeanor was the norm; but the ruler of Ethiopia, with a well-equipped army of hundreds of thousands, was unlike any Indian

[12] M. S. Wellby, 'Twixt Sirdar and Menelik (New York and London, 1901), pp. 68-69. Prince Henri d'Orleans, African adventurer and colleague of "Count" Leontieff, came into a royal interview dressed in shooting costume. Menilek exclaimed, "Who is this person who does not know how to appear before a King?" Menilek demanded and obtained from Europeans respect which befitted his rank.

[13] Harrington to Salisbury (lets.), AA, Nov. 5, 1898, FO 1/34.

potentate. As it worked out, Harrington acted the brusque soldier, who wasted little time on formalities or flattery. He believed his diplomatic style complemented the British position at Addis Ababa, which he described as being "very strong . . . its strength . . . owes more to Menilek's fear of our power and suspicion of our intentions than to any friendship on his part towards England."[14] His Italian counterpart, Captain Ciccadicola, was more lyrical in his assessment of Harrington's style and influence, "and now a new star has arisen--Harrington who had the good fortune of presenting himself to the Emperor, not accompanied by Royal gifts, but with the brilliant victory of Khartoum." Later in his report, Ciccadicola captured the essence of Harrington's influence at this early stage in his Ethiopian career: "in spite of his behaviour, which may appear to the /Ethiopians/ to be very grave and serious, they, although not loving him, fear and respect him more than any other."[15]

Harrington's new respect was of little use so long as he had no information or authorization from his home government. Almost two weeks after it was dispatched, he received his first substantive telegram since the fall of

[14] Harrington to Salisbury (let.), AA, Nov. 7, 1898, FO 1/34.

[15] Translation of Ciccodicola to Canevaro (let.), AA, Dec. 10, 1898, enclosed in Currie to Salisbury (let.), Rome, Jan. 30, 1899, FO 403/289.

Khartum concerning the situation on the Upper Nile.[16] At last, he had something to communicate to Menilek: the news of the Anglo-Ethiopian occupation of Gedaref. The emperor received it with apparent indifference; but Harrington's announcement of the Anglo-Egyptian occupation of Roseires, a strategic town on the Blue Nile which ensured control of part of the river basin, was a bombshell. The negus asked to be shown Roseires on the map. Thereupon, Menilek ran his finger from the 14th and 2nd degrees north latitude bounded on the west by the White Nile, and said to Harrington, "That belongs to me." Harrington answered that the territories under discussion were part of Egypt's lost provinces, which London had every intention of recovering. Harrington and Menilek finally admitted officially what had been known for more than a year: Egyptian and Ethiopian irredentae clashed.

Nonetheless, Harrington believed the time was right to negotiate the Ethio-Sudanese boundary. Menilek seemed unwilling to force a diplomatic crisis. After the initial controversy over Roseires, Ilg assured Harrington that an amicable settlement could be reached by the two governments.[17] While the emperor would avoid direct conflict over the Sudan frontier, Harrington had no illusions of an easy settlement. Ethiopia would continue to extend its control of contested

[16]Sanderson to Harrington (tel.), London, Oct. 14, 1898, FO 1/34.

[17]Harrington to Salisbury (let.), AA, Nov. 6, 1898, FO 1/35.

areas until its forces made contact with an Anglo-Egyptian military presence. At that point of maximum expansion, Menilek hoped to force London to open negotiations. By also advancing into disputed territory, Harrington believed the British could compel the negus to make the first border proposals. Should Salisbury have the confidence to entrust him with the power to negotiate without referring back to London, Harrington believed he might strike a favorable bargain.[18]

Harrington asked for a large measure of freedom in settling the Ethio-Sudan frontier. Given the slowness of communication between London and Addis Ababa, such demands were understandable. Even before Harrington's request reached Whitehall, Salisbury authorized him to receive and report frontier proposals to Cromer in Cairo. Harrington must stress Egyptian claims, but could listen to any proposed modifications to the old frontier the emperor wished to make. After initial discussion with Menilek and his advisors, the British agent was to inform Cromer of any proposal "calculated to bring about a satisfactory settlement."[19] The initiative for negotiation of the Ethio-Sudan frontier now rested with Harrington, but he did not rush

[18] Harrington to Salisbury (let.), AA, Nov. 7, 1898, FO 1/34.

[19] Salisbury minute to Harrington to Salisbury (tel.), AA, Oct. 5, 1898; Cromer to Harrington (tel.), Cairo, Nov. 24, 1898, FO 1/35.

into opening discussions with the emperor. Menilek was also "sitting tight," to use Harrington's expression. The negus, who expected Harrington to ask for a frontier, did not like the role of petitioner for himself.[20]

Since both Menilek and Harrington refused to be the first to initiate frontier discussions, the chances for potential collision along the frontier and tension in Addis Ababa increased. Ilg invited Harrington to his house and then berated the British agent for the impasse in the Sudan. Ilg said the emperor knew his rights and would not be alone in demanding the 14th to 2nd parallel frontier. In reply, Harrington characterized Menilek's demands to control territory between these two parallels to the White Nile as "ridiculous." Ilg countered that if the emperor felt aggrieved, he would treat the British like the Italians--draw them into Ethiopia and "hammer" them. Harrington coolly replied, "We are not the Italians."[21]

The conflict between Ethiopia and Great Britain was complicated further by the fact that neither controlled the bulk of the disputed territory. A Mahdist army under Ahmad Fedil still remained near Gerdaref (Qadarif) where it had been sent to protect the Khalifa's flank against attack from Kassala. Ahmad Fedil failed to reach beleaguered Omdurman

[20]Harrington to Maxwell (priv. let.), AA, Nov. 16, 1898, FO 1/34.

[21]Harrington to Rodd (priv. let.), AA, Nov. 23, 1898, FO 1/35.

in time to assist the Khalifa; he retreated towards Gerdaref where he was attacked, but not decisively beaten, by an Anglo-Egyptian force from Kassala.[22] While Anglo-Egyptian forces converged on the disputed territory from the east, Menilek organized an Ethiopian expedition under Dejazmach Demisi, which left for Bani Shangul with that province's Sheikh, 'Abd al-Rahman, and several artillery pieces in tow.[23] The Foreign Office ordered Anglo-Egyptian forces to avoid collision with Ethiopians, but there was always the danger of an overzealous local commander exceeding his instructions. Such an incident occurred when the commander of the Anglo-Egyptian force at Roseires, Major Nason, threatened both Menilek and Ras Mangasha with strong counteraction should any harm come to a former client shiekh of Egypt who had requested Anglo-Ethiopian protection. Nason's brusque warning--"in very impetuous terms" is how Cromer described it--hardly reinforced the spirit of friendly settlement the Foreign Office wished to cultivate.[24]

In late March, Emperor Menilek lodged a formal complaint against Anglo-Egyptian infringement of Ethiopia's frontier. The negus argued that Anglo-Egyptian military movements east of the White Nile between the 14th and 2nd

[22] Holt, The Mahdist State, p. 223.

[23] Harrington to Salisbury (let.), AA, Nov. 16, 1898, FO 1/34.

[24] Cromer to Salisbury (tel.), Cairo, Nov. 15, 1898, FO 1/35.

parallels were contrary to the 1897 treaty, since Rodd had accepted Menilek's 1891 proclamation. The emperor added, "I thank God that the officers I sent to look after my territory have avoided war and that peace has been between the Ethiopian and English Governments so far." Harrington answered that although every effort was being made to avoid collision with the forces of Ethiopia, the Anglo-Egyptian campaign against the remaining Mahdists east of the White Nile was taking place in the domains of the Khalifa, and thus was not contrary to the 1897 Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty.[25]

Meanwhile, Menilek had dispatched a small diplomatic mission to the disputed frontier to offer Ethiopian protection and to raise his standard at Matamma, at Gedaref, and at Karkoj on the Blue Nile up river from Sennar. Cromer therefore ordered Anglo-Egyptian commanders to hoist both the Union Jack and the Egyptian colors in close proximity to any Ethiopian flags they encountered, except at Karkoj, where they were to remove the Ethiopian flag altogether. Nevertheless, Anglo-Egyptian local commanders were instructed to avoid any conflict with Ethiopian troops.[26] In Addis Ababa, Harrington and the emperor both avoided discussing the western boundary question. The diplomat turned his

[25] Translation of Menilek to Harrington (let.), AA, Nov. 16, 1898 and Harrington to Menilek (let.), AA, Nov. 23, 1898, both enclosed in Harrington to Salisbury (let.), AA, Nov. 23, 1898, FO 1/34.

[26] Wingate to General Officer commanding in the Sudan (tel.), Cairo, Nov. 23, 1898, FO 403/275.

attention to the construction of a temporary residency; but the work went slowly since timber had to be transported from a forest fifteen miles from the now treeless Ethiopian capital.[27] Menilek concerned himself with more important questions, especially the revolt of Ras Mangasha in Tigré. The emperor declared Ras Makonnen governor of Tigré as well as Harar, and sent his trusted subordinate at the head of an army to quell the rebellion in the north.[28] This insurrection temporarily deflected the negus's attention from the Sudan, and the frontier issue remained in suspension for the next few weeks.

Harrington spent most of his time hunting jackals with the emperor's royal pack of hounds, which compensated for its lack of training by enthusiasm. He made the rounds, visiting the other residencies and Ilg and his wife.[29] Such diversions helped him in his war of nerves with Menilek, the objective of which was advantage in the negotiations. While Harrington sat tight in Addis Ababa, Kitchener became extremely agitated over the lack of progress in settling the Ethio-Sudanese frontier. As the conqueror of Khartum and Gordon's avenger, the Sirdar had returned in October 1898, to a hero's welcome in England which included a peerage for his services to queen and empire.

[27] Wellby, Sirdar and Menelik, pp. 101-02; Harrington to Maxwell (priv. let.), AA, Nov. 16, 1898, FO 1/34.

[28] Harrington to Salisbury (let.), AA, Nov. 28, 1898, FO 1/34.

[29] Wellby, Sirdar and Menelik, p. 100.

Notwithstanding his public acclaim, the sirdar was a secretive, lonely, and complicated man. He almost suffered a nervous breakdown during the advance on Khartum and his personal relations with Cromer had deteriorated.[30] Prior to the fall of Khartum, Kitchener composed a long memorandum outlining proposals for the Ethio-Sudanese frontier. Basing his opinion on captured Mahdist communications, Kitchener concluded that Menilek and the Khalifa had signed a treaty of friendship. This belief reinforced his dislike of the Ethiopians, who previously had caused trouble on the Sudanese frontier. Now that the Christian highlanders were armed to the teeth, he considered them a grave threat to Sudanese tranquility during the difficult upcoming period of reconstruction.

To Kitchener, "the principal point of all negotiations for a frontier should . . . be to safeguard, as far as possible, the Soudan from incursions from Abyssinia, and at the same time avoid placing under their /Ethiopians'/ rule Mahommedan populations, which must lead to grave discontent and probable fighting." The Sirdar also suggested acceding to Menilek's "greed for territorial aggrandisement" as far as possible, except at points of strategic advantage. Next, Kitchener pointed out that Menilek's pretensions, like those of former Ethiopian monarchs, were exaggerated. Rodd,

[30]Phillip Magnus, Kitchener, A Portrait of an Imperialist (New York, 1968), p. 109.

according to Kitchener, had been taken in by Menilek, who demanded more in the name of friendship towards London than he ever could have obtained from the Khalifa.[31] Kitchener proposed a specific boundary which was, if anything, more generous to Ethiopia than the frontier finally settled in 1902 by the emperor and Harrington. But in 1898, Rodd dismissed Kitchener's advice by assuring Whitehall that Menilek would never agree to such a frontier.

For almost two months after the fall of Khartum, Harrington avoided boundary negotiations. From his vantage point, Kitchener undoubtedly believed that Harrington was being carelessly dilatory by allowing the optimum negotiating moment to slip away. Kitchener decided on a simple and cunning plan to cause movement in the Ethiopian capital, which would assure Khartum some control of Anglo-Ethiopian affairs. The sirdar proposed sending a special mission of his own to Addis Ababa in the form of a military aide-de-camp, Lord Edward Cecil, Salisbury's son. The prime minister himself feared that Harrington might construe this action as a censure, and therefore he allowed Cromer absolute discretion in deciding the fate of Kitchener's proposal.[32]

Cromer reiterated his support of Harrington to Salisbury: "Kitchener for some reason or another appears to have

[31]Memo. by Kitchener, Halfa, Jan. 29, 1898, with a minute by Rodd, FO 403/274.

[32]Salisbury to Cromer (priv. let.), London, Dec. 9, 1898, CP, FO 633/7/no. 184 and SP, A/113/85.

no confidence in Harrington. His /Harrington's/ letters appear to me very sensible and I see no reason to suppose he is not doing very well." Cromer continued, "I was, as you know, at one time rather anxious about the Abyssinian doings. The whole question requires careful watching, but, with the turn affairs have recently taken, I am personally inclined to be rather less anxious about it than Kitchener."[33] On his return from England, Kitchener discussed apprehensively with Cromer the need for an officer to evaluate Menilek's military movements.[34] As a thirty-three year old lieutenant whose experience was mostly political rather than military, Harrington probably failed to impress the aloof sirdar. But Kitchener's antipathy for Harrington was rooted deep in the complex character of this secretive proconsul. After their talk, Cromer reported that he "now gathered that the Sirdar rather mistrusts Harrington." But Cromer still disagreed completely with Kitchener and wrote Salisbury that "Harrington seems to me to be doing admirably." Cromer's opinion counted more with Salisbury than Kitchener's, and the Foreign Office dropped the scheme to send a military officer to Addis Ababa.[35] In any case, in late December

[33]Cromer to Salisbury (priv. let.), Cairo, Dec. 10, 1898, SP, A/111/81.

[34]Cromer to Salisbury (priv. tel.), Cairo, Dec. 14, 1898, SP, A/111/73.

[35]Cromer to Salisbury (tel.), Cairo, Dec. 15, 1898, SP, A/111/74; Salisbury minute to Harrington to Cromer (let.), AA, Dec. 27, 1898, FO 1/34.

Harrington invited the emperor to propose modifications for the frontier.

Two events encouraged Harrington to break the deadlock of silence over the western frontier. On December 17, 1898, he received news of Nason's inopportune action at Roseires, along with a telegram explaining that Colonel Collison had been ordered from Gedaref to Gallabat, where he would establish an Anglo-Egyptian military post, thus extending Anglo-Egyptian effective occupation.[36] The objective of Collison's advance was one of Menilek's prime objectives in his campaign to attain recognition for "historic" Ethiopian boundaries in the west. Harrington calculated that the news of such an advance might jolt the emperor into quick settlement of the Ethio-Sudan frontier; Menilek's response was conciliatory. The emperor wondered why Anglo-Egyptian forces had "hoisted their flag" at Gallabat when Colonel Collison supposedly had been ordered to avoid encroachment on Ethiopian territory; Menilek maintained that "Gallabat is from old, tributary to the Ethiopian Government; my people have also gone before and hoisted my flag and stayed there to show that it is ours, now so there should be no fighting between our people, let our respective flags stay where they are. When you and I meet we will talk it over."[37]

[36] Harrington to Cromer (let.), AA, Dec. 21, 1898, FO 1/34.

[37] Translation of Menilek to Harrington (let.), AA, Jan. 7, 1899, FO 1/36.

If Harrington hoped to stampede Menilek into negotiating Ethiopia's western frontier on British terms, however, he was disappointed. Menilek's response was to send Dejazmach Demisi with 5,000 well-armed troops into the disputed territory, where in February 1899, he demanded submission of the Sheikh of Fazogli.[38] Anglo-Egyptian troops had occupied Fazogli, and the Sheikh was under the Khedive's protection. In March, Demisi and his army confronted Nason and a smaller Anglo-Egyptian force at Famaka, up river from Roseires. The Dejazmach's attitude was friendly but firm; he protested the removal of the Ethiopian flag at Fazogli. Nason yielded to superior numbers and agreed that, until the frontier was settled, the Ethiopian colors could be flown on the west bank of the Blue Nile opposite Famaka.

Cromer was deeply disturbed by this first major confrontation of Anglo-Egyptian and Ethiopian forces. He telegraphed both Salisbury and Harrington that "The urgency of the settlement of the entire boundary with Menilek is accentuated by the presence of this large Abyssinian force in the country between the two Niles."[39] Harrington requested without success that the emperor reign in Demisi since frontier negotiations were pending.[40]

[38] Harrington to Menilek (let.), AA. Feb. 28, 1899, FO 1/36.

[39] Cromer to Salisbury (tel.), Cairo, March 16, 1899, FO 403/289.

[40] Harrington to Menilek (let.), AA. Feb. 28, 1899, FO 1/36.

Harrington thought it quite possible that Demisi's advance was designed to occupy all territory in the disputed area not under direct Anglo-Egyptian control. "The reluctance the King has shown towards any discussion of the frontier," he reported, "inclines me to the belief that the King is trying to occupy effectively such points as are not effectively occupied at present, with a view to pleading that Abyssinian public opinion would never permit his public withdrawal from them."[41] Despite his concern, Harrington feigned indifference towards the frontier question in the hopes that eventually Menilek would petition for a formal revision of the boundary; such action would give support to London's contention that Egypt had never surrendered its territorial rights in the Sudan.[42]

The "opening skirmish of the frontier negotiations," as Harrington described it, occurred in mid-April.[43] At the conclusion of a routine interview, the negus abruptly brought up the question of the Ethiopian-Sudan frontier. The time

[41] Harrington to Cromer (let.), AA, March 21, 1899, FO 1/36.

[42] Harrington to Rodd (priv. let.), AA, April 5, 1899, FO 1/36.

[43] Ethio-British negotiations over the Sudan frontier have been treated thoroughly in Harold G. Marcus, "Ethio-British Negotiations Concerning the Western Border with Sudan," Journal of African History, IV, I (1963), pp. 81-94. The following discussion covers similar ground, while emphasizing particularly Harrington's role in the negotiations. Most of the documentation cited in the rest of the chapter appears also in Marcus's article.

to settle the issue had come; but Menilek wished Harrington to be the petitioner. The British agent declined, stating only that Great Britain claimed, on behalf of the Khedive, all territory that formerly belonged to Egypt. Still, Harrington informed the emperor that London was willing to modify the frontier should the Ethiopian monarch desire it. At this point, Menilek presented the Ethiopian case for the frontier: (1) Rodd had never protested his 1891 proclamation; and silence gave consent; (2) Ethiopia had hoisted her flag at such strategic points on the frontier as Gallabat, Gera on the Setit River, Famaka, and Matamma; (3) and his government's claims conformed to the ancient limits of the Ethiopian Empire.

Harrington attempted to refute Menilek's contentions point by point. Rodd's silence really meant that London never accepted the 1891 proclamation; Menilek's flag hoisting was merely a variation of the game France played unsuccessfully at Fashoda--taking advantage of Anglo-Egyptian difficulties in the Sudan "to filch a bit of our loaf," to use Harrington's phrase. As for the "historic" limits of Ethiopia, Harrington countered that ancient history counted little in modern negotiations; by that reasoning England could claim half of France. London's intentions towards Ethiopia were reasonable, Harrington maintained, and Anglo-Ethiopian difficulties could be settled only by compromise and negotiation. Menilek thereupon agreed, "Very well, if when we get into a deadlock, you are prepared to give and

take, I am." At the next discussion Harrington promised to present a map of Egypt's claims along the frontier.[44]

The emperor and Harrington continued their discussion of the western frontier in three more meetings, on April 22, May 19, and May 25. By the last session, the two men had reached a tentative agreement with the exception of the question of control of the important town of Matamma. Occupation of Bani Shangul was the only serious controversy within these three discussions. The negus had invested considerable effort in effectively occupying that province, and for good reason: Bani Shangul was rich in gold, it was within easy reach of the navigable portions of both the White and Blue Nile, and control of the area gave Ethiopia an outlet from which to carry on potential Ethio-Sudanese trade. Bani Shangul was so important that the session on May 19 was devoted almost entirely to it.[45]

Because of the long delay between the first and second conferences, Harrington feared the frontier question might drag on indefinitely. He tried Rodd's tactic, informing

[44]Harrington to Rodd (priv. let.), AA, April 15, 1899 and Harrington to Cromer (let.), AA, April 15, 1899, FO 1/36.

[45]While no statistics existed, Harrington and members of the Sudan government believed in the potential of Ethio-Sudanese trade. The xenophobic nature of the Mahdia and the anarchy caused by its disintegration reduced the trade to a trickle. With pacification of the Sudan under Anglo-Egyptian control, and with the consolidation of Ethiopian rule, prospects for a healthy commerce between the two countries increased. Notes on Abyssinia, N.D., FO 403/255.

Menilek that he planned to leave Addis Ababa the first week in June, the beginning of the rainy season, with or without a tentative agreement. This was sheer bluff; had the emperor called it, Harrington would have been forced to invent some lame excuse for remaining in the Ethiopian capital. The scheme had some effect, because the Ethiopian sovereign agreed to a third meeting to negotiate the frontier. Both men stated their government's claims to Bani Shangul. Although they came to no agreement, Harrington received a map from Menilek outlining the frontier from which the Ethiopian government was prepared to negotiate. At last the discussions could proceed from specific proposals.[46]

The May 25 session produced the first tangible results of the Ethio-Sudan frontier negotiations. Harrington explained that he had the authority to negotiate and present to Westminster a treaty which he deemed satisfactory to both London and Addis Ababa. Following Kitchener's memorandum, Harrington obtained the emperor's agreement to the principle of a boundary following "tribal limits," beginning at Todluk and running south. The Hamran Arabs, long considered tributaries of Egypt, remained within the Khedive's domains, as did the Kedawi, the Debaineh, and the Dar-es-Somati; Egypt thus retained virtually all of the province of Gedaref. In return, Menilek received territory in the Famaka and Fazogli

[46]Harrington to Cromer (let.), AA, May 19, 1899, FO 1/36.

districts where at least one local sheikh was tributary to Ethiopia. In Gallabat province, Matamma was the stumbling block. Harrington acknowledged Ethiopian control of Bani Shangul, for as he explained to Cromer and Salisbury, Menilek "had his heart set on it, and nothing short of a threat of using force would induce him to abandon his claims to it." To ease the pain of Ethiopian control of Bani Shangul, Menilek promised the gold mining concession there to British capitalists. With visions of a potential Rand on the Sudan's doorstep, which might easily cancel out French economic influence in Ethiopia, Harrington eagerly accepted the emperor's offer. In discussions on the frontier around Nasir and then south, Menilek took a hard line. The negus insisted on the Pibor and Akobo Rivers as the boundary down to sixth degree north latitude.[47] Dejazmaches Jote, Demisi, and Tassma had extended Ethiopian influence to these rivers as the vanguard of the gradual southward Ethiopian population migration which began to shift the center of gravity of power within Ethiopia from the north to the central and south.[48]

The only issue Menilek and Harrington could not agree upon was control of Matamma, the strategic and commercial center in the eastern Gallabat region. Harrington strove to

[47]Harrington to Salisbury via Cromer (let.), AA, May 26, 1899, FO 1/36.

[48]Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., pp. 336-37.

induce the emperor to withdraw his demand for the town by reiterating Egypt's claim: Anglo-Egyptian forces occupied if after the defeat of the Mahdists, thus establishing a right by conquest; furthermore, Yohannis IV had recognized both Egyptian and Mahdist rights to it. Menilek countered that he could have occupied Matamma before the Anglo-Egyptian forces, but he held back out of friendship for Great Britain.[49] The negus then frankly admitted that Ethiopia could not force London to surrender Egypt's claim to Matamma, but he requested cession of the town as evidence of British friendship. Menilek added a sentimental justification: Matamma had a large Christian population, and many Ethiopians, including Yohannis, had died or spilled blood there in their struggles against the Mahdists. Harrington was unimpressed with this line of argument, believing as he did that Matamma's "commercial value as a trade centre," rather than its sentimental or national significance, was the real motivation of the request. Surrender of Matamma went beyond Harrington's instructions. The best the British agent could do was to omit it from the tentative agreement, and leave it up to his superiors in Cairo and London. Menilek assured Harrington that if Matamma was ceded to Ethiopia, there

[49] In reality, the emperor did not use his preponderance of military power to capture Matamma because of his cautious desire to allow the struggle for control of the Sudan to resolve itself, thus assuring that Ethiopia did not offend the victor--be it Omdurman or London. Marcus, "Rejoinder," p. 117.

would be no interference with Ethio-Sudanese trade; the emperor realized that increased trade was in the interests of both parties. Thus in what were remarkably amiable negotiations Menilek and Harrington came to a tentative frontier arrangement.[50]

The frontier agreed upon in Addis Ababa needed little defense; Harrington had followed Kitchener's guidelines and satisfied Cromer's main concern, retention of most of Gallabat and Fazogli. Still, the British agent at Addis Ababa pointed out that much of the territory ceded to Ethiopia was "formerly a bone of contention" between two countries whose borders never had been properly defined. In Harrington's opinion, the tentative agreement represented "the maximum that Menilek is prepared to accede to with good grace, and short of using force . . . , I doubt it being possible to induce him to accept less." To push any further only would rekindle Menilek's suspicions of Great Britain and restore French and Russian influence in Ethiopia.[51] In Cairo, Rodd carefully considered the results of the negotiations and sent the following recommendation to Whitehall: "Mr. Harrington has succeeded in obtaining a line considerably more to the advantage of the latter [the Sudan] than his original instructions would have warranted his accepting

[50]Harrington to Salisbury via Cromer (let. no. 43), AA, May 26, 1899, FO 1/36.

[51]Harrington to Salisbury via Cromer (let. no. 42), AA, May 26, 1899, FO 1/36.

conditionally."[52] The Salisbury government seemed inclined to accept the proposed frontier, subject to minor revision, as the basis of the new Ethio-Sudan boundary.[53]

The rapid progress in negotiating the first stages of the boundary was Harrington's most important concern during his first year in the Ethiopian capital. During the last months of 1898, however, the drama at Fashoda, perhaps the last major example of "the imperialism of prestige," was the temporary preoccupation of the small diplomatic community in the Ethiopian capital. Harrington was not informed of developments on the Upper Nile partly because of the difficulties and lack of security for communication, but mostly because he was a minor diplomat. Fashoda was a matter for the cabinet and the top officials of empire. The only news Harrington received was a copy of the Blue Book issued by Salisbury in October 1898 at the height of the crisis. By the time the document reached Addis Ababa the incident was virtually resolved; France agreed to withdraw the Marchand Mission without any real concessions in return.[54] The expedition's route of evacuation remained the only live issue.

[52]Memo. by Rodd, Cairo, Aug. 4, 1899, enclosed in Rodd to Salisbury (let.), Cairo, Aug. 4, 1899, FO 403/284.

[53]Salisbury to Currie (let.), London, Sept. 8, 1899, FO 403/284.

[54]Harrington to Maxwell (priv. let.), AA, Nov. 16, 1898, FO 1/34; Robinson and Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians, p. 374; Sanderson, Upper Nile, pp. 350-51.

On October 27, Salisbury had told the French ambassador in London, Alphonse de Courcel, that there could be no compromise, negotiation, nor even promise of concessions for France on the Upper Nile, until after Marchand left Fashoda.[55] Unless France was prepared to fight, the withdrawal of their mission was inevitable. Even with Russian assistance, the French navy was hopelessly outclassed by the British fleet, and throughout the crisis the Russians had made no move to support the French. In France itself, public opinion had been sharply divided on the question of war over a point of honor. In these circumstances, Paris had sought some means of retreating with honor in the face of British intransigence. Marchand's choice of route from Fashoda offered a feeble sop to Gallic pride. On the eve of the French decision to evacuate the Marchand Mission, Courcel wrote the Quai d'Orsay that "without a doubt the principal difficulty is determination of Marchand's return route."[56] London, and Courcel himself, wished the retreat to follow the British controlled Khartum-Berber-Suakin route.

When the new French Government, formed on November 1, 1898, authorized the evacuation of Fashoda, it attempted to

[55] Courcel to Delcassé (tel.), London, Oct. 28, 1898, Documents diplomatiques francaises (hereafter Ddf), XIV, no. 459 (Paris, 1929ff.), as quoted in Sanderson, Upper Nile, p. 350.

[56] Courcel to Delcassé (priv. let.), London, Nov. 1, 1898, Ddf, XIV, no. 476; Sanderson, Upper Nile, pp. 354-62.

maintain a vestige of national pride by allowing Marchand to decide his own route of retreat. The British were suspicious of withdrawal through Ethiopia to Jibuti, although now that the French had agreed to evacuation, Marchand's contact with the Ethiopians ceased to be a grave concern in London. Still, Cromer insisted that France obtain the permission of Menilek because, according to London's interpretation, the 1897 Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty forbade the passage of armed troops between the British and Ethiopian empires. The Quai d'Orsay instructed Lagarde to obtain the emperor's permission and aid. At the beginning of December, Harrington formally notified Menilek of the French agreement to evacuate Fashoda unconditionally.[57]

After handing over the steamer Faidherbe, two artillery pieces, and a vast surplus of ammunition to the Ethiopians at Gore, the Marchand Mission arrived at Addis Ababa on March 11, 1899, where most of the European community turned out to welcome the men who recently had held the attention of Europe.[58] Harrington had wanted to join the welcoming group, but he feared his presence might be "de trop."[59]

[57] Delcassé to Courcel (tel.), Paris, Nov. 2, 1898; Lefevre-Pontalis to Delcassé (tel.), Paris, Nov. 8, 1898; Delcassé to Lagarde (tel.), Paris, Nov. 8, 1898, Ddf, XIV, nos. 477, 495, 499.

[58] Harrington to Cromer (let.), AA, April 15, 1899, FO 1/36; J. Emily, Mission Marchand (Paris, 1913), p. 321.

[59] Harrington to Rodd (priv. let.), AA, April 15, 1899, FO 1/36.

Marchand, his officers, and the Senegalese riflemen rode into Addis Ababa on elaborately decorated Ethiopian horses provided by Lagarde. The three year old daughter of a French merchant resident in Addis Ababa managed to present the French hero with a bouquet of red, white, and blue flowers, but forgot her prepared speech. Two French merchants, part of the official welcoming committee, grasped the hands of Marchand and his officers, and then introduced the party to Ilg and his wife. Menilek and his court were absent from the Ethiopian capital, so the welcome was essentially a French affair. At the French residency, Lagarde and Marchand liberally dispensed rosettes d'officier et croix de chevalier of the Legion of Honor and other medals to the members of the mission, but no amount of ceremony or awards could compensate for the failure of France's challenge to control the headwaters of the Nile.

After a discrete interval, Harrington invited Marchand and his officers to lunch at his temporary residency, a number of large, comfortable tents hung with tapestries and cluttered with heavy Victorian furniture and bric-a-brac. Anglo-French rivalry notwithstanding, fellow Europeans engaged in the struggle for power and influence in Africa could enjoy a jolly lunch together. One of the members of the Marchand Mission described his host and British prospects in Addis Ababa. Harrington was:

> Very active and intelligent, he seems willing to play the game and is ready to cut out Lagarde. . . . French diplomacy at the court of

> Negus must be forceful in order to retain its favorable position. Harrington is a man who knows how to profit from our departure from Fashoda. M. Lagarde will find him a strong adversary.[60]

In general, the French and British representatives at Menilek's court personified Anglo-French rivalry in Ethiopia. Most observers and participants in diplomatic life in the Ethiopian capital considered Lagarde a supercilious and childish man; his strongest card was his deference toward the emperor and his nobles. Harrington genuinely disliked his French counterpart, whom he considered a sycophant.[61]

In early June Harrington made the two-month journey from Addis Ababa to London, where he conferred with Kitchener, Cromer, and Sanderson in a series of informal meetings. Although the proposed Ethio-Sudanese line was essentially sound, there were a number of minor difficulties. The

[60] Menilek was consolidating his administration in Tigré, where he had suppressed a rebellion led by Ras Mangasha. After accepting Mangasha's submission, Menilek returned at a leisurely pace to his capital. The Marchand Mission waited three weeks for the emperor's return. Obviously Menilek felt no urgency to be associated with Marchand's unsuccessful expedition. Emily, Mission Marchand, pp. 322-23, 325, 328.

[61] An incident illustrative of the different personalities of Lagarde and Harrington was the question of Ethiopian decorations and titles. In 1897, Menilek offered Lagarde the tile of "Duke of Entotto," a sop to ease the French minister's disappointment over Ethiopian failure to implement the "Convention of the White Nile." Lagarde was foolish enough to take this artificial and meaningless title seriously--his calling cards, engraved "Duc d'Entotto," were a standing joke among the diplomatic community in Addis Ababa. In 1899, Harrington respectfully declined the Grand Star of the Cross of Ethiopia, an important Ethiopian honor, on the grounds that British diplomats were forbidden to accept foreign decorations.

tentative frontier ran considerably east of the boundary defined by the secret Anglo-Italian Protocol of 1891. Rodd suggested that London refer the matter to Rome before final settlement of the frontier with Ethiopia. The terms of the protocol acknowledged Egypt's right to reoccupy any Ethiopian territory ceded to Italy by the 1891 agreement, if Rome failed to make good its protectorate over the Solomonic empire. In fact, it was the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, a condominium, which was officially reclaiming the Khedive's possessions, and Italian authorities in Eritrea might use this technicality to extract concessions from the Sudan. Secondly, a survey of the frontier was necessary; both London and Addis Ababa had only sketchy knowledge of the frontier's geography.[62] Therefore, top British diplomats, administrators, and civil servants involved in the settlement of the Ethio-Sudan frontier met in a series of informal conferences in London.

At the first meeting at Sanderson's house, Harrington was absent (he was still en route to London). Cromer, Kitchener, Rodd and Lord Currie, British Ambassador to Rome, all joined Sanderson for an after-dinner discussion of the border. Cromer insisted on action; any delay in accepting the tentative arrangement was dangerous in view of Menilek's desire to settle the issue. Kitchener agreed and pushed for

[62] Memo. by Rodd, Aug. 4, 1899, Cairo, enclosed in Rodd to Salisbury (let.), Cairo, Aug. 4, 1899, FO 403/284.

a survey of the line. Cromer, who controlled the purse strings of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, balked at Kitchener's £4000 estimate for the survey, but the suggestion that the British government might take care of half of the expense eased Cromer's concern. Currie argued that the Italians must be taken into British confidence, and their observations sought before any conclusion was reached with the Ethiopian government.[63]

Harrington joined the discussions on May 11, in an informal meeting with Kitchener and Sanderson. Kitchener obviously held Harrington in higher esteem for they held "a very satisfactory conversation." Harrington concurred with the general assumptions of the previous meeting with one exception. He questioned Rodd's suggested deflection of the frontier south of the Sobat to the east, at Ethiopia's expense. While such a move would assure the firm ground of the Shankalla Mountains for construction of a potential Cape-to-Cairo railway, Harrington believed Ethiopia would never agree to such a concession. The best plan was to lease a strip of territory from the Ethiopian government, should it be required. Harrington saw the tangle of conflicting claims at the starting point of the Ethio-Sudanese frontier as a potential trouble spot. Kitchener agreed but hoped that London could convince the Italians to rearrange

[63]Memoranda by Sanderson, London, Aug. 8, 10, 1899, FO 1/44.

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[63]Memoranda by Sanderson, London, Aug. 8, 10, 1899, FO 1/44.

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Harrington's and Salisbury's apprehensions about the Italians were not realized immediately. The British Government invited Rome's observations about the proposed frontier and the Italians offered to modify their line as laid down by the 1891 Protocol.[65] Rodd went to the Italian capital, where he and Currie easily obtained the necessary modifications from the Italian foreign minister, Viconti Venosta, and Governor Martini of Eritrea. In late November, the issue was virtually decided, and a month later the Italians signed two notes. The first accepted the Harrington-Menilek tentative frontier, with Todluk as a starting point; the second promised settlement of the Eritrean-Sudanese frontier by the governments at Khartum and

[64] Memo. by Sanderson, London, Aug. 11, 1899 with a minute by Salisbury, FO 1/44.

[65] In the Horn of Africa, the Italians still suffered from the Adwa disaster, but their position as a Mediterranean power meant they shared a number of interests with Great Britain. London took care to respect Italian sensibilities, and Rome generally backed the British as the best counter to French predominance in Ethiopia. Salisbury to Currie (let.), London, Sept. 8, 1899; Salisbury to Cromer (tel.), London, Oct. 28, 1899, FO 403/284.

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Massawa.[66]

Prior to leaving London for Ethiopia, Harrington sent a telegram to Ilg requesting time to survey the proposed frontier before final settlement. Realizing that a delay would only favor the Anglo-Egyptians, Menilek was anxious to see the tentative line embodied into a treaty. Although he agreed to the survey, he made plain his displeasure with London's slow response. Harrington assured the Gibbi that the Italians were the real cause of the delay, and added privately that Menilek's proposals had been well received. Only minimal modifications were necessary.[67]

Salisbury informed Cromer of these recent developments, and asked his advice. The Egyptian proconsul predicted that the South African war, little more than a week old, would seriously complicate Harrington's negotiations in Ethiopia. The best course to follow now in the Ethiopian capital was deliberate stalling, thus avoiding final settlement of the frontier until after a British victory in the Transvaal. If Menilek could not be put off, however, Harrington must have discretionary authority to sign a frontier arrangement subject to ratification. Continual referrals to Whitehall

[66]Cromer to Salisbury (tel.), Cairo, Oct. 29, 1899; Salisbury to Cromer (tel.), London, Oct. 29, 1899; and Currie to Salisbury (tel.), Rome, Nov. 27, 1899, FO 403/284; Currie to Salisbury (let.), Rome, Jan. 3, 1900, FO 1/44 enclosing Italian Notes.

[67]Harrington to Ilg (let.), London, Sept. 8, 1899, FO 1/36; translation of Menilek to Harrington (let.), AA, Oct. 5, 1899, FO 403/284.

would brand the British agent as a powerless underling. Finally, Cromer turned to the stumbling block of the negotiations, control of Matamma. According to Cromer, the best solution was to follow Rodd's advice; partition the town. The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan needed only the fort in the new section of Matamma; Addis Ababa could be offered the old town, thus satisfying Menilek's commercial and sentimental motives for Ethiopian ownership.[68]

Harrington arrived in Addis Ababa on Christmas Day, 1899, a time when the British Empire faced a grave crisis. The entire military strategy in South Africa had gone awry. British forces faced Boer sieges at Ladysmith in Natal and at Mafeking in the west; the diamond capital of Kimberley was also isolated and surrounded. In one dismal week, December 9-15, the British suffered three humiliating defeats. The British commander in South Africa, Sir Redvers Buller, shaken by his disastrous failure to relieve Ladysmith, advised subordinates to prepare for surrender.[69] Lagarde, who had returned to Ethiopia almost a month earlier than Harrington, lost no time in making capital of British difficulties in the Transvaal. With gleeful understatement he reported that the emperor was not displeased with London's disastrous South African complication, which could only strengthen

[68] Salisbury to Cromer (tel.), London, October 18, 1899 and Cromer to Salisbury (tel.), Cairo, Oct. 20, 1899, FO 403/284.

[69] Magnus, Kitchener, p. 157.

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Ethiopia's hand in the final negotiations for the Ethio-Sudanese frontier.[70]

According to Lagarde, Menilek's main preoccupation was the settlement of outstanding issues with Great Britain. The French minister heard rumors that Ethiopia planned an offensive action at some point along the still unsettled frontier to jolt London into action.[71] In late December, Harrington received a telegram from Cromer protesting Ethiopian infraction of the draft agreement; an Ethiopian officer and thirty soldiers had arrived at Gallabat to levy taxes; and the Sheikh had received a letter from Ethiopian authorities stating that Gallabat belonged to Ethiopia. Harrington protested these actions in his first royal interview after returning to Addis Ababa. The negus professed ignorance and agreed to look into the matter. Although there is no direct documentary proof, Menilek possibly was fully aware of the actions of his officials on the western frontier. The incident at Gallabat was the offensive action about which Lagarde wrote. Ilg called upon Harrington the day after his audience with the emperor and expressed surprise at the British agent's failure to mention the Ethio-Sudanese frontier to Menilek. The British agent assured Ilg that the line defined in May 1899 had been accepted by

[70] Lagarde to Delcassé (dispatch), AA, Dec. 5, 1899, Ddf, XVI, no. 19.

[71] Ibid.

Whitehall as the basis of the settlement. He pointed out that final determination of the frontier required a thorough survey, if it was to conform to tribal and geographical logic. As for Gallabat, he told Ilg of the partition plan for Matamma. Ilg was satisfied and relieved.[72]

During most of 1900, Harrington avoided the question of the Ethio-Sudan frontier. He and his staff received the bad news of the war in the Transvaal with stiff upper lips. In the spring of 1900, the British military situation in South Africa improved slightly; "At last," Harrington wrote, "one is able to cock one's tail a bit."[73] Though no means pleased by the lack of progress, the emperor did not press the British representative about the frontier because Ilg had returned to Europe, but he remained apprehensive. The monarch told the Italian agent that Great Britain gave no answer to his proposals because of her Transvaal difficulties; after military success in South Africa, the negus expected that London would be free to deal with Ethiopia. Harrington bore the brunt of this new suspicion of British motives, and he felt uncomfortable in such an atmosphere.

In a general appraisal, he warned Whitehall that despite all his efforts, "Everyone in this country /Ethiopia/ seems convinced that we intend sooner or later to take their

[72]Harrington to Salisbury via Cromer (let.), AA, Dec. 28, 1899, FO 1/36.

[73]Harrington to Maxwell (priv. let.), AA, Mar. 10, 1900, FO 1/37.

country; the French and the Russians have told them so for the last five years and tell them so every day. Nothing I do or say has the slightest effect in shaking their belief in this idea." The Solomonic empire was well armed--Harrington estimated there were more modern Gras and Remington rifles than men to carry them. Still, he was guardedly optimistic. Menilek's extensive arsenal was essentially defensive. So long as London did not demand that Addis Ababa yield territory already in its possession, there was little danger of open hostility. Only after settlement of the British frontiers with Ethiopia would Menilek's inherent suspicion of London diminish. Harrington ended his appraisal of British prospects in Ethiopia with a blast at his diplomatic opponents in the Ethiopian capital: "If condescending to the petty, mean fabricated lies of my French and Russian colleagues is diplomacy, then I thank my stars I am not a diplomatist."[74]

The next installment of the prolonged saga of the Ethio-Sudanese frontier was the actual surveying of the tentative boundary line by two separate expeditions commanded by Majors H. H. Austin and C. W. Gwynn.[75] The latter

[74] Harrington to Sanderson (priv. let.), AA, May 1, 1900, FO 1/37.

[75] Gwynn was an officer in the Royal Engineers with African experience in Sierre Leone, Kordofa, and Darfur (where he had done survey work). Hughes Le Roux, Ménélik et nous (Paris, N.D. [1902?]), pp. 295-96. Austin was second in command of the MacDonald Expedition. He reconnoitered Lake Rudolf in July 1898. Sanderson, Upper Nile, pp. 257-58.

started from Roseires on the Blue Nile and worked north. Austin planned to carry the survey of the frontier from Nasir down to Lake Rudolf, but instead spent most of his time in the Gore area. Both expeditions ran into difficulties at Omdurman; they were delayed because all available steamers were engaged in the final campaign against remaining Mahdist resistance. The time lost was crucial. When steamers finally became available, the Nile was too low for them to be of much use. Rather than steaming up the Blue Nile, Gwynn had to travel by shallow draft sailboats. Austin was even less fortunate. He had planned to steam from Omdurman all the way down the White Nile and Sobat Rivers, but the low Nile meant his party had to march from the confluence of the Sobat and the Nile to Nasir. In the end, Austin's journey south from Nasir to Lake Rudolf was cancelled because Sudanese authorities proved unable to penetrate the Sudd to provision his base on the Sobat for the return trip from the lake.[76]

Gwynn's survey went as planned, but Austin's continued to be plagued with bad luck. He had set out for the Ethiopian town of Gore, where he hoped to procure supplies and transport. Once there Austin complained of obstruction by local Ethiopian authorities. Sick with fever and sunstroke, Austin doubted he could carry on any survey at all.

[76]Talbot to Intelligence Division, n.d., enclosed in Intell. Div. to F.O. (let.), London, Jan. 25, 1900, FO 403/297.

Harrington begged him to continue if at all possible and petitioned Menilek to pave the way.[77] Ethiopian obstruction in this case was not directed from Addis Ababa, but rather resulted from the insubordination of the emperor's border officials. Kanyasmach Walda Gabriel, Ras Tassama's second in command and then acting-Governor of Gore, was brought to the Ethiopian capital and, in the presence of the British agent, publicly flogged in the market place for disobeying Menilek's orders and harassing Austin's expedition. As an example to others, the Kanyasmach was paraded in chains along the frontier. Harrington approved whole-heartedly of the spectacle, adding that "this public punishment of an Abyssinian officer of rank will have a salutary effect on the behaviour of Abyssinian officials in future towards Englishmen."[78] Notwithstanding the scars on the unfortunate Ethiopian's back, Austin's expedition failed to survey much of the proposed frontier assigned to him, and thus in the concluding negotiations Harrington was not well informed on the geography of the southern part of the Ethio-Sudan frontier.

While the survey parties were still in the field, Cromer and the Foreign Office prepared Harrington's instructions

[77]Harrington to Salisbury (let.), AA, April 1, 1900 and Harrington to Cromer (let.), AA, April 9, 1900, FO 403/298.

[78]Harrington to Salisbury (let.), AA, May 14, 1900, FO 403/299.

and authorization for final settlement of the western frontier. He would work upon the basis of Gwynn's and Austin's survey of the tentative line of May 1899, but would have power to accept Ethiopian proposals provided London obtained four objectives in the final settlement: (1) a line suitable for a chain of posts from the Sobat to the Blue Nile; (2) free navigation of the Sobat and the Blue Nile and their tributaries; (3) right of way to construct a railway from Uganda to the Sudan through Ethiopia; (4) and an agreement that Ethiopia would not interfere with the waters of the Blue Nile and, most particularly, Lake Tana, main source of the mighty river.[79]

The most important British objective was to guarantee the Ethiopian Nile sources and affluents, which flowed north to fertilize and provide irrigation for Egypt. In the high season, the Blue Nile and its main source, Lake Tana, provided almost 70 percent of the average discharge of the Nile. Late nineteenth-century hydrologists had realized the importance of the moderate contribution of the White Nile in the low season, when the Blue Nile was not in flood. Repairs to the Delta Barrage in 1890 raised the low season level of the Nile enough to provide permanent gravity irrigation for the Delta. More water meant increased cultivation, and, by 1895, new cotton and sugar plantations once again caused a water

[79] Salisbury to Harrington (let.), London, Sept. 29, 1900, FO 403/299; Memorandum by Harrington with revisions by Cromer, Cairo, N.D., FO 1/44.

shortage in the low season. Plans for the dam at Aswan were prepared, and some engineers believed that the Blue Nile represented a better irrigation source than the White Nile's modest discharge.[80] Russel Aitken, an experienced hydrologist, believed that, by itself, the Aswan Dam would not meet Egypt's growing demand for water. He therefore proposed raising the level of Lake Tana and turning it into a gigantic reservoir capable of fulfilling the needs of both Egypt and the Sudan.[81]

The Foreign Office rejected Aitken's overtures, and actively discouraged him from placing his proposals before Menilek.[82] Furthermore, both Salisbury and the Egyptian government impressed upon Harrington the necessity for Egyptian control over any modifications in the flow of the Blue Nile, either by a private company based in Ethiopia or by the Ethiopian government itself. The British prime minister was willing to authorize Harrington to offer Ethiopia a moderate territorial concession to assure security of the Blue Nile sources.[83]

[80] Sanderson, Upper Nile, pp. 9-11. For the hydrology of the Nile see H. E. Hurst, The Nile (London, 1953).

[81] Messrs. Bell to F.O. (let.), London, October 18, 1901, FO 403/313.

[82] Lansdowne to Keyser (tel.), London, Oct. 25, 1901, FO 403/313.

[83] Salisbury to Rodd (tel.), London, July 31, 1900, FO 403/299; Boutros Pasha to Cromer (let.), Cairo, Oct. 17, 1900, FO 403/299.

Harrington returned to Addis Ababa in November 1900 with official authorization to settle the frontier, specific objectives for the final negotiations, and the detailed results of Gwynn's and Austin's surveys. Early in the next year, he reported that he had officially informed Menilek of British acceptance of the draft agreement of 1899 as the basis of the frontier. Menilek was prepared to negotiate in good faith notwithstanding the repeated warnings from Lagarde that the frontier discussions were a blind to occupy the Lion of Judah's attention until the British lion recovered from its South African wounds. To obtain the agreement of London, Cairo, Khartum and Addis Ababa had been extraordinarily difficult. Harrington hoped there would be no more delay on the British side. Menilek did not have unlimited patience and unlimited resistance to the intrigues of London's rivals.[84]

Harrington and Menilek set about arranging the details of the Ethio-Sudanese frontier. The death of Queen Victoria in late January 1901 occasioned an urgent dispatch from Harrington inquiring whether he could sign the frontier treaty with the full powers given to him by the late Queen or await new authorization from Edward VII.[85] On the brink of

[84] Harrington to Lansdowne (let.), AA, Jan. 12, 1901, FO 403/312; Harrington to Sanderson (let.), Jan. 12, 1901, FO 1/45.

[85] Harrington to Lansdowne via Cromer (tel.), AA, Feb. 12, 1901, FO 403/312.

finishing the job Rodd had set out to do almost five years before, Harrington wanted no last minute problems or delay. Then a telegram arrived in Cairo from Harrington in Addis Ababa:

> I regret to report that the negotiations over the Sudan frontier have been brought to a standstill by the action of the Italian Agent here. The Treaty had been agreed to, and was only awaiting signature when he proferred a request to King Menelek to leave the boundary line between Gallabat and Todluc unsettled until Great Britain and Italy had settled the delimitation of their Sudan-Erythrean border. King Menelek proposed we should start our frontier from Tomat, leaving the delimitation to the south of Tomat-Todluc in suspense until it is settled whether the present Italian territory to the north of the Tomat-Todluc line remains Italian or not. I have refused absolutely . . . to entertain this, and replied that this question is for settlement between /the British/ and the Italian Government[s].

Harrington was livid. Notwithstanding the documentary proof of the Italian acceptance of modifications of the 1891 Protocol frontier, Ciccodicola, Harrington's friend and ally in Ethiopia, refused to withdraw his protest. "The action," Harrington continued, "is a decidedly unfriendly one, intended to magnify the prestige of the Italians at our expense." Conclusion of the long awaited Ethio-Sudanese Frontier Treaty would be "postponed indefinitely."[86]

Ciccodicola was not deliberately attempting to sabotage his British colleague's work and influence, as Harrington charged in the heat of the moment. The Italian Foreign

[86]Harrington to Lansdowne via Rodd (tel.), AA, Mar. 30, 1901, FO 403/312.

Ministry never officially informed their agent of the Visconti-Venosta's changes in the frontier. Ciccodicola was sent only a private letter which allegedly went astray.[87] Harrington realized that his friend and colleague was not to blame. Only after he made his protest did Ciccodicola hear of the 1899 arrangements at Rome.[88]

Even before Ciccodicola's protest in Addis Ababa, the Italian Foreign Office had charged that Harrington's frontier proposals to Menilek differed from the line of the sketch map which had served as the basis of the 1899 understanding. According to Rome, Harrington had deflected the Ethio-Sudanese frontier running south-southwest from Todluk towards the east. As a result the line no longer crossed the Setit near Ombrega, but rather at the confluence of the Setit and Maieteb Rivers. Although Eritrean territory was not involved, the Italians claimed that Harrington's deflection meant that most of the Cunana country, where the trade routes from southern Ethiopia and the natural lines of communication along the Setit River crisscrossed, became Sudanese territory. Italy wanted the direct lines of communication between Eritrea and Ethiopia to remain under

[87]Currie to Lansdowne (let.), Rome, April 10, 1901, FO 403/312.

[88]Harrington to Sanderson (priv. let.), AA, April 12, 1901, FO 1/39.

Ethiopian control.[89]

Both Cromer and Sir Reginald Wingate, now the governor-general of the Sudan, saw ulterior motives behind Rome's protest, and they laid the blame on the Governor Martini of Eritrea. According to Cromer, Martini never fully accepted the Anglo-Italian understanding of 1899. When Visconti-Venosta retired from office, the governor attempted to sabotage the Anglo-Ethiopian understanding by claiming that any modification of the line invalidated the agreement. According to British intelligence, Martini had opposed the earlier retrocession of Kassala because of political ambition. He now hoped to use the question of compensation for Italian cooperation in the final settlement of the Ethio-Sudanese boundary to further his career.[90]

Whatever Martini's part and motives in the Anglo-Italian difficulty, the murky situation became dramatically clearer when the British Intelligence Division discovered that the sketch map used in the 1899 negotiations had incorrectly placed Ombrega two miles west of the frontier on the Sudanese side, when the town was, in fact, located some twenty miles

[89] Memo. by the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Mar. 10, 1901, enclosed in Buchanan to Lansdowne (let.), Rome, Mar. 15, 1901, FO 1/45; Currie to Lansdowne (let.), Rome, April 17, 1901, FO 403/312.

[90] Talbot to Civil Secretary, Cairo (let.), Omdurman, May 6, 1900, enclosed in Cromer to Lansdowne (let.), Cairo, May 20, 1900, FO 1/44; Wingate to Cromer (tel.), Kassala, March 24, 1901, enclosed in Cromer to Lansdowne (let.), Cairo, March 30, 1901, FO 403/312.

west of its indicated position, well inside Sudanese territory.[91] Although the 1899 agreement was determined by longitude and latitude and not the position of Ombrega, the Italians claimed that the inaccurate placement of the town was the deciding factor in their acceptance of the British modifications of 1899. Most British authorities involved in the controversy doubted the sincerity of the Italian argument. Wingate and Lieutenant-Colonel Talbot, who had discussed earlier preliminary arrangements in Asmara with Martini, drew up a memorandum analyzing Italian motives on two broad planes: commercial and political. After decades of unrest arising from the Mahdia, the trade routes and the commercial potential of the disputed area were opening up. The Setit Valley offered an easy route for Ethiopian trade with Eritrea. So long as the area was not subject to Sudanese customs (that is, so long as it remained a part of Ethiopia), the bulk of the trade would fall to the Italian colony rather than the Sudan. Furthermore, Rome wished to enlarge Ethiopia's frontiers as much as possible, thus assuring a favorable position in the event of the break up of the Ethiopian Empire.[92]

[91]Forestier-Walker to F.O. (let.), London, April 12, 1901, FO 403/312; Lansdowne to Buchanan (let.), London, Aug. 29, 1901, FO 403/313.

[92]Cromer to Lansdowne (let.), Cairo, May 9, 1901, FO 403/312; Lansdowne to Buchanan (let.), London, Aug. 29, 1901, FO 403/313.

The Anglo-Italian imbroglio could benefit only the Ethiopians. Menilek wisely remained neutral and refused to sign the Ethio-Sudanese Frontier Treaty while Rome and London squabbled over the frontier. Harrington tried pressing the emperor with the bogus threat of a unilateral British declaration of the Sudan's eastern frontier; but Menilek was not easily bluffed. Harrington felt that the negus was "pleased with the delay" since he had begun to have second thoughts about the frontier.[93] The only course open to London, according to the British agent in Addis Ababa, was to come to terms with Rome even if it necessitated giving ground on the 1899 agreements. Ethiopia, and indirectly France and Russia, were the only benefactors of this Anglo-Italian split over a minor segment of the Ethio-Sudanese frontier.[94] Lansdowne agreed and wrote that the British government "believe it to be of great importance both for Italy and Great Britain that the Emperor Menilek should have no occasion to imagine that so small a matter . . . can give rise to any discordance between two Governments."

Lord Lansdowne, foreign secretary since 1900, decided to strike a bargain with the Italians: the frontier would start at the junction of the Setit and Maieteb Rivers, and then proceed westward, leaving the trade routes between

[93]Harrington to Lansdowne via Cromer (tel.), AA, May 1, 1901, FO 403/312.

[94]Harrington to Lansdowne via Cromer (tel.), AA, May 4, 1901, FO 403/312.

Ethiopia and Todluk within Ethiopian territory. Such an arrangement kept the Setit Valley territory of the Hamrans, loyal subjects of the Khedive during the Mahdia, entirely within the Sudan. The quid pro quo was an Italian promise to do nothing to diminish the seasonal flood waters of the Gash River, thus insuring an adequate water supply for Kassala's irrigation.[95]

In July 1901, the Italians accepted this compromise, but then shifted to a new issue. London had hoped to settle the question of the rectangle of disputed territory which jutted out into the Sudan just south of Kassala. The southern side of the rectangle was the Tomat-Todluk line, the northern a line from the Atbara River at 14 degrees 52 minute North to the Gash River at approximately 15 degree 12 minute North. The Atbara formed the western side of the quadrilateral, and the Gash the eastern boundary. In 1899, both Harrington and Salisbury feared that this arid quadrilateral might prove a bone of contention. Three years later, Lansdowne tried to head off any controversy by joining the question of its ownership with the compromise over the Ethio-Sudanese frontier. But the Italians refused to combine the two questions; they justified their action with the excuse that they had promised the Ethiopian government they would not cede the territory within the quadrilateral

[95] Lansdowne to Buchanan (let.), London, Aug. 29, 1901, FO 403/313.

to any other power.[96]

The rectangle between the Atbara and the Gash was a matter for Sudanese-Eritrean relations; but Lansdowne realized the only exit from the territorial disputes was direct negotiation. Hence, Rodd, Captain Count Gleichen, and Harrington travelled to Rome in November 1901 to confer with Martini, Ciccodicola, and representatives of the Italian Foreign Ministry.[97] The waters of the Gash River were the bargaining counter of the Italians. The Gash was dry or in pools for nine months and in flood for the other three months of the year; therefore the only way to use the river was to dam the flood waters. In Rodd's opinion, construction of a dam in such a remote area was beyond the resources of the Eritrean government. While the British negotiators wished to include in their settlement a prohibition on diminishing the flow of the Gash, they were not willing to pay an exorbitant price for it.[98] Martini, the head of the Italian delegation, frankly admitted that the disputed quadrilateral was worthless (not quite so, it included limited arable land), but he confessed that Tomat had become a

[96]Buchanan to Lansdowne (let.), Rome, July 6, 1901, FO 1/45.

[97]Currie to Lansdowne (tel.), Rome, Oct. 29, 1901, and Lansdowne to Currie (let.), London, Nov. 9, 1901, FO 403/313.

[98]Rodd to Lansdowne (let.), Cairo, Oct. 18, 1901 with minutes by Cromer and Lansdowne, FO 1/46.

"fetish to Italian politicians and journalists." The governor foresaw political difficulties if the entire quadrilateral was surrendered to the British without adequate compensation. London's delegates countered this plea with their own minimum objectives: preservation of the Hamran Arab's territory and a workable frontier. By November 20, the two sides had reached a general agreement. Prior to the conference, the British had agreed in principle to deflect the Ethio-Sudanese frontier westwards; thus incorporating into Ethiopia some existing and potential trade routes between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The two sides compromised on their remaining important difference, the quadrilateral. They split the rectangle by drawing a line from Sabderat to Abu Gamal, just south of the Gash, and then on to the Khor Um Hagar on the Setit. Eritrea ceded the rectangle west of this line and north of the Tomat-Todluk line to the Sudan and retained a rough triangle of territory north of the Tomat-Todluk line between the Gash and the compromise line. To the south of the line, the Ethio-Sudanese frontier ran west as Lansdowne had promised prior to the Rome conference. The Italians obtained an all-Ethiopian trade route between the extreme western part of their colony and Gonder and the rest of southern Ethiopia. The British preserved the main territory of the Hamrans.[99]

[99] Currie to Lansdowne (let.), Rome, Nov. 20, 1901, FO 403/313 with enclosures.

The neutrality of the Ethiopian government in this difficulty defused local Anglo-Italian tension. Although Italian and Ethiopian interests coincided in the frontier south of the Setit River, the emperor remained aloof from direct intervention in the controversy. As a bonus for this caution, Addis Ababa obtained a minor improvement in its frontier with the Sudan. Italian intervention in the settlement of the Ethio-Sudanese frontier created temporary ill-feeling between Harrington and Ciccodicola; but the Anglo-Italian understanding to work together for mutual diplomatic interests remained a basic premise in northeast Africa.

After the Rome conference, Harrington had seemingly passed the last hurdle to settlement of the Ethio-Sudan frontier. The line itself had been agreed to in principle almost three years before; all that remained was to negotiate, as instructed by Cromer, an Anglo-Ethiopian convention governing the waters of the Blue Nile and Lake Tana. In early March 1902, Harrington obtained a tentative promise from the emperor that there would be no interference with the waters of the Blue Nile and Lake Tana without consultation of Great Britain and the Sudan, and that in granting any future concession, Ethiopia would give preference to either the governments of the Sudan, Great Britain, or their subjects.

But Menilek and his advisors had read an Anglo-Egyptian official report on the possibilities of damming Lake Tana as a reservoir for water needs of Egypt and the Sudan, and had

learned of Russel-Aitken's offer to Ethiopia of £100,000 a year for the use of Tana. Menilek realized he might be giving up a valuable national asset without proper compensation.[100] Ilg believed that the Tana guarantee, as proposed by Harrington, enabled London to fix its own terms for any future concession of the waters of the Blue Nile. Harrington agreed that such an arrangement would be "sharp practice." Without any specific authority, Harrington promised that if the reservoir scheme proved possible, London would match Russel-Aitken's price. Then Harrington broke the bad news to Cairo about Russel-Aitken's "damned" offer of £100,000, which was going to make "considerable trouble" and force Egypt . . . to take it [the Tana concession] in hand perhaps sooner than is cared for. . . ."[101] Unfortunately for Harrington, more than just the Tana concession was in jeopardy; within a month he believed the Ethio-Sudanese frontier to be further from settlement than it had been for years.

Harrington had good reason to suspect that Lagarde was urging the negus to take advantage of the drawn-out Transvaal War to "flout" the 1899 tentative agreement and "to squeeze" Great Britain on the Sudan frontier. In an audience in late March, the British agent advised the emperor to "ask

[100]Harrington to Menilek (let.), AA, March 18, 1902, enclosed in Harrington to Lansdowne via Cromer (let.), Addis Ababa, March 20, 1902, FO 1/40.

[101]Harrington to Boyle (priv. let.), AA, Mar. 27, 1902, FO 1/40.

the suggesters why they did not act themselves." Harrington provided the answer: because they were afraid of the Royal Navy, which could prevent any of Great Britain's European rivals from moving a single soldier by sea. If Menilek desired proof of Britain's naval might, he need only ask Ras Makonnen, Ethiopia's representative at Edward VII's coronation, to count the ships at the naval review. Harrington next explained his nation's policy in Ethiopia:

> We wished to keep Abyssinia independent if we could, as it was in our interest to do so, we had quite enough on our hands without his country. . . . We do not want Abyssinia to fall into the hands of a hostile power, which would be extremely undesirable from our point of view.

Harrington understood Menilek's suspicions, but he hoped that after five years of permanent diplomatic relations, the emperor would realize that London's policy was "clean and above board," with no designs beyond an equal chance in the economic development of Ethiopia. The negus replied, "Yes, we have a long frontier together." Harrington included a final salvo in his plea for settlement of the Ethio-Sudanese frontier. He told the emperor that during his audience with Edward VII at Balmoral on Anglo-Ethiopian affairs he had to admit to the British monarch that Menilek was still unconvinced of British friendship. Edward asked Harrington what proof the emperor needed to be convinced. The proof, replied Harrington, was the Ethio-Sudanese frontier agreement which left Ethiopia in control of Bani Shangul and a shareholder in Gallabat.[102]

[102] Ibid.

Despite Harrington's indirect appeal to the emperor from his British fellow monarch, the sincere appraisal of the motives of Great Britain in Ethiopia, and a few rattles of the saber, Menilek still attempted to take advantage of British difficulties by demanding major modifications in the frontier at the last moment. In late April, Harrington showed the negus the results of Gwynn's preliminary survey of the frontier and explained the changes and the agreements reached at the Rome conference. The emperor promised to study the proposed boundary. Shortly after the interview, Ilg sent Harrington an Amharic version of the Treaty which, fumed Harrington, "knocked practically everything agreed on up to date into a cocked hat." The document included:

> To start with a complete alteration of the frontier south of Melile to his advantage; a clause about Tsana and the Blue Nile which absolutely knocks the bottom out of the exchange of notes on this subject; and to crown all a clause that the treaty was to hold good for ten years and could be terminated by six months notice being given by either side.

Such a move was too much for Harrington; he replied that he was unable to accept the proposed amendments. In a private letter, Harrington revealed his true feelings:

> I must admit that we have such a slippery customer to deal with, that if he does not settle the frontier within the next three or four days . . . we ought . . . to consider the question of delivering an ultimatum as to what we consider Egyptian territory, and thence settle the question once and for all.

Harrington believed that Ilg had inspired the new demands. The British agent expected some trouble over the Amharic version of the Treaty because Menilek had been wary

of the problems of translating Amharic into European languages ever since the Italians had played fast and loose with article seventeen of the Treaty of Wuchale of 1889. The Amharic version of the Ethio-Sudan Treaty included radical revisions. According to Harrington, Ilg resented British influence with the emperor in the Jibuti-Harar railway question and hoped to use the Sudan frontier as a means of discrediting the British agent.[103] Still, it is wrong to lay the blame entirely on Ilg for undoubtedly Menilek himself wished to make the best possible arrangement over the frontier. There had been a number of changes since the 1899 draft agreement. Kitchener had left for the Transvaal, and the Anglo-Egyptian military presence in the Sudan was much less threatening. With drawn-out troubles in South Africa, the British represented a lesser threat to Ethiopia in 1902 than in 1898-9. Ethiopia's control of the sources of the Blue Nile and right of way for a Uganda-Sudan railway constituted valuable bargaining counters. Menilek would not have been true to his country's national interests had he not tried to squeeze the British for a few more concessions.

Ilg tried to break the new deadlock over the frontier in early May when he offered separate agreements on each issue. Harrington refused and justified his action with the following argument: "I am absolutely convinced that if I

[103]Harrington to Boyle (priv. let.), AA, May 3, 1902, FO 1/40.

separate the frontier from the other questions . . . I may whistle till I am blue in the face before I get any further arrangements signed. [Then] My only chance . . . would be for the Anglo-Egyptian Government to pay several hundred thousand pounds for them." Harrington's policy was all or nothing. He predicted pessimistically that the odds against the frontier were 100 to 1. Despite his gloom, Harrington refused to reveal his concern about the frontier to Menilek. He let it be known that he was in no hurry to settle the question. Menilek should be free to deal with the more important railway question; London had waited five years for a frontier settlement, and more delay hardly made much difference.[104]

Within a week Harrington had two more discussions on the Ethio-Sudanese frontier. The second resulted in settlement of the question. After five long years, the two parties signed the treaty on the evening of May 15, 1902. How is this about-face of Ethiopian policy explained? First, Harrington's resolve not to consider any modifications played a part. Second, after suffering two years of harsh warfare, the remaining Boer guerillas began preliminary peace negotiations with Kitchener on April 10, 1902.[105] Addis Ababa, in contact with the rest of the world by Reuter's telegrams,

[104] Ibid.

[105] Magnus, Kitchener, pp. 176-81, 188; G. H. L. LeMay, British Supremacy in South Africa 1899-1907 (Oxford, 1965), pp. 130-41.

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must have been aware that the tide had turned in South Africa. Third, and perhaps most important, Menilek and his advisors no doubt realized that Paris's takeover of the Jibuti-Harar railway in February 1902 meant that French influence in Ethiopia might become predominant. What better way to dish French hopes than by resolving the major Anglo-Ethiopian difference? Since the proposed treaty permitted London to build the Uganda-Sudan railway through Ethiopia, Menilek announced to Paris that France did not have a monopoly on railway construction in Ethiopia.[106]

Once Ethiopia and Great Britain settled the Ethio-Sudanese frontier, the Anglo-Italian agreements of November 1901 were formally signed.[107] On October 28, 1902, Harrington and Ciccodicola presented Menilek with British and Italian ratification of the Ethio-Sudanese and the Eritrea-Sudan-Ethiopian Frontier Treaties.[108] The emperor ratified them. Subject to demarcation by Major G. W. Gwynn, the Ethio-Sudanese frontier finally was arranged.

The settlement of the Ethio-Sudanese frontier in 1902 was the first major achievement of Harrington's diplomatic career. He alone had negotiated with Menilek and his

[106] Marcus, "Ethio-British Negotiations Concerning the Western Border with Sudan," p. 94.

[107] Harrington to Lansdowne (let.), AA, May 16, 1902, Ethio-Sudan Frontier Treaty enclosed, FO 1/46.

[108] Harrington to Lansdowne (let.), AA, Nov. 3, 1902, FO 1/47.

advisors, and the boundary was his personal accomplishment. While higher authorities established the basic goals and perimeters of the negotiations, Harrington acted autonomously on the questions of timing and tactics. His judgment of Menilek's objectives and methods was instrumental in producing eventual success.

For Cairo and Khartum, the conclusion of the frontier marked the culmination of pacification of the Sudan after the Mahdia. The guarantee of the sources of the Nile, even at £100,000 a year, and the right of way for any future Cape-to-Cairo railway more than compensated for territorial concessions to Ethiopia. For Ethiopia, the frontier represented partial realization of Menilek's 1891 proclamation, especially Ethiopian control of gold-producing Bani Shangul and such strategically and commercially important centers such as Matamma. Generally, the emperor had succeeded in instituting a frontier policy following the highlands, controlling the sources of the major rivers, and including a buffer zone between Ethiopia and the Muslims of the Nile lowlands. The buffer zone concept was also an objective of the British who justified concessions to Ethiopia with the assurance that Ethiopian control would rest lightly in areas conceded to Menilek. The tedious and drawn-out negotiations between the sovereign empires resulted in a rational frontier which has stood the test of time. Compare the success of the Ethio-Sudanese frontier with the disputed boundary between the Somali Republic and Ethiopia,

the result of a few hectic days' work during Rodd's return journey from Addis Ababa. The Ethio-Sudanese frontier is one of the beneficial legacies of the period of European colonialism in northeast Africa.

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CHAPTER VI: THE LAST ANGLO-ETHIOPIAN FRONTIER, SETTLEMENT IN THE SOUTH, 1898-1907

After ratification of the Sudanese-Ethiopian frontier in the autumn of 1902, the only remaining unsettled Anglo-Ethiopian boundary was the sparsely-populated and little explored "international no-man's land" dividing southern Ethiopia from the British protectorates of Uganda and British East Africa (Kenya).[1] In one major respect, the southern frontier was the least important of London's and Addis Ababa's international boundaries; neither Ethiopia nor Great Britain believed vital interests were at stake. Although the demographic center of the Ethiopian empire had moved south during the 1890's and 1900's, the southern frontier included no such established Ethiopian interests as Bani Shangul, Matamma, or, on the Anglo-Egyptian side, the sources and affluents of the Blue Nile. Essentially, competition for disputed territory was a question of which empire, Ethiopian or British, was better able to make good its claims. When Addis Ababa and London officially concluded

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negotiations in 1906, the line forming their last international frontier was essentially a geographic distinction separating minimal administrations. Nevertheless, the Ethiopians had been far more successful than the British in profiting from a limited commitment in the arid expanses of the south.

The rugged nature of the disputed country defused much of the controversy of conflicting claims. It also meant that surveys were considerable undertakings. The first Anglo-Ethiopian attempt to map the area ended in fiasco, and later attempts were only partially successful. Further minor complications arose because the southern frontier concerned not only Addis Ababa, Whitehall and its two African protectorates, but also the Italian government by virtue of the 1891 Anglo-Italian Protocol and its presence at Lugh. On the other hand, negotiations mostly were carried on during an era of Anglo-Ethiopian understanding, rather than amid the mutual suspicion and hostility which dominated the initial years of negotiations over the western boundary.

There was still another peculiarity to the southern frontier. Until the turn of the century the main thrust of Ethiopian expansion in the extreme south came not directly from Menilek, but through the exploits of a Russian nobleman, Nicolai Stepanovitch Leontiev, "the only Russian buccaneer in the grand style in Africa." Count Leontiev (his title derived from his Ethiopian rank of dejazmach) was the most flamboyant example of the flotsam and jetsam of Europe

which turned up in Ethiopia at the end of the nineteenth century. Leontiev's family was old Russian nobility with good contacts at the imperial court. A sense of high adventure drew him to Ethiopia, where from 1895 to 1898, he was the unofficial Russian agent at the court of Menilek. Leontiev's "breezy friendliness," his lack of racial prejudice, and his naïve idealism made him a popular figure in Addis Ababa. He was for a time a close friend of the emperor, but the ambitious Leontiev had a penchant for intrigue and dubious business practices.[2] Ultimately this combination caused his downfall.

The Russian first crossed swords with the British in 1897, when he received from the emperor the title of "Governor General of the Equatorial Provinces of Ethiopia." On paper, Leontiev's province extended from the 6th degree to the 2nd degree north latitude between Lake Rudolph and the Juba River.[3] Not only did those claims include the international no-man's land between Ethiopia and British East African protectorates, but they also included a good part of Kenya and Uganda as defined by European agreements. In the summer of 1897, Leontiev joined forces with the "unofficial" mission of Prince Henri d'Orleans to Ethiopia, which enjoyed

[2] Jésman, The Russians in Ethiopia, pp. 110-14; Sanderson, Upper Nile, p. 302.

[3] Intelligence Division (hereafter I.D.) to F.O. (let.), London, Dec. 15, 1897, enclosing memo. by Capt. Count Gleichen, London, Dec. 15, 1897, FO 403/255; Sanderson, Upper Nile, p. 302.

the tacit support of the French Colonial Ministry. Leontiev supplied the Ethiopian contacts; Prince Henri's name attracted financial backers in Europe to develop the area. The Pavillon de Flores and French colonialists in general saw Leontiev's province as a potential "buffer zone" to protect Marchand's southern flank and a block to British Cape-to-Cairo aspirations.[4] Menilek's reason for offering Leontiev the Equatorial Provinces had little to do with French expectations. By using European leaders and European capital, the emperor removed himself from direct conflict with British interests. Leontiev's expedition was an example of "secondary imperialism" which avoided the necessity of involving Ethiopian prestige in the less than vital south.[5]

When Harrington arrived in Addis Ababa in the spring of 1898, one of his tasks was to discover the location of Leontiev's province and the relationship between Menilek and the Russian. Both Menilek and Ilg initially allowed Harrington to believe that Leontiev's grant was only honorary. As late as June 1899, the negus assured Harrington that the Russian's province was near Walamo, and the count therefore would be separated from the undefined southern frontier by Ethiopian administrations.[6]

[4]Goschen to Salisbury (let.), St. Petersburg, Nov. 17, FO 403/255; Sanderson, Upper Nile, pp. 302-03.

[5]Jésman, Russians in Ethiopia, p. 119; Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., p. 334.

[6]Harrington to Cromer (let.), AA, April 15, 1899 and Harrington to Salisbury via Cromer (let.), AA, June 3, 1899, FO 1/36.

The British were not the only ones concerned about Leontiev. The French foreign minister, Gabriel Hanotaux, mistrusted him and prompted St. Petersburg to send an official envoy to Addis Ababa to counteract Leontiev's influence. Leontiev and Prince Henri nonetheless managed to gain financial backing in Paris for their expedition. The French Colonial Ministry provided 300 Senegalese riflemen from Jibuti for the mission, thus countering the opposition of the Quai d'Orsay; it had too much at stake in the Marchand expedition.[7] Menilek refused to provide a "single soldier or a sou" (Harrington's phrase), but he did lend the European adventurers some obsolete weapons.[8] The expedition was suspended in June 1898, when Leontiev was accidentally wounded in the leg during a demonstration of machine gun fire. Although the count's injuries became septic, the Russian minister at the Ethiopian capital refused him the services of the agency doctor. Menilek sent his personal physician, who patched up Leontiev enough to survive a journey to Paris for treatment.

In November 1898, Leontiev returned to the Ethiopian capital and set about resuscitating his fortunes. The count's major task was raising additional funds, since French and Russian capital had been withdrawn after his

[7] Sanderson, Upper Nile, p. 302.

[8] Harrington to Sanderson (priv. let.), SS Victoria, Port Said, Sept. 22, 1897, FO 1/35; Jésman, Russians in Ethiopia, pp. 118-19; Sanderson, Upper Nile, p. 303.

accident. Leontiev even went to the British, but eventually he obtained financial support in Brussels from one of Leopold's front-organizations.[9] Leontiev's finances were a tortuous tangle that defied understanding at the time. Harrington was more concerned that Menilek might grant Leontiev a province that included areas claimed by either Uganda or British East Africa. In December 1899, Harrington finally learned of the true location of the Russian's territory and lodged an unsuccessful protest with the emperor.[10]

While Harrington fretted in Addis Ababa, Leontiev's new expedition of several Europeans (most of whom were Russian soldiers on leave), a company of Senegalese riflemen, and, for a time, 2,000 Ethiopian troops under Dejazmach Tasamma, proceeded down the western side of Lake Rudolph, where it founded "Post Menelik."[11] Leontiev caused a minor incident by allowing his subordinates to remove British flags at Murle on the Omo River and at Nakua, west of the Omo and north of Rudolf. London considered both flags to be well within the British sphere of influence in East Africa.[12]

[9] Jésman, Russians in Ethiopia, p. 118; Sanderson, Upper Nile, pp. 303-04.

[10] Salisbury to Cromer (tel.), London, March 31, 1899; Cromer to Harrington (tel.), Cairo, April 1, 1899; Harrington to Salisbury via Cromer (let.), AA, Dec. 28, 1899, FO 1/36.

[11] Jésman, Russians in Ethiopia, p. 119. See map in N. S. Leontieff, "Exploration des provinces equatoriales d'Abyssinie," La Géographie, II (1900).

[12] Harrington to Salisbury via Cromer (let.), AA, Dec. 28, 1899, FO 1/36; Jésman, Russians in Ethiopia, pp. 122-23.

The War Office's Intelligence Division viewed the encroachments with alarm; in May 1899, Menilek proposed through Ilg a frontier from the Pibor River in the Sudan, skirting the northern end of Lake Rudolf and then proceeding due east to Dolo on the Juba River. At the time Harrington protested that this claim was irreconcilable with the 1890 Anglo-German agreement, and Ilg countered that Menilek's position rested on effective occupation. The Intelligence Division pointed out that, as Menilek's concessionaire, Leontiev was substantiating Ethiopia's claim to territory north and west of Lake Rudolf.[13] Harrington conveyed London's deep concern at Leontiev's action, but the emperor disassociated himself from the Russian's filibustering by merely claiming that the count had disobeyed his orders. To be on the safe side, Menilek informally promised to withdraw his claims to the greater part of the shores of Lake Rudolf. In return, Harrington vowed to support the emperor's frontier proposals made earlier in May 1899, not as British agent, but as a private citizen. Harrington later arranged to have an English sporting and exploring party, headed for Nasir by way of Lake Rudolf, replace the British colors.[14]

The course of events on the southern frontier placed Harrington in a difficult position. The Transvaal War and

[13]Harrington to Salisbury via Cromer (let.), AA, May 26, 1899, FO 1/36; I.D. to F.O. (let.), London, Dec. 21, 1899, FO 403/284.

[14]Harrington to Salisbury (let.), AA, June 3, 1899, FO 1/36.

the tedious negotiations for the Sudanese-Ethiopian boundary conspired to prevent either Cromer or Whitehall from considering opening a second front of border discussions. Salisbury summarized the British dilemma: "Although the proposal by Menelek /for a provisional southern frontier/ is not satisfactory, we have no means at present of enforcing our claims by effective occupation of the territory." The Uganda and British East Africa protectorates accumulated huge deficits (for 1899-1900 the Salisbury government had to ask the Treasury for a grant of £99,000 for British East Africa and one of over £240,000 for Uganda).[15] Given this grim financial picture, any effective occupation to counter Ethiopia from either of the two protectorate administrations was out of the question. Harrington had the unenviable task of protesting Ethiopian expansion on the southern frontier with words rather than with deeds.

Meanwhile, Leontiev claimed extravagant successes for his expedition: the establishment of strategic forts and posts and the recruitment and training of a local African force by the Senegalese riflemen.[16] Harrington's intelligence revealed a different picture. Upon his appointment as dejezmach, Leontiev recruited 500 Ethiopians, of whom 300

[15] Salisbury to Cromer (tel.), London, Oct. 18, 1899, FO 403/284; James Barber, Imperial Frontier, A study of the relations between the British and the Pastoral Tribes of North East Uganda (Nairobi, 1968), p. 15.

[16] The Times, Feb. 12, 1900 as quoted in I.D. to F.O. (let.), London, Feb. 13, 1900, FO 403/297.

either deserted with their arms and ammunition or were claimed as deserters by Ethiopian generals. With the remaining 200 Ethiopians and 150 Senegalese, Leontiev and his ragtag crew of Europeans set out for Lake Rudolf. Rumor in Addis Ababa held that Leontiev looted and dabbled in the slave trade. In every respect, Leontiev's rosy reports of the abundance of natural resources--especially ivory--and his assurances of the effectiveness of his administration were absolutely false. The Equatorial Provinces remained unadministered; the only ivory Leontiev managed to collect was bought at the Addis Ababa market at well above the going price. Yet notwithstanding the poor results of the venture, Leontiev's mere presence in the disputed territory bolstered Ethiopia's case.

Harrington believed, "with good supporting evidence," that all southern Ethiopian leaders, like the flamboyant Leontiev, had the emperor's permission to push as far south as they liked, and that this expansion would continue until Ethiopians came into contact with the posts of the British East Africa protectorates. In view of the Transvaal War and French influence in Ethiopia, Harrington agreed with Salisbury that London was in a weak position. Discussion of the boundary or of Leontiev would only present Menilek with the opportunity of raising the frontier issue when Great Britain was most vulnerable. Still, Harrington hoped to create dissension between the emperor and the count, and he set out

to do just that.[17]

Leontiev had mostly himself to blame for his eventual downfall. In July 1900, at a meeting with Sanderson in London, Leontiev professed his friendship for Great Britain and explained how, in the past, he had worked for British interests in Africa; had prevented Prince Henri d'Orleans from joining with Marchand at Fashoda; and, by rigidly adhering to Menilek's secret instructions, had refused to occupy territory claimed by Uganda and British East Africa. Next, the Russian requested London's support for an independent Equatorial state under his control in the event the death of Menilek and the break-up of the Ethiopian Empire. Sanderson took the offer lightly.[18] But two months later, Sir H. M. Stanley sent the head of the African Department of the Foreign Office, Sir Clement Hill, a letter warning against the possibility of Leontiev and the Equatorial Provinces becoming "another African trouble for England at no distant date." Stanley knew that Leontiev wished to cooperate and advocated either striking a bargain with the Russian to avoid encroachment upon British East African territory or else instituting effective occupation south of Rudolf by Uganda-Protectorate forces. If neither course were taken, Stanley foresaw the Uganda Railway at the mercy of the Ethiopians and

[17] Harrington to Salisbury (let.), AA, Feb. 9, 1900, FO 403/297.

[18] Memo. by Sanderson, London, July 7, 1900, FO 1/38.

communications with Uganda and Lake Victoria imperilled. The great explorer added ominously that such a state of affairs would occasion a "burst of indignation throughout England and the Government would suffer serious damage."[19]

While Sanderson and Salisbury correctly concluded that Stanley was "unduly alarmist," they nonetheless considered making a bargin with Leontiev. Sanderson doubted London had "the power to prevent C.[ount] L.[eontiev] getting funds, and disagreeable as it may be to have dealings with so thorough an adventurer, I rather doubt whether it may not be better to go so far as to say we shall be ready to give him moral support so long as a) he respects our frontiers b) his actions towards the natives are such as we can approve." Salisbury added that Harrington's opinion should be sought.[20]

Leontiev and Harrington met in Paris in October 1900, and their conversation followed the lines of the earlier Leontiev-Sanderson talk. The count admitted that he was ready to declare himself independent from Menilek, and he wished British support. If London's assistance was not forthcoming, Leontiev threatened "to go elsewhere." Harrington was well aware of the real situation. Leontiev's brutal escapades in the south had alienated many Ethiopians, including the powerful Ras Walda Giorgis of Kaffa. The

[19]Stanley to Hill (priv. let.), Pirbright, Surrey, Sept. 12, 1900, FO 1/38.

[20]Minutes by Sanderson and Salisbury, Sept. 19, 1900 to ibid.

Russian buccaneer was in danger of outliving his usefulness to Menilek, who began to rely upon more trustworthy Ethiopian leaders to extend his influence in the south. Realizing the weakness of Leontiev's position, Harrington advised against any understanding with him. Should Leontiev transport a boat to Rudolf, Harrington believed it essential that the British follow suit with their own steamer or establish a post on the lake. Harrington would try to convince Menilek to delay Leontiev so that Sir Harry Johnston, special commissioner for Uganda, could dispatch an expedition before Leontiev returned to Rudolf in force.[21]

Unfortunately for Harrington's plans, Johnston was currently preoccupied with civil reorganization of the essentially military administration of Uganda. Johnston believed the country at the southern end of Rudolf "worth preserving to British influence and control" because it might contain "considerable mineral wealth" and, because foreign rule on the western shore of Rudolf would threaten Uganda's trade and frontiers. Financial economy, however, precluded Uganda from supplying any money, and Johnston recommended that the Imperial Treasury fund the area's pacification. The exchequer refused, and Harrington's request for a British steamer on Lake Rudolf met a similar fate.[22]

[21]Harrington to Salisbury (let.), Paris, Oct. 1, 1900, FO 403/299; Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., p. 335.

[22]Johnston to Salisbury (let.), Entebbe, May 26, 1900, FO 403/299; Harrington to F.O. (let.), AA, May 25, 1901, with a minute by Lansdowne, FO 1/51.

Harrington also proposed alternative schemes for a successful defense or settlement of the frontier--arming Africans and organizing them into local defense forces under European supervision, offering to confirm Ethiopia's southern frontier in return for an extension of British Somaliland or a railway concession from Harar, or even offering to buy the emperor's claims. Each idea proved unacceptable to Salisbury and Sanderson. "I do not think . . . [Harrington's] plans for settlement are attractive," wrote Sanderson. "They all mean money and the Chanc.[ellor] of the Exch.[equer] is not likely to let us have any for the purpose. If we supply the natives with arms they are just as likely to use them against us as against the Abyssinians." Salisbury added that "the present" was "a bad time for settlement."[23] From London, then, Harrington could expect no aid in countering Ethiopian expansion to the south.

In June 1899, Harrington had promised informal support of Menilek's frontier proposals, but he received little encouragement from the men in Whitehall who were preoccupied with the Transvaal conflict. Menilek's tentative frontier arrangement faced outright opposition, however, from the administrators of British East Africa. Before retiring as commissioner of the protectorate, Sir Charles Hardinge submitted a series of caustic memoranda and dispatches on

[23]Minutes by Sanderson and Salisbury, March 27, 1900, to Harrington to Sanderson (priv. let.), AA, Feb. 17, 1900, FO 1/44.

Ethiopian claims in the south. In one the commissioner argued:

> Menelek's proposals are rather audacious. He shoves our northern frontier two parallels back, and annexes Lake Stephanie, Reshiat, and the whole or two-thirds of Boran. He talks of 'effective occupation'; but (a) he is not a party to the Berlin Conference, and (b) his effective occupation consists of the establishment of a few posts by raiding parties, who make no attempt at forming a settled or regular Government or administration, but simply pillage the tribes and steal cattle and slaves.

Hardinge had received an embassy from Aba Gada (literally "Father of War") Afalata, the head of the Boran Galla, requesting British protection against "the oppression and cruelties" of the Ethiopians. One Boran envoy expressed his leader's dilemma: "The Abyssinians have placed a rope round his [Afalata's] neck, and he begs the English Government to remove it . . . unless something is done . . . the Boran Galla as a people will be exterminated." Hardinge then reported that the legates fell to the ground and clutched his ankles, as instructed by their government, in an appeal to Queen Victoria. Impressed by such histrionics, Hardinge characterized British retention of most of the Borana territory as an "irreducible minimum."[24]

[24] Memo. by Hardinge, Penhurst, Kent, Oct. 20, 1899, FO 403/284; Hardinge to Salisbury (let.), Kismayu, May 6, 1900, FO 403/299. Charles Hardinge became permanent undersecretary of state for foreign affairs in 1905. He partly based his opposition to Ethiopian proposals on the reports of A. C. W. Jenner, Vice-Consul and Sub-Commissioner at Kismayu, who was later murdered by Ogaden Somalis in Nov. 1900.

Rodd must have found some value in Hardinge's memorandum because he suggested sending it on to Harrington in Addis Ababa "by a sure hand." If it went astray it would make unpleasant reading for Menilek. Rodd, however, tempered some of Hardinge's obvious sophistry. It was not Menilek's fault that Ethiopia was not a member of the Berlin Treaty. In 1884, Africans were hardly on the guest list for the conference. Still, Rodd believed that Harrington might well obtain Hardinge's main objective: Ethiopian recognition of Borana as British territory.[25]

Harrington was more vigorous than Rodd in his defense of Ethiopian claims. He wrote informally to Sanderson that Hardinge seemed to consider Menilek as "the ordinary squeezable petty African potentate," which he most assuredly was not. While Hardinge termed the emperor's claims as "audacious," Harrington maintained the negus justly could apply the same term to British claims. If London referred to the Anglo-German Agreement of 1890, Menilek could produce the 1891 Circular to the Powers. The use of effective occupation worked only to Ethiopia's benefit. From intelligence obtainable in Addis Ababa, Harrington now believed that Ethiopian occupation of much of the disputed territory was more extensive than had been originally thought. British presence was nonexistent. Ilg informed Harrington that Borana had been divided between the administrations of

[25]Memo. by Rodd, Naples, Nov. 21, 1899, FO 1/44.

Fitawari Habta Giorgis and Dejazmach Asfau Dargie. "I do not pretend that all the territory referred to can be said to be under what we call settled government, but it is at least under the control of the Abyssinians, and at their mercy," Harrington concluded.[26]

Later in 1900, Harrington submitted a memorandum by the American explorer, Dr. Donaldson Smith, which maintained that the Boran had accepted Ethiopian control without resistance and that they were prospering under Addis Ababa's indirect rule. While Ethiopian soldiers and their families were stationed in various Boran villages, Galla agents served as administrators. Donaldson Smith concluded that although the northerners had been cruel and severe in their initial occupation, once they had permanently subjugated an area, their rule was moderate and served the interests of colonized and colonizer alike. Such an appraisal was not a singular view. Major H. H. Austin, by no means overly sympathetic to Ethiopia, came to the same conclusion as to the nature of Ethiopian indirect rule.[27]

Harrington, therefore, was not sanguine about negotiating a frontier line giving London territory not under

[26] Harrington to Sanderson (priv. let.), AA, Feb. 17, 1900, enclosing separate memo. by Harrington, FO 1/44.

[27] Memo. by Donaldson-Smith, Geneva, Aug. 6, 1900, enclosed in Harrington to Salisbury (let.), London, Aug. 9, 1900, and Austin to Director of Surveys, Egyptian Army (let.), London, July 7, 1900, enclosed in Wingate to F.O. (let.), Khartum, Sept. 1, 1900, FO 403/299.

British occupation. He might induce the emperor to make minor concessions, but retention of all Borana was impossible. Menilek impressed upon the young diplomat the view that such a concession might incite a revolt of the powerful southern Ethiopian leaders, and eventually cause Ethio-British hostilities. Harrington conjured up the spectre of a British Adwa at the hands of the Ethiopian army, which he liberally assessed at well over 300,000 riflemen, 70 or 80 artillery units, and a large number of cavalry and spearmen. Believing Menilek's wily professions, he warned that "although Menelek himself is anxious for peace, and does not probably share the views of his army as to the result of a war with us, still . . . he may be forced by his Chiefs to fight if we press too much. . . . his ambition is to be known in history as the Monarch who extended the frontiers of Ethiopia beyond all former limits of the Empire." The settlement of the southern frontier on "somewhat liberal lines" would allay Ethiopian suspicion of Great Britain and diminish French and Russian influence in Addis Ababa. "Then," Harrington ended his letter, "British merchants and capitalists . . . would have every chance of obtaining the largest share of profits which may result from the commercial development of the country."[28]

Speaking for Salisbury, Sanderson assured Harrington that Whitehall never would insist on retaining Borana, since

[28]Harrington to Salisbury (let.), AA, Feb. 17, 1900, FO 403/297.

such a stance obviously would be a mistake. Sanderson felt that, for the time being, Whitehall could do little to assert its claims. It was an "elementary maxim" of diplomacy, he wrote, not to attempt too much at once. The war in South Africa was quite sufficient to keep London occupied.[29] Although London had no desire to rush a settlement of the southern frontier with Ethiopia, Menilek, who earlier agreed to a tentative conclusion over the Ethio-Sudanese boundary, wished to complete the regularization of all Ethiopian frontiers.

In May of 1900, the emperor queried Harrington about the southern boundary. The British agent remarked off the record that his government considered the Ethiopian proposals of May 1899 unsatisfactory. Menilek then offered to submit fresh proposals, and Harrington promised to lay them before the British government.[30] During a month-long series of sporadic discussions, Menilek, Ethiopian frontier officials, and Harrington worked toward a tentative frontier proposal. Any attempt by Harrington to obtain Borana enraged the emperor. Menilek pointed out that in 1899 he had withdrawn most of his claims to territory west of Lake Rudolf and also had made major concessions on the Sudan frontier. Harrington next attempted to arrange for a

[29] Sanderson to Harrington (let.), London, March 30, 1900, FO 1/44.

[30] Harrington to Salisbury (let.), AA, May 5, 1900, FO 403/298.

partition of Borana. The emperor considered the possibility if it included monetary compensation, but Fitawari Habta Giorgis successfully argued that Borana must be retained in its entirety if Ethiopian administration was to be effective. After heated exchanges and a demand by Harrington that Menilek request his resignation, the emperor offered new proposals which conceded considerable territory inhabited by non-Galla peoples.[31]

The proposed line began in the east, at the bend of the Ganale Doria River (a major modification from the 1899 line since it left the Liban to British East Africa); it proceeded south and then east on the Dawa River to Giacorsa. From there, it looped back west to Lake Stephanie so that the Karayu and Wadditu Galla remained subjects of Ethiopia. If the Tertale, who lived east of Stephanie, were a sub-clan of the Boran Galla they would remain under the authority of the British government; but if they were a sub-clan of the Waddítu or Karayu, they would fall under Ethiopian control. From the southern shore of Lake Stephanie the frontier proceeded due west to Rudolf, where if followed the shore to the Kibish River (Italian name, Sacchi), which defined the boundary up to the 6th degree of latitude. Harrington presented these proposals as Menilek's maximum concessions, worthy of

[31]Harrington to Salisbury (let.), Camp Burka, Ethiopia, June 19, 1900, FO 403/299.

serious consideration.[32]

Harrington's admonitions received a careful hearing. On September 29, 1900, Hardinge telegraphed that "from an East African point of view . . . we may accept King Menilek's proposals." Three weeks later, Johnston expressed the Uganda administration's approval of the frontier line.[33] The Foreign Office prepared official authorization for Harrington to conclude arrangements for the southern frontier: Menilek's proposed line was an acceptable minimum, but Harrington should try for a more favorable frontier.[34]

Final settlement of the Ethio-British East Africa frontier required adequate knowledge of the terrain. While in London during late summer of 1900, Harrington met with Major H. H. Austin, whose earlier survey expedition to Rudolf for the Ethio-Sudanese frontier had been frustrated by an abnormally low Nile. Austin estimated the cost of a southern survey starting from Rudolf and proceeding west--the most economical plan of attack--at £3,500 to 4,000. Harrington formally proposed quick action to stop Ethiopian expansion southward; to provide adequate maps from which to negotiate; and to forestall Ethiopian efforts to press the Tertale into

[32]Harrington to Salisbury (let.), Camp Lagaharden, Ethiopia, June 16, 1900, FO 403/299.

[33]Hardinge to F.O. (tel.), Zanzibar, Sept. 29, 1900 and Johnston to F.O. (tel.), Port Bell, Uganda, Nov. 19, 1900, FO 1/44.

[34]Salisbury to Harrington (let.), London, Oct. 8, 1900, FO 403/299.

saying they were a sub-clan of the Karayu or Wadditu and not a distinct clan of the Boran Galla. Harrington hoped the survey might find that Ethiopian occupation and influence was less than Menilek claimed. In that case, the British agent expected to negotiate a better line.[35]

The Foreign Office authorized Austin to proceed to Cairo to confer in person with Cromer, and with Harrington by mail. The survey party was to travel by steamer to Omdurman and then on to Nasir, where it would follow on foot the Pibor and Akobo Rivers, eventually arriving at Murle on the Omo River. At Murle, Austin's party would be joined by an Ethiopian boundary commission; together the two parties would work east from Rudolf according to Harrington's and Menilek's instructions.[36]

The survey expedition was a debacle; the Ethiopian contingent never arrived, and Austin lost 75 percent of his men while failing to map almost all of the Ethio-British East Africa frontier.[37] Austin's timing had been poor; he traversed a desolate and little-known territory too near to the rainy season and too far from harvest time, and, in any case,

[35]Harrington to Sanderson (let.), London, Oct. 11, 1900, FO 403/299.

[36]Lansdowne to Austin (let.), London, Nov. 16, 1900 and I.D. memo., London, N.D., FO 403/299.

[37]Austin to Lansdowne (let.), Lake Baringo, Uganda, Aug. 5, 1901, enclosed in Rodd to Lansdowne (let.), Cairo, Sept. 14, 1901, FO 1/45; Report of the South Abyssinian Survey Expedition enclosed in Austin to Lansdowne (let.), London, Nov. 30, 1901, FO 1/46.

during a famine. The almost unanimous hostility of indigenous people to the survey party defies easy explanation, although the hungry men of the Anglo-Sudanese expedition admittedly engaged in some raiding. The freebooting Leontiev expedition, which covered similar ground two years before, probably left a heritage of suspicion and hostility among local Africans. Finally, the failure to rendezvous with the Ethiopians seriously upset Austin's plans. In a broader context, the disaster meant that the frontier negotiations to be delayed until another attempt could be made to survey the disputed territory. With Leontiev still in the field and increased Ethiopian pressure in the south, the early conclusion of the southern frontier negotiations became impossible.

The failure of Austin's expedition magnified the importance of Leontiev's undertaking in the Rudolf area. In January 1901, the count landed almost 500 cases of rifles and 3,500 boxes of ammunition at Jibuti for transhipment to Ethiopia and presumably the Equatorial Provinces. The local Jibuti paper claimed Leontiev planned to lead another expedition, this time with a Russian lieutenant and nine non-commissioned officers. If the news was confirmed, Cromer argued that London rightfully could ask Ethiopia to ban the arms and ammunition, which could only be used for raiding or sold illegally in still-un-delimited regions. Cromer later speculated that Leontiev might well have conspired with Leopold himself to occupy territory west of Rudolf between

the 4th and 2nd parallels; and thus indirectly extending the Congo Free State's influence east of the White Nile.[38]

In Addis Ababa, Harrington protested the Russian adventurer's doings, but Menilek gave no satisfaction. Ilg soothingly assured Harrington that if the Russian or any member of his party strayed over the proposed boundary, Addis Ababa would consider such action as open revolt. The Swiss also told Harrington that the emperor was doing his utmost to limit Leontiev's arms shipments. Harrington warned Whitehall that it would be difficult to prove Leontiev had crossed the frontier since there was no British authority in the vicinity, and he reemphasized the need for a British steamer on Rudolf to keep track of Leontiev and document his border incursions.[39]

In early summer 1901, Leontiev's influence began to wane in Addis Ababa. Harrington wrote in June, just before his customary rainy-season leave, that the situation had changed and the count was "very much under a cloud for the moment." Still, Harrington remained anxious because, as he wrote, "the present tendency seems to be to allow Leontieff rope enough to hang himself with. It is rather annoying that the rope should be provided at our expense." Finally,

[38]Cromer to Lansdowne (let.), Cairo, Jan. 15, 1901; Cromer to Harrington (let.), Cairo, Jan. 14, 1901; and Cromer to Lansdowne (let.), Cairo, March 23, 1901, FO 403/312.

[39]Harrington to Lansdowne (let.), AA, May 24, 1901, FO 403/313.

the Russian adventurer suffered a serious rebuke. He was publicly judged and fined several thousand Maria Theresa dollars for having pillaged Fitawari Habta Giorgis's territory. Although he could not pay, Ras Walda Giorgis accused him of a similar crime.[40] The charges of these two powerful southern Ethiopian leaders seriously compromised the reckless Russian.

Leontiev's position grew even more tenuous when Menilek learned that he had borrowed Belgian money on the promise of extensive gold concessions. The speculators in Brussels realized they had been swindled and complained to Menilek. The emperor immediately advised Harrington that Leontiev's mineral concession lasted for five years, thereafter renewable, and that the count had no right to grant sub-concessions for mineral exploitation. The negus allowed Harrington to report these facts so that Leontiev would not bamboozle any more European investors. Menilek added privately that he intended to strip the Russian of his provinces, but would act gradually to avoid providing Leontiev with an excuse for the inevitable failure of his company.[41]

In May 1902, Leontiev's Equatorial Provinces scheme--that hotchpotch of financial flim-flammery and personal

[40] Harrington to Sanderson (priv. let.), AA, June 1, 1901, FO 1/51; Harrington to Lansdowne (let.), AA, June 1, 1901, FO 403/313.

[41] Harrington to Lansdowne (let.), enroute to London, July 6, 1901, FO 403/313.

political influence at the Gibbi--collapsed. Leontiev blamed his downfall on Harrington and his influence with the rases. Although the British agent had worked actively against the Russian, Leontiev really had only himself to blame. To raise money he had peddled worthless Ethiopian gold concessions throughout Europe. Addis Ababa sought to create a climate favorable for foreign investment capital on Ethiopian terms, and Leontiev's actions undermined this policy. The emperor sent letters to all European diplomats in Addis Ababa informing them that Leontiev's gold concessions were fraudulently given. Such illegality offered the negus an excuse to dismiss the troublesome count. After a personal interview with Menilek, Leontiev left for Jibuti, where he spent a melancholy winter. The next spring his dubious concessions were finally liquidated to the rude shock of his investors.[42]

In retrospect, Leontiev's filibustering takes on almost comic-opera proportions; yet, at the time the Russian presented a serious challenge, both real and potential, to British influence in East Africa. For a while, the Russian buccaneer proved a useful means of indirect Ethiopian expansion, but his brutal methods and flamboyant style were not

[42]Translation of Menilek to Harrington (let.), AA, May 8, 1902, enclosed in Harrington to Lansdowne (let.), AA, May 12, 1902, FO 403/322. Leontiev never returned to Ethiopia, although, after serving with distinction in Manchuria during the Russo-Japanese war, he tried unsuccessfully. Jésman, Russians in Ethiopia, pp. 123-25.

conducive to the serious development of Ethiopian administration. Despite his long personal friendship with the Russian, Menilek had to shunt Leontiev aside and hand over consolidation of all Ethiopian government on the southern frontier to surer and more loyal subordinates.

Having jettisoned Leontiev and contemporary European techniques, Menilek turned to a more traditional Ethiopian method of subjugating and maintaining order in the south: the exploitative neftenya-gabbar system. Under this scheme northern Ethiopian soldiers and their families remained in fortified villages, or katammas, at key strategic points in the conquered provinces. Beyond the settlements were smaller outposts scattered throughout the south and manned by Ethiopian "soldier-settlers," or neftenya as they came to be called, and their families. Under the system a number of peasant farmers, or gabbars, were assigned to each "soldier-settler," for whom they provided a moderate amount of agricultural produce and service. In this way Ethiopian indirect administration of conquered territory--not to be confused with the neftenya-gabbar system--benefitted from a scattered northern military presence able to control disorder and small-scale revolts and to aid the local administration. While the neftenya system allowed for a resettlement of the surplus northern population of Ethiopia, it also provided effective and self-supporting means of

colonizing the south.[43] British administration, with costly European district officers and financial dependence on customs revenues, head, or hut taxes, was simply uncompetitive with the neftenya-gabbar system.

Equally important for the southern frontier was Ethiopian federalism. While Addis Ababa constituted the administrative center of the empire, provincial and local officials were almost totally autonomous. The emperor offered advice and issued orders to his provincial subordinates, but in day to day administration and policy, there was broad scope for independent action, even against the will of Addis Ababa.[44] It was therefore in the interest of Ethiopian frontier officials to retain a "fluid" southern frontier; as Harrington later said, "delimitation will curtail the region in which they [southern officials] are now at liberty to engage in raids and elephant hunts." The British agent was plainly aware of the independence of the southern frontier officials, who "are so far from the capital that it is hard to control them." He argued that Ethiopians would "naturally raid" and hunt ivory where there was nothing to prevent it. Furthermore, without proof of Ethiopian raids across the proposed frontier, Harrington's complaints at the

[43] Harold G. Marcus, "Some Reflections on the Development of Government and Taxation in Southern Ethiopia Around the Turn of the Century," Paper delivered at the 4th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Rome, April 14, 1972, pp. 5-7.

[44] Ibid., p. 9.

Gibbi only made him look foolish.[45]

In late 1901, Harrington offered two makeshift plans for policing the southern frontier. The first involved cooperating with Addis Ababa to establish a small border patrol stationed on the frontier. It would gather information about border infractions and allow Harrington to fix the blame and to ask the emperor for punishment of the offenders. In a modified form this scheme was introduced in 1905. An alternative plan was the establishment of flag posts manned by local Africans on the British side of the line. London could provide limited arms and ammunition, perhaps even a travelling European inspector; in that way, at least the frontier would be defended. Harrington expected minor clashes and casualties, but suggested that both London and Addis Ababa not take them seriously. No matter which expedient Whitehall eventually chose, he had to learn more about the geography of the southern frontier before final settlement.

In order to survey the Ethio-British East Africa frontier, Harrington suggested using the enthusiasm and resources of the numerous British globe-trotters and sportsmen who flocked to Ethiopia. Two likely candidates, H. Z. Darrah and A. E. Butter, planned an expedition to Rudolf and the

[45] Harrington to Eyre Crowe (let.), London, Oct. 19, 1901, FO 1/39. Harrington to Gov. of Uganda, Aug. 15, 1907, Entebbe Archives 1/1906 as quoted in Barber, Imperial Frontier, pp. 45-46.

Nile. All London need do was provide a surveyor to accompany them in order to map the proposed frontier.[46] The Intelligence Division agreed and sent two non-commissioned officer-surveyors of the Royal Engineers, but bad luck plagued this proposed expedition. One of the British soldiers contracted a bad case of dysentery; both were judged by Harrington and Darrah as too inexperienced for the task expected of them. Harrington sent the surveyors back to Aden, much to the annoyance of the Intelligence Division. As it was, the Darrah-Butter expedition fell through. Even with 25 years experience in India, Darrah wilted before the rugged challenge of the country along the southern frontier. Instead, Darrah and Butter made a purely sporting expedition to Danakil and Somaliland. There was one bright spot however: Butter promised to have another try at a survey of the frontier completely at his own expense.[47]

The next time, Butter offered to pay for a proper surveyor. Lansdowne approved of the plan and turned the details of the expedition over to Harrington in Addis Ababa.[48] The British agent insisted upon men "of the right class"; he

[46]Harrington to Eyre Crowe (let.), AA, Oct. 19, 1901, FO 1/39.

[47]Harrington to Lansdowne (let.), AA, Dec. 22, 1901 and I.D. to F.O. (let.), London, Nov. 7, 1901, FO 1/39. I.D. to F.O. (let.), London, Jan. 25, 1902, FO 1/40; Harrington to Sanderson (let.), AA, March 4, 1902, FO 1/46.

[48]Sanderson to Harrington (tel.), London, July 23, 1902, FO 1/46.

recruited Captain P. Maud from the Royal Engineers to act as surveyor, the doctor of the British agency in Addis Ababa as a medical officer, and a Jemader (sergeant) of the 11th Bengal Lancers, with experience in both Ethiopia and Tibet, as the expedition's chief non-commissioned officer. John Baird, Harrington's assistant at the agency, also joined the expedition as liaison officer to the 100-plus official Ethiopian contingent representing the emperor and the Ethiopian provincial governments of Sidamo and Borana. In all, the expedition numbered about 200 members.[49]

Harrington issued instructions to the patron and leader of the expedition, A. E. Butter, similar to those given the Austin survey party of 1901: follow the line proposed by Menilek and settle the status of the Tertale. In this case, however, the expedition would leave from Addis Ababa and proceed east to Rudolf. Once at the lake, the expedition's leaders had to decide whether or not to attempt a survey of the country between Rudolf and Melile on the Akobo River. Harrington had a few words of general advice. The object of the expedition was to provide the Ethiopian and British governments with adequate information to arrange a frontier. A broad survey, moderately accurate, was more important than a more intensive one with a narrower sweep.

[49]Harrington to Sanderson (let.), AA, July 31, 1902, FO 1/46; Report by Capt. Maud of the Butter Expedition, Sept. 4, 1903, enclosed in Harrington to Lansdowne (let.), AA, Sept. 28, 1903, FO 403/334.

"Tribal limits" and geographical logic should be potential guiding principles. Harrington also ordered the expedition to take particular note of Ethiopian effective occupation and raiding limits.[50] With extensive instructions and preparations, the joint Anglo-Ethiopian survey expedition left the Ethiopian capital on November 6, 1902.

The Ethiopians were extremely helpful in arranging transportation and supplies, but according to the British members of the expedition, they attempted to force the frontier as far south as possible. Maud complained that the Ethiopians "roundly asserted" that any peoples encountered by the expedition were Boran, and thus subject to Addis Ababa. The limits of Borana, according to the Ethiopians, "extended eastwards up the Ganale River to Lugh . . . anywhere from ten to twenty marches south of wherever the expedition happened to be."

The expedition split several times in order to make a broader survey of the frontier line proposed in 1900. After assessing the limits of Borana, the expedition proceeded west and mapped the country between Lakes Stephanie and Rudolf up to the Omo River at the northern end of Lake Rudolf. Rather than continue as planned up the Kibish and Akobo Rivers to the Nile, the expedition next pushed south to Uganda and from there travelled comfortably to the

[50]Harrington to Lansdowne (let.), London, Aug. 28, 1902, FO 1/47.

Mombasa by the Uganda railway.[51]

In their reports the British members of the joint survey complained of Ethiopian obstruction: the only Boran Gallas they were allowed to interview were carefully rehearsed by the Ethiopians. In one area where Ethiopian claims rested only on sporadic raiding, the Ethiopians allegedly had built villages at strategic points. When the Anglo-Ethiopian main caravan arrived, the villages teemed with people. Upon the departure of the joint expedition, the villagers raced ahead to inhabit the next Ethiopian settlement on the itinerary. Notwithstanding these strategems, the gist of the reports of the members of the Butter party amounted to a unanimous conclusion: Ethiopian influence in the south did exceed the boundaries proposed by Menilek in 1900. Maud was most explicit in assessing Ethiopian effective occupation. Within the Dirre country at Arero, the Ethiopians had established a fortified stockade, garrisoned by 250 rifles. From this post or katamma, Ethiopian soldiers were thinly scattered throughout the rest of the south. Maud emphasized that these individual soldiers lived in isolation far from their headquarters, and such a

[51] Reports by Maud, Sept. 4, 1903 and by Baird, Sept. 28, 1903, enclosed in Harrington to Lansdowne (let.), London, Sept. 28, 1903, FO 403/334. At Rudolf, Maud and Butter had a quarrel over leadership of the expedition. Butter, who after all was paying the expenses, decided against sending Maud with a light expedition to the Nile. Instead, the entire British party retired via Uganda. Extracts from Butter's and Baird's letters, enclosed in Harrington to Lansdowne (let.), AA, Mar. 19, 1903, FO 1/47.

state of affairs was proof of effective occupation. The single post at Arero maintained order and prevented Boran internecine fighting in the Liban, Dirre, Tertale and part of Golbo.[52]

The results of the Maud-Butter survey dashed British hopes of including part of Borana within their sphere. The lineage of the Tertale made no difference, given Ethiopian effective occupation of the area. Hence, Maud advocated a new line considerably south of the 1900 proposals. Territory occupied by Ethiopia should go to Addis Ababa, while territory raided by Menilek's forces should go to British East Africa. For the area between Rudolf and the Ganale River, Maud suggested following the natural escarpment dividing the higher cattle country and the low plains. Harrington was despondent because Ethiopian influence extended far beyond Menilek's proposals of 1900. According to the British agent, when negotiations resumed the earlier agreements would not be worth "the paper they were written on." Harrington feared that the final settlement would arouse imperialist public opinion because of the "scandalous cession of British territory." But the only real alternative facing London was to save what was left of the British sphere by accepting Maud's recommendations as the basis of a frontier.[53]

[52]Report by Maud, Sept. 4, 1903, enclosed in Harrington to Lansdowne (let.), AA, Sept. 28, 1903, FO 403/334; Harrington to Sanderson (let.), AA, Mar. 19, 1903, FO 1/47.

[53]Harrington to Sanderson (let.), AA, March 19, 1903, FO 1/47.

In the year following the Butter expedition, the Foreign Office, the Intelligence Division, and the British East Africa administration confirmed Maud's and Harrington's opinion. Sir Charles Eliot, commissioner in British East Africa, gave powerful support to an immediate frontier settlement, even if it meant negotiating on Ethiopian terms. Eliot asked three questions: "What we [the British] want; what we can get; and what we may do with what we get." In answer to the first question, Eliot disclaimed "land hunger" and doubted that the disputed territory was worth the trouble of occupation. The commissioner, however, was not advocating inaction. He believed the Ethiopians "were not a stationary element, but are flowing southwards with a fairly rapid aggressive advance." London had to achieve in their arrangements some barrier to Ethiopian expansion--natural or negotiated.

Eliot next turned to the question of what concessions from Ethiopia London could achieve without force and concluded that they would be few, if any. While the loss of a protectorate over the Boran Galla would hurt British prestige, it was also a fait accompli. The Liban, the waterless and valueless territory in the east, was most useful as a bargaining counter in negotiations. Eliot endorsed the "Butter-Maud line" because it was a clear frontier defined by natural features, the escarpment dividing high country from the lower plains. Eliot agreed with Harrington's earlier conclusion that any attempt to procrastinate until

Menilek's death, in the hopes of taking advantage of the anticipated confusion, would be a tactical mistake. Menilek would live for at least ten years, and within that decade Ethiopian expansion would be extensive and perhaps even the cause of local hostility.

Finally, the commissioner dealt with British policy after settlement of the frontier. To rely solely on a paper frontier would be disastrous. The only alternative was effective protection of the frontier following the plan proposed by Maud; three posts garrisoned by 300 African troops and officers and visited by European inspectors. Eliot estimated the annual cost of the scheme at £6,000 and anticipated revenue, at best, only £3,000.[54] Lansdowne, who had assumed the post of Foreign Secretary in 1900, thought the price too high and asked the Intelligence Division for a less expensive alternative. The Division suggested reliance on Africans on the British side of a potential frontier and periodic visits by the Camel Corps from Kismayu.[55] Despite these alternative plans for protection of the frontier, the Foreign Office continued to procrastinate.

The disinclination of the Foreign Office establishment to take action on the southern frontier was dramatically emphasized in February 1903. Commissioner Hayes-Sadler of

[54] Eliot to Lansdowne (let.), Mombasa, July 17, 1903, FO 403/332; Barber, Imperial Frontier, pp. 48-49.

[55] I.D. to F.O. (let.), London, Dec. 8, 1903, FO 403/334.

Uganda telegraphed London that he had ordered a battalion of the King's African Rifles to occupy Manimani in Karamoja, north of Mount Elgon, to counter raiding in Turkana by a force of 450 Ethiopian soldiers. The Ethiopian troops were regulars under Fitawari Demtu, a subordinate of Ras Walda Giorgis, and were supposedly making good claims that Kaffa extended to Manimani. Despite the director of Intelligence's plea for a "firm stand," officials of the Foreign Office feared a local Anglo-Ethiopian clash and immediately vetoed troop movements to Manimani. Instead of an armed response from Uganda, the foreign secretary ordered Harrington to exert diplomatic pressure in Addis Ababa to prevent further "incursions."[56]

The Manimani incident was merely the culmination of what the British termed "Abyssinian Acts of Aggression" in East Africa. London insisted that it could not recognize claims to territory based on "encroachments made subsequently to the frontier survey." As the frontier was over 350 miles from Addis Ababa and given the autonomy of Ethiopian provincial leaders, the Intelligence Division concluded that only formal delimitation based on Maud's proposals and the establishment of an effective British presence would bring tranquillity to the Ethio-British East African

[56]Sadler to Lansdowne (tels. no. 18, 19), Entebbe, Feb. 15, 1904, Lansdowne to Sadler (tel.), London, Feb. 16, 1904, FO 1/54; Barber, Imperial Frontier, pp. 38-39.

frontier.[57] Sir Clement Hill, head of the African Department of the Foreign Office and the British civil servant most influential in directing East African policy, agreed. He suggested a formal proposal of the line as the frontier, first to Italy, and then to Ethiopia. Hill also revived Harrington's earlier suggestion of protection of the frontier by Ethiopian frontier guards paid and officered by the British.[58]

In April 1904, Sanderson sent Harrington official authorization to negotiate the southern frontier of Ethiopia on the basis of the Maud line. But first the Italians were to be consulted. He offered Harrington the choice of negotiations with them at the legation level in Addis Ababa or at the embassy level in Rome. Harrington chose to work through his Italian colleague in the Ethiopian capital, probably to avoid the kind of misunderstanding that had occurred over the Ethio-Sudan frontier.[59] Sanderson once again requested the minister plenipotentiary's (Harrington's new diplomatic rank) opinion on the best means of watching and protecting the frontier. The Foreign Office establishment

[57] Observations on the Present Position of the British East Africa-Abyssinian Boundary Question," with appendix A, memo. by General Staff, War Office, May 17, 1904, enclosed in I.D. to F.O. (let.), London, May 17, 1904, FO 403/342.

[58] Hill minute to Grierson to Sanderson (let.), London, Feb. 25, 1904, FO 1/54.

[59] Sanderson to Harrington (tel.), London, April 1, 1904 and Harrington to Sanderson (tel.), AA, May 16, 1904, FO 1/54.

was unable to decide on the best method; Sanderson called the impasse "a very serious problem"; the permanent undersecretary sponsored the use of the Boran Gallas on the British side backed up by eventual patrols by the Camel Corps from Kismayu. Hill disagreed, believing that such a plan would lead to costly military garrisons in Jubaland and reckless British officers who would continually request permission to mount punitive expeditions--the nightmare of the Treasury. Hill favored an Ethiopian frontier force led by English officers; they would keep the Ethiopians in line, and the cost would be less than partial occupation or periodic patrols from the British side. Lansdowne was dubious about Hill's suggestion; he expected "transgressions of the frontier and irregularities," which, if committed under the eyes of British officers, could not be overlooked. Lansdowne unenthusiastically fell back on the expedient of diplomatic protest in Addis Ababa, which he judged "better than involving ourselves on the spot."[60]

The initiative for constructive action on the still unsettled frontier came from Addis Ababa. In autumn 1905, Harrington reported that he had received intelligence of preparations for Ethiopian raids on British East Africa. He

[60]Minutes by Hill, Mar. 25, 1904, by Sanderson, Mar. 18, 1904, and by Lansdowne, Apr. 2, 1904, FO 1/54. The threat of punitive expeditions was foremost in the minds of the Foreign Office establishment because in 1904 the Office was directing a costly campaign against the so-called "Mad Mullah of Somaliland," Sayyid Muhammad 'Abdille Hassan.

suggested the appointment, with the approval of the emperor, of a travelling inspector for the preliminary frontier. Just such a man was available in Addis Ababa, Photius Zaphiro, a Greek ornithologist among other things, who knew the country and spoke both Amharic and Gallinya. Initially, Zaphiro could be paid £900 a year out of which he would recruit an Ethiopian officer and 12 well-armed soldiers. Harrington's scheme was inexpensive, and it did not rely upon British personnel; therefore it did not implicate British prestige. Lansdowne gave preliminary approval. Within a few days the Greek bird-watcher and his band of Ethiopians were en route south. Harrington presented the Foreign Office with a fait accompli while they were still fumbling over the details of his proposal.[61]

Harrington instructed Zaphiro to patrol the provisional line of 1900, to warn large expeditions which crossed the frontier that they would be punished by the emperor, and to turn back small raiding or elephant-hunting parties. The Greek was to report all incursions to the British legation

[61] Harrington to Lansdowne (tel.), AA, Nov. 28, 1905, FO 1/54; Harrington to Lansdowne (let.), AA, Nov. 30, 1905, 289 FO 371/2. Photius (Philip) Zaphiro was brought up in Cairo of middle-class parents and went to Harar at age twenty posing as a doctor. He had a varied career in that highland city, which included procuring passes for big game hunters and arranging and leading caravans. Given the post of frontier inspector, Zaphiro seemed to fulfill his position dutifully. He insisted upon flying the Union Jack at "Fort Harrington," near Moyale and inside Ethiopian territory, thus giving continual credence to local rumors that London was out to annex the country. Charles Chenvix, Trench, "Why a Greek? An East African Frontier in 1905," History Today, XV, 1 (1965), pp. 48-56.

in Addis Ababa.[62] The expanse of the harsh country and the pitifully small size of Zaphiro's border patrol seemed to doom the border commissioner to failure. Surprisingly enough, that was not the case. The Greek and his border patrol turned back numerous small raiding and elephant-hunting parties; in an eight-month period in 1907, Zaphiro confiscated £2,000 worth of ivory. Southern Ethiopian frontier officials complained bitterly of Zaphiro and temporarily caused his recall. In part, however, Zaphiro's success rested upon the cooperation and goodwill of Addis Ababa. Ethiopian expansion in the south had reached the natural boundaries and was "more or less complete." Menilek took advantage of Zaphiro's border patrol to rein in unruly frontier officials and to train future officers for the Ethiopian army.[63]

Zaphiro's border patrol was merely an expedient. The larger task of settlement and delimitation of the southern frontier remained unfinished. As was the case in the Ethio-Sudan frontier, the negotiations were not bilateral. Italian claims in the Lugh vicinity were contiguous with the approximate starting point of the frontier and, according to

[62] Harrington to Lansdowne (let.), AA, Nov. 30, 1905 /2897, FO 371/2; Barber, Imperial Frontier, pp. 50-51; G. H. Mungeam, British Rule in Kenya, 1895-1912 (Oxford, 1966), p. 167.

[63] Hohler to Grey, Nov. 15, June 3, 1907, Entebbe Archives 1/1906, as quoted in Barber, Imperial Frontier, p. 51; Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., p. 335, end note 71, p. 378.

diplomatic convention, London still recognized Italy's defunct protectorate over Ethiopia. For these two reasons, London had to consult Rome and keep the Italians informed of Anglo-Ethiopian negotiations.

Early in 1903, the Italians had requested British support for their plan to leave an open door for expansion into the hinterland of the Benadir coast and to obtain a sphere of commercial influence surrounding Lugh. Furthermore, the director of the Colonial Department of the Italian Foreign Ministry, Giacomo Agnesa, informed Rodd (recently named as first secretary of the British Embassy in Rome) that Italy considered the thalweg of the Dawa River, rather than the Ganale Daria, as proper boundary for the line of the 1891 protocol. Naturally, Rome was anxious that British negotiations with Ethiopia should not alter the 1891 line without its consent. In return for British support of Italian goals, Rome would help London in negotiations for the East Africa frontier with Ethiopia.[64]

Harrington viewed this proposal as tantamount to diplomatic blackmail. "The Italians," he fumed, "in demanding a quid pro quo for their non-opposition to the proposed southern frontier, seem to ignore the fact that our neutrality in the matter of a satisfactory settlement of the Benadir frontier has a value." The root of the problem, according to

[64] Rodd to Lansdowne (let.), Rome, Jan. 1, 1903 and memo. by Admiral Morin, Rome, May 30, 1903, enclosed in Bertie to Lansdowne (let.), Rome, FO 403/334.

the British plenipotentiary, lay in London's acceptance of Italian pretensions in northeast Africa. Harrington continued:

> I fully realize that British policy in Abyssinia must be regulated by the general situation, which may render it undesirable to break with the Italians here. But from the local point of view, we should be much better off without Italian co-operation. Italy . . . considers her position in this country should be analogous to that of France in Morocco, or England in Egypt; therefore Italian support is confined to helping us when we seem likely to advance the realization of this hope, and thwarting us in everything else. We are in fact to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for Italy, but not to keep them for ourselves.

Harrington concluded this condemnation with a prediction that he could obtain a satisfactory frontier in spite of Italian opposition.[65] He was not alone in his opposition to Rome. Both Count Gleichen, one of Cromer's subordinates in Cairo, and the Intelligence Division agreed that it would be inadvisable to support Rome at the cost of offending Addis Ababa. Ethiopia hardly would allow the Italians any real concessions around Lugh. The Intelligence Division maintained that London would gain little advantage by supporting "the extremely shadowy claims of Italy."[66]

In general, Anglo-Italian discussions over the southern frontier of Ethiopia were overshadowed by an Anglo-Italian

[65] Harrington to Lansdowne via Findlay (Cairo), (let.), AA, Sept. 26, 1903, FO 403/346.

[66] Note by Gleichen on Italian memo. of May 30, 1903, enclosed in Cromer to Lansdowne (let.), Cairo, June 20, 1903 and I.D. to F.O. (let.), London, July 15, 1903, FO 403/334.

campaign to prevent France from obtaining commercial predominance in Ethiopia through control of the Jibuti-Harar Railway. This diplomatic activity eventually resulted in the Tripartite Treaty of 1906. In December of 1903, Harrington (en route to Ethiopia) had stopped in Rome, where he joined Rodd in week-long discussions with Giacomo Agnesa on Anglo-Italian co-operation in Ethiopia, and mutual policy on the southern frontier was a minor concern of these talks. Initially, the Italian insisted that the Ethio-East African frontier should leave to Ethiopia all trade routes from Borana to Lugh. Rodd and Harrington rejected this out of hand, and the two sides thought it best to defer the frontier question until after the agreement for co-operation was complete. When the question was re-opened later in the week, the British delegates offered to recommend to London the Dawa River as a frontier, with the concession of free trade and transit in British territory for caravans to Lugh. Agnesa objected to this counter-proposal since his government wished to prevent any future British commercial rivalry in the Lugh area. While both Rodd and Harrington were loath to do so, they agreed tentatively to commit London not to establish a rival station in an area (to be later defined) north-west of Lugh. The British delegates justified this concession with two reasons: their instructions from Whitehall directed them "to have due regard for Italy's interests in the valley of the Juba," 2) and Harrington was anxious to settle Anglo-Italian differences before proceeding to the

Ethiopian capital to conclude negotiations of the southern frontier with the emperor. Rodd and Harrington combined freedom of trade with the Borana (really a bogus concession since it was already guaranteed to Italy under the Berlin and Brussels agreements) and the prohibition of a British commercial station in the Lugh vicinity as their final offer. Agnesa accepted.[67]

With a preliminary agreement with the Italians in his pocket, Harrington returned to Ethiopia in early 1904. There was not much of importance left to negotiate with Menilek. For the eastern part of the frontier, the Butter-Maud line was still generally acceptable to Ethiopia. In the west, the May 19 agreement among Rodd, Harrington and Agnesa, recognized the Dawa River as the southern frontier and thus acknowledged Ethiopian control of the Liban territory. Yet despite this general agreement, negotiations did not proceed smoothly. In August 1904, the Italian chargé in Addis Ababa, Count Colli, complained that Harrington had been negotiating the southern frontier without informing his Italian colleague. Lansdowne assumed Harrington had mentioned the frontier at the Gibbi, but checked with Addis Ababa. Harrington countered that he had only had two preliminary interviews on the issue with the emperor in August, that he had kept the Italians informed, but that Colli could

[67] Memo. by Rodd and memo. by British Delegates, enclosed in Bertie to Lansdowne (let.), Rome, Dec. 19, 1903, FO 403/334.

not resist meddling.[68] Almost a year later, Harrington reported that the state of the negotiations had deteriorated. Colli was still making trouble, and Menilek had put forward claims to territory down to the 2nd degree north latitude.[69]

The Italians remained suspicious of Anglo-Ethiopian negotiations. In April 1906, the Italian ambassador in London petitioned the Foreign Office for the full terms of the frontier convention and requested that it should be accompanied by a special agreement between Great Britain and Italy concerning free trade and restrictions on any British commercial activity around Lugh.[70] Such a request indicated the increasing Italian apprehension that London would abandon its policy of co-operation with Rome in Ethiopia. The Anglo-French Entente of 1904 and the growing anti-Germanism of the Foreign Office establishment aroused Italian fears.[71] While the entente hardly eliminated Anglo-French rivalry in Ethiopia, it lessened prospects for continuation of a united

[68] Memo. by Barrington, London, Aug. 18, 1904 with minute by Lansdowne, n.d.; Lansdowne to Harrington (tel.), London, Aug. 22, 1904; and Harrington to Lansdowne (tel.), AA, Aug. 28, 1904, FO 1/54.

[69] Harrington to Lansdowne (tel.), AA, April 2, 1905, FO 1/54.

[70] Memo. communicated by Tittoni to F.O., London, April 10, 1906 [12491?], FO 371/2.

[71] The entente and the growing anti-German feeling in the Foreign Office are extremely important developments in British diplomatic history. These issues will be treated in more detail in the next chapter. Two good summaries of these topics can be found in Zara S. Steiner, The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1898-1914 (Cambridge, 1969) and George Monger, The End of Isolation (London, 1963).

Anglo-Italian front to block French influence in the Ethiopian Empire and to obtain Rome's ends there.

The formation of the Liberal Government in December 1905 accelerated Great Britain's movement towards France and later Russia. Unlike Lansdowne, the Liberal foreign secretary, Sir Edward Grey, was not open to the possibility of a working agreement with Germany. Grey pushed Britain closer to the Dual Alliance, and away from the Triple Alliance of which Italy was nominally a member. Equally important in the realignment of British policy was the rise to positions of power and influence within the Foreign Office and diplomatic establishments of a group of men led by Sir Francis Bertie, ambassador in Paris, Eyre Crowe at the Foreign Office, and Charles Hardinge, permanent under-secretary of state after 1905. This clique drew support from Edward VII and was adamantly anti-German. They desired closer ties with France and were therefore unlikely to support Italy against France in Ethiopia.[72]

In a brief memorandum, Grey (actually Charles Hardinge, since he drafted most of Grey's correspondence) reminded the Italians that they had been continually informed of the state of negotiations for the frontier. Hardinge also pointed out that the expected settlement between London and Addis Ababa would leave Ethiopia with more territory than

[72] Steiner, Foreign Office, pp. 65-76, 86-94; Monger, End of Isolation, pp. 100-103.

the 1891 Protocol line; thus if Rome ever resurrected its protectorate over the Solomonic empire, it would not lose any territory. There could be no grounds for objection by Italy. As for the declaration of December 19, 1903, prohibiting commercial rivalry in areas of British East Africa near Lugh, Hardinge curtly stated that London could not restrict its liberty of action in its own territory. The Italians accepted this change, but hoped that as a "friendly power" Great Britain would assist Italy in securing freedom of trade for caravans from British East Africa. Such a request was unnecessary, according to the Foreign Office, since the Lugh vicinity was part of a "free trade zone" as defined by the General Acts of the Berlin and Brussels Conferences.[73]

Grey and Hardinge had freed Harrington from the yoke of Italian "co-operation" in negotiations for the southern frontier. He still faced a formidable adversary in the emperor and his southern frontier officials. Twice in 1906, Harrington presented a supposedly final frontier convention for Menilek's signature only to have the negus raise a new series of objections. After departing the Ethiopian capital in late 1906 for an extended leave, Harrington convinced both the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office to authorize his temporary replacement, George Clerk, to sign a frontier

[73] Memo. for Tittoni, April 12, 1906 /12491/; Tittoni to Grey (let.), London, Apr. 18, 1906 /13463/; and Grey to Tittoni (let.), London, May 20, 1906 /17031/, FO 371-2.

treaty embodying Menilek's modifications. Neither ministry had seen a copy of the treaty, but Harrington assured them it was still a good boundary. Included were grazing rights on either side of the frontier, as in the annex to 1897 Ethio-Somali Protectorate treaty, and the right to a potential lease from Ethiopia of a trading station at the mouth of the Omo River. Harrington noted that the southern rases opposed the treaty, which, he wryly suggested, was an argument in its favor. Finally, the British plenipotentiary reminded Whitehall that it had taken eight years to obtain a settlement. Failure to authorize Clerk to sign might mean a further delay of one or two years; and Menilek, according to Harrington, was becoming increasingly "crotchety" in his old age. Within four days Clerk had authorization to sign the treaty.

In May 1907, Clerk attempted unsuccessfully to obtain the emperor's signature to the treaty. He blamed his failure on "low-class European and Levantine hangers-on in the Ghibbeh," who played on the emperor's post-Wuchale suspicion of formal agreements, and on a strong party of Ethiopian advisors who were unwilling to see Ethiopia excluded from raiding in almost the last no-man's-land in East Africa. In a minute written in London, Harrington added his appraisal: "The whole difficulty with the Southern frontier is that the Boran are put-up by local Abyssinian chiefs who see [that] their raiding & elephant hunting grounds will be curtailed once the frontier is

settled."[74]

Clerk sent the Foreign Office a draft of the frontier treaty and a copy of a letter from Menilek to Fitawari Hapta Giorgis for communication to all the governor's officials. Menilek had presented a copy of the letter to Zaphiro, who in turn unofficially had passed it on to Clerk. Menilek's communication defined the frontier in exactly the same terms as the first article of the proposed treaty and warned his subjects not to cross the new frontier.[75] With this information, Clerk was confident of eventual success, but himself left the Ethiopian capital for London in late May 1907 and was replaced by Thomas B. Hohler, the second secretary in Addis Ababa since February 1907.[76] The number

[74]F.O. to Colonial Office (hereafter C.O.) (let.), London [2173], Jan. 19, 1907, based on a minute by Harrington, London, Jan. 18, 1907, and Grey to Clerk (tel.), London, Jan. 21, 1907, FO 371/190. George Russell Clerk was born in 1874 and educated at Eton and New College, Oxford (honors in classics). He passed the competitive examination and entered the Foreign Office as a clerk in 1898. In 1901, he moved to the diplomatic service and filled a number of ceremonial posts connected with the accession of Edward VII. In April 1903, he was sent to Addis Ababa as Harrington's assistant, and was in charge of the legation for nine months during 1903-4. In 1905 Clerk earned his allowance for knowledge of Amharic. From February to May 1907, he again took charge of the legation. He next returned to the Foreign Office. Clerk to Grey (let.), AA, May 15, 1907 [19070], with a minute by Harrington, London, July 27, 1907, FO 371/190.

[75]Translation of Menilek to Habta Giorgis (let.), AA, April 14, 1907 and Clerk to Menilek (let.), AA, May 14, 1907, enclosed in ibid.

[76]Thomas Beaumont Hohler was born in 1871 and, prior to arriving in Addis Ababa, he had held minor diplomatic posts in Turkey, Egypt, and Japan. A capable linguist, he arrived in the Ethiopian capital in Feb. 1907, and assisted Clerk. When Clerk left in May 1907, Hohler took over as chargé d'affaires until Harrington's return in December 1907.

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of different men in charge of representing Great Britain at the Court of Menilek is evidence that the essential work on the southern frontier was complete. It was a matter of waiting for the emperor to sign the treaty. By December 1907 the waiting was over. Menilek presented the treaty in essentially the form agreed upon, and Hohler attached his signature as British representative.

The Ethio-British East Africa Frontier Treaty was a simple document consisting of three articles and a map. Article I defined the frontier line and granted free access to grazing and water on either side of the line. The frontier began at the junction of the Ganale and Dawa Rivers and followed the Dawa River to Ursulli. From there, the frontier conformed to the "tribal limits" between the Boran and Gurre and proceeded on through the summits of a number of mountains to the lower tip of Lake Stephanie. From Stephanie, the line continued due west across the north end of Rudolf to the mouth of the Kibish (Italian name, Sacchi) River. The line followed the thalweg of the Kibish to latitude 5 degree 25 minutes North, where it jogged west and then north to join the Ethio-Sudan frontier. Article II made provision for a joint Anglo-Ethiopian Boundary Commission to delimit the actual frontier, with the power to make modifications. In the event of steam navigation on Rudolf, Article III granted the potential lease of a commercial station to Great Britain at the mouth of the Omo River. The station could not be used for military or political

purposes.[77]

The 1907 frontier agreement settled the last undefined border between Ethiopia and British imperial possessions in Africa. Again, the achievement was Harrington's; he managed to convince the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office, and the administrations of the two East African protectorates that recognition of an immediate boundary on Ethiopian terms was preferable to no agreed frontier at all. The extent of Ethiopian raiding, elephant-hunting, trading, and surprisingly efficient administration drove home this message. The treaty was not the total remedy; for the successful negotiation of the frontier and its delimitation by an Anglo-Ethiopian commission in 1909 proved only a partial solution to the problem of lawlessness and violence on the frontier. Harrington had earlier predicted that, without effective occupation by the British protectorate governments, Ethiopian control and influence in the south would increase despite the new international frontier. In 1909, the British East Africa administration, under its expansionist Governor, Sir Percy Girouard, established a series of posts to defend the northern frontier of British East Africa. West of Rudolf, the Uganda government refrained from any control of the ivory and arms trade which flourished in the first decade of the twentieth century. From Maji, near the Kibish River on a plateau six or seven days' march north of Rudolf,

[77]Draft treaty enclosed in Clerk to Grey (let.), AA, May 15, 1907 [1907?], FO 371/190.

Ethiopian traders and elephant hunters dominated the country west of Rudolf and the Omo (this area was at the time under Uganda administration, in 1914 part was transferred to the Sudan and in 1926 part to British East Africa). Only in 1911, when Uganda's cotton crop revenues erased the need for grants-in-aid from the imperial government, did the administration at Entebbe attempt to control the north. Uganda's inaction and limited response to the Ethiopian domination eventually resulted in local Anglo-Ethiopian hostilities--an outcome Harrington had also predicted. In 1918, the British sent an expedition to the Turkana country to eliminate Ethiopian control of the area. Following local Anglo-Ethiopian clashes, a second joint commission toured the frontier. The British finally held the balance of military power on the frontier and they insisted upon their liberal interpretation of the line agreed upon by Harrington and Menilek more than a decade earlier.[78] This unsatisfactory epilogue to Harrington's work on the southern frontier had its origins in a situation beyond his control. British officials in Uganda had ignored the warnings of the plenipotentiary in Addis Ababa of the dynamic nature of Ethiopian southern expansion.

[78]For a fuller subsequent history of the frontier see Barber, Imperial Frontier, pp. 51-52, 105-118, 170-189 and Harold G. Marcus, "A History of the Negotiations Concerning the Border Between Ethiopia and British East Africa," Jeffry Butler (ed.), Boston University Papers on Africa, vol. II (Boston, 1966), pp. 237-266.

CHAPTER VII: THE ETHIOPIAN RAILWAY IMBROGLIO, 1898-1904

Agreement on Anglo-Ethiopian frontiers and assurance of the security of Ethiopian sources of the Nile were the positive achievements of British imperial policy in Ethiopia during Harrington's years as representative at Addis Ababa. With the exception of the southern frontier, Harrington accomplished these goals during the first half of his diplomatic tour. For his last five years in Ethiopia, the British minister-plenipotentiary dealt primarily with the question of British prestige and influence within the Solomonic empire, especially in relation to London's major rival, France. As the major limitrophe power, Great Britain enjoyed a sustained minimum level of influence upon Ethiopian affairs. Beyond that low-water line, the influence and prestige of the British empire in the Ethiopian capital was, in part, a matter of Menilek's and his advisors' confidence in the British minister. As Harrington astutely perceived, the standing of a European imperial power within the Ethiopian empire was never simply a matter of absolute power or advantage. Rather, when Ethiopia felt threatened by one European nation, it balanced the scales by increasing the influence of a rival European state.

During his ten years in Ethiopia, Harrington sought to counter the perennial threat of "French political predominance" through control of the Jibuti-Diré Dawa railway. In 1898, he warned of the consequences of failure to break the planned French monopoly of rail communication within Ethiopia. Even after his final departure from Africa, Harrington was still cautioning London that control of the railway secured for Paris "a powerful lever in future Abyssinian affairs."[1]

In this campaign against French governmental dominance of the railway, Harrington expended most of his own personal influence with the emperor, with Cromer, and with the Foreign Office establishment. His dogged opposition earned Harrington the enmity of the Quai d'Orsay and of French colonial circles. More than once Paris complained that the British plenipotentiary in Addis Ababa was acting contrary to the spirit of the Anglo-French Entente of April 1904. Harrington's alarm over the railway became virtually an obsession and, try as he might, he could never realign his thinking to accommodate the Entente Cordiale. Thus, when Harrington left Ethiopia in 1908, he was without a future within the diplomatic corps. The anti-German faction which had gained ascendancy in the Foreign Office was glad to be

[1]Memo. by Harrington, Nov. 7, 1898, enclosed in Harrington to Salisbury (let.), AA, Nov. 7, 1898, FO 1/34. Memo. by Harrington, Dec. 6, 1908, enclosed in Harrington to Grey (let.), R.M.S. Lusitania at Queenstown, Dec. 6, 1908 [42773], FO 371/396.

rid of an embarrassment and a far from insignificant irritant to Anglo-French relations.

The railway was Harrington's bête noire; it also became a major diplomatic controversy. In 1894, Messrs. Ilg and Chefneux obtained a Ethiopian government concession to build a line from the French Somali Protectorate to Harar, Addis Ababa and on to the White Nile. After Adwa, the Imperial Ethiopian Railway Company was formed and registered in France and a contract was negotiated with a French construction firm. The new Company's task was immense: to develop Jibuti as a port and build a rail system in a rugged, mountainous country. Estimated costs were high, thirty million francs for the first 300 kilometres. Normally conservative French capital did not support such a speculative venture, and the railway company suffered from a chronic insufficiency of funds. On the advice of Ilg and Chefneux, Menilek invested a large but undetermined part of his war indemnity from the Italians. British capital also began to purchase the company's greatly discounted stocks and bonds.[2]

Even given the French company's financial difficulties, Harrington realized the dual threat the railway posed to British interests in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa: the

[2] Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., p. 353; Robert P. Skinner, Abyssinia Today (London, 1906), pp. 104-05; see also T. Lennox Gilmour, Abyssinia: The Ethiopia Railway and the Powers (London, 1906) and John B. Christopher, "Ethiopia, the Jibuti Railway and the Powers, 1899-1906" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1942) for fuller accounts of the railway problem.

ruin of Zeila's trade with southern Ethiopia (rail communication would make the Jibuti route quicker and cheaper than the caravan route to Zeila), and the rise of French economic and political dominance in the Ethiopian empire. Harrington used his post as vice-consul for Zeila to bombard his superiors with warnings of the dire consequences of the French railway. He proposed two alternative remedies: 1) London should support a British syndicate willing to negotiate another concession from Ethiopia and build a rival line from a British Somaliland port (Zeila was Harrington's preference) to Harar; or 2) an English company should buy out the French concession and thus free the way for construction of a branch line to Zeila.[3]

In August 1898, Salisbury requested Treasury support for a rival British branch line. Inspired by memoranda from Harrington and the consul at Aden, the prime minister-foreign secretary concluded that the railway would cause "serious injury . . . both politically and financially" to the British Somali Protectorate, which derived its revenues largely from customs duties on trade with southern Ethiopia. Thus, the British government would become saddled with a protectorate operating at a large deficit.[4] The Treasury recognized the

[3]Harrington to Ferris (priv. let.), Zeila, June 24, 1896, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./1228/38; Harrington to Ferris (let.), Zeila, Nov. 10, 1898, ARR, R/20/A.I.A./c/13; Sadler to Creagh (let.), Aden, June 4, 1898, enclosed in I.O. to F.O. (let.), London, June 28, 1898, FO 1/36.

[4]F.O. (Sanderson for Salisbury) to Treasury (let.), London, Aug. 6, 1898, FO 403/275.

seriousness of the dilemma, but raised a number of questions and problems about the scheme for a British line. Estimated cost, the unsuitability of Zeila as a coastal terminus, expected French and Ethiopian opposition, and finally the 99-year monopoly clause in the Ilg-Cheneux concession were powerful deterrents. Harrington supplied an unrealistically low £300,000 estimate for a branch line and a defence of Zeila as a harbor; but in the face of the monopoly clause, he turned to the alternative policy, British commercial takeover of the original concession.[5]

For most of the next two years, Harrington negotiated informally with a number of private firms in the hopes of interesting them in buying out the concession and constructing a branch line from Zeila to Harar. His task was complicated by the Treasury's unwillingness to accept any financial responsibility for the project. In early 1899, the chancellor of the exchequer, Michael Hicks-Beach, whose Conservative party label hardly disguised his loyalty to Gladstonian liberal economics, ruled out government financial support. Later in March 1900, Salisbury noted that "the thought of an African railway makes him [Hicks-Beach] sick."[6] Without a Treasury guarantee, no major British

[5] Treasury (Mowatt) to F.O. (let.), London, August 12, 1898 and Memo. by Harrington, London, Aug. 15, 1898, FO 403/275.

[6] Hicks-Beach to Sanderson (let.), London, Jan. 7, 1898 [sic] [97], FO 1/36; Salisbury minute to Cromer to Sanderson (let.), Cairo, March 6, 1900, FO 1/41.

company was interested in the railway; Harrington was reduced to dealing with limited-capital firms whose primary interest was financial speculation, not the development of Ethiopia's commerce.

With only a few kilometers constructed, the Imperial Ethiopian Railway Company was beset with problems during 1898-99. Harrington believed "the situation was favorable for the purchase of the whole show." In France, the company was unable to sell its shares and debentures and, instead, had to turn to British investors. In French Somaliland, the Esa Somali engaged in a spirited, but short-lived, resistance to the railway's construction (they worked the caravan trade between Jibuti and Harar, and faced elimination of their livelihood). Finally, Menilek himself showed increasing discontent over the railway affair. Harrington incorrectly assumed--and the negus did nothing to dissuade him--that Ethiopia had been forced to concede the concession to French individuals to counter the military threat from Italy.

When on leave, Harrington recommended to Salisbury and Hicks-Beach that Whitehall support a small-gauge light railway capable of showing a quick profit. The core of Harrington's scheme was the idealistic view that so long as private British capital controlled a branch line to Harar, the longer route from British Somaliland would be used, and the British Somaliland establishment there saved from financial ruin. If the French were allowed to dominate Harar's trade, he argued that the imperial consequences would be disastrous.

British interests in the Sudan would be threatened by a diversion of potential Ethiopian trade via the Nile; the British Somali ports would decline in commercial importance; and Jibuti would rival Aden as the principal Red Sea entrepôt.[7]

Harrington's arguments impressed the Eastern Division of the Foreign Office, which suggested distribution of his memorandum for inter-ministerial consideration. Afterwards, Treasury and Foreign Office officials met to discuss the railway question. Sir Francis Mowatt, speaking for the chancellor of the exchequer, underscored Treasury opposition to support of a rival British line within the boundaries of British Somaliland; any guarantee for a line outside the British protectorate (within Ethiopia) was most assuredly out of the question. The best Mowatt could suggest was the creation of a special committee of Harrington, Mowatt, and Sir Francis Bertie, assistant parliamentary undersecretary of state, to study the problem. Even this limited measure required Salisbury's approval. The prime minister-foreign secretary minuted his decision:

> Until we see more of the Somali expedition [against the so-called Mad Mullah, Muhammed Abdille Hassan, anti-colonial leader in British Somaliland] we had better not move. This

[7]Sadler to Creagh (let.), Aden, June 4, 1898, enclosed in I.O. to F.O. (let.), London, June 28, 1898; Harrington to Rodd (let.), AA, April 22, 1899; and Memo. on the Somali Coast Railway, enclosed in Harrington to Salisbury (let.), London, Aug. 31, 1899, with a minute by Maxwell, FO 1/36.

> Transvaal war may involve expenditure on a large scale. Then there is the Shiré Railway; and Uganda will be under construction for 18 months more. I do not like to press the C./hancellor/ of E./xchequer/ until the prospect is more favourable.[8]

While in London, Harrington had also continued discussions with private British firms in an attempt to interest them in buying out the French company's concession.[9] Without Whitehall's financial support--probably a government guarantee of the rate of interest on investments--his hopes for British purchase of the concession dimmed.

But Harrington was not easily dissuaded. He next asked Cromer to intercede with Salisbury. Surely the latter could interest a great financial house, either Rothschild, Hamboro, or Cassel, in buying out the Ilg-Chefneux concession. Cromer already had given qualified support to Harrington's railway scheme; but once again the proconsul wrote to the Foreign Office:

> Harrington overstates the case. After Fashoda, one can never be certain that great events may but arise out of apparently small things. I do not, however, think it probable that all Europe will be convulsed even if the French do make their railway to Harrar. Still, although I am generally disinclined to recommend projects of

[8] Hill to Bertie (let.), London, Oct. 3, 1899, with a minute by Salisbury, FO 1/41.

[9] Harrington negotiated with the London-based Pentagon Syndicate and Messrs. Ochs Ltd., already one of the major shareholders in the railway company. Harrington preferred Pentagon as he considered Albert Ochs, of Messrs. Ochs, a "slippery customer." Harrington to Rodd (priv. let.), AA, Dec. 7, 1898, FO 1/34; Harrington to Rodd (priv. lets.), AA, April 15, 22, FO 1/36.

> this nature. . . . It seems to me a matter of some importance.

According to Cromer, the railway would result in a loss of Zeila's revenue and in French predominance in Ethiopia, where they were "sure to cause trouble of one sort or another."[10] Notwithstanding Cromer's qualified support, Whitehall refused to act in the Ethiopian railway question.[11]

Another course remained open to Harrington, but it was one he had previously avoided. With London's support for Ethiopia, Harrington could play on Menilek's suspicions and hope to induce the emperor to cancel the concession.[12] In the course of discussions on the southern boundary in May, 1900, Harrington did just that. He asked Menilek why he had placed practically the entire commercial development of Ethiopia in French hands by granting the concessionaires a 99-year monopoly of railway construction (article III of the original concession) and by guaranteeing that all goods exported from Harar must travel by the railway or, if they

[10]Cromer to Sanderson (priv. let.), Cairo, March 6, 1900, CP, FO 633/8/p. 256; Cromer to Salisbury (let.), Cairo, May 15, 1900, FO 403/298.

[11]Harrington's suggested exercise of influence on London's financiers was never considered; such requests would have to be paid for with honors--something both Salisbury and Sanderson disliked. Sanderson's memo. for Salisbury, London, April 11, 1899, with a minute by Salisbury, FO 1/41. Two years later, an anonymous Foreign Office wag pencilled in the following: "Sir E. Cassel is now a Privy Counciller. The Railway is still unconstructed."

[12]Memo. by Harrington, AA, n.d. (received at the F.O. July 25, 1899), FO 1/36.

followed another route, pay taxes equal to railway rates (article X). Menilek claimed he had never intended to confer monopoly status on the railway and talked of annulling the agreement. Harrington warned of the danger; the concession was a tightly drawn contract and a major European power, such as France, would probably back up the investments of its citizens. Nevertheless, the British agent launched into an attack on the concession, which he branded "negative" because it restricted "free enterprise with a political object." Furthermore, it hindered international trade and was an affront to Ethiopia's independence. The emperor was impressed by these arguments, and from this important interview grew the seed of collusion between Menilek and Harrington to defeat a French controlled railway in Ethiopia.[13]

Meanwhile in London, Salisbury and the Foreign Office once again attempted to promote construction of a line from Berbera to Harar, and once again the Treasury balked. The chancellor of the exchequer refused to make fresh proposals to Parliament for railway construction in Africa until the Uganda Railway was complete.[14] Nevertheless in October 1900, officials of the Foreign Office, the Treasury, and the Board of Trade met with Albert Ochs and represenatives of

[13] Harrington to Salisbury (let.), AA, May 30, 1899, FO 403/299.

[14] F.O. to Treasury (let.), London, June 12, 1900, FO 403/298; Treasury to F.O. (let.), London, July 10, 1900, FO 403/299.

the Imperial Ethiopian Railway Company. British capital, mainly Oceana Ltd., the New African and Egyptian Companies, controlled a virtual majority of the railway company's shares. Elimination of the Ethiopian railway as an international dispute was the best defense of the sagging shares and bonds of their companies. Conversely, so long as France, Great Britain, and Ethiopia could not agree over the railway, prospects for raising capital for completion of the line were slight. Ochs and his English associates, therefore, submitted a compromise proposal to Whitehall: if the British government could arrange for the construction of a 200 kilometer line from Berbera to the Somali protectorate frontier, the company would negotiate a concession from the Ethiopian government to join the Jibuti-Harar Railway with the British branch line. The two railways would pool receipts and share them on the basis of mileage. The agreement was contingent upon British acceptance of the company's monopoly of railway construction within the Ethiopian empire.[15]

Ochs, whose New African Company had lent the railway enterprise 2 million francs in August 1900, directed his efforts towards facilitating a compromise between Paris and London; but his motives were not entirely patriotic. Just 100 kilometers (about 70 miles) of a planned 290 had been laid. The company's capital was virtually exhausted, forcing

[15]Memo. by Mowatt, Oct. 25, 1900, London, FO 403/299.

it to stop the line at a railhead 80 kilometers short of Harar rather than tackle the expense of the gradients to that highland city.[16] A month after his meeting with British officials, Ochs informed Whitehall that to assure the success of the Berbera railway he would need a guarantee on £500,000 more to maintain control of the Imperial Ethiopian Railway Company as well as governmental security for an investment of a million pounds for construction. Ochs suggested the establishment of a chartered company or a bank as a railway holding company. Sanderson and Mowatt pointed out that the Treasury had serious doubts about guaranteeing construction of a line within British Somaliland and no intention whatever of offering a fixed rate of interest for a line outside the protectorate. Ochs was asking for a potential guarantee of investment return on £1,500,000 (at roughly 3%, £45,000), to save about £12,000 a year in customs duties. Neither British civil servant saw any prospect for Whitehall's support for Ochs' schemes.[17]

The possible British commercial takeover of the railway company and Ochs' negotiations with London alarmed French governmental and colonial circles. Léonce Lagarde, Paris's minister in Addis Ababa, warned of the danger of a British

[16] Rodd to Sanderson (let.), Cairo, May 25, 1900, FO 403/298; Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., pp. 253-54.

[17] Memo. by Sanderson respecting the Ethiopian Railway Scheme, November 20, 1900, London; and Sanderson to Ochs (let.), London, Dec. 1, 1900, FO 403/299.

ouster of French interests from the railway on the pretext of Ethiopia's sovereign rights. A visit to Ethiopia by Member of Parliament Alfred Pease, with the expressed purpose of winning the Ethiopian government over to the idea of a British Somaliland branch line, exacerbated French fears.[18] In May and June 1901, several inter-ministerial meetings were held in Paris. The foreign minister, Théophile Delcassé, emphasized the danger of takeover by the New Africa Company and suggested that the Ministry for Colonies immediately consider the matter. Journalist Hugues Le Roux, and French deputy for Oran, Eugène Etienne, simultaneously began a popular campaign to prevent the railway from falling into British hands.[19]

French fears were well-founded; in July 1901, the three British firms which held the majority of shares and bonds of the railway company formed, with a few French investors, the International Ethiopian Railway Trust and Construction Company. The new company established extensive authority over the Imperial Ethiopian Railway Company--it controlled four of eight directorships, it held a monopoly of all further rail extensions in Ethiopia, and it established power of

[18]Lagarde to Delcassé (D. no. 2, confidentiel), Entotto, Jan. 26, 1901; and Cambon to Delcassé (D. no. 126), London, May 9, 1901, Ddf, ser. 2, I, nos. 52, 231; Cranborne to Lansdowne (let.), London, June 26, 1901, FO 1/40.

[19]Delcassé to Caillaux (Min. of Finances), Paris, July 1, 1901, Ddf, ser. 2, I, no. 309; Monson to Lansdowne (tels.), Paris, May 13, July 27, 1901, FO 1/41.

consent over future financial assistance or loans to the railway.[20] While the British-dominated trust had achieved a commercial coup, they had won an unfinished line of less than 200 kilometers, saddled with staggering debts. To fulfill the railway's potential considerable new money was required. The president of the trust, Lord Chesterfield, floated the idea of equal British and French shares in the railway--a quasi-internationalization.[21] Such a plan would allow for French and British investment to coexist and, more importantly, so far as the trust was concerned, help generate funds for the continuation of the railway.

French colonial circles viewed the British commercial takeover with dismay and they demanded that their government free the railway from the shackles of English capitalists. In December 1901, the Ministry for Colonies initiated a scheme allowing the Jibuti Colony to lend the railway company the money necessary to complete construction without further recourse to English investors.[22] The ministry

[20] Messrs. Ochs to F.O. (let.), Paris, Jan. 28, 1902, FO 403/322; Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., p. 354.

[21] Geoffray to Delcassé (D. no. 322, confidentiel), London, Nov. 9, 1901, Ddf, ser. 2, I, no. 492.

[22] The International Ethiopian Railway Trust and Construction Company agreed to cede its recently-acquired financial and construction rights for adequate compensation from the French government, which placed a representative on the company's board. Report of Directors and Statement of Accounts, The New African Company Ltd., as at 31st Dec 1901 with a Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Account up to June 30th 1902. FO 1/41.

introduced a bill in the Chamber of Deputies authorizing a guarantee on interest up to 500,000 francs (£200,000) per annum for the next 50 years. Such a subvention would allow the company to raise a total of 12 million francs (£4,000,000), a sum sufficient to finish the railway, pay off foreign creditors, and assure that the line remained exclusively French. In March 1902, the convention between the railway company and the Jibuti colony was made public. The line had to be wholly French, and no changes could be made in its course without the consent of the French Foreign and Colonial ministries. Furthermore, the Jibuti colony could purchase the line from the sea to the course of the Hawash River after 1920, and the whole railway to Diré Dawa after 99 years.[23]

Harrington viewed the French government's subvention as proof that France was using the railway for political ends: to control all trade with Ethiopia to the exclusion of the British Somali ports and Aden.[24] There was little London could do; as Sanderson pointed out, the cost of a Berbera-Harar railway (including considerable capital outlay to improve Berbera harbor) was hardly commensurate with the expected loss of revenues to British Somaliland. Any attempt to prevent the French government from subsidizing the line

[23] Monson to Lansdowne (lets.), Paris, Dec. 24, 1901, FO 403/313 and Feb. 7, 1902, FO 403/322; Lansdowne to Cromer (let.), London, March 14, 1902, FO 403/322.

[24] Harrington to Lansdowne (tel.), AA, Jan. 14, 1902, FO 403/322.

would only invite more vigorous support from Paris. Finally, there was no assurance that Diré Dawa would be an effective entrepôt for the trade of Harar province; and perhaps, Sanderson hoped, the Sudan railway might gain a good share of Ethiopia's commerce. Lord Lansdowne, the new secretary of state for foreign affairs, agreed with Sanderson's judgments.[25] For his part, Harrington lamented that he was

> in a hole in this matter, as it is rather hard to convey to Menelik's mind the undesirability of the French Government having control over the Railway, he wants the railway and I very much fear he will come to terms with the French Government, more particularly as I have no power to offer him an alternative whereby we would benefit.[26]

Harrington's position was still far from hopeless, however. The French, in their haste to reverse the British commercial absorption of the original railway company, had exposed an achilles heel. They failed to inform the Ethiopian government of the terms of the new convention, many of which were direct affronts to its sovereignty. The most blatant infringements were found in articles IX, XIV and XV, respectively granting the French legation in Addis Ababa responsibility for law and order on the line within Ethiopia, bestowing upon the French colony at Jibuti, after 99 years, proprietorship of the line (much of it on Ethiopian soil)

[25]Memo. by Sanderson, March 8, 1902, London, with a minute by Lansdowne, FO 1/41.

[26]Harrington to Boyle (priv. let.), AA, March 27, 1902, FO 1/40.

and conceding to the colony an option for purchase of the railway from Jibuti to the Hawash Valley after just eighteen years. The legal inability of the railway company to confer such rights found tacit recognition in article XVIII, which obliquely stated that the above articles were applicable "under reserve as to an understanding between the French and Ethiopian Governments."[27] Harrington saw his chance in French presumptions and he deftly struck at his arch-rivals.

At the end of March, Harrington met with the emperor on two successive days, and pointed out the objectionable clauses of the French convention. Menilek was furious. The generally amiable Ethiopian monarch punctuated his remarks with whacks of his cane; now he realized why Lagarde had been so secretive. The goal of the French, Harrington continued, was commercial and political control of Ethiopia. Somewhat pedantically, he lectured the emperor on international relations. If the negus believed international friendship existed for its own sake, he was badly mistaken. Friendship between governments rested on "a community of interests"; none would make sacrifices for another unless it was in its own interests to do so. "True! true!," the emperor intoned. In short, Harrington suggested that Menilek had placed Ethiopia's commercial future entirely in the hands of private French individuals who, in turn, had shown

[27]Lansdowne to Harrington (let.), London, March 14, 1902, FO 403/322; Skinner, Abyssinia Today, pp. 107-08.

little respect for his trust when they signed the convention usurping Ethiopian sovereignty.[28]

Menilek asked for Harrington's advice as a private individual. The Englishman suggested the construction of a competing railway from Harar to the British Somaliland frontier, thus neutralizing the French. What about the monopoly clause of the original concession, the negus enquired? The British agent disingenuously stated that a line to Ethiopia's borders would fall outside the restrictions of the original concession, which stipulated no competing lines to the Indian Ocean or Red Sea. There was nothing against Ethiopia building a line and the British meeting it at the frontier. Such advice was, at best, dubious. Harrington was well aware that London had ruled out a railway within its Somali protectorate and that his circumvention of the monopoly clause would probably fail to hold water. Although he claimed to speak as a private individual, Harrington acted unwisely in stoking the flames of the railway crisis.[29]

Harrington once again wrote the Foreign Office requesting London's backing of Ethiopia's plan to defy France. "It's hardly likely," he stated, "that a better opportunity for establishing our influence will occur." As proof of his trust of the British representative, the negus promised to make no railway agreement with France without first

[28]Harrington to Boyle (priv. let.), AA, April 5, 1902, FO 1/40.

[29]Ibid.

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[28]Harrington to Boyle (priv. let.), AA, April 5, 1902, FO 1/40.

[29]Ibid.

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[28]Harrington to Boyle (priv. let.), AA, April 5, 1902, FO 1/40.

[29]Ibid.

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consulting Harrington and the British government. In response to this development, Lansdowne argued for caution; a railway within British Somaliland might require large expenditure. The foreign secretary requested Harrington to thank Menilek for his promise and to inform him that the British government would consider his plans in a "friendly spirit."[30]

From London, then, Menilek could expect little more than moral support. Even Harrington advised the emperor to accept the French convention subject to modification with the hope that London would eventually agree to a joint British-Ethiopian railway. But the negus was adamant, and on May 10, 1902, he informed Lagarde that the Ethiopian government was unable to accept the convention.[31] Menilek wished modernization of Ethiopia's transportation system, but not at the price of absolute French control over Ethiopia's rail communications.[32]

During the railway imbroglio, Harrington had played a key advisory role to Menilek. In this instance, the French

[30]Harrington to Lansdowne via Cromer (tel.), AA, April 12, 1902 and Lansdowne to Harrington via Cromer (tel.), London, April 12, 1902, FO 403/322.

[31]The Italian minister Ciccodicola and Empress Taitu, a confirmed opponent of Europeanization of Ethiopia, argued for rejection of the convention. They overrode Harrington's pleas for delay. Harrington to Boyle (priv. let.), AA, April 5, 1902, FO 1/40; Harrington to Lansdowne (tel.), AA, May 10, 1902, FO 403/322.

[32]Skinner, Abyssinia Today, p. 108.

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were on the defensive; it was the British minister plenipotentiary (Harrington's new rank after 1902) who enjoyed the trust of the emperor. Such a state of affairs was a dramatic volte-face. When Harrington, a mere lieutenant in the Bombay civil service on special assignment, had arrived in Addis Ababa in 1898, the afterglow of the Rodd mission was gone, and Anglo-Ethiopian relations were on the decline. Four years later, London and Addis Ababa had settled the strategic Sudan frontier to their mutual satisfaction; Harrington and the negus were working hand in glove to defeat Paris's railway designs; and Ethiopian and British troops were cooperating in the Haud against Muhammad 'Abdille Hassan's Somali rebellion. French officials complained of an Anglo-Ethiopian "alliance," and the French consular agent in Harar sadly reflected that "gratitude and honesty do not exist in the Abyssinian dictionary."[33]

How had Harrington succeeded? One journalist who visited Addis Ababa explained that Menilek liked the English representative, Great Britain wanted nothing from Ethiopia, and the British minister was a gentleman while his rival diplomats were not; the analysis perhaps was facile, yet it contained a certain truth.[34] British strategic interests in Ethiopia were defensive, concentrating upon security for

[33] Gerolimato to Sadler (let.), Harar, May 12, 1901, enclosed in Sadler to Lansdowne (let.), Aden, May 23, 1901, FO 403/312.

[34] Herbert Vivian, Abyssinia, Through Lion Land to the Court of the Lion of Judah (London, 1901), pp. 176-78.

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Nile sources and stable frontiers. While Harrington sought to gain for British capitalists a share in the economic development of the Solomonic empire, he was not thinking in terms of control of Ethiopia's commercial life. Notwithstanding Harrington's cultivated pukka sahib demeanor--de riguer for a British diplomat at an "oriental" court--Menilek gave him respect and even affection. Harrington's aloof manner barely disguised his excitable nature.[35] He often engaged in shouting matches with the negus during negotiations, and usually these outbursts tended to clear the air. In all conversations at the Gibbi, Harrington made a point of explaining the advantages and disadvantages to Ethiopia of any particular matter under discussion. He knew full well that if Menilek himself did not grasp the disadvantages, Lagarde would not fail to inform him.[36] Frankness was a useful technique. As a careful and cautious diplomatist, Menilek usually obtained the views of his primary link with Europe, the diplomatic community in the Ethiopian capital. After hearing its various and often conflicting viewpoints on a particular matter concerning Ethiopia's

[35]Examples of Harrington's insistence upon respect for his standing as Her/His Britannic Majesty's representative are numerous. If Harrington felt insulted by an Ethiopian official, he usually demanded and got satisfaction from the emperor. The offenders were publicly flogged--a light sentence within the Ethiopian code of justice.

[36]Harrington to Boyle (priv. let.), AA, May 3, 1903, FO 1/40. Harrington to Cromer (priv. let.), AA, March 23, 1903, FO 1/43.

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diplomatic relations and ascertaining the opinions of his own advisors (both European and Ethiopian), the emperor made his decision. By 1902, in such important matters as the railway, Harrington was the favored informal counsellor.

Harrington's increased influence at the Gibbi probably compensated somewhat for the remoteness and loneliness of service in Addis Ababa and the occasional attacks of influenza from which he suffered. Even with the railway link between Diré Dawa and Jibuti, the journey to the coast was difficult. Communications were improving, but it normally took twenty-four days for a letter to reach the Ethiopian capital from England. The European community in Addis Ababa, split into Franco-Russian and Anglo-Italian camps, numbered only a few hundred men and a handful of women. Diversions were those of an Indian garrison station with an international flavor: waiting for the weekly British post from Harar, polo, hunting to the hounds, shooting game, and the camaraderie of fellow diplomatic representatives.[37] On Thursdays, the emperor held small intimate champagne parties for Ethiopian notables, the diplomatic community, and

[37] An excellent vignette of life in Addis Ababa dates from early 1900. The emperor, accompanied by thousands of courtiers and troops, visited the British compound to hunt the hounds sent as a present by Queen Victoria. The hunt was a success resulting in the kill of a jackal. The negus returned with Harrington to the still-unfinished residency to inspect the stable and polo grounds. Menilek was heard to say to Ras Walda Giorgis, "Englishmen are a curious people, quite unlike any other nation I have seen; for they build a house for their horses, before they have a roof over their own heads." P. H. G. Powell-Cotten, A Sporting Trip through Abyssinia (London, 1902), p. 137.

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important foreign visitors. The Italian and British legations met socially every Sunday. Often on religious and national holidays, Menilek gave immense state dinners in his huge ceremonial hall. In two or more sittings, literally thousands of Ethiopian soldiers dined with the negus, his rases, important Ethiopian generals, and the ministers of the European powers.[38]

Harrington also began to receive increased recognition in the British diplomatic corps. In late 1902, he received a knighthood for his services in Ethiopia. Early the next year, Addis Ababa was raised to legation status and Harrington became a minister plenipotentiary and consul-general. Such a promotion meant a better salary, more expense money, and more importantly, two young diplomats to assist him. W. A. M. Wakeman, assistant surgeon in the Indian medical service and the legation doctor, and part-time interpreter McKelvey were the other Europeans on the staff.[39]

The British legation, a parallelogram of eight round huts connected by mud passages, resembled a feudal castle and formed its own substantial community. Indian and Ethiopian servants also lived in their quarters within the

[38]Vivian, Abyssinia, pp. 181-83; James J. Harrison, "A Journey from Zeila to Lake Rudolf," Geographical Journal, XVII (1901), p. 264; Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., p. 397.

[39]McKelvey, an expatriate Irishman, had lived in Ethiopia for decades. He had married an Ethiopian and adopted Amhara dress and life style.

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Harrington, a thin, athletic man of medium height, was the patriarch of this polyglot clan. A demanding superior, Sir John expected vice-consuls to be proficient typists, accountants, and able to take shorthand. Second secretaries, who became chargés d'affaires in Harrington's absence, needed the tact and language skills of a superior diplomat. In either case, members of the legation's diplomatic establishment were cast in the mold of gentlemen-sportsmen; for the smallness of the legation staff necessitated this social homogeneity. The diplomatic scene of Addis Ababa was also a small world where feuds and apparent insults grew in magnitude. The French minister, Léonce Lagarde, "Duke of Entotto" by Menilek's proclamation, was a standing joke among the British; his visiting cards were coveted by pranksters. The Russians maintained a lavish diplomatic establishment. Their gifts to the emperor and to Ethiopia were magnificent; at the drop of a hat, the Russian diplomats would saunter out with the large military retinue, knowing that it impressed the snobbish and militaristic Ethiopians. Yet in Addis Ababa's international politics, mere display

[40] Harrington to Sanderson (let.), AA, March 24, 1900, FO 1/37; Vivian, Abyssinia, pp. 169-72.

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legation's eight-acre compound. Six Indian sowars (mounted troopers) with turbans and lances formed the small, but immaculate, military escort. The sowars were keen horsemen and were pressed into polo games with the Englishmen.[40]

Harrington, a thin, athletic man of medium height, was the patriarch of this polyglot clan. A demanding superior, Sir John expected vice-consuls to be proficient typists, accountants, and able to take shorthand. Second secretaries, who became chargés d'affaires in Harrington's absence, needed the tact and language skills of a superior diplomat. In either case, members of the legation's diplomatic establishment were cast in the mold of gentlemen-sportsmen; for the smallness of the legation staff necessitated this social homogeneity. The diplomatic scene of Addis Ababa was also a small world where feuds and apparent insults grew in magnitude. The French minister, Léonce Lagarde, "Duke of Entotto" by Menilek's proclamation, was a standing joke among the British; his visiting cards were coveted by pranksters. The Russians maintained a lavish diplomatic establishment. Their gifts to the emperor and to Ethiopia were magnificent; at the drop of a hat, the Russian diplomats would saunter out with the large military retinue, knowing that it impressed the snobbish and militaristic Ethiopians. Yet in Addis Ababa's international politics, mere display

[40] Harrington to Sanderson (let.), AA, March 24, 1900, FO 1/37; Vivian, Abyssinia, pp. 169-72.

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counted for little. The Russians' real influence was miniscule.[41]

On the other hand, the Italians, whose palatial legation dispensed a refined and generous hospitality, held a curious position in Ethiopia. Major Ferdinando Ciccodicola, the Italian minister, was on intimate terms with the emperor; in fact, the British second secretary, John Baird, believed Ciccodicola to have virtually replaced Ilg as Menilek's principal foreign advisor. Baird alluded to "Cicco's" (as the Italian minister was affectionately called) recent accomplishments: Italian protection for Ethiopians at Jerusalem--an obligation both the French and the Russians desired--and a commercial concession near Lake Tana. Also, the emperor and empress made numerous informal visits to the Italian legation, a familiarity previously unheard of in the Ethiopian capital.[42] Harrington was more skeptical, perhaps also more jealous. He thought his Italian friend was "getting a swelled head" and deceiving himself into believing that he was "all-powerful" with Menilek, instead of realizing he was, like the rest of the diplomatic corps, "pawns to be used by Menilek." Sir John astutely pointed out that it was easy to influence the emperor when it suited Ethiopia's purpose. The British

[41] Vivian, Abyssinia, pp. 181-87.

[42] Baird to Lansdowne (let.), AA, Aug. 1, 1902, FO 403/323.

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minister believed that no European representative had influence to his own advantage, but only to the detriment of other European powers.[43] Harrington's observation was a penetrating insight to the workings of Menilek's diplomacy.

In the early summer of 1902, Harrington enjoyed a temporary reprieve from the intrigues of the Ethiopian capital. In the face of determined French opposition, the British minister convinced Menilek to dispatch Ras Makonnen, his friend and the leading candidate for succession to the imperial throne, as Ethiopia's representative to the coronation of Edward VII. The negus insisted that Harrington accompany Makonnen and promised to make no major moves in the railway controversy during the Englishman's absence.[44] While in England, Sir John met with the financier, Sir Edward Cassel, and discussed funding of a Somaliland light-railway. Harrington envisioned a "glorified steam tramway" using the rack system to ascend the mountains of the interior

[43]Harrington to Boyle (priv. let.), Cairo, March 27, 1902, FO 1/40.

[44]In 1899, Harrington suggested a visit by Makonnen to London; the coronation provided the justification. While the trip was essentially ceremonial, it took on political overtones since it was considered proof of the growing Anglo-Ethiopian rapprochement. The Ethiopian government allowed Makonnen to visit France after the coronation to soothe French sensibilities. Harrington to Cromer (let.), AA, March 3, 1899, FO 1/36; Harrington to Boyle (priv. let.), AA, March 27, April 5, 1902, FO 1/40; Harrington to Lansdowne, via Cromer (tel.), AA, May 7, 1902, FO 403/322.

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of Somaliland.[45] He also used his London visit to lobby in Whitehall for a rival Anglo-Ethiopian railway. Once again the Foreign Office, with prodding from Cromer, took Harrington's case to the chancellor of the exchequer. The Treasury refused appropriations for even a preliminary survey of the potentialities of a light railway from Berbera to Hargeisa or Jig Jig. Total cost of such a reconnaissance was only £2,000 to 3,000; surely, a Foreign Office parliamentary under-secretary wrote, such a sum was not too high a price for a trustworthy opinion? The Treasury was adamant in its opposition. The huge cost overruns of the Uganda line had given the chancellor of the exchequer a severe case of African railway-phobia. Rather than press the issue, the Foreign Office decided to ask Military Intelligence to conduct a rough survey and to pay for it out of their budget.[46]

Harrington returned to Ethiopia in late autumn 1902. During the winter, Addis Ababa's diplomatic scene remained

[45] Cassel was tentatively prepared to finance the line with a three 'per cent' guarantee of interest from the British government. Harrington assured the financier that the line would pay working expenses of one to one-and-a-half 'per cent' interest per year. Cassel promised to divide any surplus profit over three 'per cent' with the government. Harrington to Sanderson (let.), London, July 29, 1902; and Swayne to Harrington (priv. let.), Berbera, May 7, 1902, enclosed in Harrington to F.O. (let.), London, July 29, 1902, FO 1/41.

[46] Cromer to Lansdowne (let.), Cairo, Oct. 17, 1903; Treasury to F.O. (lets.), London, Nov. 14, Dec. 17, 1902; and F.O. to Treasury (let.), London, Dec. 1, 1902, FO 403/323; Sanderson to Cromer (let.), London, Dec. 19, 1902, FO 1/41.

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quiet as representatives of the European powers awaited Menilek's next move in the "railway game." Lagarde cajoled, pleaded, and threatened the Ethiopian monarch in the hopes of obtaining his signature to a modified version of the 1902 convention; but the emperor steadfastly refused. Menilek showed his displeasure with Paris by failing to attend the inaugural ceremony of the first portion of the line and by revoking the French company's dîme, the right to a 10% tax on goods travelling on the line. French colonial papers complained of a low ebb in Franco-Ethiopian relations and placed the blame on the intrigues of Harrington.[47]

For Sir John, the winter of 1902-3 was one of discontent and apprehension. The emperor continued to refuse the French convention, but Harrington realized that eventually the negus would ask Great Britain for support against the French. The British minister knew such a request would cause a crisis in Anglo-French-Ethiopian relations. A commitment to build a rival line would "serve notice" to Paris that London would refuse to allow French predominance in Ethiopia and dispell any lingering suspicions Menilek might have about England's motives. On the other hand, if the Ethiopian monarch asked for a Harar-Berbera line and London failed to produce one, Menilek's trust of London, so

[47] Harrington to Sanderson (let.), AA, Feb. 8, 1903, FO 1/43; Monson to Lansdowne (lets.), Paris, Feb. 24, March 11, 1903, FO 403/344; Marcus, The Life and Times of Menilek, mss., pp. 355-56.

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carefully cultivated in the past, would be destroyed and Anglo-Ethiopian relations would revert to their unsatisfactory pre-Rodd Mission state. Harrington became a self-admitted "bore on the subject of the railway." He wrote urgent private letters to Cromer, Sanderson, and Lansdowne explaining the dangers for British interests in Ethiopia and requesting support for Addis Ababa's possible cancellation of the French railway concession.

Cromer agreed with the British plenipotentiary in Addis Ababa, but Lansdowne doubted the soundness of such advocacy and advised Arthur Balfour, Conservative prime minister, that unconditional support of Menilek would be a mistake. Lansdowne had had numerous useful conversations with the Anglophile French ambassador in London, Paul Cambon, about Anglo-French differences, especially Paris's policy of "peaceful penetration" of Morocco and British strategic interests at the Straits of Gibraltar.[48] The foreign secretary suggested taking advantage of the growing Anglo-French rapprochement to work out a "friendly solution" of Ethiopian differences directly with Paris. Lansdowne, therefore, warned Harrington against committing Great Britain to assist Ethiopia in the fight against French railway dominance. The Berbera-Harar railway could only be justified on commercial

[48] Samuel R. Williamson, Jr., The Politics of Grand Strategy, Britain and France Prepare for War, 1904-1914 (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), pp. 7-9; George Monger, End of Isolation (London, N.Y., 1963), pp. 105-14.

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and financial grounds. This the Intelligence Division's survey was endeavoring to ascertain. If the British line was not feasible, then Lansdowne noted that London "must depend on other methods of counteracting French predominance." "The issues," the foreign secretary concluded, "are scarcely of sufficient gravity to warrant expenditure of millions, and access to Abyssinia by way of the Nile will remain in our hands."[49]

Lansdowne had abruptly reined in Harrington, who was hurt by the implied criticism. In a long, handwritten, private letter, Harrington admitted his shock to Lord Cromer and protested that his main concern always had been to avoid giving Menilek the impression that London would build a railway from Berbera to Harar. Harrington believed that he had made it clear to the emperor that British assistance to any rival railway would be decided only upon commercial grounds. He had distinguished, however, between advice he gave the negus as a "private individual" and as a British representative; still, he believed he had "thrown more cold water on any hopes . . . of British assistance than /he/ had

[49] Harrington's private letters to Cromer and Lansdowne are mentioned in their correspondence, yet neither are in the F.O. official archives nor the private papers of the two men. One can get a fair assessment of their content from Lansdowne's telegram to Cromer of March 17, 1903. Apparently, Harrington sent almost identical letters to the two peers. Balfour was confused by the Ethiopian railway question and asked Lansdowne to explain it to him in person. Harrington to Sanderson (let.), AA, Feb. 8, 1903; and Lansdowne to Cromer (priv. tel.), London, March 14, 1903, FO 1/43.

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given encouragement." At the risk of his "personal influence," however, the Englishman promised Menilek to do all in his power to convince London to support an Anglo-Ethiopian line. In this respect, perhaps Harrington had made a mistake; but he felt strongly about the question, and thus his zeal.[50]

Cromer passed on the gist of Harrington's defense to Sanderson at the Foreign Office with the following comment: "the opinion of the 'private individual' as opposed to the 'represenative' is a very ancien jeu diplomatique, but I am not quite sure that Harrington knows the tricks of the trade quite well enough to use this weapon with safety." Cromer was glad Lansdowne had reprimanded Harrington, but Sir John was "extremely sensitive," and Cromer did not wish to bruise his feelings. A reassuring private letter was the proconsul's remedy, and Sanderson wrote accordingly. More important than Harrington's sensibilities, however, was the railway question itself. "What I care most about," Cromer continued, "is the idea of shifting the issue--that is to say, substituting an Anglo-French exploitation for a three cornered Abyssinian, Anglo-French /illegible/ with Menilek sitting in the middle playing the part of Teritus Gaudens."[51]

[50] Harrington to Cromer (priv. let.), AA, March 23, 1903, FO 1/43.

[51] Cromer to Sanderson (priv. let.), Cairo, April 23, 1903, FO 1/43.

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Meanwhile, accommodation with the French preoccupied British statesmen. After groundwork by Joseph Chamberlain, Delcassé and Lansdowne met in London in July 1903 to discuss various colonial matters. Lansdowne insisted that any potential colonial settlement had to include Egypt, while the French foreign minister sought recognition of French preponderance in Morocco. The fear in French colonial circles that Egypt and Morocco would be linked grew as Delcassé inched crab-like towards that conclusion. Cromer, who had been in London during the summer of 1903, realized the value of the Moroccan lever to force French diplomatic support for Great Britain in Egypt. The proconsul became an avid supporter of an Anglo-French entente. In October, he wrote personally to Balfour in order to impress upon the prime minister "the very great importance of the present negotiations with France." It was not just a matter of Egypt--although that in itself was an important part--but Cromer hoped the entente would provide a "stepping stone" to a settlement with Russia. To Cromer's mind, British agreement with St. Petersburg would allow for a reduction in military spending and a reallotment of British resources to remedy the empire's two greatest dangers: backwardness in education and unsound fiscal policies.[52]

[52] Cromer to Balfour (priv. let.), Cairo, Oct. 15, 1903, CP, FO 633/6/no. 340; Monger, The End of Isolation, pp. 105-56; John Marlow, Cromer in Egypt (New York and Washington, 1970), pp. 246-47.

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[53] Lansdowne inquired what support of Ethiopia entailed. Sanderson replied "moral and financial." Harrington to Lansdowne via Cromer (tel. and let.), AA, June 10, 1903, with minutes by Lansdowne and Sanderson, FO 1/43.

[54] Harrington received the Star of Ethiopia 1st Class and Edward VII allowed him to accept the decoration. Menilek was invested with the insignia of a Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of Bath. Such ceremonies were meant to be signals to the French of Ethiopia's confidence in London and its displeasure with Paris. Harrington to Lansdowne (lets.), AA, April 21, June 1, 1903, FO 1/42.

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Harrington carried to London official authorization from the Ethiopian government to lay before Edward VII its objections to the French convention of 1902 and to request British support. Menilek's argument was simple: he had granted the original concession, with its unique privileges, on the distinct understanding that the railway company would be a private enterprise without governmental involvement. The French government had intervened through its annual subvention of 500,000 francs and the terms of the 1902 convention between the colony of Jibuti and the railway company. The political and commercial advantages of sole control of Ethiopia's railway communication by a foreign power were, in Menilek's opinion, a threat to the independence of the Ethiopian empire. Furthermore, the railway company had forfeited its privileges by entering into an agreement with Paris; Ethiopia was determined to eliminate any special advantages France claimed to enjoy. The Ethiopian monarch therefore proposed an Ethiopian-owned railway from Harar to the British Somaliland frontier and requested that London construct a connecting line within its protectorate.

[55]Cromer to Sanderson (let.), Cairo, April 15, 1903, with minutes by Sanderson and Lansdowne, FO 1/43.

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Harrington explained to Lansdowne that the railway question was a matter of Ethiopian sovereignty and, in his capacity as Menilek's emissary, he would request that Edward VII make good previous promises to maintain the independence of Ethiopia.[56]

The best method of fulfilling this undertaking, according to Harrington, was an exchange of notes between London and Addis Ababa whereby Ethiopia promised not to accept any railway convention proposed by France except with the advice and cooperation of the British government. In return, London would agree to support Ethiopia should it refuse to accept a "distasteful" convention, that is, one that Addis Ababa was not honorably bound to accept under the original concession. The British minister also pointed out that the original concession applied only to the first section of the line. Conditions under which the second and third sections --Harar to Addis Ababa and Addis Ababa to the Nile--were to be built remained within the prerogative of Ethiopia. Therefore, Addis Ababa was justified in preventing any extension of the line; London would have to ensure that Paris did not ride roughshod over Addis Ababa's rights. Once Menilek refused to continue the line and the British government supported him, France would accept a compromise

[56]Harrington to Lansdowne (let.), London, Aug. 20, 1903, FO 403/334; Harrington to Lansdowne (let.), London, Sept. 14, 1903, FO 1/42.

"without any real fuss."[57]

Unfortunately for Sir John, Lansdowne did not follow his advice in the railway issue. The French had grudgingly and tentatively agreed to recognize the bitter pill of British permanency in Egypt so as to obtain a similar acceptance of their position in Morocco. Desiring to end its policy of isolation and to eliminate the possibility of the Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902 leading to a war with the Dual Alliance in the Far East, the British cabinet discussed the Ethiopian railway question and evidently concluded that it was relatively unimportant, and that it should not threaten the proposed Anglo-French entente.[58] The foreign secretary, therefore, simply requested that Ethiopia submit to London any French proposals to modify the original concession. If pressed by Paris, Menilek could inform the French representative that he was negotiating with the British for a Berbera-Harar line--not strictly true since the Treasury ruled out financial support--and, thus could not

[57] Memo. by Harrington, n.d., London, enclosed in Harrington to Lansdowne (let.), London, Nov. 28, 1903 and Harrington to Sanderson (let.), London, Nov. 20, 1903, FO 1/43.

[58] No records were kept of cabinet meetings prior to 1916. A summarizing memorandum on the railway was reprinted for cabinet use on Nov. 28, 1903. Given the later action of the Foreign Office, the cabinet obviously decided against supporting Ethiopia against France by the construction of a rival line within British Somaliland and financial support of an Ethiopian line to join it. Memo. by Sir T. Sanderson on the French Railway from Jibuti to Harar, and a project for a British Railway from Berbera, June 28, 1902, London, FO 1/41, FO 403/322.

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entertain any proposals beyond those of the existing concession. Such advice fell far short of the kind of support Harrington had envisioned (in fact, Harrington had made the mistake of informally assuring the negus of British support). Harrington was disappointed, as was the Ethiopian monarch. George Clerk, chargé d'affaires in the Ethiopian capital, privately informed Harrington in London that the emperor was inclined to repudiate the French concession independently. Harrington thereupon sent an urgent telegram asking Clerk to dissuade Menilek from acting alone.[59]

Unnerved by his failure, Harrington left for Rome to join Rodd in discussing Ethiopian policy with the head of the Colonial Department of the Italian Foreign Office. En route to Rome, Harrington stopped in Paris for a meeting, arranged by Ochs, with Lagarde to attempt to work out some compromise on the railway question. After informal conversation with Lagarde, Harrington believed he had hit upon a solution that would satisfy the French, the British, and the Ethiopians. France would control the railway line to the foot of the plateau on which Addis Ababa was located; continuation of the line on to the capital would be under joint Anglo-French control; any railway communication west of Addis would be the preserve of Great Britain. France would receive a free hand in the Hawash valley in the event

[59]Lansdowne to Clerk (tel.), London, Nov. 28, 1903, FO 403/344. Bertie to Lansdowne (tel.), Rome, Dec. 19, 1903, FO 1/43.

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of disintegration of the Ethiopian empire, and, by implication, London's sphere of influence would be west of Addis Ababa. Such an agreement, Harrington maintained, required French promises not to create political difficulties nor attempt to gain predominance in Ethiopia and an Anglo-French assurance that neither power would interfere with the independence of the Ethiopian empire so long as it remained a viable political unit. Finally, Jibuti was to become a free port with equal trading rights for the French and British.[60]

Lagarde communicated the proposed compromise to the leader of the French colonial party, M. Eugène Etienne, who approved. On the other side of the channel, Sanderson believed that such an arrangement would "render the question of a line from Hargeisa to Harar less urgent"; therefore, the permanent undersecretary suggested following up on Harrington's initiative and obtaining the Intelligence Division's opinion. For his part, Lansdowne felt the railway compromise might be included in the general colonial entente with Paris.[61]

The Intelligence Division, however, raised serious objections to the proposed agreement. Continuation of the line to the Ethiopian capital would probably follow the

[60] Harrington to Sanderson (tel.), Paris, Dec. 10, 1903, FO 1/42.

[61] Monson to Lansdowne (tel.), Paris, Dec. 12, 1903, with minutes by Sanderson and Lansdowne, FO 1/43.

of disintegration of the Ethiopian empire, and, by implication, London's sphere of influence would be west of Addis Ababa. Such an agreement, Harrington maintained, required French promises not to create political difficulties nor attempt to gain predominance in Ethiopia and an Anglo-French assurance that neither power would interfere with the independence of the Ethiopian empire so long as it remained a viable political unit. Finally, Jibuti was to become a free port with equal trading rights for the French and British.[60]

Lagarde communicated the proposed compromise to the leader of the French colonial party, M. Eugène Etienne, who approved. On the other side of the channel, Sanderson believed that such an arrangement would "render the question of a line from Hargeisa to Harar less urgent"; therefore, the permanent undersecretary suggested following up on Harrington's initiative and obtaining the Intelligence Division's opinion. For his part, Lansdowne felt the railway compromise might be included in the general colonial entente with Paris.[61]

The Intelligence Division, however, raised serious objections to the proposed agreement. Continuation of the line to the Ethiopian capital would probably follow the

[60] Harrington to Sanderson (tel.), Paris, Dec. 10, 1903, FO 1/42.

[61] Monson to Lansdowne (tel.), Paris, Dec. 12, 1903, with minutes by Sanderson and Lansdowne, FO 1/43.

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valley for most of the distance, only climbing the plateau when close to Addis. Thus, the section under joint control would be short. The arrangement would do nothing to relieve London from constructing a Berbera-Harar line unless the government was willing to lose the revenues of the Somali ports and allow France control of Ethiopia's major access to the sea. Finally, a free hand in the Hawash Valley would mean French predominance in eastern Ethiopia between the capital and the coast without assurance of compensation for British interests.[62]

Cromer, always a key figure in imperial policy, also expressed his views on the Harrington-Lagarde conversation. To Cromer the proposals were "very important"; he only hoped that Sir John could explain at the Gibbi such a complete turnabout by London. Such a change in policy would certainly be viewed in Addis Ababa as a "complete surrender to the French." Admittedly, the Berbera-Harar rival line would be the ideal counter-thrust at Paris, but that was a decision for the cabinet. Personally, Cromer would reject the railway and afford relief to the Treasury even at the cost of "some political sacrifice." The sacrifice Harrington proposed, however, was, to Cromer's mind, too great; it would give France paramountcy within Ethiopia.

While Harrington's solution was weak on details, Cromer believed the idea of compromise with France to be basically

[62] Lansdowne to Harrington (let.), Cairo, Dec. 26, 1903, FO 1/43.

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sound. It was in keeping with the growing entente with Paris, and it would prevent Menilek from following "the common Oriental policy of playing off one Power against the other." Cromer suggested an agreement on the following lines: an Anglo-French-Italian promise to respect Ethiopia's independence, Harrington's idea of a western boundary to France's sphere of influence in the Ethiopian empire, joint Anglo-French control of the entire railway to the coast, and stringent provisions assuring Jibuti's status as a free port.[63]

Harrington's proposals of December 10, 1903, seem curiously out of character. It is easy to understand why the French were ready to agree to them; the compromise gave them virtually all they could have hoped for and such an arrangement would help to break the financial deadlock over the railway. The annual subvention of 500,000 francs had been discounted to finish construction of the first section of the line. Because of Menilek's hostility, the company was unable to raise further money and was saddled with a million-franc annual deficit.[64] Rightly or wrongly, the Quai d'Orsay and the Pavillon des Flores believed that Harrington was the key to Ethiopia's opposition. His proposals must have seemed a welcome windfall indeed. The question still remains: why did Harrington change in

[63] Cromer to Lansdowne (let.), Cairo, Dec. 26, 1903, FO 1/43.

[64] Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., p. 356.

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midstream? Certainly he was disappointed with his government's failure to back up Ethiopia and, perhaps, he believed that such a compromise would save British influence in western Ethiopia. Also, a firm promise from France to respect Ethiopian independence would assure, at least until Menilek's death, a sovereign empire in northeast Africa. Finally, the British plenipotentiary was attempting to work within the guidelines of the imminent Anglo-French entente, a development he could hardly have been unaware of after six months in England.

Not only were Harrington's proposals of December uncharacteristic, but they were entertained only briefly by the British diplomat himself. After the conference at Rome, Harrington met with Cromer in Cairo and seemed to have changed his mind. Cromer described their meeting:

> I have seen Harrington. He was not happy when he arrived, and I doubt if he was much happier after he had seen me. I thought it advisable to speak in a tone calculated to calm his natural excitability. He is doubtful whether he can "hold" Menilek /prevent him from cancelling the concession/. . . . In any case, I told Harrington that he must on no account go outside the text of the instructions conveyed in the telegram of the 28th November. He again hinted at the possibility of exceeding his instructions and "taking the risk." I told him plainly and decisively that he was on no account to do anything of the sort. I also intimated that he must not, because we wish to combat French predominance in Abyssinia, at once rush to the conclusion that we are prepared to make war on France to assert our views. Harrington belongs to the somewhat numerous class of political tyros who do not recognize that there are any shades of colour between coal-black and snow-white.

Such an interview with the austere and overbearing Cromer

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must have been an ordeal for Harrington. Unfortunately for Sir John, "the Lord" (as Cromer was called in Cairo) was waiting to pounce on the unsuspecting diplomatic representative to Addis Ababa. As Cromer earlier confided to Sanderson, "Harrington seems to me to be not only very flighty, but to be suffering to some extent from a swelled head. When I see him I will endeavour to reduce the congestion."[65]

Harrington was not the only minister to Ethiopia under fire. His French counterpart, Lagarde, suffered heavy criticism from the French colonial press for his failure to obtain Ethiopia's assent to continuation of the line; only with difficulty did the Frenchman secure his return as minister to Addis Ababa.[66] Understandably, Lagarde attributed his troubles to the hostility of British policy in Ethiopia:

> Here, at this moment Great Britain is in full expansion of an enviable and single-minded policy. For her, everything works towards one goal. . . . She makes the Negus tremble and at the same time allows him to save face and lavishes on him gold and presents/£100,000 per annum subsidy for security of Blue Nile sources/ The British influence penetrates everywhere, the palaces and the provinces, and it seems to the eyes of my informers that . . . they covet the whole empire.

Lagarde also argued that Harrington's proposals of a railway "condominium" would mean the end of French privileges on

[65] Cromer to Sanderson (let.), Cairo, Jan. 14, 1904, FO 1/50; Cromer to Sanderson (priv. let.), Cairo, Jan. 8, 1904, Sanderson Papers, FO 800/2.

[66] Monson to Lansdowne (let.), Paris, June 29, 1903, FO 403/334; Ochs to Lansdowne (let.), Paris, Dec. 15, 1903, FO 1/43.

their line. To the Frenchman's mind, exclusive control of the Jibuti-Harar line and maintenance of a protective, food-producing zone necessary for development of the French Somali Protectorate were unalterably linked.[67]

Lagarde returned to the Ethiopian capital with precise instructions to pursue an active policy of defense of French interests; but the Frenchman wisely changed tactics and did not press the Ethiopian government.[68] In March 1904, Lagarde's attitude of official indifference ostensibly paid off; Chefneux negotiated a tentative agreement for the continuation of the railway. Believing that the new agreement protected Ethiopia's interests, Menilek showed it to George Clerk, Harrington's temporary replacement and British chargé d'affaires. The preamble of the document cancelled only the third segment, from Kaffa to the White Nile, and stated that some further (unspecified) articles had been cancelled. The emperor was under the impression that the 1894 concession had been totally abrogated. When Menilek realized his mistake, he recalled the document before it could be signed by Ilg, and sent his secretary to the British Legation. The emperor's secretary and the legation staff worked through the night on the Amharic version, making sure to protect Ethiopian sovereignty. In the morning, Chefneux refused to

[67] Lagarde to Delcassé (D. no. 2), Camp de Ganet, Ethiopia, Feb. 25, 1904, Ddf., ser. 2, IV, no. 318.

[68] Clerk to Lansdowne (tel.), AA, Jan. 9, 1904 and Monson to Lansdowne (let.), Paris, Jan. 11, 1904, FO 403/346.

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accept the modified version, which gave the Ethiopian government justification for inaction.[69]

Clerk eagerly awaited Sir John's arrival. Although the Ethiopian government refused to discuss the railway on anything other than the Clerk-inspired terms, the emperor was being bombarded daily by Ilg, Chefneux, the journalist Le Roux and, to a lesser extent, Lagarde, to come to some agreement before the British minister's return. Menilek held firm until Harrington reached the Ethiopian capital. In London, Harrington had failed to win approval of his policy of wholehearted support for Ethiopia in the railway question. While he remained patently anti-French in his outlook, Harrington now believed that if London refused financial support for a rival line from Berbera, then Whitehall should come to terms with Paris on lines similar to Cromer's suggestions--an Anglo-French promise to respect Ethiopia's independence, delimitation of a sphere of French "political interference" east of the Hawash, joint control of the whole railway, and Jibuti as a guaranteed free port. Harrington doubted the French would accept such terms; if they did, the arrangement would be only "makeshift." The British minister fully expected Paris to repudiate its engagements.[70]

[69] Clerk to Lansdowne (let.), AA, April 2, 1904, FO 403/346.

[70] Memo. by Harrington, April 1, 1904, AA, sent privately to Cromer and officially to the F.O., FO 1/50.

From both Lansdowne and Cromer, Harrington had explicit instructions: prevent the Ethiopian government from signing a convention for extension of the railway under solely French auspices without committing London to support any rival line in Ethiopia.[71] Lansdowne had concluded that internationalization of the line (or at least tripartite control by Great Britain, France and Italy) was the best solution.[72] Harrington worked along similar lines in the Ethiopian capital. In May of 1904, the Ethiopian government issued its guidelines for settlement of the railway problem. Not surprisingly, they were almost a carbon copy of Harrington's plan for internationalization: an Anglo-French promise to respect Ethiopia's independence and to refrain from acquiring territory or political influence, Anglo-French-Italian control of Ethiopia's railway system, and the establishment of Jibuti as a free port.[73]

The French made known their increasing exasperation at Harrington's apparent control of the pace of events in the railway problem. Paul Cambon, French ambassador in London, unofficially brought to the British foreign secretary's attention "disquieting reports" received at the Quai d'Orsay

[71]Harrington was told to follow the instructions given in Lansdowne to Clerk (tel.), London, Nov. 28, 1903, FO 403/344.

[72]Sanderson (for Lansdowne) to Cromer (let.), London, Jan. 29, 1904, FO 1/50.

[73]Harrington to Lansdowne via Cromer (tel.), AA, May 6, 1904, FO 1/50.

of Harrington's anti-French policy, which, to Cambon's mind, was out of date in the light of the Anglo-French Entente. Harrington, according to French information, had demanded British control of the entire line, including the already constructed section from Jibuti to Diré Dawa. Such a request, Lansdowne retorted, was highly improbable, although no doubt the British minister in Ethiopia proposed internationalization of the line. To Cambon, internationalization of the French portion of the railway was unthinkable; the line had been constructed with a governmental guarantee and, therefore, must retain its national character. After all, the French ambassador continued, Ethiopia was an island surrounded by British interests; for France, and for the other interested powers for that matter, the railway was the means of regulating Ethiopian affairs. While Lansdowne understood French feelings, it was impossible for him "to allow a single Power to retain absolute control over a portion of the Abyssinian railway system, especially when that portion was the 'neck of the funnel.'" Lansdowne did offer Paris some comfort: he admitted the construction of a Berbera-Harar line was a utopian scheme and confided that some means would have to be found for allowing Great Britain unrestricted use of the present line. Such a solution, according to the French ambassador, was possible if the line was treated as a commercial enterprise. France would surrender the concession between Addis Ababa and the White Nile and assure London equal treatment on the railway's

first two sections and in the port of Jibuti. Notwithstanding considerable progress towards a friendly solution with France, Lansdowne realized that settlement of the railway question would have to be part of a larger, general agreement on Ethiopian affairs by London, Paris and Rome. Cambon agreed with Lansdowne's conclusion, and their conversation ended on this optimistic note.[74]

From Addis Ababa, Harrington rebutted the French accusation that his conduct was out of date: the 1894 concession was not given to a French company, but to private individuals who formed a private company of principally British and French shareholders. Furthermore, the Ethiopian government persistently refused to accept the version of the concession giving the concessionaires a monopoly of railway construction from the Red Sea or Indian Ocean into Ethiopia. The British minister did not oppose the commercial interests of France--from an economic standpoint internationalization was the best alternative--but he did object to a single railway under exclusive French control. Such a policy was contrary to the "keystone" of Harrington's policy, the independence of Ethiopia. A French monopoly of Ethiopia's railway system was, to Harrington's mind, "a bid for political supremacy . . . and the only reason France can have for seeking a predominant position

[74]Cambon to Delcassé (D. no. 149, très confidentiel), London, May 18, 1904, Ddf, ser. 2, V, no. 148; Lansdowne to Monson (let.), London, May 16, 1904, FO 403/346.

in Abyssinia must be to gain the power of threatening England by flanking her in Egypt and the Sudan, and by commanding the Blue Nile."[75]

Here was the clearest indication of the lynch pin of Harrington's imperial policy. French control of the railway would mean French political dominance in Ethiopia which, in turn, would make Egypt and the Sudan vulnerable. The Nile was the key to Egypt and the Sudan; Ethiopia controlled one of the major sources of that mighty river. Unless England maintained Ethiopian independence, either by supporting the emperor's opposition to the French railway demands or by internationalizing (and thus neutralizing) the line, the recently signed Anglo-French Entente would be only as good as the French government's far from trustworthy word. What Harrington did not and could not foresee was that future German pressure in Morocco would permanently cement the Entente Cordiale. In 1904, Harrington remained skeptical of Paris. Since he had managed to win the confidence of the Ethiopian government, he used his influence to work against France. When Addis Ababa realized that the three limitrophe powers to Ethiopia were considering a tripartite agreement on the railway, it requested Harrington's inclusion in the negotiations to watch over Ethiopian interests. Such a request was a surprising mark of confidence, and Harrington strongly favored granting it. The British minister also

[75]Harrington to Lansdowne (let.), AA, June 15, 1904, FO 403/346.

reported that the Ethiopian government would stall the railway rather than accept an unsatisfactory solution. He added that if London did not take advantage of the present situation, it would cost millions to neutralize the mistake. Sir John concluded emphatically, "France has, and can have, no interest in Abyssinia, except to again raise the Egyptian question at a future date."[76]

Lansdowne telegraphed the British minister in the Ethiopian capital that negotiations were not sufficiently advanced to require his presence in London, but that the minister would be given full opportunity to act as the emperor's surrogate when the proper moment arrived. Harrington was to assure the negus that London would not neglect Ethiopian interests and had no intention of coming to an agreement with Paris without first consulting Addis Ababa.[77] While such an assurance was basically true, the British government had begun to consider seriously the possibility of a tripartite agreement with France and Italy to settle outstanding Ethiopian questions.

Thus, after mid-1904 it is misleading to treat the Ethiopian railway controversy as an issue unto itself. The railway question was one important consideration in the larger Tripartite Treaty negotiations. After overseeing

[76] Harrington to Lansdowne via Cromer (tel.), AA, June 8, 1904, FO 403/346.

[77] Lansdowne to Harrington via Cromer (tel.), London, June 9, 1904, FO 403/346.

and assisting construction of the first section of the railway to the foothills of Harar, the French government was unable to continue the line because of opposition in Addis Ababa. The Ethiopian government, inspired in good measure by Harrington, concluded that continuation of the line in solely French hands was an unquestionable threat to Ethiopia's independence. The emperor preferred no further railway construction to French commercial, and ultimately political, dominance through a monopoly of rail communications within his empire. For this reason, the French agreed to deflect the locus of the issue away from Addis Ababa to the capitals of the three interested European powers. For the next few years, the tripartite agreement was the overriding consideration in Ethiopian external affairs, and as such, it merits a separate chapter in a study of Sir John Harrington's career.

CHAPTER VIII: THE TRIPARTITE TREATY AND THE SEEDS OF MISTRUST, 1904-1906

The Tripartite Treaty, signed in December 1906, embodied specific diplomatic and strategic goals of each of its contracting parties. To the French, the treaty promised neutralization of Ethiopia and thus protection for their economic interests, especially the railway. From the British point of view, the agreement, above all, guaranteed the security of the Ethiopian sources and affluents of the Nile against European imperial rivalry. For the Italians, the 'poor relations' of France and Great Britain in northeast Africa, the treaty granted a further acknowledgement of Italian possessions in Eritrea and Somaliland, a vague promise of a strip of territory to join them in the event of the break-up of the Ethiopian empire, and the smallest shred of legitimacy for Italian pretensions to a protectorate over Ethiopia.

On an individual level, negotiations for the treaty were a serious threat to Harrington's position at the Gibbi and a confirmation that future British-Ethiopian relations would conform to the priorities of Whitehall's foreign policy. In an era of general settlement of colonial issues with France in anticipation of the threat of Germany,

Harrington felt increasingly out of step with the direction of British policy in Ethiopia. He made a conscientious effort to make the Tripartite Treaty work, but became convinced that it really was a French ruse, disguising their bid for supremacy. After 1906, Harrington received promotions and new honors, in this case, a sign that he was on the way out. Harrington's last two years in Ethiopia were a melancholy epilogue to his diplomatic career. His fall was even more meteoric than his rise.

The diplomatic negotiations leading up to the Tripartite Treaty were both lengthy and complex and have been the subject of recent scholarship.[1] In 1899, the French minister in Addis Ababa floated the idea of the neutralization of Ethiopia to be adhered to by Paris, London, and Rome. Menilek approved and asked Lagarde to investigate the possibility. The Quai d'Orsay expected Italian cooperation because Rome favored a waiting game after Adwa and would view neutralization as a means of preventing French political predominance in Ethiopia. The British, however, were the stumbling block according to the Anglophile French ambassador to London. Lagarde's envisioned neutralization would be interpreted as a French attempt to freeze a status

[1] Harold G. Marcus, "A Preliminary History of the Tripartite Treaty of December 13, 1906," Journal of Ethiopian Studies, XI, 2 (1964), 21-39 and Life and Times of Menilek, mss., pp. 358-71. The emphasis of this treatment of the negotiations will be upon Harrington's role and the effect the treaty had on his career.

quo favorable to French interests. Geography, Ambassador Paul Cambon pessimistically noted, intended Ethiopia to fall to England, and the British cabinet would not negotiate away that advantage.[2]

Cambon was overly pessimistic and Lagarde overly optimistic about British response to the neutralization idea. The French consul-general at Cairo hit the mark when he suggested that while Great Britain constituted a threat to Ethiopia, British policy was essentially defensive.[3] For almost two years, Paris received little response to neutralization from London. Harrington, in an informal conversation with the acting governor of Jibuti, conceded that he favored common action on the division of influence in Ethiopia among the three interested European powers after "an entente of good faith." As he was wont to do, Harrington spoke for his own part and allowed the French to conclude that he spoke for London. Actually, the question of respective influence in Ethiopia grew out of the problem of Menilek's succession. The Italians wished the three limitrophe European powers to come to an understanding as to which of the possible candidates for the Ethiopian imperial throne to support and, if necessary, impose in the event of the

[2]Lagarde to Delcassé (T. s.), Entotto, April 26 and AA, May 22, 1899, nos. 185, 214; and Cambon to Delcassé (D. no. 137), London, May 30, 1899, Ddf, ser. 1, 15, no. 195.

[3]Cogordon to Delcassé (D. no. 124), San Stefano, July 1, 1899, Ddf, ser. 1, 15, no. 227.

aging Menilek's death.[4]

Rodd, currently second-in-command at the British Embassy in Rome, asked Harrington's opinion of the Italian proposal. Sir John feared civil war upon Menilek's death and saw the obvious danger to Ethiopian independence in European meddling in the succession. Rival claimants to the throne might call upon Italian or French support with two possible results: if one European-backed candidate won, that nation would enjoy predominant influence in the Ethiopian empire or, more probably, European backing would result in a stalemate in the struggle for the imperial throne and the division of Ethiopia into spheres of influence. Without idealizing Ethiopian administration, Harrington believed it better assured British interests (especially Anglo-Egyptian security for the Nile's sources and affluents) than either one-power European domination or spheres of influence. Therefore, the British representative's advice was for non-intervention in the internal affairs of the African empire. Sir John thought an agreement by the three interested powers to this effect, first suggested by Rodd, was an excellent idea.[5]

[4] Bonhoure to Minister of Colonies, Jibuti, July 20, 1901, MAEF, Ethiopie, Politique Étrangère, Dossier Général, III, 1899-1904, as quoted in Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., p. 359, n. 123; Rodd to Lansdowne (let.), Rome, Sept. 10, 1902, FO 403/323.

[5] Harrington to Lansdowne (let.), AA, Dec. 15, 1902, FO 403/334.

While Rodd and Harrington envisioned a tripartite agreement to abstain from interference in the Ethiopian succession, the Italians worked along different lines. Admiral Morin, Italy's foreign minister, suggested an Anglo-Italian guarantee of possessions in East Africa and joint diplomatic action to forestall French monopolization of Ethiopia's rail outlets to the sea. Later in the summer of 1903, Morin hinted at a division of Ethiopia into economic spheres of influence. Rodd believed that Italy sought a definite agreement with London over Ethiopian policy to strengthen its "somewhat unsubstantial authority" in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. Lansdowne had no intention of allowing Italy to hitch its derelict ambitions to Great Britain's preponderant influence in Egypt, the Sudan, the Red Sea, and Indian Ocean. Nevertheless, the foreign secretary was willing to negotiate an agreement to support Ethiopian agreements already in force in the event of a change in the status quo within the Ethiopian empire.[6] The Italians couched their proposals in such convoluted and obscure generalizations that Harrington was diverted to Rome (he was en route to Ethiopia from London) to discover the specific

[6]Bertie to Lansdowne (let.), Rome, May 25; Memo. by Morin, Rome, Aug. 29; and Rodd to Lansdowne (let.), Rome, Sept. 6, 1903, FO 403/334. According to the foreign secretary, the Italians were "not . . . desirable partners" in a mutual guarantee of respective possessions in East Africa. Lansdowne minute to Italian memo. of May 23, 1903, FO 1/43; Lansdowne to Bertie (tel.), London, Oct. 8, 1903, FO 403/334.

nature of Italian aims in Ethiopia. Sir John joined Rodd in a series of meetings with Giacomo Agnesa, head of the colonial department of the Italian Foreign Office, which resulted in preliminary recommendations for an agreement on Anglo-Ethiopian cooperation in Ethiopia.

The preamble of the Anglo-Italian recommendations, including as an avowed object of joint policy the maintenance of the integrity of the Ethiopian empire, was easily agreed to by the delegates. The first two articles of the preliminary agreement also caused little difficulty. Italian and British representatives agreed to keep each other fully informed, and the two governments promised to maintain the status quo as defined by various agreements, treaties, and the de facto territorial situation between the colony of Obok-Jibuti and Ethiopia (neither Rome nor London was aware of the exact nature of Franco-Ethiopian frontier arrangements, thus the vague language). The third article would confer legitimacy on what had been customary: neither power would seek concessions in Ethiopia which might harm the interests of the other. Article IV, constituted finally as an agreement to remain neutral in the event of a disputed succession, caused considerable problems. Initially, Agnesa wished the two governments jointly to support a candidate in return for concessions after his ascension to the throne. Neither Rodd nor Harrington favored such a plan. After long and exhaustive discussions, Agnesa dropped the scheme for supporting individual claimants, in favor of

remaining neutral, and the two Englishmen deferred to the Italian's wishes by including a paragraph providing for cooperation in the event of unforeseen circumstances arising out of a disputed succession. Since the delegates had obliquely raised the possibility of the disintegration of the Ethiopian empire, Agnesa insisted that this contingency be covered. Accordingly, the two powers engaged in Article V to act together to insure that any partition of the empire would be made on the basis of the documents defining the status quo in Article II, with any modifications thought necessary by either power to protect British interests in the Nile basin and Italian interests in Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somaliland, including an intervening zone connecting Eritrea and Somaliland-Benadir. Finally, the two powers agreed to consider opposing any other power attempting to contravene the realization of the objects contemplated in Article V. Naturally the document would remain secret.[7]

Interested British diplomats and statesmen objected to Article V of the projected agreement. Sir Francis Bertie, ambassador to Rome, concluded that, in the event of Ethiopia's disintegration, the stipulation implied nothing less than armed Anglo-Italian opposition to resist French occupation of derelict Ethiopian territory, notwithstanding Morin's assurances that Article V did not entail compulsory

[7]Memo. by Harrington and Rodd on the preliminary Anglo-Italian agreement, enclosed in Bertie to Lansdowne (let.), Rome, Dec. 19, 1903, FO 403/334.

armed intervention. Also, as the Anglo-Italian Protocols of 1891 and 1894 were part of Article II's definition of the status quo, their inclusion in the projected agreement gave a further shred of legitimacy to the defunct Italian protectorate over Ethiopia.[8] Foremost among the critics of Article V was Cromer, who agreed with Bertie's assessment that an agreement to oppose any third power which might attempt to acquire territory meant no less than a commitment forcibly to resist French occupation of Ethiopian soil. "It is certainly desirable that French influence in Ethiopia should not become predominant in Abyssinia," Cromer noted, "but from that to the recognition, in however slight a degree, that so great a British interest is involved as to justify a recourse to arms in order to obviate the establishment of that influence, is a very wide step indeed."[9]

The more Cromer thought about the Anglo-Italian recommendations the more unsatisfactory he realized they were. The Italians always proceeded on the assumption that London preferred themselves to the French as the Sudan's neighbors. While Cromer believed the Italians were "more troublesome," he did admit that, as the weaker power, they were preferable. Yet when Rodd and Harrington agreed to recommend the use of force in Ethiopia to combat French ambitions,

[8] Bertie to Lansdowne (let.), Rome, Dec. 19, 1903, FO 403/334.

[9] Cromer to Lansdowne (let.), Cairo, Jan. 8, 1904, FO 403/346.

Cromer felt that "one has to ask oneself what is the maintenance of British influence in Abyssinia worth? It is worth a diplomatic effort, but it is certainly not worth a war with a First Class Power." Cromer never could remember a time "when greater steadiness was required in dealing with foreign affairs. It is certainly not the moment for taking serious engagements or the accomplishment of objects of second-rate importance."[10]

Cromer concluded that London could not "come to terms with the Italians alone without assuming--at all events in appearance and probably in fact--an unfriendly attitude toward France. Mutatis mutandis, the same applies to an arrangement with France only, to the exclusion of Italy." Lansdowne agreed it would be a mistake to arrange Ethiopian affairs with Italy "over the heads or behind the backs of the French."[11] The logical step was to include the French in tripartite negotiations.

On May 18, 1904, Lansdowne took advantage of Cambon's profession of the absence of French political designs on Ethiopia to mention the negotiations with Italy. The announcement did not take the French by surprise; they were working hard to mend their fences with Italy in the hopes

[10]Cromer to Sanderson (priv. let.), Cairo, Jan. 8, 1904, Sanderson Papers (hereafter San P), FO 800/2.

[11]Cromer to Gorst (priv. let.), Cairo, March 15, 1904, CP, FO 633/8. Lansdowne to Cromer (priv. let.), London, May 10, 1904, CP, FO 633/7/no. 192.

of using the Italians as a link to Great Britain in Ethiopia. The French ambassador immediately proposed three-sided negotiations and presented a tentative outline of topics to be discussed: recognition of Ethiopian independence, delimitation of Ethiopian frontiers, definition of zones of influence adjacent to each power's possessions, and the question of the railway.[12]

Given the recently signed Anglo-French entente, the Italians were hardly surprised when Lansdowne relayed Cambon's suggestions. Italy was reconciled to a tripartite agreement divested of any anti-French character. The only interested diplomat left unaware of the tripartite initiatives was Harrington in the Ethiopian capital. In a blistering telegram, the British plenipotentiary protested to Whitehall:

> I am assured as a positive fact by Menelek, and all interested in the matter, that the British and French Governements are at present engaged in negotiations for the settlement of the Railway question. My position as regards His Majesty becomes very difficult in this case. My professions of ignorance are received by everyone with incredulity, and my language is employed as a weapon against our policy by my French colleague.

Harrington realized that "the broad lines" of policy must form the basis of the settlement, and far be it for him to

[12]The French attempt at rapprochement with Italy is well documented; see Barrère to Delcassé (D. no. 4, T. no. 10, no. 31, D. no. 41), Rome, Jan. 8, 13, Feb. 1, March 8, 1904, Ddf, ser. 2, IV. For the Lansdowne-Cambon conversations see Lansdowne to Monson (tel.), London, May 18, 1904, FO 403/346.

dictate policy; but Sir John felt compelled to "submit that your Lordship [Lansdowne] is entirely master of the situation, and any terms which you offer must be accepted by the French."

To have kept Harrington in the dark was deplorable, but what alarmed the British minister more was the possibility that London would concede by negotiation in Europe what Paris had failed to achieve in the Ethiopian capital--continuation of a French-dominated railway. Sir John was understandably upset; Lansdowne's comment was "Harrington wants a sedative badly." Cromer suggested the sedation in the form of a reassurance that the projected tripartite agreement would guarantee the independence of Ethiopia and that Harrington would be kept informed of the progress of negotiations on the railway. Harrington was not convinced. He tried the obvious ploy of attempting to include himself in the negotiations as Menilek's accredited representative, a request which Lansdowne firmly turned down.[13]

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[13] Harrington to Cromer (tel.), AA, n.d., relayed in Cromer to Lansdowne (tel.), Cairo, May 26, 1904, with a minute by Lansdowne, FO 403/346 and FO 1/50; Lansdowne to Harrington via Cromer (tel.), London, May 28, 1904, FO 403/346.

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connecting territorial zone between Somaliland and Eritrea.[14] If this belt of Italian territory was meant to separate Ethiopia from the Sudan, then Cromer was opposed. "The interposition of even a friendly power like Italy between the headwaters of the Blue Nile and its lower reaches is strongly to be deprecated," he remarked. Furthermore, "a ring-fence around Ethiopia would cut off the Sudan's growing trade with Ethiopia and the natural sanitorium of the Abyssinian highlands." Cromer's specific objections grew into a basic disapprobation of the entire tenor of the Anglo-Italian discussions; while the Italians, and the French for that matter, paid lip-service to the concept of maintaining Ethiopian independence, Italian proposals and French informal approaches all viewed disintegration of Ethiopia as a "highly probable contingency." Of the three, only Great Britain was genuinely opposed to disintegration and partition. Cromer preferred not to deal with disintegration at all, but to treat it as a contingency which must not be allowed to occur. Such determination meant support of Ethiopian rule and non-interference in any civil war until Ethiopians themselves solved the question of succession. If the Italians insisted upon bringing up the possibility of disintegration, then London should lay down clearly and definitely that the object of common policy in Ethiopia was

[14]Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., p. 363.

to prevent it.[15]

Following Cromer's advice, Lansdowne refused to accept the amended Italian draft. The foreign secretary informed Rome that all his government intended "was to place on record that in an eventuality, which . . . he hope[d] might be remote, viz., the disintegration of the Ethiopian Empire, the two Governments would endeavor to arrive at a reasonable arrangement, in which each side would take into consideration certain interests in which the other was peculiarily concerned."[16] When the British informally opened negotiations with France, the problem of spheres of influence was again raised in a new guise, which Delcassé termed temporary "economic zones." Paris insisted that such a partition did not threaten Ethiopia's independence. Cromer, who as senior imperial statesman was the key advisor to Lansdowne in the tripartite negotiations, was not so sure. "I do not like M. Delcassé's idea of dividing the country into 'spheres of influence.' It is to this policy that Harrington has always strongly objected . . . I think he is right." To Cromer, Delcassé's temporary economic zones were indicative of the "earth-hunger so prevalent nowadays." It was an easy transition from an economic zone to a sphere of influence and then to an outright possession.

[15]Cromer to Lansdowne (lets.), Cairo, May 13, July 4, 1904, FO 403/346.

[16]Lansdowne to Rodd (tel.), London, Oct. 8, 1904, FO 403/346.

Cromer next turned to the question of the railway. While he and Harrington favored internationalization of the entire line to prevent French predominant influence in the Ethiopian empire, "the Lord" realized such a remedy was now impossible. First, the French had made it clear that they were unalterably opposed to internationalization. Second, even if Paris agreed to such a demand, it was unlikely that the British Parliament would provide funds for a joint Anglo-French-Italian guarantee of interest on capital to complete the Ethiopian rail system. Under those circumstances, Cromer advised dropping internationalization and concentrating upon obtaining the guarantees best suited to prevent French influence from becoming paramount in Ethiopia. The French were already prepared to concede equality of treatment on the first two sections of the line, and control of the third section, west of Addis Ababa, to British enterprise. Cromer thought these concessions inadequate. Although London would probably never avail itself of the right, he suggested that France should recognize a British concession for a line from British Somaliland to the Sudan. Such an admission would give London a last-resort guarantee of equality of treatment on the established French line, the threat of a potential rival line.

The Egyptian pro-consul then recommended that the second section of the line, from Diré Dawa to Addis Ababa, should be constructed by Ethiopia and that the management, so far as it was European, be internationalized.

Lansdowne's main objection to this suggestion was that the French were unlikely to agree. Menilek had refused to allow continuation of the second section under pressure from Harrington. A British proposal of Ethiopianization of the Diré-Dawa-to-Addis Ababa segment would be interpreted in France as still another attempt to relieve French commerce of its rightful concession and to cut off French influence from Addis Ababa. Nevertheless, Lansdowne passed on Cromer's suggestions to the Quai d'Orsay.[17]

Given the good feeling engendered by the Entente Cordiale of 1904, compromise between London and Paris was possible. Admittedly, the French did not like the idea of transferring construction of the second section to Ethiopia. The annual subvention for the first segment of the line from the French Chamber might well depend upon French control of the second section, Delcassé maintained. Also, the French feared that the Italian demand for a link between Eritrea and Somaliland might come at the expense of the Ethiopian hinterland of the Jibuti colony, an area Paris wished to reserve for French economic penetration. Nevertheless, a considerable body of substantive agreement existed: France's main interest was the Ethiopian hinterland of Jibuti east of the Nile watershed; Great Britain's, the Nile and its affluents; and Italy's, territorial continuity between its

[17] Cromer to Gorst (let.), Cairo, Nov. 12, 1904, FO 403/346, with minutes by Gorst and Lansdowne.

colonies in East Africa. Lansdowne assured Delcassé that this Italian corridor would not interrupt the projected French zone, and the French foreign minister, in turn, accepted the idea of a British concession for a possible British Somaliland-to-the Nile railway which crossed Ethiopia. Naturally, London would extend absolute equality on their line (should it be built), as the French proposed to do on theirs. Paris could give no assurance that the lines would be linked in the future, but the French did not rule out that possibility. Finally, the French suggested equality of footing in the Ethiopian capital. Lansdowne believed it was time to begin formal tripartite negotiations. The announcement of a German mission to Ethiopia gave the French an extra prod; Cambon stressed the need for urgency to complete the agreement before the meddling Kaiser Wilhelm II tried his hand at Ethiopian politics.[18]

The special interests of each European power in the event of the disintegration of the Ethiopian empire--despite all three nations' statements denying any desire to subvert Ethiopia's independence--formed a substantial part of the tripartite agreement. The railway, however, was the most immediate issue, and the one in which Harrington, a stranger to all but the barest outlines of the tripartite negotiations, was most interested. Since August 1904, the

[18] Lansdowne to Cambon (let.), London, Dec. 16, 1904, FO 403/346; Lansdowne to de Bunsen (tel.), London, Jan. 4; Lansdowne to Bertie (tel.), London, Jan. 11; and Lansdowne to Cambon (let.), London, Jan. 13, 1905, FO 1/56.

Ethiopian capital had been rife with rumors of an Anglo-French Ethiopian railway agreement; Lagarde was in regular telegraphic communication with the Quai d'Orsay while Harrington heard nothing from Whitehall. Menilek daily inquired of news from the British minister, who sadly informed His Majesty that he had nothing to report.[19] Silence only increased the Ethiopian monarch's suspicion that London was prepared to abandon Ethiopia to the French.

In February 1905, Menilek asked Harrington to remind London that the Ethiopian government desired a solution to the railway problem which would leave no one European government in control of the line. The Ethiopian Treasury, Sir John added, could raise the necessary capital to construct the remainder of the railway. Were Ethiopia to do so, starting from British Somaliland, the French would have no choice but to accept internationalization. In conclusion, the British minister reiterated his objection to continuation of the railway under Paris's control, not to the French railway company itself.

Harrington's suggestions annoyed Lansdowne; they were not in keeping with the possible. Despite a strong pro-internationalization campaign by the chambers of commerce of a number of French industrial cities, the French government refused to consider internationalization and intended

[19] Harrington to Lansdowne via Cromer (tel.), AA, Aug. 21, 1904, FO 1/50.

to hold Ethiopia to the original concession. "The railway is what they really care about," Lansdowne confided to Bertie, the new ambassador to France, "and now as they have a concession from Menelek in their pocket, I don't see how we can--considering our present relations--put up that Potentate to oppose the construction of the Dire Dawa-Adis Abeba section." Furthermore, if Harrington still had hopes of Treasury support for construction of a line within British Somaliland to join an Ethiopian line, he was mistaken; of that there was simply "no chance." Finally, the foreign secretary failed to appreciate Sir John's distinction between a private company and one under governmental control. If the capital was all-French, what was the difference?[20]

Harrington responded with his now-familiar litany: the concession was no longer a monopoly since it was given on the distinct understanding that no government was to be involved. The concessionaires had broken the contract by accepting the Jibuti subvention. In any case, the concession applied only to the first section. As an independent sovereign, Menilek was justified in dictating terms for continuation of the line. Harrington felt it was his duty to

[20] Harrington to Lansdowne (tel.), AA, Feb. 28, 1905, with minute by Lansdowne, FO 1/53; Lansdowne to Bertie (priv. let.), London, Jan. 13, 1905 /ab/05/17, Bertie Papers A, FO 800/160. For the campaign of the French chamber of commerces, see Bertie to Lansdowne (lets.), Paris, Feb. 15, 18, 20, and March 28 and Lansdowne to Bertie (let.), London, March 1, 1905, FO 1/53; and La Question Éthiopienne et les Chambres de Commerces de France (Paris, 1905).

warn Whitehall that the Ethiopian government was more determined each day to prevent French railway dominance and was prepared to build its own line or go to Berlin for help. "Any arrangement," Harrington concluded, "not in accordance with his /Menilek's/ views lays both powers open to serious rebuff."[21]

Lansdowne believed Ethiopia had no case for abrogation of the original concession because of the vague clause in the 1902 convention stipulating Ethiopian assent for execution of the agreement outside French territory. Nonetheless, the foreign secretary informed the Quai d'Orsay of Menilek's desire for internationalization, knowing full well it would be strenuously resisted. Lansdowne noted that the French seemed unaware of Ethiopia's stiffening opposition; was Menilek as determined with Lagarde as he was with Harrington?[22]

The British foreign secretary admitted considerable anxiety over Ethiopian affairs. In spite of the movement of French chambers of commerce in favor of internationalization, the Paris government and parliament were opposed. "On the other hand," Lansdowne continued:

[21] Harrington to Lansdowne (tel.), AA, n.d., relayed in Cromer to Lansdowne (tel.), Cairo, March 15, 1905, FO 1/53.

[22] Lansdowne to Harrington (tel.), London, March 17, 1905, FO 1/53. Lansdowne was really asking if the Ethiopian government was as adamant as Harrington maintained, or did Sir John allow his own strong feelings to color his judgment?

> Menelek, if Harrington is to be believed [italics mine], is steadfastly opposed to a French line to Adis Abeba, and is not unnaturally puzzled at the change which our policy has undergone. Harrington is so deeply wedded to the old policy, and so clearly identified with it in Menelek's eyes, that Menelek will probably not believe him when he tells His Majesty we have come to an understanding with the French.

Lansdowne also noted that Paris could never be convinced that Sir John was "not putting spokes in their wheels." In all, it was a difficult situation made worse by reliable indications that Ethiopia would turn to the Germans if denied internationalization of the railway. Still, the foreign secretary did not believe the Kaiser would pay one of his now celebrated visits to Addis Ababa.[23]

Lansdowne's expressed fears implied that Harrington, either wittingly or unwittingly, was following a dangerously independent line in the Ethiopian capital. While Lansdowne hinted, his French counterpart accused. When Delcassé learned of Harrington's telegram citing Ethiopia's opposition to the railway and the threat to go to Berlin for support, he was convinced that "in reality, it is not Menilek who is opposed to our projects. It was always, and is even more so today, Harrington." Delcassé instructed Cambon to ask Whitehall to reject the advice of its representative in Addis Ababa, the saboteur of the 1902 convention and the two satisfactory near-agreements in 1904. Then

[23]Lansdowne to Cromer (priv. let.), London, April 3, 1905, CP, FO 633/7/no. 194.

the railway question would be settled with little difficulty. To French minds, Harrington became the personification of La perfide Albion whose influence had to be counteracted. Lansdowne agreed to order Harrington to impress upon Menilek that there could be no tripartite agreement--the only means of assuring Ethiopian independence--if the French railway extension was denied. The British foreign secretary gave Ethiopia his promise that its interests would be adequately protected under the terms of the proposed tripartite agreement. With less than full candor, Lansdowne pointed out that the stipulations guaranteeing Ethiopian integrity outweighed the danger to Ethiopia of failure of Anglo-French negotiations over the future of the Solomonic empire.[24]

In reality, Lansdowne was not completely satisfied that the French threat had been removed. Paris's gratitude for Whitehall's support of its policy of peaceful penetration of Morocco, especially important after the Kaiser William's March visit to Tangiers, would not extend all the way to the Ethiopian capital. French "mischief" was to be expected there. Nevertheless, Lansdowne felt fairly confident he could handle Paris; it was Harrington's behavior that worried him. The Italian ambassador's intelligence, as passed on to the Foreign Office, revealed that Sir John was "more uncompromising" than he had led Whitehall to believe. In a

[24] Delcassé to Cambon (D. no. 273), Paris, March 20 and Cambon to Delcassé (D. no. 105), London, March 27, 1905, Ddf, ser. 2, VI, nos. 165, 196; Lansdowne to Bertie, to Harrington (lets.), London, March 22, 1905, FO 1/53.

confidential note to Bertie in Paris, Lansdowne admitted, "We are not making much progress with Abyssinia--I mistrust Harrington [italics mine], but the French cannot expect us to ride rough shod over Menilek in order to get them their precious railway." Bertie did his best to play on Delcassé's anxiety about Morocco and to predict a similar "German push" in Ethiopia. All the more reason for Paris to settle the railway question, said the British ambassador. But Delcassé was in a corner; he had committed himself publicly not to accept internationalization.[25]

While Lansdowne and Whitehall became increasingly suspicious of Harrington's conduct, the British minister found himself in an equally difficult position in the Ethiopian capital. The Gibbi was kept in the dark as to the details of the tripartite agreement, and the negus brusquely replied to London's advice of settlement with the French: "After my experience of French policy in my country, I fail to see the value to me of any agreement whereby the French Government control a railway to my capital, and unless the Railway in Abyssinian territory is internationalized, I shall build the continuation myself." Informally, Menilek complained to Harrington that France, Italy and Great Britain were treating Ethiopia as "a pawn . . . of no account."

[25]Lansdowne to Cromer (priv. let.), London, April 20, 1905, Lansdowne Papers: Egypt, 1900-1926, FO 800/124; Lansdowne to Bertie (let.), London, April 26 [ab/05/4], and Bertie to Mallet (priv. let.), London, April 12, 1905 [ab/05/3], Bertie Papers A, FO 800/160.

Harrington telegraphed for aid from Cromer, and he agreed that secrecy over the tripartite agreement was leading to undue Ethiopian suspicion. "The Lord" would try to arrange for a communication to soothe ruffled feathers at the Gibbi.[26]

Lansdowne tried to obtain assent from Paris and Rome to the transmittal to Addis Ababa of an innocuous version of the tripartite agreement, but he moved too slowly. On the next day, April 11, 1905, Menilek summoned all representatives of European nations, the concessionaires, and the agent of the railway trust to the Gibbi, where he informed them that Ethiopia had asked France and Great Britain to settle the question. If the railway issue was not solved on international lines, the negus promised that his government would build the extension to Addis Ababa. The meeting was well orchestrated; Harrington followed the emperor with his familiar arguments in favor of internationalization and against French governmental control. At one point, when Sir John remarked that French domination of the line was incompatible with Ethiopian independence, Lagarde lunged at the British minister as if to rebut the Englishman's accusation with action as well as words; but Sir John continued unperturbed and untouched. Then Lagarde spluttered a defense;

[26]Harrington to Lansdowne (tel.), AA, April 2, relayed in Cromer to F.O. (tel.), Cairo, April 5, 1905, FO 1/53; Cromer to Gorst (let.), Cairo, April 6 and Cromer to Harrington (priv. tel.), Cairo, April 11, 1905, FO 1/56.

the three interested European powers were discussing the question, and when they had made their decision he would inform the Ethiopian government. One of the rases present taunted Lagarde to explain France's motives; the little "Duke of Entotto" replied that his service in Ethiopia for the past twenty-six years must satisfy the negus. After this outbreak, the Italian minister confirmed his government's position in favor of internationalization; the Russian diplomat present said nothing. With that, the levée ended.[27]

The French were furious at Harrington. They believed he was the inspiration for Menilek's ultimatum. Cambon warned Lansdowne that Sir John's action threatened to reopen Anglo-French colonial rivalry, and he took advantage of the occasion to report the local Addis gossip: Harrington publicly professed that he was unconcerned about any arrangement between Paris or London; he alone would defend British interests in Ethiopia. As for disapproval, Sir John allegedly cared little; he feared neither disgrace or displacement. Lansdowne brushed off these bazaar-rumors, but privately he had clearly lost confidence in the British plenipotentiary. The French continued their campaign against Harrington. Lansdowne was informally reminded that

[27]Gorst to Cromer (priv. tel.), London, April 10, 1905, FO 1/56. Harrington to Lansdowne (tel.), AA, April 11, relayed in Cromer to F.O. (tel.), Cairo, April 13, 1905, FO 1/53; Ochs to F.O. (let.), Paris, May 16, 1905, FO 401/8.

since the Entente Cordiale was a fait accompli, Paris expected "better things" than Harrington's stubborn opposition.[28]

Ethiopia's opposition to continuation of the railway on anything other than international lines and the possibility of German support for Menilek made the tripartite negotiations crucial for the French. Before tackling Ethiopian resistance, they needed the cooperation--at least the neutrality--of Rome and London. Two obstacles prevented French concurrence in the proposed agreement; the question of control of the Ethiopian rails system and the problem of the Italian connecting strip. Delcassé feared that the Italian claim to territorial continuity between Eritrea and Somaliland could be fulfilled only at the expense of the Hawash basin, the hinterland of Jibuti colony; if France agreed to the Italian demand, it would find itself barred territorially from Addis Ababa in the event of the collapse of Ethiopia. On the other hand, any settlement of the second section of the railway on international lines would destroy the principal French avenue of commercial penetration of the Ethiopian empire.[29] Delcassé's task was to compromise enough to gain British (and to a lesser extent,

[28]Cambon to Delcassé (D. no. 153), London, May 3, 1905, Ddf, ser. 2, VI, no. 389; Lord Percy to Lansdowne (priv. let.), London, April 18, 1905, FO 1/53.

[29]Delcassé to Cambon (D. no. 225), Paris, March 8, 1905, Ddf, ser. 2, VI, no. 135; Lansdowne to Bertie (let.), London, March 15, 1905, FO 401/8.

Italian) concurrence in a tripartite agreement without losing the advantages France enjoyed in Ethiopia.

Delcassé quickly set about his task. If Whitehall would agree to deflect the Italian connecting strip to the west of Addis Ababa, then the Quai d'Orsay would accept Lansdowne's suggestion of an international board of directors for the railway, to consist of one Italian, one British, and one Ethiopian representative with the rest, including the chairman, to be French. Once this compromise was accomplished, Delcassé was sure that the Ethiopian government would be won over; Menilek's suspicions were, after all, "largely due to the personal influence of Sir John Harrington."[30] Lansdowne knew full well that internationalization of the railway company itself, as opposed to the cosmetic internationalization of the board of directors, would entail British financial support for the Ethiopian rail system. In London the money was not to be had.[31] Therefore, the foreign secretary decided to obtain what railway concessions he could from Paris while still leaving the monetary responsibility to the French. Following Cromer's advice, Lansdowne demanded, in return for British concurrence to the continuation of the line to Addis under

[30]Lansdowne to Bertie (lets.), London, April 19, May 3, 1905, FO 1/56.

[31]Clarke (for the Committee of Imperial Defence) to Lansdowne (let.), London, Jan. 25, 1905, with a memo. by Lansdowne, Jan. 26, FO 1/56.

French auspices, equality of treatment in Jibuti and on the railway; surrender of the French right to build the third section on to the Nile; acknowledgement that the British would control railway communications west of the Ethiopian capital; and the right for a potential British Somaliland line to the Sudan (Cromer's way of assuring French good behavior). Paris accepted.[32]

Although the British and the French had struck a bargain, the Italians tiresomely dragged their feet to obtain the right to construct railways north and south of the Ethiopian capital and sovereignty over their potential connecting zone. The French and British refused, stalling the negotiations for months until Rome accepted a draft with explanatory letters stating that the promised Italian zone of communication should be "territorial."[33] Flushed with this success, Rome attempted to wrest new concessions. Only an Anglo-French threat by the new foreign ministers, Sir Edward Grey and Leon Bourgeois, of a draft treaty without the Italians and with all references to Italy deleted brought Rome to its senses.[34]

[32]Memo. by Geoffray, London, April 25, 1905, FO 1/56; Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., pp. 366-67.

[33]The Moroccan crisis and subsequent political changes in all three limitrophe powers' governments played a major part in the delay.

[34]Marcus, "Preliminary History of the Tripartite Treaty," pp. 35-36. Grey to Bertie (lets.), London, May 21 [17737], 22 [17734], 23 [17953]; Grey to Egerton (lets.), London, May 23 [17968], June 6 [19682], 1906, FO 371/1.

Next it was the French who became difficult. They insisted on, and received, assurances that the Italian corridor would be carved out of the territory falling to England in the basin of the Nile.[35] On July 4, 1906, Sir Edward Grey, the foreign secretary of the new Liberal Government, and Paul Cambon initialled the final draft; two days later the Italian representative, the Marquis di San Giulano, also signed his initials. Formal signature awaited the Ethiopian government's views, but, in essence, the treaty was accomplished.[36]

It was a curious document. The preamble to the eleven articles acknowledged the signatories' desire "to maintain intact the integrity of Ethiopia"; yet the difficult negotiations had been over the definition of respective interests and spheres in the event of the dissolution of Ethiopia. Was it hypocrisy? The British Foreign Office under both the Conservative and Liberal governments saw the treaty as a means of assuring Ethiopian independence (and European non-interference with the sources of the Nile); but if the

[35]Grey feared that last-minute feet dragging might jeopardize the entire negotiations. London had pressed Rome to sign the treaty, only to find the French hesitant. Therefore, Grey agreed that the Italian inter-communication should "be what M. Bourgeois calls 'at the expense of England.'" Egerton to Grey (tel.), Rome, June 19 [20977]; Grey to Bertie (let.), London, June 19 [20977]; Bertie to Grey (tel.), Paris, June 21 [21172], with a minute by Gorst; and Grey to Bertie (tel.), London, June 22, 1906 [21264], FO 371/1.

[36]Grey to Harrington (tel.), London, July 6, 1906 [23072], FO 371/1.

Ethiopian empire were to collapse, then London had ensured the Nile sources by its sphere of influence west of Addis Ababa. As for the treaty itself, Article I defined the status quo in Ethiopia on the basis of previously signed agreements, pointedly omitting the disputed 1902 railway convention between the company and the Jibuti colony. Italy won retention of the Anglo-Italian Protocols of 1891 and 1894 defining Ethiopia as their protectorate, even while unabashedly declaring that the various diplomatic agreements used to define the status quo did not infringe on Ethiopian sovereignty. Article II stated that each power's nationals should not injure the interests of the two others.

Non-interference and neutrality in Ethiopian affairs (one of Cromer's important demands) was the gist of Article III; nonetheless if such involvement proved unavoidable, the consent of the three limitrophe powers was required before intervention. Article IV defined the interests of the three powers in the event of disintegration of Ethiopia: the basin of the Nile for England, territorial communication between Eritrea and Somaliland for Italy, and, for France, the hinterland of Jibuti colony, which the second section of the railway was to cross. Articles V and VI recognized France's right to construct the second section and granted equality of trade on the line and in Jibuti. National representatives of Great Britain, Italy, and Ethiopia sat on the railway's board of directors by virtue of Article VII, which also granted reciprocal rights to the French on any

future Italian and British sponsored lines in Ethiopia. Article VIII held Paris to non-interference in the railway concession beyond the Ethiopian capital; railways west of Addis, according to Article IX, were the preserve of Great Britain. Also attached was London's right to build a British Somaliland line to the Sudan. By Article X, the limitrophe powers promised exchange information in the Ethiopian capital and to cooperate in protecting their respective interests. Finally, Article XI pledged the signatories not to oppose the diplomatic arrangements ennumerated in Articles I and V.[37]

Ostensibly, Harrington had played only a minor role in the tripartite negotiations; yet his real importance was far greater. Sir John was Lansdowne's (later Grey's) 'stick' used in conjunction with the foreign secretary's 'carrot,' i.e., British acceptance of French control of the Diré Dawa-Addis Ababa section. The French held an exaggerated view of the British plenipotentiary's influence in the railway question. Failure to come to terms with London meant continued opposition by the irascible Englishman. In fact, Harrington was hardly the sole inspiration for Ethiopian opposition; Sir John often simply reinforced the Gibbi's defiance of French railway dominance. Nevertheless, implicit in the Anglo-French bargain was the understanding

[37] Tripartite Treaty, Dec. 13, 1906 /419767, FO 371/1; see also Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., pp. 360-70.

that Whitehall would call off Harrington. The Foreign Office was fully aware of Sir John's forthright opposition to an all-French railway, a policy bordering on independence of Whitehall, but it suited London's purpose for the present to have a bâton ethiopien in the person of the British minister plenipotentiary.

After the initialling of the tripartite agreement, Harrington was ordered to ascertain the Ethiopian monarch's view of the arrangement and obtain the Ethiopian government's approval of the treaty. Throughout the negotiations Sir John had argued against secrecy and had insisted that the text of the treaty be communicated to the negus, who would "resent any attempt to ignore his right to a voice in matters affecting his own kingdom."[38] On July 17, 1906, the representatives of the limitrophe powers communicated the terms of the treaty to the Ethiopian government. Harrington and his old adversary Lagarde attempted to induce the negus to accept it. At first, Harrington was hopeful that the emperor would have no major objections. He added that "I have done more than anyone to obtain the Emperor's adhesion to the Agreement, to my own personal disadvantage in my relations with His Majesty." Lagarde, the British plenipotentiary complained, was too "fearful of hurting" Menilek's susceptibilities; it would be helpful if he also

[38] Harrington to Lansdowne (let.), AA, Sept. 14, 1905, FO 1/56.

spoke plainly to the negus, explaining that while there was much to object to in the treaty, it did represent Ethiopia's best guarantee of independence.[39]

Ethiopian indignation at the Tripartite Treaty mounted during the autumn of 1906, when Harrington reported that Addis Ababa's assent to the treaty was impossible; all that could be anticipated was no formal objection from the Gibbi. Grey noted that it was sufficient that the Ethiopian government make no opposition to the tripartite agreement; after all, Ethiopia was never intended to be a signatory.[40] In Addis Ababa, Menilek summoned the representatives of the limitrophe powers for an audience on October 11th (Harrington was too ill to attend, so he sent Clerk): the emperor queried the various articles and acknowledged his surprise at the mention of railways without any attempt by the signatory powers to obtain prior authorization from his government. Clerk asked when the Ethiopian government would give its opinion of the treaty, but the negus was not able to say. Harrington became convinced that Menilek was stalling and suggested that the formal signing take place without communication from Ethiopia. Whitehall considered the scheme; but finally the emperor showed Harrington a draft

[39] Harrington to Grey (tel.), AA, July 17 [25176]; Sept. 11, 1906 [31283]; and Grey to Harrington (tel.), London, Aug. 28, 1906 [29392], FO 371/1.

[40] Des Graz to Grey (let.), Rome, Sept. 16 [32226] and Harrington to Grey (tel.), AA, Oct. 4, 1906 [34051], FO 371/1.

of his answer to the tripartite agreement and asked for the Englishman's observations. "It was a typically Abyssinian document," Harrington sourly reported, full of bluster and vague warnings. Sir John bluntly informed Menilek that if he gave such a reply "he laid himself open to the charge of either not having understood the Agreement or not having read it at all." The Ethiopian monarch responded that he had no intention of allowing his government to assent to the treaty. Harrington suggested a reply that conveyed Ethiopia's disapproval without directly opposing the agreement of the three limitrophe powers. Menilek answered in the sense Harrington suggested: "We have received the arrangement made by the three Powers. We thank them for their communication, and their desire to keep and maintain the independence of our Government. But let it be understood that this arrangement in no way limits what we consider sovereign rights."[41]

After Menilek's cool acknowledgement, the Tripartite Treaty was formally signed in London on December 13, 1906.[42] The agreement, overshadowed by the groundbreaking Entente Cordiale of 1904, nevertheless reinforced the Anglo-French rapprochement. As Grey remarked, it was a clear bargain:

[41]San Guiliano to Grey (let.), London, Oct. 12 /34978/; Harrington to Grey (tels.), AA, Oct. 12 /35062/, minutes by Gorst, Hardinge, and Grey, Dec. 1 /40690/, Dec. 5, 1906 /41665/, FO 371/1.

[42]Grey to Clerk (tel.), London, Dec. 13, 1906 /41976/, FO 371/1.

the agreement to respect and promote Ethiopian independence was Great Britain's quid pro quo for recognition of France's right to construct the second section of the railway.[43] London safeguarded, and reinsured through Article IV, the affluents and sources of the Nile; Paris believed it had ended the railway stalemate by removing British--essentially Harrington's--opposition. After December 1906, the Quai d'Orsay need only worry about Menilek, whom, as it turned out, they underestimated. As for the third partner to the agreement, the Italians, they were thrown only a few bones by the other two powers: a shred of legitimacy for their defunct protectorate over Ethiopia; an oblique British promise of territorial continuity between their East African possessions; and equal treatment on the French railway and in Jibuti.[44] In general, the Tripartite Treaty called a halt to overt European imperial rivalry in Ethiopia and provided a period of stability for Ethiopia.[45]

For Harrington, the Anglo-French entente, followed by the Tripartite Treaty, represented a sharp corner to turn. After opposing French influence and his arch-rival Lagarde for almost a decade, Sir John found it difficult, if not

[43] Grey to Bertie (priv. let.), London, June 1, 1906 /ab/06/37, Bertie Papers A, FO 800/160.

[44] Nonetheless, Mussolini would use the Tripartite Treaty as the "magna charta" of Italian aggression during the 1930's. George W. Baer, The Coming of the Italian-Ethiopian War (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), p. 6.

[45] Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., pp. 370-71.

impossible, to pull in the new Anglo-French harness in Ethiopia. The Tripartite Treaty exacted its toll on the British plenipotentiary's influence in the Ethiopian capital. His pressing of the Ethiopian monarch to accept an agreement continuing French control of the Diré Dawa-Addis Ababa railway segment was a task the Englishman did not relish. Nine years of warnings to Menilek about the danger from French commercial and political dominance in Ethiopia did not prepare Sir John for advocacy of a scheme which seemed to leave France in real control (despite the board of directors) of Ethiopia's existing and future railway. The other side of Harrington's railway argument, the probable fate of the British Somaliland ports, was left in an even gloomier state. A British line either rivalling or connecting with the existing rail system was out of the question, given the simultaneous demands for guns and butter, more specifically dreadnoughts and old age pensions, on the British Treasury. Berbera and Zeila slowly declined as commercial centers and London retrenched in its Somali protectorate.

Harrington also sowed the seeds of mistrust of himself personally among many of the permanent members of the Foreign Office establishment and with the Liberal and Conservative foreign policy-makers, including the foreign secretaries. Even Cromer, perhaps Sir John's staunchest ally in the past, had soured on the British minister to Ethiopia. Anti-French "political tyros" were a plain liability in an era of Anglo-French understanding. Finally, the tripartite negotiations

had taken their toll physically upon Harrington. Influenza, fever, and acute neurasthenia plagued the British minister during the prolonged railway-tripartite negotiations. After receiving the Ethiopian government's opinion of the Tripartite Treaty, Harrington immediately took an extended leave of absence from his African post. After he returned to the Ethiopian capital, things were never as they had been before. After 1906, Harrington's diplomatic career declined sharply, and he resigned in 1908. Fortunately for Sir John, his personal life greatly improved and parliamentary politics and the First World War called him to duty once more.

CHAPTER IX: THINGS FALL APART, RESIGNATION, 1908

The impetus for the later Tripartite Treaty negotiations came from Paris, Rome, and London. Harrington had been consulted, yet he had not played a major part in the settlement. He therefore turned his energy towards promotion of an Anglo-Egyptian sponsored national bank of Ethiopia. During his years in the capital, Harrington had seen some evidence of modernization. Understandably, the most visible and prominent changes had occurred in Addis Ababa or along the Jibuti Dirê-Dawa railway. Electric street lamps lit some of Addis Ababa's streets; a new motor road led to Addis Alem, which provided easier transport of wood to the treeless capital; soon young Ethiopians would attend the first government school; and, since the turn of the century, the central public administration of the empire had undergone considerable reform.[1]

As part of the campaign of modernization, Harrington advocated a central bank for the empire. It would aid in

[1] Richard K. P. Pankhurst (ed.), The Ethiopian Royal Chronicles (Addis Ababa, Nairobi, Lusaka, London, 1967), pp. 190-92; Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., pp. 337-38.

the direction of the Ethiopian economy and meet the needs of the Ethiopian Treasury, especially the issue of bills and the coinage of money. Sir John hoped that the bank could be apolitical, and still serve as a center for British financial influence in Ethiopia. Such a goal was illusory; from the start the bank proposal was strenuously resisted by Paris and its representatives in Addis Ababa.

In early 1898, the Quai d'Orsay anticipated a project by Whitehall to gain a concession for a bank and alerted its representatives in the Ethiopian capital. Actually, Harrington had no authority to open negotiations, although he undoubtedly promoted the scheme informally.[2] The first official mention of a bank concession came five years later, when Harrington passed on a request from the emperor for British sponsorship of a national bank. Naturally, Whitehall required details: the amount of state support contemplated; the nature of the bank's business; the amount of capital required and security offered; and the nature of the concession, that is, was it to be only an exclusive banking concession or would mining or commercial rights also be included? Over a year later, the Ethiopian government proposed a fifty-year concession on the following terms: exclusive control of the empire's banking, charge

[2] Notovich to Hanotaux (L. privée), Neuilly-sur-Seine, May 24, 1898, no. 200 and Hanotaux to Lagarde (T. no. 8, très confidentiel), Paris, May 29, 1898, no. 204, Ddf, ser. 1, XIV.

of all state monies, issuance of notes and coinage, preferential rights to all state loans, and establishment of bonded warehouses. Ethiopia welcomed both British and Italian capital; Alfred Ilg's syndicate, the French Protestant Financial Group, was also invited to participate since it had been seeking such a concession for years. Harrington asked Lansdowne to pass the proposal on to two British financiers, Sir Elwin Palmer and Lord Revelstoke. If interested, they should send agents to the Ethiopian capital.[3]

Sir John stressed the desirability of the Ethiopian banking concession, a privilege sought unsuccessfully by the Italians, French, Germans and Americans. While profits would be moderate and tied to the commercial development of Ethiopia and thus the railway, long-range political advantages could be expected from a bank operating under British control and auspices. If Whitehall refused the offer, others would be more than willing to step in. Lansdowne, however, feared giving the impression during the early stages of the tripartite negotiations of attempting to steal a march on Paris or Rome by exclusive British control of Ethiopian banking; nevertheless he informed the suggested British financiers of the tentative Ethiopian offer. Palmer

[3]Harrington to Lansdowne via Cromer (tel.), AA, May 3, 1903 and Lansdowne to Harrington (tel.), London, May 8, 1903, FO 403/344; Harrington to Lansdowne via Cromer (tel.), AA, Dec. 20, 1904, FO 403/346.

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notified Cromer in Cairo that the National Bank of Egypt, a British controlled institution, would send an agent to the Ethiopian capital.[4]

Harrington worked closely with the agent of the National Bank of Egypt, Mr. D. McGillvray, the emperor, and Ethiopian advisors. Palmer offered a variety of options for division of bank profits; in the end, the Ethiopian Government opted for 20 'percent' of the potential profits after 7 'percent' was paid to shareholders and 10 'percent' placed in reserve. As Cromer noted, such a profit-sharing arrangement with a government was unusual for a bank, but the proconsul agreed with Sir John that such a scheme was advantageous to both Anglo-Egyptian and Ethiopian interests.[5] On March 11, 1905, the Ethiopian government granted a charter for "The Bank of Abyssinia" to the National Bank of Egypt. The bank's capital was to be £500,000 of which 100,000 should be subscribed and paid up when the company was constituted. Capital could be increased as the necessity arose. Menilek insisted that public subscriptions be offered in the major capitals of Europe as well as New York, Cairo, and Addis Ababa, since a diverse and

[4]Harrington to Lansdowne via Cromer (tel.), AA, Dec. 21, 1904; Lansdowne to Cromer (tel.), London, Dec. 22, 1904; and Cromer to Lansdowne (tel.), Cairo, Dec. 28, 1904, FO 403/346.

[5]Harrington to Cromer (tel.), AA, Dec. 30, 1904; Cromer to Harrington (tels.), Cairo, Jan. 2, April 3, 1905; and Cromer to Lansdowne (tel.), Cairo, March 15, 1905, FO 401/8.

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international group of shareholders better assured that the bank would not go through the same unfortunate metamorphosis as the railway--from private company to a foreign government's national enterprise.

The bank received eight privileges. First, it was the only banking institution in the Ethiopian empire; second, it enjoyed a monopoly for the issue of legal tender banknoted backed by gold or silver; third, it had the sole right to mint coin in consultation with the government at Addis Ababa. By virtue of its fourth and fifth privileges, the bank became the depository for all government public funds and received preference for the issue of government loans. Privileges six, seven and eight were minor: bonded warehouses, free land grants for the bank's offices, agencies and warehouses, and transportation of specie by rail in Ethiopia at government rates. MacGillvray and Palmer had hoped to obtain a statement of preferential treatment for the bank in the granting of further commercial and industrial concessions in Ethiopia, but Harrington strongly resisted such a move since it threatened to hinder the development of the Ethiopian empire.

On paper, the bank had been granted a fundamental role in the direction of the Ethiopian economy. Palmer's agent, MacGillvray, anticipated substantial investment returns after the first few years. Exchange would be profitable; MacGillvray noted that in the Addis Ababa market place every tenth man was a money changer. Ethiopia's major

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currency was the Austrian Maria Theresa dollar (roughly 10 M.T. dollars to the pound), but Menilek had already minted in Paris a number of Menilek dollars and fractions of dollars. Only in Addis Ababa were the new dollars accepted on a par with the older currency, and everywhere the fractional parts were subject to a great deal of speculation. Menilek was most anxious to replace the Maria Theresa dollar and the debased fractional parts of the Menilek dollar with a sounder gold currency. Through both its issue of bank-notes (the only legal paper money in the Ethiopian empire) and coins, the bank expected profit. There was even a scheme to unload the Maria Theresa dollars down the East African coast, where they were in great demand.

Menilek hoped the bank would offer loans to Ethiopian cultivators, although MacGillvray was more interested in providing advances on merchandise for the thirty or so expatriate merchant firms operating out of the Ethiopian capital. MacGillvray realized that the development of the Ethiopian economy, and with it the bank, depended on the successful completion of the Diré Dawa-Addis Ababa railway extension. The emperor expressed a desire to use the bank to help raise money for Ethiopian construction of the second section. MacGillvray eagerly promoted such a plan. Obviously, the bank was more than just a financial institution. Menilek saw it as a means of improving Ethiopian credit in the world market and developing the Ethiopian economy, and as a potential weapon in his arsenal against

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French economic influence.[6]

As initially contemplated, the bank had no international representation beyond a potential cosmopolitan group of shareholders; but Lansdowne and Cromer had misgivings. Harrington's conspicuous part in the negotiations assured that foreign influence should be excluded. The result was that all Ethiopia's finances would be in Anglo-Egyptian hands; not surprisingly, opposition to the bank came from every quarter. Nonetheless, such a state of affairs, Lansdowne noted, was satisfactory to the crafty Ethiopian monarch, who was promised a high rate of interest and who hoped to use the bank as an agency to build his own railway to the exclusion of the French. Yet the bank deal could only be interpreted in Paris as a successful British intrigue against French economic influence in Ethiopia. Sooner or later, Paris would ask for representation on the board of directors, just as the British were demanding a place for their own nationals on the railway board. As foreign representatives on the bank's board would not adversely affect the concession, but would remove French suspicions, Lansdowne favored such a scheme. Cromer reported that the National Bank of Egypt was willing to

[6]Charter for the State Bank of Abyssinia, March 11, 1905, and Report presented to Sir E. Palmer, Governor of the National Bank of Egypt, Cairo, by Mr. MacGillvray, March 14, 1905, enclosed in Cromer to Lansdowne (let.), Cairo, April 21, 1905, FO 403/8.

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appoint both French and Italian directors.[7]

Despite these concessions to Rome and Paris, the bank's real power was lodged with the two British directors, Mr. Rowlatt, the president of the board and the governor of the National Bank of Egypt, and MacGillvray, vice-president and governor of the Bank of Ethiopia. Although in no way officially connected with the bank, Harrington's promotion and support of the enterprise at the Gibbi gave him considerable say in the bank's future. At first, MacGillvray and Harrington collaborated in Addis Ababa in an attempt to connect the railway and the bank; as a quid pro quo Harrington offered to exchange French representation on the bank's board (originally a French request) for more Englishmen on the railway's board. Furthermore, the Bank of Ethiopia also handled the finances of the railway company's Ethiopian assets.[8] This rapprochement between the French and British enterprises was short-lived. In the spring of 1906, Cromer received disquieting reports that MacGillvray had come to some arrangement with Menilek financially to support the Ethiopianization of the second section of the railway. At the same time, the Ethiopian government abruptly announced that, unless it

[7]Lansdowne minute, London, May 1, 1905 to Cromer to Lansdowne (let.), Cairo, April 21, 1905, FO 1/52.

[8]Cromer to Grey (let.), Cairo, March 1, 1906 and Rowlatt to Cromer (priv. let.), Cairo, Feb. 21, 1906 /8561/, FO 371/1.

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witnessed a satisfactory railway settlement within two months, Ethiopia itself would take steps to continue the line to Addis Ababa.[9]

Sir Eldon Gorst, assistant under-secretary of state, and Sir Edward Grey, the new Liberal foreign secretary, were anxious to avoid the impression of a British breach of faith in the tripartite spirit, the interpretation Paris would naturally place upon the bank's role in Ethiopia's ultimatum. Unfortunately for Whitehall, the British government had no legal right to interfere with the bank and its officials. Cromer wished to recall MacGillvray because he believed that the governor had acted contrary to the late Sir Elwin Palmer's assurance that the bank would take no political action not sanctioned by Harrington. Sir John dashed to the beleaguered MacGillvray's defense. To recall him would be a disastrous mistake since it would convince the Ethiopian administration that the bank was political (and, more importantly, pro-French). Harrington explained that MacGillvray had been consulted about the railway and, on Harrington's advice, gave his opinion as the governor of the bank. Menilek's ultimatum, recently extended to six months, was not, in Sir John's opinion, of

[9]Cromer to Harrington, to Grey (tels.), Cairo, March 17, 1906 [93727], and Menilek to Harrington (let.), AA, March 15, 1906, FO 371/1.

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much importance. The situation was far from dangerous.[10] Ethiopia's blustering time-limits for settlement were reminders for the limitrophe powers that a railway settlement must be acceptable to Addis Ababa. The bank's participation in preliminary arrangements for Ethiopian construction gave those threats added substance.

The French and Italians were not the only Europeans interested in the bank. In May 1905, the German government demanded the right to purchase one fifth of the bank's capital and to place a director on the governing board. Such a demand, following on the heels of the Moroccan crisis, was typical of the heavy-handed teutonic diplomacy which drove London further into the arms of Paris. Lansdowne asked Cromer's advice on the matter. "If the general political situation were normal, and considering the question from the Abyssinian point of view," the Egyptian proconsul remarked, "I should not hesitate to recommend the refusal of the German proposal." But given the Franco-German tension over Morocco, Cromer was "not sure it would be wise to adopt this course." He was confident that Berlin intended "to magnify the whole affair, and that the present tension between them, on the one hand, and France and ourselves on the other, will be increased unless they

[10] Cromer to Harrington, to Grey (tels.), Cairo, March 19, 1906 with minutes by Grey and Gorst, and Harrington to Cromer (tel.), AA, March 23, 1906, enclosed in Cromer to Grey (tel.), Cairo, March 24, 1906 /11040/, FO 371/1.

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get a Director on the Board."[11] Lansdowne and Delcassé agreed on a conciliatory policy and plans were made to include a German on the board of directors. The French foreign minister, however, could not perceive how the various European powers could apportion capital in the bank, given the Ethiopian government's decision to offer shares by international public subscription.[12]

The bank continued its controversial role in Ethiopian affairs. The opening of branches in Harar and Diré Dawa occasioned an objection from Lagarde (although not from Paris) on the grounds that British enterprise had moved into the French sphere. Harrington pointed out that Ethiopia had not been divided into spheres of influence--such a partition would only follow the break-up of the empire--and how could Paris promise to respect Ethiopian independence, yet require the national bank of the empire to obtain French

[11]Cromer to Lansdowne (tels.), Cairo, May 18, 22, 1905, FO 401/8.

[12]Lansdowne to Bertie (lets.), London, May 24, 31, 1905 and Lascelles to Lansdowne (let.), Berlin, May 31, 1905, FO 401/8. Not everyone agreed with Cromer's advice in favor of German participation in the bank. Bertie, one of the diplomatic service's leading Germanophobes, wrote, "Cromer is much too fond of throwing sops. He thinks of nothing beyond the Nile. I think it is a mistake to admit Germany as a partner either in the Bank of Abyssinia or the Railway. She will look on it as a sign of weakness and her appetite will increase. She will do nothing but intrigue to make quarrels in the Abyssinian Triplice." Bertie to Mallet (priv. let.), Paris, 06/73, Bertie Papers, series B, FO 800/184.

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permission to work its concession on Ethiopian soil?[13] In this instance the Quai d'Orsay did not sustain Lagarde's objection.

If Harrington hoped for a respite for the bank, he was disappointed. From the Gibbi came the increasing pressure, seconded by MacGillvray, for greater Ethiopian representation on the board of directors.[14] Furthermore, MacGillvray displayed a penchant for political intrigue. The management of the bank was generally shoddy; working expenses, let alone profits, which he had confidently predicted, seemed no closer after six months of operation.

August 1906 witnessed the inevitable falling out between Harrington and MacGillvray. Sir John believed himself entitled to a part in the bank's future policy because he had been instrumental in obtaining the concession and Menilek sought his advice on all bank matters. Unfortunately, the slipshod management and governor MacGillvray's intrigues incited opposition in the Ethiopian capital. The emperor asked Harrington to rectify the situation; but when the British plenipotentiary demanded that MacGillvray communicate the general lines of bank policy to him so that any differances of views could be referred to Cairo,

[13]Harrington to Grey (tel.), AA, May 18, 1906 [17527], FO 371/1.

[14]Harrington to Cromer (let.), AA, Feb. 26, 1906, enclosed in Cromer to Grey (let.), Cairo, March 1, 1906 [8561], FO 371/1.

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MacGillvray refused. From then on, according to Harrington, MacGillvray conducted a personal campaign against him by making use of his defense of British interests to weaken his personal position with Menilek. Harrington responded with a campaign for MacGillvray's recall. While Sir John maintained that the bank was not a political institution, he admitted it remained so in the eyes of the Ethiopians. "The non-success of the Bank," Harrington argued, "entails loss of confidence in us, and Abyssinia, being what it is, if we lose Menelek's trust we lose our influence here. Thus, the Bank and British prestige are at present indissolubly bound together."[15]

Harrington faced a dilemma. While MacGillvray was working with "an Ethiopian anti-British group" (Sir John's phrase), the British plenipotentiary dared not openly break with him for fear of crippling the bank, an enterprise locally considered to be under Harrington's unofficial direction. Thus, Sir John had to work behind the scenes to recall the unpopular MacGillvray and to salvage some of the bank's reputation. In September 1906, he sent the following urgent telegram to Whitehall:

> Our only asset here hitherto has been the trust that the Abyssinian Government have in my word although they have feared and disliked me. I learn today that this trust has been shattered by MacGillvray's conduct and it is essential

[15]Harrington to Cromer (lets.), AA, Aug. 12 /28239/, Nov. 29, 1906 /41152/, FO 371/3.

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that he should be recalled, or our position is reduced to nothing.[16]

Harrington later clarified the events which had shattered his prestige. A reputable British firm attempting to negotiate a concession in Ethiopia was refused consideration by Dejatch Abatu, an official of the Ethiopian government, because of MacGillvray's conduct and the bank's failure to fulfill its obligations. Abatu informed the British commercial agent that his government felt obliged to regard Englishmen as being in the same class as those adventurers who came to the Ethiopian capital to deceive the investing public in Europe and Ethiopia.[17] Such criticism stung Sir John, who carefully screened potential British concession seekers with a view to eliminating the "undesirables."[18] "I fairly hate the sight of concessionaires and wish there were none in Abyssinia," the British

[16]Harrington to Cromer relayed to F.O. (tels.), AA, Sept. 10 /30795/, Sept. 13, 1906 /31070/, FO 371/3.

[17]H. Clarkson Williams to Harrington (priv. let.), Sept. 9, 1906 and Harrington to Grey (let.), AA, Sept. 10, 1906, enclosed in Finlay to Grey (let.), Cairo, Oct. 3, 1906 /34412/, FO 371/3.

[18]In 1902, Harrington stymied the chances of the Abyssinian Exploration Company, a dubious firm allied with Leontiev, for a concession in Ethiopia. In 1907, Sir John intervened at the Gibbi to obtain the removal of the Syrian agent of the Ethiopian Rubber Company, another concessionaire who failed to fulfill his promises. In both cases, the companies resented Harrington's interference and his assumption that he was "the tribunal before which British capitalists had to prove their worth." F. W. North to Sanderson (priv. let.), London, Jan. 30, 1902, FO 1/51; L. L. Boustead, Chairman, Ethiopian Rubber Company, to Clarke (let.), London, April 9, 1908 /12469/, FO 371/396.

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minister earlier admitted, "however as they are a necessary evil and I wish to see all interests on the Sudan side [western Ethiopia] in British hands, one must put up with them. In any case if I can prevent it, none but first class people shall get concessions in Abyssinia."[19] Harrington had constantly promoted the idea among Ethiopians of British moral superiority over other Europeans. Now MacGillvray had let down the side and ruined the good name of Britain--he had to go!

The campaign for MacGillvray's recall succeeded. At Cromer's prompting, the National Bank of Egypt replaced him with his second in command within the Ethiopian bank management. The affair had been an additional ordeal for Sir John during the height of the tension over the final Tripartite Treaty negotiations and the Ethiopian acceptance of the agreement. Cromer explained to Charles Hardinge, new under-secretary of state, that "he [MacGillvray] and Harrington have been at daggers drawn. I have no doubt whatever, from all that I have heard, that, substantially, Harrington has been quite in the right, but that his modus operandi has not been everything that could be desired." Cromer added that at first Harrington was "jovially familiar" with his bank-governor antagonist, later, "violently abusive. . . . This is not the sort of way to

[19]Harrington to Maxwell (priv. let.), Camp Waga Harden, Ethiopia, Dec. 16, 1901, FO 1/39.

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treat a man like MacGillvray, who has no pretence to be a gentleman," Cromer smugly noted.[20]

The National Bank of Egypt instructed the new governor of the Bank of Ethiopia, Mr. Goldie, to restore confidence in the institution. From Harrington, Goldie hoped for at least enough support to stave off financial failure. But so far as Sir John was concerned, the bank had made such poor showing that liquidation and a new concession was the best course. At this juncture, Menilek, probably with the concurrence and even complicity of Harrington, sought to break the bank by demanding the return of the money he had invested in the enterprise. Goldie wired Cairo for the necessary funds and Cromer warned Harrington that:

> appearances would seem to indicate that the Emperor is organizing a run on the Bank with the object of breaking it. I need hardly say that you should do nothing to encourage an attempt of this description, whilst at the same time disclaiming any responsibility for the conduct of the affairs of the Bank.

Cromer passed on assurances from the National Bank of Egypt that the £100,000 due the Ethiopian bank could be produced on demand. A run would not succeed.[21]

Officials of the Bank of Ethiopia had decided to ride out the storm of Ethiopian discontent at the price of a

[20]Hardinge to Harrington (tel.), London, Sept. 17, 1906 /31070/7, FO 371/3; Cromer to Hardinge (priv. let.), Cairo, Jan. 11, 1907, Grey Papers, FO 800/46.

[21]Goldie to Rowlatt (tel.), AA, Nov. 17, 1906; Rowlatt to Goldie (tel.), Cairo, Nov. 19, 1906; and Cromer to Harrington (priv. tel.), Cairo, Nov. 19, 1906, enclosed in Cromer to Grey (let.), Cairo, Nov. 21, 1906 /40377/, FO 371/3.

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temporary loss of capital. To do so they needed to cut expenses. They proposed closing the Harar branch. Harrington vigorously opposed such action for two reasons. First, the bank had made no effort to obtain the Ethiopian government's approval for the closing, and such a move would cause resentment at the Gibbi. Second and perhaps more important, closing the Harar branch would have "an extremely detrimental effect on the Bank and on British prestige." Sir John asked Cromer to persuade the directors of the Bank of Ethiopia to delay action on the Harar branch until he arrived in Cairo in early 1907. The directors thereupon reversed themselves and allowed the branch to continue operation temporarily.[22]

Cromer disapproved of Harrington's conduct in the bank affair. He reminded the British plenipotentiary that "the Bank is not a political institution, and any risk of drifting into a position in which 'British prestige' would be made to depend on such a question as the maintenance or withdrawal of a branch establishment, should be avoided with the utmost care." The Egyptian pro-consul informed Grey that Harrington was mistakenly treating the bank as a political institution--Sir John himself had always warned against doing so. Harrington realized that Cromer disapproved of his part in the bank fiasco and offered to tender

[22]Harrington to Cromer (tel.), AA, Nov. 23 and (let.), Nov. 29, 1906, enclosed in Cromer to Grey (let.), Cairo, Nov. 24, 1906 [40379], FO 371/3.

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his resignation, if after hearing his version of the affair, Cromer believed he had acted unwisely. Cromer coldly responded that he suspended his judgment until Harrington's arrival in Cairo.[23]

Cromer's displeasure with Sir John had been growing for a number of years. In October 1905, "the Lord" privately confided to Sanderson that "Harrington is unquestionably a difficulty. There is much to be said in burying him away altogether. On the other hand where is he to go? It is bad to swop horses crossing a stream." Cromer recommended that Harrington's future in the diplomatic corps be decided upon after completion of the tripartite negotiations. In the meantime, Sir John should be granted leave as soon as possible because of his health and because any diplomat staying in a remote post like Addis Ababa "gets rusty & hypochondriacal."[24] In January of 1907, Harrington at last went on leave; his first stop en route to London was Cairo, where he discussed his future with Cromer. The pro-consul could not determine whether Harrington wished to return permanently to the Ethiopian capital; Sir John talked of wishing to go back for a year and then moving on

[23]Cromer to Harrington (tel.), Cairo, Nov. 27, 1906, enclosed in Cromer to Grey (let.), Cairo, Nov. 27, 1906; Cromer to Harrington (tel.), Cairo, Nov. 30, 1906, enclosed in Cromer to Grey (let.), Cairo, Dec. 1, 1906 [41152], FO 371/3.

[24]Cromer to Sanderson (priv. let.), Argowan, Greenock, Scotland, Oct. 2, 1905, FO 1/52.

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to another post. Although he had no explicit indication, Cromer believed Harrington would like to return to the Indian service, a course Cromer feared would be difficult to arrange. If India failed, Harrington could be appointed to a South American post where his francophobia and active solicitation of Ethiopian interests would no longer cloud Whitehall's Ethiopian policy.[25]

Cromer's assessment virtually assured the demise of Harrington as molder of British imperial policy in Africa. From 1907 on, Harrington tidied up loose ends. He began in Cairo with a series of discussions with Rowlatt, the president of the board of the Bank of Ethiopia. Harrington presented a reorganization scheme to put the bank on a firmer footing. First, the directors would consult Menilek on all important policy decisions. Second, the bank should redeem its notes at branch banks so long as such a service was not used to the detriment of the bank's interest. Next, the bank must accept an Ethiopian stamp duty. Fourth and most important, the bank had to accommodate Ethiopia's desire for control of its own national bank. As the institution was then constituted, Europeans controlled 92 'percent' of the shares and Ethiopians only 8 'percent.' The simplest solution seemed to allow Menilek to buy 75 'percent' of the shares, but such a plan required

[25]Cromer to Hardinge (priv. let.), Cairo, Jan. 11, 1907, Grey Papers, FO 800/46.

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a general meeting. There was no assurance that shareholders would agree to the nationalization with compensation which Ethiopia wanted and Harrington proposed. Instead, Harrington and Rowlatt decided to satisfy the Ethiopian government's desire that the bank should be directed from Addis Ababa by delegating full powers to a committee of four directors resident in the Ethiopian capital. Of the four, two would be Ethiopians and two Europeans appointed after consultation with the negus.[26] The remaining Egyptian and European directors would retain their titles so as to aid in the raising of capital; but the real power over the bank would reside in Ethiopia. Essentially, this was the new shape the bank took after 1907, although Menilek continued to push for a management committee of three Addis Ababa residents in which native Ethiopians held the two casting votes.[27] The bank, begun as an European directed and controlled institution, was thus Ethiopianized. The three European limitrophe powers found there was little they could do about it; opposition to nationalization of the management would be proof that the bank was a political tool of European imperialism. To Harrington's credit, it must be noted that although he had been instrumental in

[26]Harrington to Clerk (let.), Cairo, Jan. 12, 1907, enclosed in Cromer to Grey (let.), Cairo, Jan. 12, 1907 [2008], FO 371/190.

[27]Clerk to Grey (let.), AA, April 27, 1907 [16235], FO 371/190.

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chartering the bank as an Anglo-Egyptian dominated enterprise, the British minister worked tirelessly to transform the bank to an Ethiopian controlled institution, a potentially and truly national bank for the Ethiopian empire.

Harrington had left the Ethiopian capital with mixed feelings in late 1906. Many of the old familiar faces were gone. In March 1906, Ras Makonnen, one of Menilek's closest advisors and Harrington's oldest Ethiopian friend, died a sadly premature death. Ilg, for years Menilek's foreign policy advisor, left Ethiopia in a huff over a railway disagreement, never to return. Often an adversary of Harrington, Ilg, with his hospitable Swiss wife and three children, had lent continuity and balance to the Addis Ababa European community. Finally, Menilek himself was suffering from syphilis and a number of ailments associated with old age: mild strokes, occasional epilectic-like fits, indigestion, and gradually increasing senility. The Ethiopian monarch was forced to restrict his busy schedule (although not nearly as much as his doctor recommended), and Harrington's royal audiences were less frequent.[28] On a personal level, Sir John felt apprehensive about his peculiar position in the diplomatic corps, that of an outsider appointed to a newly created post, a man without real

[28]Harrington to Grey (tel.), AA, March 27, 1906 /10758/, FO 371/2; Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., pp. 385, 400-01; Harold G. Marcus, "The End of the Reign of Menilek II," Journal of African History, XI, 4 (1970), pp. 571-74.

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Harrington's concern about the future was doubly reinforced by dissatisfaction with his present situation. Financially, the Addis Ababa post was hardly remunerative. In 1903, Harrington's legation had been placed on a permanent footing, which meant that he was supposed to pay for his journeys to London and receive half pay while on leave. He enjoyed no private income, virtually a 'must' for a diplomat of his rank (in 1906, as minister plenipotentiary-consul general, Harrington was Cromer's nominal equal). To return to London he had to become a supplicant of Whitehall since his salary and expenses only really covered operation of the legation. Had he remained in the Bombay Political Service, Harrington believed he could have saved money, the expected compensation for a life abroad. Furthermore, there was no comparison between the easy life in India and the rugged existence in the Ethiopian capital. "Here one's life is that of a first-class misdemeanant, with little more liberty," Harrington complained. He continued:

> The post offers no compensation for existence in an unhealthy climate; there is no sport, unless one travels 200 miles for it, an expense beyond my means; Marriage, not that I have any intention that way, is out of the question, even were I in a position to afford it, and life is insufferably duller than any place I have yet experience of, even Zeila.[29]

Those despairing words, written during one of Harrington's increasingly frequent fits of depression during late

[29]Harrington to Sanderson (priv. let.), AA, Oct. 1, 1904, FO 1/49.

1904, applied equally well in 1907. There was one exception however. Marriage, so far away in 1904, by 1907 was close at hand. Not that Harrington's finances had improved substantially, but his fiancee, Amy McMillan of Detroit, was both independently wealthy and unperturbed by the rigors of life in the Ethiopian capital. Harrington met his bride-to-be while she and her father, a United States Senator, were on a sporting-exploring trip to the Sobat region of Ethiopia. After his arrival in New York in June 1907, Harrington and Amy McMillan were married in a small family wedding. Sir John and Lady Harrington travelled to London during July 1907.[30]

Harrington and his wife did not return to the Ethiopian capital until the end of 1907. While they were in Europe, a number of important developments occurred in Ethiopia which were to affect Harrington's last year as British representative there. Menilek responded to the implied threat in the Tripartite Treaty by continuing to broaden Ethiopia's diplomatic relations. The United States had sent a mission in 1903, and the Germans arrived in 1905 to set up a permanent, although low-key, diplomatic establishment.[31] Menilek also signed treaties with the

[30] Memo. by Harrington, London, Dec. 2, 1903, FO 1/42; New York Times, June 14, 1907. For tentative conclusions on the effect of Anglo-American marriages on the British foreign policy-making elite, see D. C. Watt, Personalities and Policies (London, 1965), pp. 25-26.

[31] The American diplomatic representative arrived in December 1905, stayed barely a month, and rushed home again.

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Austro-Hungarian and Belgian governments, although neither sent permanent diplomatic representatives. The design was clear, as chargé d'affairs George Clerk astutely noted:

> Menelek has, moreover, fully realized the advantage to be drawn from Treaties with Powers who have no direct contact with Ethiopia. He sees that the greater number of Powers with which he has Treaty relations, the less likelihood of any one of the limitrophe Powers being allowed to add Abyssinia to its possessions.[32]

On a more specific level, since Harrington's departure in late 1906, the railway dispute between Ethiopia and France seemed to have eased. In January 1907, an inter-departmental conference attended by representatives of the French foreign, colonial, and finance ministries and presided over by premier Clemenceau, met to discuss the Ethiopian problem, especially the financial disaster threatening the railway because of the Ethiopian retraction of the company's 10 'percent' ad valorem tax on goods travelling on the line. The French decided to liquidate the troubled company and negotiate a new concession with the Ethiopian government. To carry out these difficult negotiations the Quai d'Orsay dispatched A. Klobukowski, consul general and head of the French Cairo agency, to Addis Ababa. Klobukowski had two major objectives: to ensure that the new

[32]General Report on Abyssinia for the year 1906 (by Clerk, April 10, 1907) [19257], FO 371/192. These annual reports were required of the heads of all British diplomatic establishments after the reforms of the Foreign Office and diplomatic service in 1905-6. As one diplomat's view of foreign and domestic relations and local personalities, the reports were interesting, if not always objective, reading.

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concession would be a French enterprise and that the liquidation or forfeiture (déchéance) of the company would meet with the approval of the Ethiopian government. For without Ethiopian support, serious investors would not subscribe capital to a new Ethiopian railway company. A special objective of the mission to Addis Ababa was to determine the precise share claimed by Menilek and the Ethiopian government in the old railway. In return for a new concession Paris offered a guarantee against the loss of Menilek's personal investment in the old railway--roughly some 2 million francs supposedly invested by co-concessionaire Chefneux on the emperor's behalf, but suspiciously absent from the inquiry into the company's tangled finances. Paris hoped to obtain Ethiopia's willing participation in the new enterprise.[33]

The Klobukowski-Menilek negotiations raised a series of technical and substantive problems for British policy in Ethiopia. Perhaps the most technical was the right to compensation for the British controlled Imperial Ethiopian Trust and Construction Company in the French government's forced déchéance of the railway. So far as Paris was concerned, many of the claims of the trust company were illegal and therefore not eligible for any special consideration. In Ethiopia, the agents of the trust took possession of the

[33]Pichon to Klobukowski (D. no. 7 bis), Paris, March 24, 1907, no. 447, Ddf, ser. 2, X. Hohler to Grey (let.), AA, June 15, 1907 /224727, FO 371/191.

concession would be a French enterprise and that the liquidation or forfeiture (déchéance) of the company would meet with the approval of the Ethiopian government. For without Ethiopian support, serious investors would not subscribe capital to a new Ethiopian railway company. A special objective of the mission to Addis Ababa was to determine the precise share claimed by Menilek and the Ethiopian government in the old railway. In return for a new concession Paris offered a guarantee against the loss of Menilek's personal investment in the old railway--roughly some 2 million francs supposedly invested by co-concessionaire Chefneux on the emperor's behalf, but suspiciously absent from the inquiry into the company's tangled finances. Paris hoped to obtain Ethiopia's willing participation in the new enterprise.[33]

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[33]Pichon to Klobukowski (D. no. 7 bis), Paris, March 24, 1907, no. 447, Ddf, ser. 2, X. Hohler to Grey (let.), AA, June 15, 1907 [22472], FO 371/191.

Diré Dawa station and the last 80 kilometers of the line, which the trust had accepted as security for loans. French authorities were both astonished and irked, and they persuaded the Ethiopian government to restore the station and track to them. From London, Harrington lobbied on behalf of the British company, which he believed had been used by the French government to keep the railway company financially afloat during the last stages of the tripartite negotiations. Now, less than a year later, French authorities were "forcing the Company into liquidation purely and simply to get rid of the Trust Company's control of the Railway Company." While Harrington had little sympathy for the men who controlled the trust--stockjobbers and confidence men is perhaps too strong a description, but their dealings were often shady--he resented the attempt of the French "chauvinistic party" to eliminate British interests without fair compensation.[34]

The British government interceded informally on the trust's behalf, but to no avail. The French refused to

[34] Hohler to Grey (tels.), AA, June 2, 5, 1906 /18181 and 18668/; Grey to Cambon (let.), London, Aug. 6 /21225/, Harrington minute to Imperial Ethiopian Railway Trust and Construction Company to Grey (let.), London, June 26, 1907 /21225/, FO 371/191. Bertie later explained that the French Colonial Office had engaged in some rather "sharp practice" in the affair. They profitted by the trust finding money to keep the railway on "limping legs" until they were confident Menilek would not forfeit the old concession and grant a new one. Then, they took advantage of a technicality and practically confiscated the property of the railway company, the only security for the trust. Bertie to Grey (priv. let.), Feb. 7, 1909 /ab/09/3/, Bertie Papers, ser. A, FO 800/160.

grant the trust any differential treatment in the liquidation process. Rather than admit the trust's status as special financiers of the old company, the French government claimed the trust had lent the Imperial Railway Company money without the approval of the Ministry for Colonies and against the terms of the convention of 1902, a contravention of French commercial law. All Whitehall could do, therefore, was to advise the trust to seek adequate compensation through the French judicial system.[35]

A second difficulty arising from the Klobukowski mission was the French representative's blatant disregard of both the spirit and letter of Article X of the Tripartite Treaty, which called for cooperation and exchange of information between the signatory powers' diplomatic representatives in the Ethiopian capital. Clerk complained from Addis Ababa that the French were back to their "old crooked game," acting contrary to the spirit of the entente cordiale. The instigator, Klobukowski, suffered from the "maladie du pays," a swollen head in anticipation of the great triumph he planned to achieve. According to his critics, Klobukowski worked in secret, frustrated Italian efforts to curb the Red Sea arms trade, derided the

[35]Lister to Grey (let.), Paris, Dec. 13, 1907 [411297], with minutes by Clerk and Mallet, FO 371/191; Memo. communicated to Cambon, London, July 2, 1908 [185277]; memo. communicated by Cambon, London, Dec. 2, 1908, with a minute by Grey [423577]; and Langley to I.E.R.T. & C.C. (let.), London, Dec. 28, 1908 [423577], FO 371/394.

Tripartite Treaty, and insulted his British and Italian colleagues.[36] Harrington had foreseen such a danger. He had travelled to Paris in February 1907 for a meeting with M. Louis, political director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Consul General Klobukowski himself in the hopes of convincing the French to abide by Article X of the Tripartite Treaty, and thus present to Ethiopia an united front. The course to follow, in Harrington's blunt words, was a white versus black policy. Notwithstanding promises of French cooperation, Harrington was disappointed, but not surprised, to discover that Klobukowski was "playing the old game of trying to make French influence predominant in Abyssinia."[37]

Officials at the Foreign Office were not unduly alarmed at Klobukowski's actions. There was an unwillingness to meddle in Franco-Ethiopian negotiations for continuation of the railway. After 1906, Whitehall considered the line "a purely French question." Charles Hardinge, permanent under-secretary of state, expressed Whitehall's prevailing optimism: "all the harm that M. Klobukowski has done will be probably set right by Sir J. Harrington,

[36] Clerk to Maxwell (let.), AA, July 9, 1907 /228737 and Hohler to Grey (let.), AA, Oct. 29, 1907 /387817, FO 371/190.

[37] Memo. by Harrington, Paris, Feb. 18, 1907, enclosed in Bertie to Grey (let.), Paris, Feb. 18, 1907 /35907, FO 371/191. Harrington minute, Nov. 2, 1907, to Hohler to Mallet (let.), AA, Sept. 9, 1907 /331407, FO 371/193.

on his return, as he is the one Minister who really enjoys influence at Addis Ababa."[38] Such confidence was rudely shattered when a telegram arrived from the Ethiopian capital from Menilek with the following request: "your agent here /T. H. Hohler/ has informed me that Sir John Harrington is returning to Addis Ababa. We desire to maintain good relations with the British Gov/ernmen/'t & therefore wish for another person to take his place here."

Hohler, who refused to send the telegram officially, noted that the negus offered no explanation for this extraordinary step, but the British chargés d'affaires suspected French intrigue. Grey's comment was revealing: "It is a question whether we shall not have to tell the French that M. Klobukowski is impossible." Unlike Lansdowne, Grey did not place a high priority on imperial affairs; his response to French double dealing in Ethiopia was that of mild annoyance verging on apathy.[39] In the Ethiopian capital, Hohler insisted on having a reason for Harrington's recall. Menilek noted that Lagarde and Ciccodicola had left (the Italian, under the cloud of scandal); it was time for Harrington also to depart. Hohler refused to accept the explanation as a valid reason and threatened to withdraw

[38]Hardinge minutes to Hohler to Grey (let.), AA, Oct. 29, 1907 /38781/, to Memo. by Harrington, London, Feb. 12, 1907 /4868/, FO 371/191.

[39]Hohler to Grey (priv. tel.), AA, Oct. 25, 1907, with a minute by Grey, /F35751/, FO 371/193; Steiner, Foreign Office, pp. 87-88.

the British legation if Harrington's credentials were not accepted. The emperor was not rattled because he did not think London would withdraw.

Hohler reasoned that Klobukowski was terrified that Harrington would prevent successful completion of the railway negotiations, just as he had scuttled French plans in the past. Therefore, the Frenchman had collaborated with a "clique of the most undesirable, but at the moment, the most influential people at the Gibbeh." Both Klobukowski and the anti-Harrington faction feared, according to Hohler, that Sir John's return would signal their downfall.[40]

Menilek finally offered a fuller explanation for his action: "As in all words that Sir John speaks to us, civility [the word was hard to translate from Amharic, perhaps a proper sense of etiquette or manners was a better description] is lacking; it is therefore our desire to have another Minister in his place." In Menilek's letter, the British legation interpreter thought he detected signs of translation from French to Amharic. Klobukowski later explained that Menilek was adverse to Sir John because

[40]Hohler to Grey (priv. tel.), AA, Oct. 27, 1907 [35753]; to Hardinge (priv. tel.), AA, Oct. 26, 1907 [36592]; and to Grey (let.), AA, Oct. 30, 1907, with a minute by Clerk [38782], FO 371/193. Hohler, a career diplomat with varied experience, characterized Addis Ababa as "the toughest job of the lot," that is, the most difficult position in the diplomatic corps. Few who knew Ethiopia disagreed.

"he addressed him without the proper respect and reverence which is due to a crowned head."[41] Certainly Harrington had been outspoken, blunt, and perhaps he had occasionally crossed the line of civility, but such action hardly justified his recall. Hohler's explanation of the palace intrigue contained a good deal of truth.

In October 1907, the seriously ailing Ethiopian monarch formed a ministry of relative non-entities from the Ethiopian political scene. Among them was the minister of foreign affairs and commerce, Nagardas Haile Giorgis, the "clever, unscrupulous, plausible, and corrupt . . . doyen of the Ethiopian merchants," who, in Hohler's opinion, might even be in French pay. Ironically, a ministry for Ethiopia had been one of the reforms suggested by Harrington; now it seemed that the new foreign minister wished to prevent Sir John's return to the Ethiopian capital to eliminate a rival foreign affairs advisor.[42]

The major weapon of the conspirators against Sir John was Menilek's state of health. The Ethiopian monarch was old and tired; the tenacious Harrington's interference in the railway issue was something the negus would like to

[41] Menilek to Hohler (let.), AA, Oct. 29, 1907, enclosed in Hohler to Grey (let.), AA, Oct. 30, 1907 [38782]; Hohler to Gorst (priv. let.), AA, Oct. 31, 1907 [40452]; and Hohler to Grey (let.), AA, Nov. 29, 1907 [41641?], FO 371/193.

[42] Hohler to Grey (tel.), AA, Oct. 30, 1907 [?], FO 371/193. Pankhurst (ed.), Royal Chronicles, pp. 192-93; Marcus, Life and Times of Menilek, mss., p. 403.

avoid. Furthermore, the emperor's personal relationship with Harrington had deteriorated as it became obvious that Whitehall was not following their representative's advice in the railway question, but rather seeking accommodation with Paris. Menilek even tried a direct appeal to Edward VII for Sir John's recall, not realizing that his constitutional fellow monarch could legally do nothing.[43]

So far as the Grey government was concerned, the affront implied in Menilek's request could not be accepted without adequate and proper reason; British ministers could not be changed by whim. Fortified with the increased rank of envoy extraordinary-minister plenipotentiary-consul general, Harrington left for the Ethiopian capital with his wife in November of 1907.[44] Undoubtedly Harrington felt apprehensive about his return to Addis Ababa; yet he was received satisfactorily and without rancor by the negus on January 30, 1908.[45] Despite previous disagreements and considerable strain in their relations after 1906, the

[43]Menilek to Edward VII (let.), AA, Nov. 4, 1907; Hardinge to Davidson (secretary to the king) and vice versa (lets.), Nov. 4, 1907; and memo. for king, Nov. 5, 1907 [36595], FO 371/193.

[44]Grey asked the French to support Harrington's return with the explanation "that the Emperor's telegram . . . was an affront to which we could not submit, and I [Grey] should be bound to send Sir John Harrington back, at any rate for a time." Grey to Bertie (let.), London, Oct. 28, 1907 [35907], FO 371/193.

[45]Harrington to Grey (tel.), AA, Jan. 11, 1908 [35887], FO 371/395.

emperor's reservoir of respect for Harrington was not exhausted. Nothing was said about the campaign for Harrington's recall, but Sir John could never feel the same assurance at the Gibbi.

Almost simultaneously with the Harringtons' arrival, Klobukowski concluded a new Ethiopian railway concession. Dr. Vitalien, Menilek's Afro-French doctor, was the nominal concessionaire (Harrington labelled him the French government's "dummy"). By the 99-year concession, Vitalien's new Ethiopian Railway Society obtained the right to work the existing line and complete construction to Addis Ababa. The Ethiopian government was to collaborate with the new company by subscribing a quarter of its capital or its equivalent in labor. In addition, the new syndicate assumed the 2,300,000 million franc debt owed to Menilek with 5 'percent' interest. Included in the numerous articles of the new concession were such privileges accorded to the Ethiopian government as free troop transport during mobilization or war, priority and half-fare for government merchandise and officials and free use of telegraph and telephone communications provided by the company. More importantly, Menilek insured that Ethiopia would have an important voice in the management of the line. The company was prohibited from increasing its capital, constructing any branch line, or using its capital for any enterprise other than construction or maintenance of the line without prior consent of the Ethiopian government. An Ethiopian

representative sat on the council of administration; in the event of a disagreement between Addis Ababa and the company's agent, Ethiopia could ask for the agent's recall. To assure proper execution of the contract, Ethiopian and French controllers were to be appointed to supervise construction and management of the line. There was a built-in arbitration mechanism for differences between the company and the Ethiopian government. Finally, under no circumstances could the company transfer the concession to a foreign government.

Harrington and Whitehall were only bothered by Article VII of the concession, which stipulated how the line was to be financed. Exports or imports of any nationality travelling on the railway were to be exempt from internal Ethiopian duties, but required to pay a 6 'percent' surtax, of which 4 'percent' went to the railway and 2 'percent' to the Ethiopian government.[46] Such an arrangement, in the opinion of Clerk (reassigned to the Foreign Office), was designed to force commerce onto the railway at the expense of other outlets of Ethiopian trade, thus restricting freedom of commerce and equality of treatment secured to the limitrophe powers through their various treaties with Ethiopia. In this way, the article directly contravened

[46] Harrington to Grey (tel.), AA, Feb. 23, 1908 [6498] and Concession granted by the Emperor Menelek to the New Ethiopian Railway company, Papers communicated by Mr. T. L. Gilmour, April 28, 1908 [14575], FO 371/394.

one of the principles on which the Tripartite Treaty was based. Harrington was also anxious about Article VII, since he wished to negotiate removal of internal taxes between Ethiopia and British East Africa and the Sudan under the most-favored-nation clause of the 1902 Anglo-Ethiopian treaty. If the Ethiopian government wished to direct its commerce onto the railway, there was little hope for achieving this goal. Finally, the new concession made no mention of British or Italian representatives on the board of directors, a definite stipulation of the Tripartite Treaty.

Unfortunately for Clerk and Harrington, the Foreign Office concluded there were no grounds for objection to Article VII and the 6 'percent' surtax. "We must assume," Foreign Office official William Langley noted, "that Menelek in fixing the equivalent for the internal dues has made a bargain not unfavourable to himself and that as long as the internal dues are not increased British goods will suffer no injury even if entering by other routes and methods than the Railway." While such details may try the mind, the principle was simple. So long as the Ethiopian government did not raise internal taxes above the 6 'percent' surtax level, there were no grounds for complaint of inequality. All goods entering Ethiopia paid the same 6 'percent' duty. The fact that the railway would be a faster and presumably cheaper means of transport meant that most of southern Ethiopia's commerce would be attracted to

it. Harrington had already written off the port of Zeila--Whitehall might as well sell it to the French, he lamented. His new worry was that British East African and Sudanese trade with the Ethiopian empire might also become a casualty of the French railway.[47]

Such pessimism about British prospects in northeast Africa typified Harrington's state of mind upon returning to Addis Ababa. His last year in Ethiopia was a sad end to a career worthy of a better conclusion. Plagued by an overriding fear that France had gained the upper hand in the Ethiopian empire, Sir John's official correspondence assumed a decidedly petulant tone. Trivial matters were particularly irksome, especially the appalling physical state of the British legation. As early as 1904, Harrington had requested funds for a new legation. The old building, a temporary structure of round huts connected by mud passages, was in a deplorable condition. The thatched roof needed repair; walls crumbled with damp rot, and the heavy rains, white ants, and termites threatened to undermine the entire structure. To make matters worse, the British compound was the shabbiest of the major diplomatic establishments, and the escort quarters and outhouses were "a disgrace to the Legation." Even the more successful Indian

[47]Harrington to Mallet (priv. let.), on board Adriatic bound for New York, June 6, 1907 [18804], FO 371/190; Clerk minute, May 1, 1907, and Langley minute to Papers communicated by Gilmour, April 28, 1907 [14575], FO 371/394.

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it. Harrington had already written off the port of Zeila--Whitehall might as well sell it to the French, he lamented. His new worry was that British East African and Sudanese trade with the Ethiopian empire might also become a casualty of the French railway.[47]

Such pessimism about British prospects in northeast Africa typified Harrington's state of mind upon returning to Addis Ababa. His last year in Ethiopia was a sad end to a career worthy of a better conclusion. Plagued by an overriding fear that France had gained the upper hand in the Ethiopian empire, Sir John's official correspondence assumed a decidedly petulant tone. Trivial matters were particularly irksome, especially the appalling physical state of the British legation. As early as 1904, Harrington had requested funds for a new legation. The old building, a temporary structure of round huts connected by mud passages, was in a deplorable condition. The thatched roof needed repair; walls crumbled with damp rot, and the heavy rains, white ants, and termites threatened to undermine the entire structure. To make matters worse, the British compound was the shabbiest of the major diplomatic establishments, and the escort quarters and outhouses were "a disgrace to the Legation." Even the more successful Indian

[47]Harrington to Mallet (priv. let.), on board Adriatic bound for New York, June 6, 1907 [18804], FO 371/190; Clerk minute, May 1, 1907, and Langley minute to Papers communicated by Gilmour, April 28, 1907 [14575], FO 371/394.

petty traders enjoyed the status of stone houses. For two consecutive years, the Treasury refused to authorize a new legation or major improvements to the existing one on the flimsy grounds that there was doubt whether Addis Ababa would remain a permanent capital.[48]

Undaunted by Treasury tight-fistedness, Harrington continued his campaign for reconstruction of a new legation in the Ethiopian capital with the persuasive argument of the threat of civil disorder against British subjects upon the death of Menilek. Without mentioning the obvious parallel of Peking during the Boxer Rebellion, Sir John hinted that whites in Ethiopia ran "the risk of being massacred" in the event of the sudden death of the emperor. It is doubtful Harrington himself believed that such violence would occur; after all, he took his wife to the Ethiopian capital. But he did believe that there was a strong possibility of mob-riot and pillage against Europeans and Indians. With the chargé d'affaires of the Russian legation, also a military man, Harrington worked out an Anglo-Russian scheme for the defense of the neighboring British and Russian legations. The Russians possessed a fortress-like stone structure, ample armament, and a martial diplomatic establishment, but their legation

[48]Harrington to Lord Windsor (first commissioner of works) (let.), AA, Sept. 30, 1904; Victor Cavendish to Sanderson (let.), London, Dec. 23, 1904; Harrington to Lansdowne (let.), AA, Sept. 5, 1905; F.O. to Office of Works (let.), London, Oct. 17, 1905; and Treasury to F.O. (let.), London, Oct. 28, 1905, FO 1/55.

lacked a defensible water supply. In the event of serious disturbances, the Russians proposed to join the British, whose legation was inadequate but who enjoyed an easily protected water source. All Harrington required from Whitehall for his scheme was a Maxim, two smaller Rexer quick-firing guns, rifles, tens of thousands of cartridges, axes, spades, barbed wire, search lights, dynamite, mines, money to build at least a fortified basement for the British legation, and £20,000 credit to buy protection from an Ethiopian notable.

Harrington's enthusiasm for defense of the legation seemed boundless; he talked of constructing blockhouses to knock out an artillery attack and Hale's rockets to command the hill overlooking his legation. The Russian chargé d'affaires proposed a trip to St. Petersburg for consultations with his government (he had little to do in Addis Ababa).[49] Grey was both amused and alarmed by Harrington's proposals. He sanctioned a request for the arms and supplies from the War Office, resigned himself to construction of a new legation, and warned Harrington not to expect any relief expedition in the event of a siege. "I do not understand why the scheme for defending the two legations at Addis Ababa has suddenly lept into such importance . . . ," Grey wrote, "Tibet, Afghanistan, Persia & the Dardenelles

[49]Harrington to Grey (let.), AA, Aug. 20, 1906 [31426], with a minute by Grey, FO 371/3.

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are quite overshadowed."[50] In any event, Harrington obtained a promise of new buildings and, as commander of a soon-to-be fortified legation, satisfied a yen stemming from his first career, soldiering.

During 1906, Sir John drew up detailed plans and estimates for the new fortress-legation, but he delayed actual construction until his return in January 1908. Despite official sanction of funds, Whitehall's Office of Works was not anxious to pay the price of a new legation. They considered Harrington "a little wild in his ideas." If given a "free hand," there was no telling what kind of bill Sir John would accumulate. Works suggested fobbing the cost off onto the long-suffering Egyptians, but Cromer would have nothing to do with such a plan. "The Lord" was not going to allow the under-financed and under-staffed Egyptian Office of Public Works to do another of London's "odd jobs."[51]

The whole question became further entangled when Menilek learned of the Anglo-Russian plans and threw a spanner in the works by announcing his intention of placing a mountain battery on the hill above the two legations. It mattered little if the British legation was a fort or a

[50]Minute by Grey to Harrington to Grey via Findlay (tel.), AA, Aug. 23, 1906 [28789], FO 371/3.

[51]Murray to Hardinge (lets.), London, Feb. 18, 21, 1907 [6774]; McDonnell to Hardinge (priv. let.), London, Feb. 21, 1907 [6774]; and Cromer to Hardinge (let.), Cairo, March 7, 1907 [8540], FO 371/190.

house, if Menilek proceeded with his plans, for in either case the legation could be blown to smithereens. Harrington wearily reorganized his scheme and settled for a bullet-proof house, some arms and ammunition, a Maxim, barbed wire, and sand bags. He hoped that Menilek's fort would act as a deterrent to mob violence. After considerable foot dragging, the Treasury sanctioned £20,000 credit for emergency protection of the 500 British subjects resident in the Ethiopian capital, and a £20,000 appropriation for construction and refurbishing of the Addis Ababa legation. A supervisor of the Office of Works would oversee construction of a flat-roofed, single-story stone house.[52]

An issue of far greater consequence for British policy in the Ethiopian empire was the widening gulf between French and British interpretations of the Tripartite Treaty. The major controversy revolved around Article X--the signatories' promise to keep their Ethiopian represenatives informed of various policy decisions and to cooperate in protecting each nation's interests. Very simply, the French did not wish to limit the initiative of their minister by prior consultation with the representatives of Great Britain and Italy. For this reason, Klobukowski and his successor, M. Brice, maintained that Article

[52] Clerk to Grey (let.), AA, May 8, 1907 [18080]; Harrington to Grey (let.), London, Sept. 10, 1907 [31115]; and F.O. to Treasury (let.), London, Jan. 3, 1908 [32377], FO 371/190; Office of Works to F.O. (let.), London, April 15, 1908 [13206], FO 371/395.

X concerned solely the execution of Article III--joint consultation if European intervention in Ethiopian affairs after the death of Menilek was deemed necessary. On the other hand, Harrington wished to limit French predominant influence as much as possible. When the Italians suggested a series of comprehensive identic instructions for the limitrophe powers' ministers in Ethiopia, Sir John threw his support behind the plan. "If loyally carried out," Harrington believed, the identic instructions "would prevent the Emperor from benefitting from differences between the three Signatory Powers to the Agreement of 1906, and would probably render diplomatic representations more efficious than they are at present."

So far as Harrington was concerned, the Tripartite Treaty was a disaster; the French had nimbly turned it to British disadvantage. While Rome and London attempted to abide by the rules, Paris played a double game. To make matters worse, the Ethiopians interpreted the treaty not as a self-denying mutual accord, but rather a "free hand" for France, agreed to by Great Britain and Italy.[53]

Not surprisingly, the French vigorously opposed identic instructions. They pointed out with justification that such comprehensive and binding guidelines would only lead to further instructions explaining the first ones and so on

[53] Harrington to Grey (tel.), AA, Feb. 29, 1908 [7548], and (let.), AA, March 28, 1908 [13303], FO 371/396.

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ad infinitum. Among interested Foreign Office officials there existed a tendency to let things in the Ethiopian capital fall as they may. Affairs in Addis Ababa were proceeding quietly; identic instructions would only cause renewed Anglo-French conflict. George Clerk noted that so long as Harrington remained in the Ethiopian capital "his personal influence will assure our being no losers even under the restricted conditions proposed by the Italians," but Clerk thought that Sir John's successor, who had to deal with the emperor or his heir to the throne, Lig Jasu, would find himself, under the proposed scheme of identic instructions, "severely handicapped in his efforts to maintain our proper position in Abyssinia." For these reasons, Grey decided to let the Italians alone propose discussion of the instructions à trois.[54]

Sir John smarted under the Liberal government's indifference. His strong advice in favor of the Italian proposal for identic instructions went unheeded. In fact, his opinion was increasingly disregarded by Grey's government, which drew ever closer to Paris and was, therefore, more willing to allow the French considerable latitude in Ethiopia. As a result, Harrington's dispatches to Whitehall became fewer and their substance less important. For

[54] Minutes by Clerk, Mallet, Hardinge, and Grey to Harrington to Grey (let.), AA, March 28, 1907 [13303]; to San Giuliano to Grey (let.), London, Sept. 19, 1908 [32983]; and Grey to Cambon (let.), London, Oct. 14, 1908 [33316], FO 371/395.

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example, reporting with dismay that the emperor had entrusted the French government with sponsorship of Ethiopian entry into the Universal Postal Convention Bureau at Berne, Switzerland, he peevishly complained that Ethiopian entry was "premature." Ethiopian postal and telegraph communications, which extended only to Diré Dawa, Harar, and Addis Ababa, were directly under French control. "The Ethiopian Government," he added, "has so little sense of responsibility" that there could be no assurance for the security of confidentiality in the postal service. The Foreign Office formally sent Sir John's objections to the General Post Office, which brushed them aside as inadequate. In reality, Harrington's objection was not so much to Ethiopia joining the union, but to its entry under French auspices. He hoped to create a British postal agency in the Ethiopian empire similar to that operating in Turkey. As it turned out, Ethiopia joined the union in August 1908.[55]

Harrington's opposition to Ethiopian entry into the Postal Union was symptomatic of another of Ethiopia's maladies du pays, the belief that all matters in Ethiopia were, above all, questions of political influence. Like many other imperialists in the field, Harrington allowed himself to extrapolate endlessly and often fancifully on the motives and policy of a rival imperialist nation. The

[55]Harrington to Grey (lets.), AA, June 13 [23248], July 31, 1908 [30243], and General Post Office to F.O. (let.), London, Aug. 5, 1908 [27296], FO 371/396.

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realization that his advice was little heeded in Whitehall and the real and imagined threat of French influence in Ethiopia made Harrington's last year as minister in Addis Ababa an uneasy one. There was one compensation: Amy, Sir John's wife. The limited social life in the Ethiopian capital, including endless social calls on fellow diplomats, the race meetings (where the British legation organized the odds totalizer), and the royal ceremonies took on new interest as Sir John saw them through the eyes of Lady Harrington. Also planning the construction of the new legation provided an added interest.

Unfortunately, Harrington's health, despite his relatively young age (43), was adversely affected by his prolonged residence in Addis Ababa and earlier in Zeila. The climate and altitude of the highland capital, when combined with his propensity to worry deeply over diplomatic problems, debilitated his physique. He suffered from "acute neurasthenia," general anemia, and occasional bouts of fever and influenza. In May 1908, Harrington decided that for reasons of health he must quit the Ethiopian capital and asked the Foreign Office for leave "as promised." Charles Hardinge telegraphed that the Foreign Office was unaware of any such promise. As Harrington had only arrived in January 1908, he must wait a year until his next leave came due. Sir John answered this curt rejection with the proverbial stiff upper-lip:

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Actually, it had been customary for Harrington to return to London during the months of June through September. When negotiations required his presence during the rainy season, Harrington invariably suffered a near physical and nervous breakdown. Sir John was hardly shirking his duty.

The Foreign Office, after the reforms of the Liberal government, was less willing to bend the rules to accommodate men like Harrington. The age of the independent ambassador with his hands firmly on the reins of British policy in the country in which he represented the crown had passed.[57] Because of the remoteness and exotic nature of Ethiopia, Harrington had initially enjoyed an Indian summer of relative independence matched by few other men in the diplomatic corps. The direct telegraph link and the railway drew Ethiopia closer to the capitals of Europe and allowed for tighter supervision of British policy there. Neither Hardinge nor Grey looked kindly on Harrington's

[56]Harrington to Hardinge (tels.), AA, May 27 [18394], May 31, 1908 [19188], and vice versa, May 28, 1908 [18394], FO 371/396.

[57]Steiner, Foreign Office, pp. 173-78.

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[56]Harrington to Hardinge (tels.), AA, May 27 [18394], May 31, 1908 [19188], and vice versa, May 28, 1908 [18394], FO 371/396.

[57]Steiner, Foreign Office, pp. 173-78.

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request for special leave and reassignment. He had been a difficulty in the past; neither had any idea where he could go next.

Harrington was bitterly disappointed with the attitude of the Foreign Office. Ever since the Liberal ministry had come to power in December 1905, Sir John fell increasingly out of favor with Whitehall. The correct, but officious, attitude of Hardinge, and ultimately Grey, revealed their exasperation with Harrington. If they were trying to drive him from the diplomatic service, they succeeded. On August 7, 1908, Harrington tendered his resignation on the grounds that, as there was no probability of any immediate transfer available, his health precluded further residence in Ethiopia. At the end of the rains, Harrington planned to leave the Ethiopian capital and retire on whatever pension he was entitled to for his service since 1884.[58] Lady Harrington's American money made retirement that much more attractive.

Harrington's final months in Ethiopia were spent in gathering up loose ends. He proposed for the future a special leave allowance of one hundred pounds for members of the legation. The caravan journey of 280 miles to Diré Dawa cost about thirty pounds, the train fare with baggage to Jibuti was another twenty, and the steamer to England

[58]Harrington to Grey (let.), AA, Aug. 7, 1908 [30247], with medical certificate, FO 371/396.

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cost an additional fifty pounds. To bear such an expense personally was not fair to the junior members of the staff. Sir John also sent a request for a new legation guard of six sowars from the Central Indian Horse, Sikhs "of good character and fine physique, good shots, good riders, and good at sports." At least the Addis Ababa polo games would remain as a testimony to Harrington's love of sport. Sir John also collected butterfly and insect specimens for the British Museum and packed his large photography collection of Ethiopian subjects. He planned to write a political and natural history of Ethiopia much in the style of the encyclopedic works of Sir Harry Johnston on Nyasaland (Malawi), but he was not a scholar and the work never passed the planning stage.[59]

Although no copy exists, Grey evidently sent Harrington a personal acceptance of his resignation and appreciation for his service. After leaving the Ethiopian capital on September 30, 1908, Sir John sent Grey a short memorandum "as promised" on the decline of British influence in the Ethiopian empire. As the memorandum is the last will and testament of Harrington on Ethiopian affairs, it is worthy of examination. Harrington prefaced his remarks with a melancholy observation: In 1906, Lagarde had

[59]Harrington to Grey (let.), AA, Sept. 25, 1908 [36282] and I.O. to F.O. (let.), London, July 8, 1908 [23715], F.O. 471/396; C. E. Fagan to Hardinge (let.), London, Feb. 8, 1908 [4813], FO 371/395.

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admitted that no European diplomatic representative could attempt a move with any reasonable hope of success without the consent of Sir John. Since the signing of the Tripartite Treaty, the situation had entirely changed. British influence was, in Harrington's blunt appraisal, "non-existent."

To make matters worse Harrington foresaw a troubled succession to the imperial Ethiopian throne. A strong party opposed to Menilek's nominated successor, Lig Yasu, because of his Muslim background, was coalescing around young Dejazmach Tafari (later Emperor Haile Selassie), the son of the late Ras Makonnen. Given this potential danger, Harrington pleaded for a reappraisal of the nature of British policy in Ethiopia. He reviewed what he believed was the object of the Tripartite Treaty--to maintain Ethiopian independence and to end the rivalry between the three limitrophe powers. But because of the action of French representatives, the result had been just the opposite. Harrington noted that "the French Government hardly any longer conceal their view of Abyssinia as a purely French preserve . . . they are fostering French influence and laying the ground to establish the claim to be the paramount Power in Ethiopia and arbiter of its destiny." Klobukowski was the principal villain. He ignored both the spirit and letter of the Tripartite Treaty and presented himself at the Gibbi as the friend and protector of Ethiopia against an Anglo-Italian threat. Klobukowski's new railway

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concession was a virtual government monopoly hidden by the flimsiest of fig leaves--Doctor Vitalien's concession. After the death or serious debilitation of Menilek, the railway would prove a "powerful political lever" against a weakened Ethiopian government.

French influence permeated the entire empire. By pandering to Menilek's "personal vanity" through seconding his desire to join the Universal Postal Union, the French tightened their grip on Ethiopia's communications with the rest of the world. Paris dispatched medical and veterinary doctors and agricultural experts to Ethiopia. Informal proposals for establishment of the Banque de l'Indo-Chine at the Ethiopian capital threatened the monopoly of the international and, in Harrington's opinion, apolitical Bank of Abyssinia. To Harrington's mind, French sacrifices in money, especially continued financial support of the extension of the railway to Addis Ababa, denoted an ulterior object beyond the commercial development of Jibuti: informal control over the proud African empire. Harrington argued that the maintenance of Ethiopian independence, with its concommitant, security for the sources of the Nile, had been the real reason for the considerable sacrifices British policy endured in Ethiopia in order to achieve the tripartite agreement. Therefore, Whitehall must force Paris to fulfill its 1906 obligations. Such

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was Harrington's last official advice.[60]

Harrington's resignation and final assessment scarcely caused an official murmur among the Foreign Office establishment. The head of the African Department, E. A. W. Clarke, minuted this comment: "It is merely a repetition of the old story. We are always being led into joining self-denying agreements which we observe & our co-signators do not." Walter Langley, assistant permanent undersecretary, suggested making a formal complaint with a documented brief to the Quai d'Orsay.[61] Grey reluctantly agreed, but made it clear that given the state of Menilek's health--a forced retirement from affairs of state because of the cerebral hemorrhage suffered in June 1908--and the ensuing paralysis that overtook the central Ethiopian government, "no progress [towards an equitable share of influence] is worth much in Abyssinia under present conditions."[62]

Harrington was the last of the three original permanent diplomats (Lagarde and Ciccodicola were the other two) who rushed to Addis Ababa to present credentials, thus acknowledging Ethiopia's new status after the victory at Adwa. These three men engaged in a hectic struggle for

[60]Harrington to Grey (let.), R.M.S. Lusitania, Queenstown, Dec. 6, 1908 [42773], enclosing "Memorandum respecting Abyssinia," Lusitania, Dec. 5, 1908, FO 371/396.

[61]Clarke, Langley, and Grey, minutes to ibid.

[62]Grey minute to Hervery to Grey (let.), AA, Oct. 14, 1908 [39278], FO 371/396.

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influence at the Gibbi and within Ethiopia, which often included personal vendetta. It would be a mistake to conclude that Harrington's departure marked the end of a discernible era in the conduct of London's policy in Ethiopia. The gradual accommodation with Paris, accelerated after 1905 by the Liberal government and an anti-German Foreign Office, and Menilek's retirement from active direction of Ethiopian affairs were the two events which most directly transformed British policy in Ethiopia. The Entente Cordiale and Tripartite Treaty resulted in less tolerance by Whitehall for Harrington's anti-French point of view. Menilek's illness and convalescence removed the most potent weapon Sir John possessed in the course of his Ethiopian career--the ability to discuss matters directly and frankly with the negus himself. To work through the aloof Empress Taitu or the sycophantic and ineffectual minister of foreign affairs, Nagardis Haile Giorgis, was too great a transition for the blunt soldier-diplomat to make. It is not surprising that after ratification of the British East Africa-Ethiopian boundary treaty in 1907, Sir John's work was done.

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CHAPTER X: EPILOGUE, POLITICS AND WAR, 1909-1918

In British society during the first half of the twentieth century, retired Anglo-Indian or Colonial officers (for that was the category in which Harrington would naturally be lumped) formed a discernible group. Secure with their modest though adequate pensions, they came "home" to England, often to discover to their dismay that they did not feel at all "at home." Service in India and/or Africa set them apart from their fellow Britons. The legions of servants, the provincialism and intimacy of the small hill station or small European community overseas, were missing in England. Many retreated into their memories; many became crashing bores.

This dismal prospect never threatened Sir John Harrington. He was relatively young, only recently married, and full of nervous energy. A Colonel Blimp he could never be. Harrington's first year of retirement began sedately. He did his part for his old public school by becoming president of the Stonyhurst old boys association, and for his family by visiting his in-laws in New York and Detroit.[1]

[1] John Gerard, A Stonyhurst Handbook (Stonyhurst, 1927), pp. 27, 35.

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Yet Harrington did not remain a private individual for long. The times beckoned men of strong principle to stand up and be counted. In 1909, Great Britain was a society engaged in a constitutional confrontation between the House of Lords and the House of Commons. But the divisions between Englishmen and women ran deeper than disputes over the role of the peers in British political society. Liberal England was beset by challenges from the socialists, from the Irish, from the suffragettes, and from the tariff reformers. While England was convulsed by division and strife, there persisted among most Britons a general belief that such differences could be settled through the political process. 1909 and 1910 were pre-eminently political years.[2]

Harrington had hardly expressed his political beliefs during his years in India and Africa. As a diplomat he was theoretically apolitical, although in fact he found it easier to work under the Conservatives than the Liberals. Yet Harrington's upbringing and accomplishments molded his political outlook. He was, in essence, a self-made man. Although he enjoyed a public school education, he had worked his way from private to the rank of distinguished

[2]A fuller examination of British domestic history 1909-1910 is beyond the scope of this epilogue. For such, see George Dangerfield, The Strange Death of Liberal England, 1910-1914 (New York, 1968, orig. 1935), Peter Rowland, The Last Liberal Governments: The Promised Land 1905-1910 (London, 1968), and, for the constitutional crisis specifically, Roy Jenkins, Mr. Balfour's Poodle (London, 1968).

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and honored diplomat and soldier. Like many self-made men, Harrington believed in conserving the traditions of society; still, he realized that contemporary British civilization was failing to provide many of its members with full and prosperous lives. Furthermore, as an imperialist, he believed that Great Britain's strength in a twentieth-century world, dominated by large political and economic units, depended upon the empire. To satisfy both the goals of social reform and a closer imperial unity, Harrington became a follower of the political policies of Joseph Chamberlain, an advocate of tariff reform and Empire solidarity.

Young, well-off, distinguished, and self-made, Harrington seemed ideally suited to carry the message of tariff reform to the skeptical English workingman. The question was where and how to bring them the news. With the prospect of an early dissolution of Parliament, the conservative challenger for the seat held by a local Liberal in the Crewe Division of Cheshire withdrew and the local Conservative association was compelled to look for a fresh candidate. In June, 1909, they invited Harrington to address them on political topics and were suitably impressed with his views. Although some of the local Tories favored the unsuccessful 1906 candidate, Sir John won the overwhelming support of the divisional executive. He was chosen as the strongest possible Unionist (Conservative) candidate for Crewe. Although an outsider and a late-comer,

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Harrington had, in the opinion of local Conservatives, a special appeal to the predominantly working-class district of industrial Crewe. His Roman Catholicism was not expected to detach any of the usual supporters from the Conservative ranks; in fact, Crewe Unionists hoped to win much of the substantial Catholic vote in the division, which had gone to the Liberals in the last election.[3]

The incumbent, Harrington's principal opponent, was a local squire, James Tomkinson, who had been a Cheshire politician since 1881 and Member of Parliament for Crewe since 1900. One of the best huntsmen in the district, Tomkinson had a reputation as a "hard goer." He managed his estates profitably, fulfilled his obligations to the Earl of Chester's Yeomany, and usually voted with the Lib-Lab block in Parliament, thus assuring his popularity in his predominantly working-class constituency. A third candidate stood for office and therein lay the optimism of the Conservatives. He was Frank Rose, a member of the Amalgamated Engineer's Union, candidate of the Young Labour party. The Liberals were dismayed. Rose had not a "ghost of a chance" and his candidacy threatened to split the workingman's vote and possibly even allow Harrington to win. Prominent trade unionists tried to convince Rose to step down, but the socialist was serenely confident that he

[3]Crewe Guardian (hereafter C.G.), Jan. 26, 1910; The Crewe Chronicle (hereafter C.C.), Jan. 29, 1910.

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was acting with the support of the organized workers of the borough.[4]

Harrington did not begin active campaigning until the second week in November, less than two months before polling day.[5] His candidacy was not without controversy; a conference of Protestant, Conservative party workers organized a petition opposing his selection and election by all legitimate means because of his Roman Catholicism. These fervent Orangemen raised the tired charge of loyalty, whether to religion or country, and attempted to justify their bigotry with the observation that the next Parliament was to deal with a number of religious questions, including alteration of the Protestant declaration of the King, legalization of the Jesuits, and procession of the Host through Protestant United Kingdom streets. Harrington countered such opposition by firmly supporting the established Church of England and professing his loyalty to king and country over pope and religion. Thereafter, anti-Catholicism played little overt part in the campaign

[4] C.G., Nov. 13, 1909; C.C., Jan. 29, 1910.

[5] Harrington initiated his campaign with a non-political lecture, complete with a rudimentary system of photographic slides, before the Crewe Literary and Philosophical Society. He compared Ethiopia in 1880 to England at the accession of Henry VII. The rases were the equivalent of the barons and Menilek II was likened to the great Tudor king, Henry VII. In general, Sir John considered the Ethiopian empire an important bulwark against fanatical Islam. So long as Great Britain retained in Egypt, East Africa, and Somaliland, a hostile European power must not be allowed to control Ethiopia. C.G., Dec. 11, 1909.

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(Tomkinson and Rose never mentioned it); but it is uncertain how great a factor it was in the privacy of the polling booth.[6]

The Crewe division numbered some 16,000 electors and measured twenty miles from end to end. Industrial Crewe contained sixty percent of the voters and was thus the focal point of all campaigns. There were, however, a number of smaller towns and country districts. A local newspaper described the tactics of the campaign: "It was a sort of motor-car race from place to place, and even villages where a candidate had never been before were favoured with visits." Elections prior to the Great War were rough and tumble affairs. Harrington distinguished himself not by his platform oratory, which was hardly stirring, but by his willingness to address crowds in hot-beds of liberalism and to endure heckling and personal insults with good humor.[7]

Harrington ventured into the workingclass neighborhoods of Crewe to repeat Joseph Chamberlain's message to the nation. He campaigned on the then familiar tripod of tariff reform, social reform, and empire unity.[8] Under

[6] C.G., Nov. 13, 20, 1909; C.C., Jan. 29, 1910.

[7] C.C., Jan. 29, 1910; C.G., Dec. 11, 1909.

[8] For comparison of Harrington's program with that of his political mentor, Joseph Chamberlain, see Alfred Gollin, Balfour's Burden, Arthur Balfour and Imperial Preference (London, 1965), part I.

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free trade, Harrington's letter to the electors declared, Great Britain was handicapped both in foreign markets and at home by the unfair competition of goods imported from protectionist nations. Such states, notably Germany and the United States, could afford to sell their manufactures cheaply in England because of their protected markets at home. By way of example, Harrington's campaign workers opened a "dumping shop" in the High Street of Crewe to demonstrate how below-cost foreign imports were flooding the British market and undercutting British products. Under tariff reform (the current euphemism for protective tariffs), British industry, free from unfair competition, would arrest its present decline and solve the problems of unemployment and destitution, both increasingly evident in the industrial north. The revenues from the tariff would provide funds for such social reforms as old age pensions, a measure to which Sir John gave his fullest support. Finally, Harrington promised that tariff reform combined with the obvious step of "a wise system of colonial preference" would help unify the British Empire and assure for Great Britain magnificent future markets.[9]

As was the case in most tariff reform versus free trade parliamentary campaigns, the Liberals branded Chamberlain's scheme as "taxes on food" or "stomach taxes." No such confrontation would be complete with the proverbial

[9] C.G., Jan. 8, 1910; C.C., Jan. 29, 1910.

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[9] C.G., Jan. 8, 1910; C.C., Jan. 29, 1910.

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loaf of bread; the Harrington-Tomkinson fight was no exception. Sir John bought a loaf of bread and cabled his brother-in-law in New York to prove that the price of bread in the protectionist United States was as cheap and as good as its free-trade equivalent. To give the lie to the Liberal rumor that German workers were so poor that they had to eat black bread, Harrington purchased rye and pumpernickel to prove to the skeptics that they were the choice of the Germans because they were more nutritious than "the wishy-washy English White bread." To the general amusement of all, Sir John threw loaves around so that his audience could test their quality.[10]

Despite the levity of the battle of the loaves, the election in January 1910 was one of the most important ones in early twentieth-century British political history. The conflict between Commons and Lords embodied a whole series of issues: the legality of the Lloyd George Budget of 1909, reform of the Upper House, Home Rule for Ireland. In short, Harrington opposed the budget since it singled out one class (the landed gentry) for special legislation through its death duties, land and surtaxes; he favored reform of the Lords, but not with hasty and immature legislation; and he opposed Home Rule for Ireland, since its claim for special treatment was a danger to the rest of the empire and to the Protestant majority in the north. Instead,

[10] *C.G.*, Jan. 12, 1910.

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Harrington suggested the fullest measure of local rule for the Irish within the British Empire.[11]

Throughout the arduous campaign, which usually included four or five speaking engagements a day (a good number of them before hostile crowds), Harrington retained his good spirits and his temper. He debated socialism with the Labour candidate before a pro-Labour audience. After listening to Rose's Marxist critique of capitalism and his explanation of socialism Harrington used his personal experience to controvert the doctrine. He stressed his supposedly humble origins and his achievements as a self-made man. Men were naturally unequal by virtue of their intelligence and ability and collective ownership would retard all of them.[12] It was hardly a brilliant rebuttal and it won few, if any, of the pre-disposed; but at least Harrington was willing to face Rose on his home ground. Tomkinson never ventured that.

There were other less abstract issues; votes for women was one. Suffragette militancy was no stranger to Crewe. When Liberal minister Winston Churchill came to speak on Tomkinson's behalf, he was picketed, stink-bombed, and stoned by militant women, who saw him as one of the leaders of the anti-suffragette faction of the Liberal Party. Supporters of Churchill rushed the suffragettes and a

[11] C.G., Jan. 8, 1910.

[12] C.G., Jan. 5, 1910.

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furious battle erupted. Several children were trampled; one suffered a broken leg. The police dragged the women away to save them from serious injury. Harrington reacted to the melee by publicly declaring himself opposed to votes for women. The non-violent North England Society for Women's Suffrage endorsed Tomkinson, who declared himself "benevolently inclined." Rose, true to his socialist credo, announced his full support of women's suffrage; yet the established women's organizations favored the more genteel Tomkinson.[13]

Military preparedness was to be the Conservative's trump card during the election. Great Britain still shuddered from trauma of the Naval Scare of 1909 and Harrington, as a life-long soldier and diplomat, assumed the air of a "man-in-the-know." According to Sir John, there was no doubt that Germany was preparing for war. In order to keep naval supremacy, which meant no less than the preservation of England's homes, liberty, and food supplies, two British keels must be laid for every German one. How could this be paid for, the skeptics asked? With the proceeds from the tariff and from the prosperity which protection would bring. Harrington added a final salvo at the opposition: Liberals

[13] C.G., Dec. 22, 1909, Jan. 22, 1910. One suffragette, Nellie Taylor, was convicted of breaking the windows of the Liberal Club the day of Churchill's visit to Crewe. She refused to pay costs to avoid a conviction being recorded, instead she was fined 1s. 2d. damages and one guinea costs or seven days in jail. Nellie chose the prison cell and joined the ranks of women martyrs.

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who neglected the navy and gave away advantages were "either lunatics or traitors." "Rot, Rot!, Be Careful," the hecklers warned, but Harrington bludgeoned on: the navy had saved England during the Boer War and it would do so in the event of war with Germany.[14] Historians can hardly argue with that prediction.

Tomkinson enjoyed the advantages of the incumbent; he need only parry Harrington's criticisms. The naval question was a "red herring" and an insult to England's sailors. In his letter to the electors, Tomkinson stated what he believed was the central issue of the campaign: whether the people should rule themselves or whether they were to be taxed and controlled by hereditary peers, most of whom were Tories. The partisan Lords, by altering the 1909 Budget, were attempting to assume a new and unconstitutional power, that of the purse. Tomkinson next denounced tariff reform as no more than taxes on food and defended free trade as the true basis of British wealth and the worker's prosperity. The Liberal incumbent stood behind Asquith's record of social reform and promised more of the same with the Lloyd George budget as "a secure foundation." The campaign was characterized, although hardly summarized, by the two opponents' slogans: "If you want British Work for British Workmen, Vote for Harrington! . . . If You Want to Rule Yourselves, Vote For Tomkinson!"[15]

[14] C.G., Jan. 8, 1910.

[15] C.G., Jan. 1, 8, 1910.

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Polling day was Saturday, January 22, 1910. The sun shone brilliantly; a keen frost and gusts of chilling wind dried up the roads. The working men of Crewe enjoyed Saturday off in order to vote. Harrington could reflect on a clean, hard fought campaign. Financing was ample; Harrington's poster covered the district and his pamphlets were widely circulated. Scores of campaign volunteers stood ready with their automobiles, carriages, and traps to flush out potential supporters and bring them to the poll. Harrington's campaign headquarters remained confident of victory, although party workers were no longer giving long odds, but accepting even money in their personal wagers. Harrington had enjoyed good support from the national party. The Earl of Stanhope had spoken on his behalf and F. E. Smith, a controversial national Conservative, had given Liberal hecklers a good going over in his supporting speech at Crewe. Various tariff reform organizations sent minor luminaries to enlighten the public on the complex subject of protection.[16]

Crewe Division took on the carnival atmosphere which accompanies a well-fought British parliamentary campaign. Party colors were everywhere--blue for Tories, yellow with red for the Liberals, and yellow for Labour--and many voters sported medallions with photographs of the candidates. Local wags had a field day; a donkey festooned with Liberal

[16] *C.C.*, Jan. 29, 1910; *C.G.*, Jan. 1, 8, 1910.

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party colors carried the comment, "Don't tax thistles" and a terrier attracted attention because of its accompanying slogan:

> A Free Trader, I am you see,
> Tariff Reform will make sausage of me,
> So please have pity on me,
> And vote for your old M.P.

"Weaklings and wobblers"--the lame and sick--were dragged to the polls soon after they opened at eight in the morning. Throughout the day voter turnout was heavy; in fact, the heaviest on record. Harrington and Tomkinson toured the division, both confident of victory, while workers scoured the countryside for supporters who had yet to vote. The ballots were not to be counted until Monday morning, so Harrington and his wife spent an anxious Sunday.[17]

On Monday morning, a crowd of several thousand waited in front of the town hall at Crewe to hear the results. Snow fell with increasing ferocity until, when the results were announced, there was a near blizzard. The clerk entered the doorway of the hall and a hush fell over the crowd. He read the results: Tomkinson, 7,762, Harrington, 5,419, and Rose, 1,380. The hats and handkerchiefs of the Liberal supporters flew into the air like a flock of ducks startled from a quiet pond. All supporters cheered their candidates, but the hurrahs for Tomkinson were the loudest

[17] C.C., Jan. 29, 1910. Dangerfield characterized the campaign as "a month of very dull electioneering . . . [in which] the country went to the polls in small numbers. . . ." Crewe's experience is diametrically opposed to this judgment. Dangerfield, Strange Death, p. 25.

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and longest. Tomkinson emotionally thanked his supporters and suggested adjournment to the Liberal Club for a victory celebration and concert by Mr. E. Foden and his Workingman's Grand Band. A local Liberal paper conceded that Harrington took his defeat like "a gallant soldier." In response to a question from the press, Harrington thanked his workers "who did all they could and worked splendidly" and added, "It was a sporting chance; I went for big stakes and did not pull them off." Then he and Lady Harrington retired to the Conservative Club.[18] Harrington's first venture into politics had failed.

On a national level, the Conservatives had better success than Harrington in Crewe; they reduced the Liberal ranks by 125 seats and achieved virtual parity with their opponents. Yet John Redmond's eighty Irish Nationalists held the balance of power in the Commons, and allowed Asquith to continue his ministry in return for a firm promise of Home Rule for Ireland. Without adequate statistical information, it is hard to gain a clear picture of Harrington's defeat. Crewe as an industrial area had undergone a definite population increase since 1906, which enlarged its electorate. Comparing, as The Times did, the Liberal and Conservative votes of the 1906 and 1910 elections, Tomkinson's vote actually fell by 44, and Harrington's increased by 122 over the 1906 Tory challenger's

[18] C.C., Jan. 29, 1910.

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total. The Labour vote of thirteen hundred plus was evidently the result of new voters in the division. The Times took solace in the fact that Harrington had actually reduced the liberal majority by 166 votes.[19]

Harrington had little time to brood over his defeat. Asquith prepared to curb the Lord's power of veto, assuring once and for all the supremacy of the Commons and allowing for passage of a Home Rule bill. Irish self-rule and the introduction of the Parliament Bill had become, in 1910, two sides of the same issue. Without a reformed House of Lords, Asquith had no chance of repaying his political mortgage to Redmond and the Irish. At the prompting of the new King, George V, Conservative and Liberal party leaders met in a secret constitutional conference to attempt to negotiate a settlement to the dispute between Commons and Lords. But the deadlock over Ireland finally broke down negotiations. On November 11, 1910, Asquith asked for an immediate dissolution and a royal promise to create enough Liberal Peers to swamp the Tories in the Lords if the electors decided in favor of the Liberals. The King gave his hedging approval five days later. For the second time in the same year, a general election was held.[20]

[19] The Times as quoted in the C.C., Jan. 29, 1910.

[20] Dangerfield, Strange Death, pp. 34-41; Roy Jenkins, Asquith, Portrait of a Man and an Era (N.Y., 1966), pp. 214-22; Harold Nicolson, King George The Fifth, His Life and Reign (London, 1952), pp. 125-30.

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For reasons which are, unfortunately, unknown, Harrington was not to fight this second election in Crewe, but rather in Battersea, where upper-middle class houses along the Thames River soon gave way to the slums of London's poor. Again the lure of the numerous Irish voters in the district seemed to offer Sir John grounds for optimism; they were, in fact, only a phantom hope for two reasons. First, Harrington's opponent was John Burns, the president of the Local Government Board in the Liberal ministry and the only real working man in the Asquith cabinet. Burns, an extremely popular politician, known for his wit and energy, was virtually unbeatable. Second, Burns and the Liberals promised Home Rule, a powerful appeal in a heavily Irish-Catholic area like Battersea. Strong Unionist that he was, Harrington plunged headlong into the Irish question. He branded Redmond "an Irish dictator, backed by Protectionist American gold" and opposed Home Rule for Ireland as the first step in the disintegration of the Empire. What the Irish wanted, according to Harrington, was continuation of the Land Purchase Act.[21] Like many other Conservatives, Harrington saw the Irish problem as essentially an economic rather than a national one.

The second campaign of 1910 was a generally lacklustre affair on all sides. Harrington walked through

[21] The South Western Star (hereafter S.W.S.), Nov. 25, Dec. 2, 1910; The Wandsworth Boro' News (hereafter W.B.N.), Dec. 2, 1910.

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Battersea's ninety miles of streets and lanes without being recognized. The electorate could not always understand the intricacies of the Parliament Bill and the constitutional crisis, so instead, the campaign was fought over the issue of a free trade versus protection. The local Battersea Tory weekly did its best for Sir John, whom they described with typical campaign hyperbole as:

> A tall, athletic man, with long sweep of limb and much grace of carriage, a countenance bronzed and tanned by tropical sun and desert wing, and a countenance to which reflects the sunshine in its frequent laughter [sic], eyes that look into and through one and a chin which denotes resolution and command--that is Sir John Harrington.

Harrington's platform seconded this sympathetic description by declaring that he was "heart and soul an Imperialist," who favored tariff reform or, as the euphemism went, "fair trade." Harrington promised never to support a fiscal system that would increase the cost of living "one farthing," so sure was he of the instant benefits of protection. As for the supposedly central issue of the campaign, he favored "A strong Second Chamber, but a reformed one." Having sidestepped that obstacle, he promised "progress not Socialism" and called for naval and military rearmament.[22]

Harrington waged his campaign with typical "restless energy"; but the popularity, reputation, and cabinet rank of Burns formed an insurmountable obstacle. In a hectic and vigorous campaign, the Liberal president of the Local

[22] S.W.S., Nov. 18, 25, 1910.

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Government Board championed the government's record of social reform and pointed with pride to increasing British prosperity. As for defense, Burns cast aspersion on the "Imperial Scaremongers" without deigning to mention Harrington by name. Burns saved his most scathing invective for the bigger fish in the House of Lords, whom he branded as "enemies of the people" and a "menace to the Ministers." Above all, Burns enjoyed this advantage of the incumbent in a position of power. While Harrington trudged through Battersea's streets in December's downpours--which caused a number of cancellations of his outdoor meetings--Burns tailored official duties to coincide with his campaign by opening such visible signs of the benefits of Liberal rule as a local children's hospital.[23]

Harrington countered with the weapons at his disposal. Neighboring Conservative Members of Parliament and tariff reform advocate and editor of the National Review, Leo Maxse, spoke on his behalf. A particularly revealing vignette of the campaign was the Conservative metropolitan meeting held in late November at Battersea Town Hall. F. E. Smith, accompanied by fifteen peers and fifteen members of Parliament, led off the rally with a speech of over an hour before a packed house, including major newspaper correspondents and numerous liberal supporters who were surprisingly keen to see so many of the infamous peers. Smith excelled

[23] S.W.S., Nov. 18, 25, Dec. 9, 1910.

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in invective, denunciation and retort (against those foolish enough to heckle him), but he gave no comprehensive explanation of the constitutional issue as expected. When Harrington rose to speak, the crowd was restless. Few professional speakers would have relished following an orator such as Smith; Harrington had no mastery of the platform; only his "soldierly presence and indomitable intrepidity" pulled him through the crescendos of catcalls and guffaws from the opposition audience. Sir Edward Carson, another of the Tories' golden voices, gave the concluding remarks. Harrington had been sandwiched between two of the Conservative Party's premier orators; he did not fare well by the comparison.[24]

There was no Labour candidate in the Battersea contest, although a Social Democrat contender made it a three-way race. Harrington had campaigned for only two weeks (even his manager was new to Battersea), while Burns had represented the district since Gladstone's time. Again the suffragettes were prominent in the campaign. Led by Christabel Pankhurst, they scourged Burns as a minister of a government which had flouted the women and betrayed the workers. Harrington, in response to the queries of a women's deputation, acknowledged he still opposed women's suffrage, but if faced by a bill to that end, promised he would poll his constituency and resign if the majority view

[24] S.W.S., Nov. 25, 1910.

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conflicted with his. The women left dissatisfied.[25] Their reaction was mirrored by the male electorate which remained generally apathetic during the brief campaign. On December 7, 1910, the results of the smallish poll came as little surprise. Burns, the recipient of a thousand-plus vote victory, rushed from the hall into the arms of his supporters, who hoisted him into his victory chair and surged along the familiar victory route carrying their hero aloft.[26] Harrington had lost again.

In the second election of 1910, the Conservatives achieved exact parity with the Liberals, but the solid phalanx of eighty Irish nationalists insured a stable majority for Asquith's ministry so long as the Liberals accommodated Redmond and his followers. The government reformed the Lords, paid off debts to Labour in the form of social reform and abolition of the anti-Labour Party Osborne decision, and rewarded the Irish with enactment of a Home Rule Bill (implementation was delayed and then foreclosed by the war). Nevertheless, the next four years were a time of considerable difficulty for the government in both domestic and foreign affairs, but those problems are beyond the scope of this brief epilogue. Suffice to say that the

[25] S.W.S., Dec. 2, 1910.

[26] The actual results: Burns 7,836, Harrington 6,544, and Shaw 477. The W.B.N. claimed the Irish were responsible for the Liberal victory and pointed out that ironically Harrington and Shaw were both Irishmen. W.B.N., Dec. 9, 9, 1910; S.W.S., Dec. 9, 1910.

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war, which Harrington predicted in 1910 (he was one of the many to do so), descended upon Europe in August of 1914. At the outbreak of the war, Harrington was in the United States; but he returned to England and re-entered the army as a major, second in command of the 11th Battalion, South Lancashire Regiment, and crossed with it to France in autumn 1915 as commanding officer. Harrington served in France in a war in which he, as a nineteenth-century colonial soldier, found little to liken to his previous military experiences. He resigned in May 1916 because of ill-health (hardly surprising for a fifty-one-year-old with his medical background) and was granted the rank of honorary colonel for his service in France.[27]

During the four years of the Great War, Parliament's life was prolonged and a coalition government formed to prosecute the "war to end all wars." Soon after the armistice, Prime Minister David Lloyd George announced that after eight years, dissolution of Parliament was necessary. The timing of the "Coupon" election of 1918 remains a controversy; what is of concern here is that it was Harrington's last chance to gain a seat in Parliament. Lloyd George's Liberal followers were allotted 150 "coupons," while Conservative supporters of the coalition got 450 of the semi-official endorsements. With these "coupons,"

[27] The Southwark and Bermonsey Recorder and South London Gazette (hereafter S.B.R. & S.L.G.), Dec. 6, 1918; Irwin and Chichester-Constable, Stonyhurst War Record, passim.

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candidates went to the voters as men who had received the approval of the government that had won the war. Needless to say, the "coupon" was a powerful political weapon; those candidates without them suffered under a grave handicap.[28]

In north Southwark, the political machinations of the coalition meant that the incumbent member for Parliament, Mr. E. A. Strauss (Liberal), received official endorsement and his Conservative challenger was ordered not to oppose him. Many local Conservatives balked at voting for Strauss, primarily because of his rumored German ancestry and the belief that he would be unduly sympathetic to his second country when it came time for Parliament to assess German war guilt and reparations. These disgruntled Unionists recruited Harrington. Although he stood at first as a candidate of the obscure, reformist National Party, he later won adoption by the non-coalition Conservatives and carried their Unionist label at the polls. Still, Harrington realized his predicament as a candidate without Coalition

[28] Criticism of the "Coupon Election" focuses upon the belief that the election, following so soon after the peace, was ill-timed and bound to suffer from the popular hysteria against Germans, which had been a fact of life of the war years. Justifications abound. Thomas Jones, Lloyd George (Cambridge, Mass., 1951) points out that Parliament was eight years old and dissolution long overdue; that given the new composition of the electorate (women and universal male suffrage had been enacted since 1910), Lloyd George needed a mandate for his peace-making in Paris. Robert Blake, Unrepentant Tory: The Life and Times of Andrew Bonar Law (New York, 1956) also observes that it was difficult enough in 1918 to convince Conservatives not to challenge Liberals. Delay of the election might have meant an end to the Coalition.

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approval; he wrote to Lloyd George stating his support for the Coalition's peace negotiations and social reforms. The chief Liberal-Coalition whip responded with a request to speak in favor of Strauss. Harrington, needless to say, did not respond. Instead, he made the "coupon" an issue in his campaign.[29]

Harrington offered himself to the predominantly working-class voters of north Southwark as a man "sick to death of party politics." He trusted that the electors would resent being told for whom to vote; he hoped they wanted honest men rather than self-seeking politicos. The war had dramatically changed Harrington's approach to social reform. He now favored collective bargaining and collective action (strikes), subject only to the paramount interest of the public. His pre-war support for such measures as old age pensions had blossomed into a general commitment to workers' insurance against old age, sickness, and involuntary unemployment. He called for better housing and better living conditions and suggested that British firms should introduce profit-sharing with workers from increased efficiency and labor-saving machinery. Finally, Harrington acknowledged the need to make all work interesting to Englishmen and women. While such a platform represented the conversion of Harrington, it was also a politically motivated response

[29] The South London Press (hereafter S.L.P.), Nov. 22, Dec. 6, 1918; S.B.R. & S.L.G., Dec. 13, 1918.

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to the increased labor militancy since 1910 and to the radicalization of Europe after 1917.

In many respects, however, Harrington's political ideas remained unchanged. He still opposed breaking the imperial link with Ireland, although he envisioned a home rule along the lines of American state government--hardly a realistic solution in 1918. He remained a strong navy-imperialist. This time tariff reform was tucked away in his platform under the headings of imperial preference and the preservation of British industry from unfair competition.[30] In his treatment of defeated Germany, Sir John abandoned himself wholeheartedly to the excesses of public feelings. "Pay, pack, and punish" was his glib solution to the German problem: Germany and her allies must pay the full cost of the war; Germans in Great Britain, the "spawn of Hell," must be sent "packing"; and Germans must be punished for their bestialities in France and in Belgium. For the Kaiser, the hangman's rope was the mildest penalty. To take advantage of the rumors circulating about Strauss's nationality, Harrington proclaimed himself "A 100 'Per Cent' Britisher" and demanded that Britain should "be governed by the British and for the British." It was, in this respect, a campaign unworthy of Sir John, but typical of the heightened passions of late 1918.[31]

[30] S.L.P., Nov. 29, Dec. 6, 1918.

[31] S.L.P., Dec. 6, 1918; S.B.R. & S.L.G., Dec. 13, 1918.

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Despite the bombast and innuendo (much of it from Harrington), the outstanding feature of the election was voter indifference. Scarcely fifty percent of the eligible voters cast their ballots. Polling day was quiet, cold, and rainy. Women voted for the first time and the proxy votes of soldiers were surprisingly few. Scarcely fifty people awaited the results outside the Town Hall. Harrington and Strauss started neck and neck, yet the Liberal soon pulled away and stayed ahead. The Labour candidate, an active trade unionist, was thought to have a better chance, but ended up with fewer votes than Sir John. The general assessment was that it had been "the dullest election on record."[32] The 1918 contest marked Harrington's last try for Parliament.[33] Ironically, his best chance had been his first one. In all three instances, he believed that his primary task was to get the message of tariff reform across to the people (although in 1918 German reparations and war guilt took the limelight). Essentially, Harrington was an amateur in politics, a man with the time and the money to wage a campaign for his personal beliefs. While he never aroused the electors sufficiently

[32] S.B.R. & S.L.G., Dec. 20, 1918; South London Observer Camberwell and Peckham Times, Dec. 21, 1918; S.L.P., Jan. 3, 1919.

[33] Actual results: Strauss (Coalition Liberal, retiring M.P.), 4,254; Harrington (Unionist), 2,183; Issacs (Labour), 2,027; Gebbett (National Federation of Discharged and Demobilized Soldiers and Sailors), 573. S.B.R. & S.L.G., Jan. 3, 1919.

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to enter the Commons, he always admitted to having fun in his unsuccessful campaigns.

The rest of Harrington's life is an epilogue to an epilogue. He retired from public life and, with Lady Harrington, led a quiet existence. Like many imperialists with long overseas service, Harrington struck no roots in the English countryside. His American connections and his limited family--two spinster sisters--may also partially account for this phenomenon. With ample resources, the Harringtons led a comfortable existence and travelled frequently. On September 8, 1927, Sir John Harrington died in Sussex at the age of sixty-two; he was survived by Lady Harrington, who returned to Grosse Point, Michigan.[34]

[34]Will of Sir John Harrington, Paris, April 16, 1925, lodged in Somerset House, London.

CONCLUSION

A final assessment of Sir John Harrington has to consider his life in light of his several careers: he was soldier, administrator, diplomat, unofficial advisor to the emperor of Ethiopia, railway lobbyist, and politician. The last category can be most easily dealt with. In parliamentary politics, the first priority is to get oneself elected, and Harrington never did. His political style was awkward, and his program of tariff reform, social legislation, and empire unity never sparked the electorate to which he addressed his campaigns. Admittedly, protectionism tended to fragment the Conservative Party, and it remained a controversial issue until the Depression forced it upon British society. In politics, however, perseverance is often the primary virtue. As an amateur essentially concerned with getting the message of tariff reform across to the British worker, Harrington had neither the inclination nor the physical constitution to carry on his parliamentary campaigns throughout the 1920's.[1]

[1]Had Harrington remained active in politics he would have benefitted from the Conservative party's adoption of tariff reform. In the autumn of 1923, Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin decided to call an early general election on the issue of protection. The result, however, was defeat for the Tories and the creation of the first Labour government in British history.

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As a soldier, Colonel Harrington saw limited, although varied service. He campaigned against rebellious Somalis as a young lieutenant. When a plenipotentiary in Addis Ababa, he acted as an informal liaison officer between British forces attempting to smash the Somali anti-colonial movement of Muhammad 'Abdille Hassan and Menilek, the supreme commander of Ethiopian troops out to accomplish the same end. In these endeavors neither the British, nor the Ethiopians, for that matter, had much success.[2] In France during 1915-1916, Harrington took part in a war which came close to destroying European civilization. What he witnessed in Flanders and France was totally alien to his previous military experience. In retrospect, Harrington's service record was a modest one, which was hardly surprising given his prior commitment to the diplomatic corps and Indian administration.

As an administrator Harrington displayed his capacity for hard work. The famous quip that empire provided "outdoor relief" for Britain's upper classes is especially

[2]Somali anti-colonial leader, Muhammad 'Abdille Hassan, the so-called "Mad Mullah of Somaliland," belonged to a puritanical and reformist Islamic brotherhood. In the interior of the protectorate, he established a teaching center and acquired a wide following among Somali pastorals. From 1899 to 1920 he and his adherents fought against numerous British and Ethiopian expeditions; in fact, the several British attempts to defeat his movement made up one of London's longest "little wars." In the vast expanses of the interior, the Sayyid Muhammad and his followers were elusive foes. The resistance movement only died out after Muhammad's death in 1921. Lewis, Modern History of Somaliland, chapter IV; Somali Peninsula, pp. 67-68.

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specious in Harrington's case. To work on the blistering Somali coast for 8,000 rupees a year (£500) under an indifferent Indian administration required dedication and a sense of mission. Imperialists like Harrington never considered the possibility of Somali self-government, except on an extended gradualist scale, but they were concerned with law and justice, modest public works, and increased prosperity through improved trade.

It is Harrington's career in Ethiopia, however, with which his reputation stands or falls; and here the ledger contains notable achievements and some notable failures. It is important to recall that in Addis Ababa he acted in a curious and difficult dual capacity: he was both diplomat and unofficial advisor to Menilek, especially after the emperor became convinced that French designs to win control of Ethiopia's rail system threatened the independence of the Solomonic empire.

Harrington's first task as British diplomatic agent was to report on Menilek's foreign policy. He arrived in Addis Ababa during a critical juncture for Ethiopian diplomacy: the negus had negotiated secret agreements with both Paris and Omdurman. To Paris he promised, although purposely failed to deliver, extensive support for the French campaign to control the Upper Nile Valley. The Mahdists received assurances of a détente, and obtained, at most, Ethiopian neutrality until the complicated situation on the Nile had run its course. Despite secrecy at the Gibbi,

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exaggerated rumors, and limited reliable sources, Harrington realized that the Franco-Ethiopian alliance had little real substance. As for Ethiopian occupation of northern border areas left vacant by the collapse of the Khalifa's government, Harrington justifiably believed the Gibbi's pronouncements that Ethiopian forces were engaged in a campaign of effective occupation, although, in fact, the emperor initially moved in disputed areas with limited diplomatic missions. In the southern Sobat region, Harrington correctly predicted that an Ethiopian contingent could not remain for long in the fever-infested swamps of the Sobat River area.

Harrington's second diplomatic function during his early years in the Ethiopian capital was to help stabilize Anglo-Ethiopian relations. Essentially, this meant assuring the Ethiopian government that the reconquest of the Sudan was in no way aimed against Ethiopian interests, that frontier conflicts could be settled by negotiation, and that it was to Addis Ababa's interest to grant London security for the sources and affluents of the Blue Nile. In 1902, he signed a treaty at Addis Ababa which defined the Ethio-Sudanese frontier and provided security for Egypt's and the Sudan's Blue Nile water supplies. The frontier was a compromise for both sides; Ethiopia surrendered vast "historic claims" in return for retention of the valuable gold-producing district of Bani Shangal and half of the strategic commercial center of Matamma. In

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return, Harrington obtained for Anglo-Egyptian interests a clear-cut boundary and security of the Blue Nile sources, objectives judged more valuable than control of territories never firmly under past Khedival authority.

Harrington's success in the Sudanese frontier negotiations was directly related to the Anglo-Egyptian commitment in the Sudan. Despite the diplomatic strain of the Boer War, the military balance of power on the Ethio-Sudanese frontier remained roughly equal. London and Cairo had expended considerable resources to reconquer the Sudan, and they retained military garrisons near the frontier long after the fall of Omdurman. Ethiopia, for its part, committed troops and funds to occupy effectively those areas it considered important. The same rough balance was not present on the southern Ethiopian boundary with British East Africa protectorates (Uganda and Kenya).

In the south, the British empire, notwithstanding its general technological superiority over its Ethiopian counterpart, proved unable to compete for disputed territory. "Unable" is the correct term, because within the official establishments of the two British East African protectorates there was an almost unanimous belief that some frontier presence was required to check the Ethiopian advance, but that such a move could only come if the two protectorates were financially self-sufficient. As it was, both Uganda and British East Africa (Kenya) were supplicants for imperial grants-in-aid to correct operating deficiencies.

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Westminster, finding itself squeezed between increased demands for defense and social services, refused to consider any forward policy to counter Ethiopian "encroachments" until the two wayward protectorates put their own finances in order.

On the other hand, Ethiopia enjoyed a traditional method of subjugation and pacification which allowed it to control the south effectively and efficiently. The neftenya-gabbar system, with its scattered military presence supported by local peasants, was the key to Addis Ababa's success in the south. Not surprisingly, therefore, Harrington had considerably more difficulty in successfully negotiating the southern frontier of Ethiopia. Not until 1907 was a treaty finally officially agreed upon; even then, Sir John correctly realized that without adequate protection, the line he agreed to with Menilek would not act as an effective brake to gradual Ethiopian advance.

In frontier negotiations, Harrington was at his most effective. Outwardly at least, he displayed the calmness and perseverance necessary for direct diplomacy with the wily Ethiopian monarch and his advisors. Such negotiations were essentially a matter of reconciling Ethiopian and British imperial interests. In the more complex question of European influence generally within the Ethiopian empire, Harrington's role was less sharply defined.

During the protracted railway imbroglio Harrington acted not only as British representative, but also as

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lobbyist for a British subsidized rival line to offset the planned French railway monopoly and as an unofficial advisor to Menilek in his campaign to prevent Paris's takeover of the Ethiopian economy. As a lobbyist, Harrington was unsuccessful. The financial fiasco of the Uganda Railway and the strain of simultaneous demand for armaments and social services disinclined the British exchequer towards support of an Anglo-Ethiopian or an all-Ethiopian railway. Furthermore, like most bureaucrats and politicians, the men in Whitehall postponed action so long as the French line remained only a potential threat. When they finally seriously considered the problem, the railway had been constructed to Diré Dawa, and the government in Paris had come to regard the completed and future line as an important French national interest. The only course left was a cosmetic internationalization and assurances that British commerce would receive equal treatment in Ethiopia.

In his role as unofficial advisor to the Ethiopian government during the railway controversy, Harrington earned the hostility of the Quai d'Orsay and eventually the mistrust of his own superiors. After 1902, when Ethiopia made clear its intention to resist the French dominated railway company, Sir John became the focus of French enmity. Lagarde, in part to justify his own failure at the Gibbi, informed Delcassé that Harrington provided the real stiffening for Ethiopia's resistance, when, in fact, the Englishman only reinforced the Gibbi's determination.

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Harrington was instrumental, however, in persuading Menilek not to assent to some dubious railway agreements. The Ethiopian monarch was particularly vulnerable in the railway issue because his major foreign affairs advisor, Alfred Ilg, was an interested co-concessionaire of the original railway, and because Menilek himself had considerable investments in Ilg's company. Thus, Harrington and his staff at the British legation provided a crucial counterweight to the immense French pressure on the Gibbi to settle the problem on terms less than favorable to Ethiopia's interests.

It was Harrington's misfortune to thwart French imperial policy when London and Paris were reaching a colonial rapprochement. The Anglo-French entente of 1904 was, in Cromer's words, "a sharp corner" for Sir John to turn. Although he did not turn as sharply or as quickly as he might, Harrington eventually fell in line with a policy designed to settle the railway question and the general Ethiopian problem between Rome, Paris, and London. Although Harrington was not a central figure in the later Tripartite Treaty negotiations, he argued strongly for making the agreement a means of assuring Ethiopian independence, rather than a blueprint for partition of the Solomonic empire on the death of Menilek. Harrington also warned that the tripartite agreement should not be imposed upon Ethiopia without first informing the Gibbi of its essence.

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After 1906, Harrington made a brief effort to work within the contours of the tripartite agreement, hoping that the treaty's provisions for mutual cooperation and the reservations of future spheres of influence would satiate the French appetite, but he became convinced that the French were still seeking the goal of predominant influence.

Unfortunately for Harrington, most of his own influence at Whitehall had been expended during the railway controversy. Lansdowne mistrusted him, believing he had been more uncompromising in the railway negotiations than he led London to understand. When the Liberal government replaced the Balfour ministry in late 1905, anti-German elements in the Foreign Office enjoyed even more support. The Tripartite Treaty's definition of the Ethiopian Nile basin as London's special concern made Harrington's policy of staunch defense of Ethiopia's independence as the best means of securing for Egypt the Blue Nile sources and affluents a less important policy even from the purely local viewpoint. The Entente Cordiale and the tripartite agreement jolted Harrington out of step with the main course of British policy.

The Tripartite Treaty also marked the end of Harrington's influence with the emperor; in his effort to convince him that the tripartite agreement represented the best guarantee aginst French designs, Harrington laid himself open to the charge of insincerity. Since 1898, he had

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warned the negus of the perils of French control of Ethiopia's rail system. After 1906, when London and Cairo had reinsured the security of the sources of the Blue Nile by definition of the watershed of the Blue Nile as their special zone, Menilek detected a hollow ring to Harrington's professions that the Tripartite Treaty (which essentially left Paris in control of present future rail links to Addis Ababa), provided adequate security for Ethiopian independence. Significantly, the emperor negotiated a new 1908 railway concession with Paris without advice from Harrington. London had made its peace with Paris, and Ethiopia would have to combat the railway threat alone as best it could.

Plainly Harrington was a victim of the Entente Cordiale. His Indian experience and his early years in Addis Ababa confirmed his prejudice against France and Russia. Nevertheless, he was often his own worst enemy in that he suffered from a lack of perspective--a malady almost endemic to British imperialists. As one whose diplomatic experience was limited solely to Ethiopia, it is not surprising that he over-emphasized the importance of the Solomonic empire to British imperial policy. Still, Cromer's label of "political tyro" is too harsh a judgment. Cromer himself displayed a strong preoccupation with Egypt. In the great pro-consul's case, the policy of accommodation with Paris ran in Egypt's favor. Perhaps what Harrington failed to realize was that Ethiopia, although an

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important adjunct of Egyptian policy, was not an equal consideration.

Essentially, Harrington was a man not given to compromise or accommodation. He had helped frame treaties to ensure Ethiopian independence and, given that kind of commitment he would not helplessly witness French subversion of Ethiopian integrity by economic means. He preferred to resign. Throughout his life, he was a man given to causes. The French threat in Ethiopia, Germany's preparations for war, the need for empire unity, and tariff reform were all matters he considered worthy of his fullest support.[3] When Sir John threw his cap into the ring, he did so without reservation, and he kept it in despite the consequences.

In final retrospect, he played an important role in mobilizing British support of Ethiopia during the crucial years from 1898 to 1906 and he did much to stabilize Anglo-Ethiopian relations. Harrington also helped to alert Addis Ababa to the threat posed by the French control of Ethiopia's rail system. Yet after 1906, he failed to convince Whitehall that a staunch defense of Ethiopian integrity was worth the risk of offending France. What Harrington could not have perceived was that the First World War and the

[3]Interestingly, after his resignation and away from the heated atmosphere of Ethiopia, Harrington became convinced of the German threat to Great Britain, and thus a supporter of closer Anglo-French relations in Europe. So far as Ethiopia was concerned, Harrington opposed actual French designs and any potential German ones.

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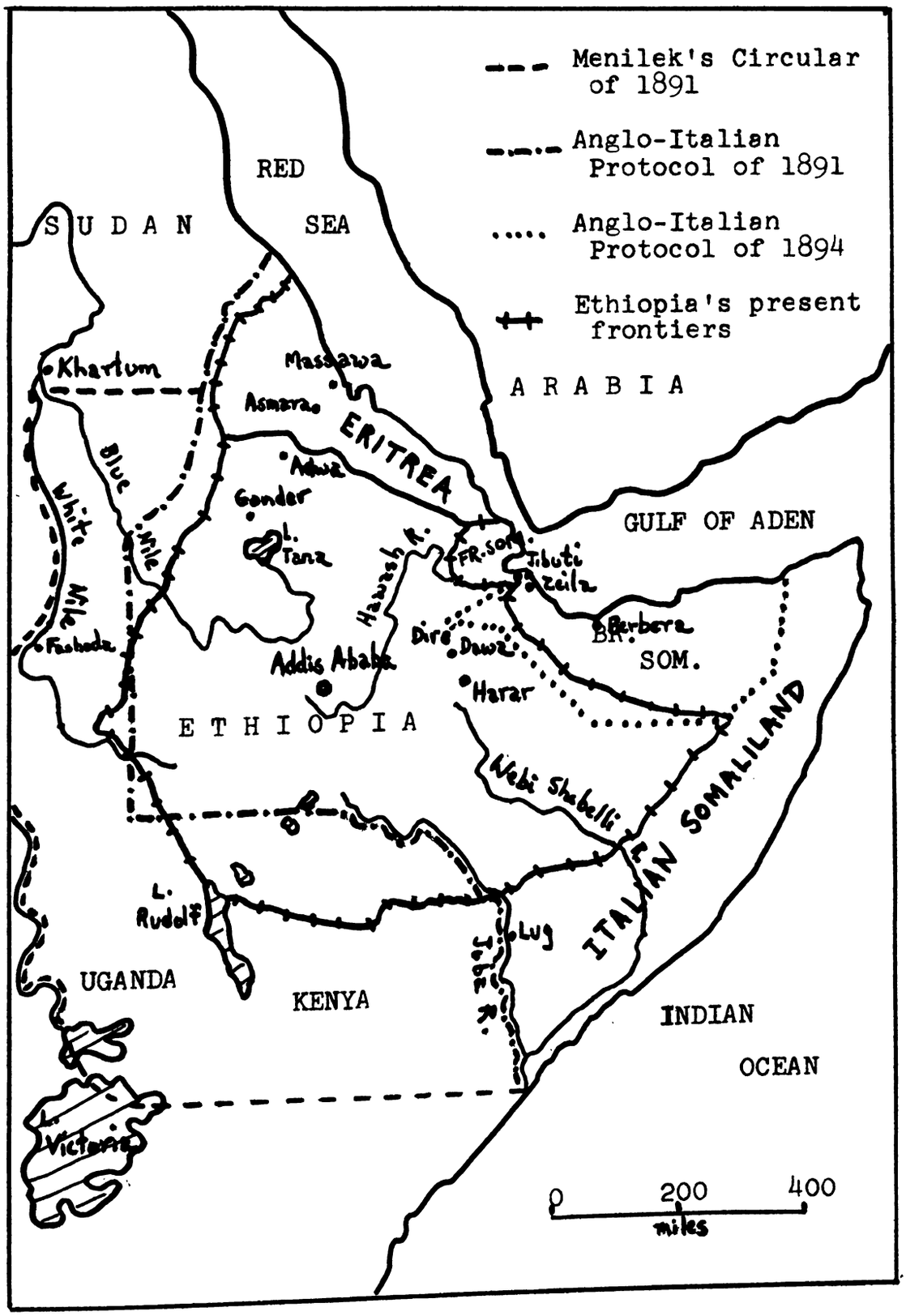
continued German threat would lower France's horizons in the Solomonic empire. During the late 1930's, of course, resurgent Italian aggression once again threatened Ethiopia. Had Harrington been in Addis Ababa then, he would have undoubtedly opposed Rome's designs, and Whitehall would have again overruled him, citing as justification the need for Mussolini's support against Germany.

APPENDIX, MAPS

APPENDIX, MAPS

ETHIOPIAN BOUNDARY CLAIMS (APPROXIMATE)



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APPENDIX, MAPS

SKETCH MAP, SUDANESE-ETHIOPIAN-ERITREAN BOUNDARIES

Reference:

Anglo-Italian Protocol of 1891 —·—·

Tomat-Todluk line — — —

Proposed Sudanese-Ethiopian frontier, Harrington-Menilek negotiations, 1899 .....

Compromise division of rectangle, Nov. 1901, and new Sudanese-Ethiopian-Eritrean borders + + + \\\

Rectangle disputed by Sudan and Eritrea ///

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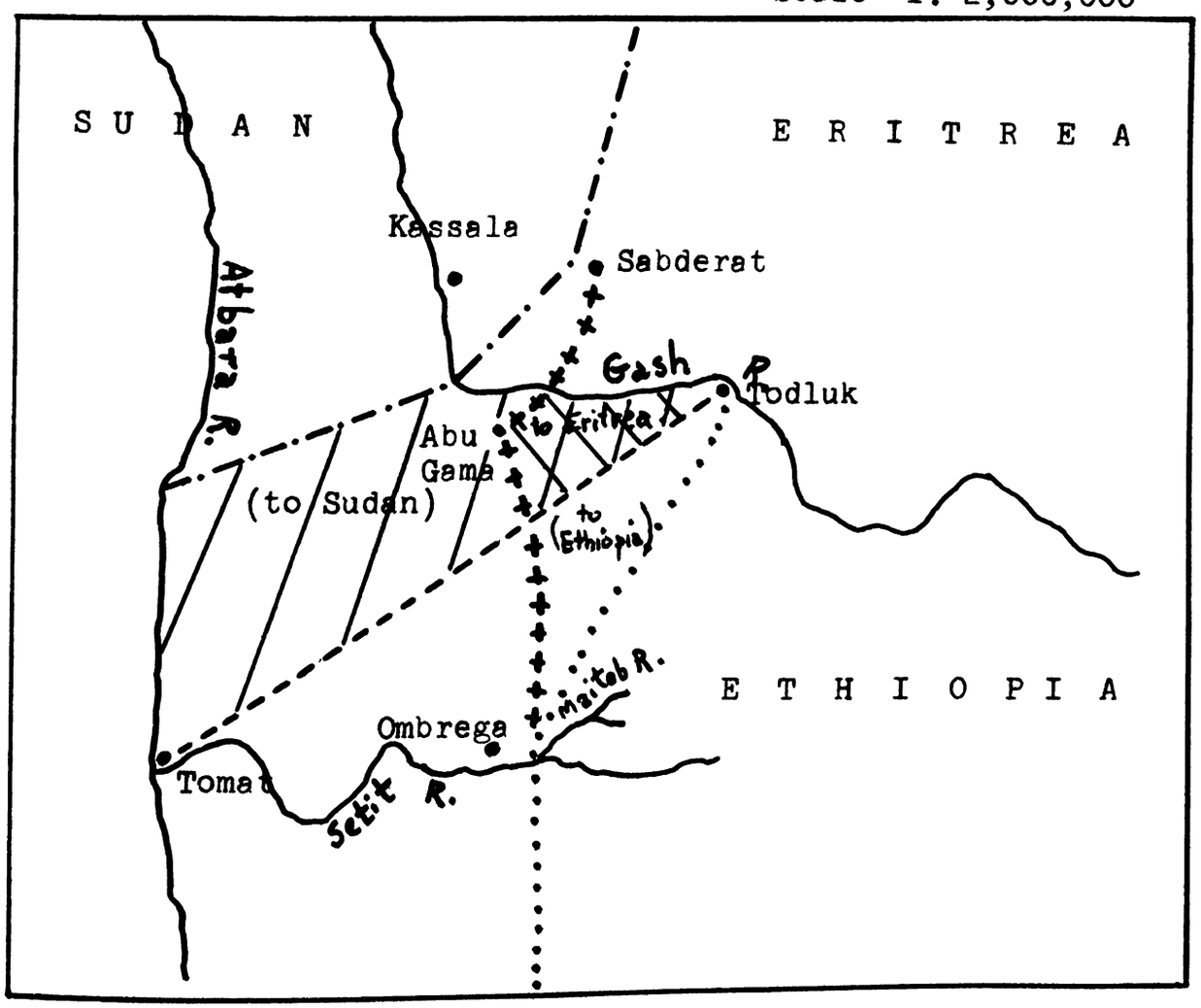

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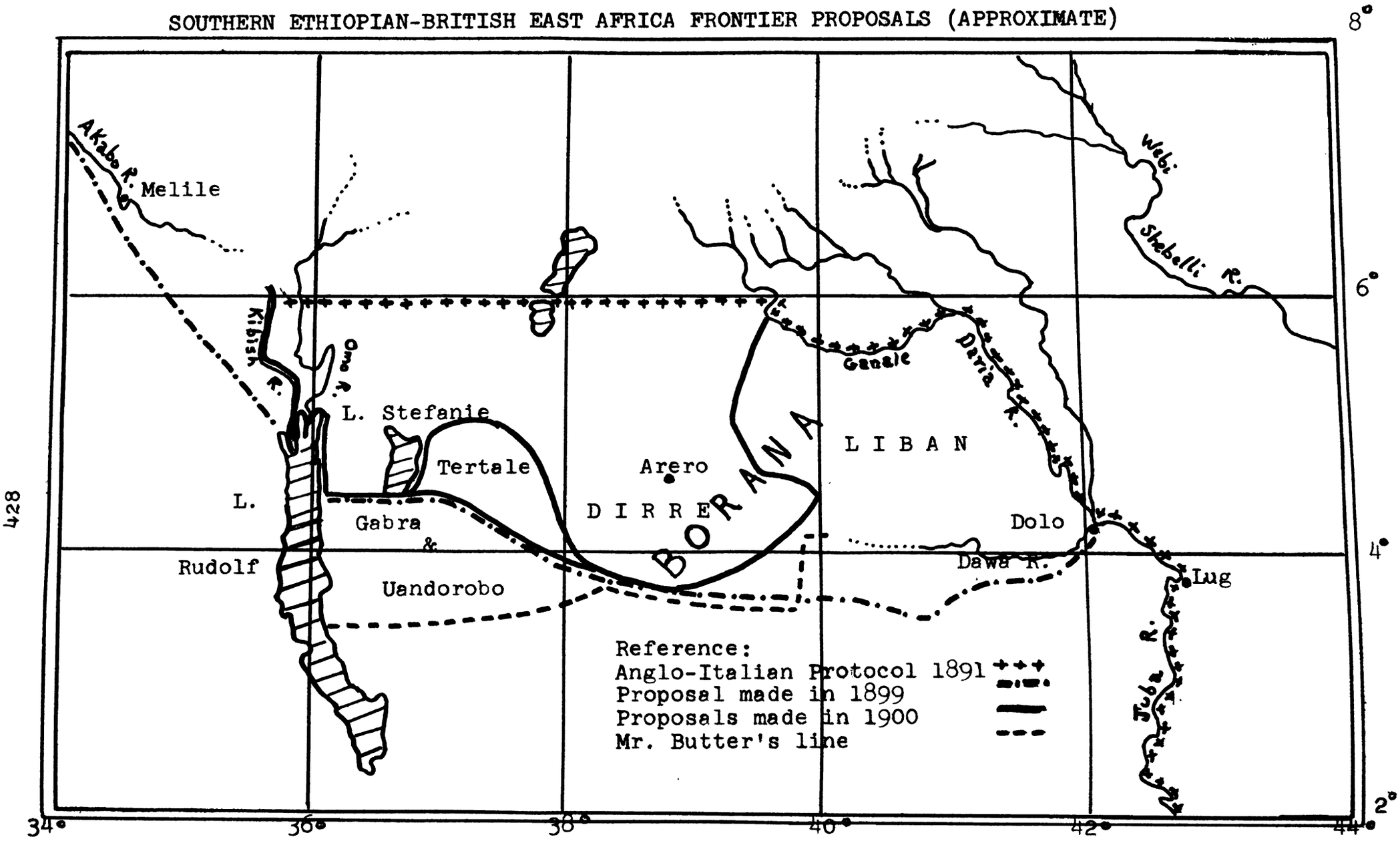
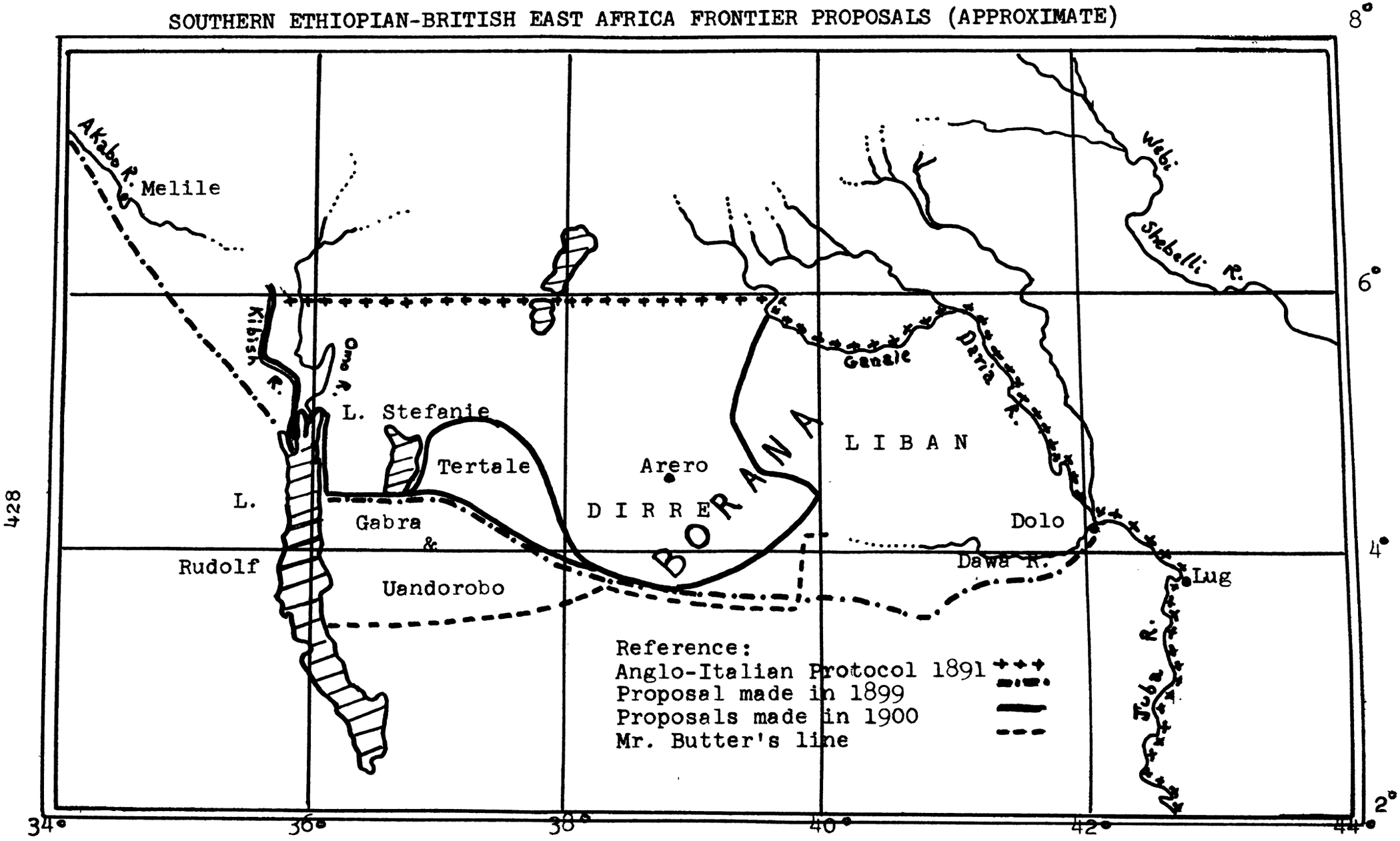
SOUTHERN ETHIOPIAN-BRITISH EAST AFRICA FRONTIER PROPOSALS (APPROXIMATE)



SOUTHERN ETHIOPIAN-BRITISH EAST AFRICA FRONTIER PROPOSALS (APPROXIMATE)



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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

There are four main types of sources for this political biography: public governmental archives, private papers, contemporary accounts, and later secondary historical, anthropological, and economic studies. Harrington's career covered a wide geographical area, and therefore source materials are necessarily eclectic. The bulk concern Ethiopia and northeast Africa, but India, Aden, and Great Britain claim a good part of Sir John's early and later life. As the substance of this study is the diplomatic career of Sir John Harrington, careful selectivity was used in research into the peripheral, although illuminating, episodes of his life.

The records of the Anglo-Indian government located at Orbit House, Blackfriars Road, London S.E., furnish the basic documentation for Harrington's years as an Indian public servant. The India List, Civil and Military. London: Wm. H. Allen and Co., published bi-yearly for the India Office, is the natural starting point. It lists all civilian and military officers of the Indian establishment, and it provides a bare outline of Harrington's career as a staff officer. For Harrington's year in India's native states, the Kathiawar Agency Records and the annual

administration reports are the basic governmental sources. A word of explanation is in order. These agency records have not been catalogued or organized by India Office archivists; in fact, this writer was the first to examine them. They are boxed and indexed as they were stored in Kathiawar, by subject rather than chronology, and they have suffered serious deterioration to the extent that occasional items cannot be viewed. Fortunately, the annual administration reports in bound volumes give a general chronological overview of events in Kathiawar. The following records were examined and found relevant: Western Indian States Agency Records (WISAR), R/1/2, boxes 605, 615, 616, 656 and Kathiawar Administrative Reports (KAR), 1893-94.

The same picture holds true for the more extensive Aden Residency records (ARR), most of which were also examined for the first time by this writer. The day-to-day administrative records of Aden protectorate are in their original boxes, and have suffered from Aden's climate. Pages are brittle and wont to crumble, and worms have bored holes in some of the folios in the boxes. Again the organization is topical rather than chronological, and occasional boxes are unfit for viewing. Boxes for the years 1894-98, R/20/A.I.A./1171-1288 (partly incomplete) were examined; R/20/A.I.A./1171-1206 were most useful as they corresponded with Harrington's tour in Aden.

The Aden Residency was administratively responsible for the Somali Protectorate until October 1898; therefore Somali protectorate records were kept at Aden. When the Foreign Office took over administration of British Somaliland (as it came to be called), all pertinent records were transferred to Berbera. Upon the independence of the Somali Republic the archives were regrettably destroyed. Fortunately for historians of British imperialism in Somaliland, the most important documents are available in other files. Correspondence related to the Somali Protectorate which was deemed important enough was collected and printed in a separate confidential series, R/20/A.I.A./C/9-15, covering the period 1898-98. Much of this documentation was forwarded to the Foreign Office for publication in its confidential print series, FO 403, "Egypt, The Sudan, and the Red Sea." "Letters, political and secret (L/P & S/9/7) from Aden" contain some important documentation, and L/P & S/18/8.69 encloses memoranda on possible cession of Zeila to Italy. The Somali Coast Protectorate administrative reports (SCAR), 1891-92 to 1896-97 offer a useful, although one-sided, overview. The Somali Coast Decennial Report for 1892-93, an invaluable historical, geographic, and administrative document, was misplaced in the Kathiawar Administration reports and found quite by chance.

In general, records relating to Kathiawar, Aden, and the Somali Coast are badly, if at all, indexed, in poor condition, and until now, virtually untapped by historians.

The extent of the historical holdings of the India Office Library, the limitations on staff and money, and the peripheral location of Aden, the Somali Coast, and the Kathiawar native states in relation to the sub-continent states explain the state of the records. Furthermore, the Indian and Pakistan governments are seeking, through international arbitration, the return of the India Office Library, which they regard as a priceless national historical resource. Given this uncertainty, one should not look for rapid improvement in the holdings at Orbit House.

The archives of the Foreign Office and diplomatic service, located at the Public Record Office, Chancery Lane, and at the Portugal Street Annex, London W.C. 2, are, on the other hand, in excellent condition. The basic documentation relating to Ethiopia prior to 1906 is the FO 1 series, which includes all correspondence to and from British representatives in Ethiopia, direct correspondence from the government at Addis Ababa, and letters of the interested public. FO 1/32-40, 42, 49, 52 begins with the special Rodd mission and includes general diplomatic, consular, and commercial documents from Harrington and his staff for the years 1898-1905. FO 1/41, 43, 50, 53 cover the Ethiopian railway problem from 1897-1905; FO 1/44, 45-48, 54 involve boundary questions during the same period; Count Leontiev and concessions in Ethiopia, 1898-1904, are the substance of FO 1/51; the Harrington mission's buildings, 1900-05, are discussed in FO 1/55; and 1903-05

negotiations for the Tripartite Treaty fill the FO 1/56 volumes.

Documents considered of more than local importance were printed in the Foreign Office confidential print series, FO 403/221 etc., under the heading "Egypt, the Sudan, and the Red Sea" (later changed to "Northeast Africa"). From 1895 to 1905, there were generally two or three yearly volumes in the confidential print series which was distributed on a limited basis in Whitehall. Naturally, there is considerable duplication with the FO 1 series so far as Ethiopia is concerned, but the prints also include information on Egypt, the Sudan, Somaliland, the Red Sea area, and on some related East African matters. For the broad view the prints are invaluable.

After 1905 a new more rational system of registry of documents was introduced at the Foreign Office. Rather than creating a separate series for each country with which London had relations, all incoming dispatches were registered in one FO 371 series and sent in "jackets" to the appropriate sub-registry, where a second-division clerk summarized the document, collected related material, and then sent the dispatch and the related information to the head of the Eastern Department, in which Ethiopia was grouped until 1908. The senior clerk handed the dispatch to a junior clerk who read it and the related papers, chased down additional information, and sometimes recommended a course of action. The senior clerk was able to

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settle a good deal of the business which came to his attention. Unfinished questions were passed on to the assistant-undersecretary, and only the most important went to the permanent undersecretary or foreign secretary himself. An added bonus for historians was the practice of attaching on an initial white sheet of paper a subject heading, a file number, and a space for minutes by all officials who read the document. This system was infinitely superior to the pre-1905 practice of scrawling comments on the margins or writing cryptic minutes on separate note paper. The pertinent files examined are FO 371/1-3 (1906), FO 371/190-194 (1907), and FO 371/394-6 (1908). Documents considered of more than local importance were printed in a new confidential print series beginning in 1905, FO 401/8-15, which was specifically limited to Ethiopia, and thus only duplicated part of the FO 371 series.

Records of cabinet meetings were not kept until 1916 so the best way to determine what the cabinet considered concerning Ethiopia is to take note of those confidential prints and cabinet papers which were distributed by the various ministries for the perusal of their colleagues. While Queen Victoria and Edward VII (both as Prince of Wales and king) received much of the diplomatic correspondence related to the Solomonic empire, the cabinet discussed Ethiopia only very infrequently, mostly in connection with the railway deadlock and the campaigns against the Sayyid Muhammad of Somaliland. For an index see <u>List of Cabinet</u>

Papers 1880-1914. Public Record Office Handbook No. 4, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1964, a collection of previously scattered cabinet information papers in one chronological series which makes no pretense of being comprehensive.

Documents diplomatiques francaises. Paris: Commision pour la publication des documents relatif aux origines de la guerre, 1914-1918 (1929), provides the French official documentation for this study. Series 1, vol. XIV and series 2, Vols. I-XI were most useful; the French series is of course no substitute for work in the Archives nationaux, especially now that correspondence relating to the French Somali Protectorate is open for inspection, but it gives a good account of the main contours of French policy in northeast Africa, and is sufficient for this dissertation.

Private papers form an auxilliary primary source for Harrington's career. Regrettably, Harrington's private papers, if they were kept at all, have disappeared. He probably never considered himself a figure of future historical interest, and he had no immediate heirs who might have kept his papers. He and his wife were childless; his two sisters were spinsters. There are, however, mitigating circumstances. A great deal of his personal and semi-private correspondence found its way into official archives, and into the private papers and writings of his better known contemporaries. Harrington's parliamentary campaigns, well reported in local newspapers, also help to

bring his personality into sharper focus.

The private papers of the major British foreign policy makers are an absolute necessity for a study of this kind, for in private correspondence the great figures are more candid about personalities and policy in general. At Christ Church, Oxford, Class A, 140 chronological volumes of papers deal with Lord Salisbury's Foreign Office correspondence. Volumes for the years 1896-1899 contain occasional documents relative to Ethiopia and Somaliland. The man whom Harrington considered his immediate superior was Lord Cromer, and his papers, located in the Public Record Office, Chancery Lane, in the FO 633 series, especially vols. 5-12, are the best private source for Harrington's life and Anglo-Egyptian policy in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. The Balfour Papers in the British Museum are silent on Ethiopia; obviously the prime minister allowed Lansdowne a free hand in deciding most policy in northeast Africa. At the Portugal Street Annex of the Public Record Office, an important series, FO 800, contains private papers of the following Foreign Office individuals who had some interest in Ethiopian affairs: Sir Thomas Sanderson, Baron Hardinge, Sir Frank Lascelles, Sir Francis Bertie, Lord Lansdowne, Sir Eyre Crowe, and Sir Edward Grey. Lord Kitchener's papers are now lodged at Chancery Lane and they were examined in the hopes of discovering why the Sirdar initially disliked Harrington. The collection was a disappointment; Kitchener preserved little relating to Sudanese-Ethiopian relations.

He was notoriously careless and untidy with his personal correspondence.

The final official archives used are located at Somerset House, Aldwych, London W.C. 2. There the wills of Harrington and his immediate family are deposited, and they give a good account of the family's financial situation.

The last two categories of bibliographical material, primary and secondary published sources, present a problem of organization which is best solved by periodizing Harrington's life. For Sir John's childhood and school days we must rely on a mixed group of sources. The Welsh economic and social environment is described in E. G. Bowen, Wales, A Study in Geography and History. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1960; David Williams, A History of Modern Wales. London: John Murray, 1950; and J. F. Rees, Studies in Welsh History. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1960, especially chap. IX, "How South Wales Became Industrialized." Short of wandering Swansea's streets, a picture of that industrial town and its vicinity can be gleaned from Eilved and Peter Lewis, The Land of Wales. London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 2nd rev. edition, 1945; H. L. V. Fletcher, The Coast of Wales. London: Robert Hale Ltd., 1969; and Maxwell Fraser, Wales, Vol. II: The Country. London: Robert Hale Ltd., 1952. The substance of Harrington's public school days is drawn from official records and guides of his college: Father John Gerard, A Stonyhurst Handbook for Visitors and Others. Stonyhurst:

Stonyhurst College Press; J. G., Memorials of Stonyhurst College. London: Burns and Oats, 1881; and The Rev. Francis Irwin and Capt. Cecil Chicester-Constable, Stonyhurst War Record. Derby: Bemrose and Sons Ltd., 1927. A number of general studies analyze the effect of the public school system on British society. The best, Rupert Wilkinson, The Prefects, British Leadership and the Public School Tradition. London: Oxford University Press, 1964, describes the "public school ethos" and demonstrates how it became "a public service élite." Robert Huessler, Yesterday's Rulers: The Making of the British Colonial Service. Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1963, more briefly describes the public school as "the basic conditioner" of British colonial servants. Finally, A. P. Thornton, The Habit of Authority. London: George, Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1965, draws the connection between empire, paternalism, and the public school.

Harrington initially spent ten years as an active soldier, both as an enlisted man and an officer. Major A. E. Mainwaring, Crown and Company, The Records of the Second Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. London: Arthur L. Humphrey's, 1911, is his first regiment's official history. For information on the Bombay Army and Indian staff corps, Sir Patrick Cadell, History of the Bombay Army. London, New York, Toronto: Longmans Green and Co., 1938, and "Regulations for Admission to the Indian Staff Corps," The India List, Civil and Military. London: Wm. Allen and Co., Jan. 1890, are useful. Major A. T. Moore, Notes for Officers

Proceeding to India. Chatham: Royal Engineers Institute, 1904, and Lieut. J. E. Power, Vade Mecum for Officer and Civilians Proceeding to India. London: Forster Groom and Co., 1912, are sources for the social history of the British soldier in India. Regrettably, there are few first-hand sources for the daily lives of common soldiers in India. Frank Richards, Old Soldier Sahib. London: Faber and Faber, 1965 (orig. pub. 1937), is an entertaining and revealing memoir of a private soldier in India during the first decade of the twentieth century. Donald F. Featherstone, All for a Shilling a Day. London: Faber and Faber, 1966, is a good reconstruction of a mid-Victorian private soldier's life in India by a well-known military enthusiast.

India, the British Empire, and race relations have come increasingly under the scrutiny of those with a historical bent. Phillip Woodruff, The Men Who Ruled India, Vol. II: The Guardians. London: Jonathan Cape, 1954, and V. G. Kiernan, The Lords of Human Kind. Boston and Toronto: Little Brown and Company, 1969, are excellent general starting points. A sympathetic and journalistic, although effective, overview of the British Empire is James Morris, Pax Britannica, The Climax of Empire. London: Faber and Faber, 1968. A good starting place for background on Kathiawar is Percival Spear, A History of India, Vol. II. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1956. More specialized is Capt. H. Wilberforce-Bell, The History of Kathiawad from the Earliest Times. London: William Heinnemann, 1916. The

period of British suzerainty is adequately covered by the following works of British Indian officials: Sir William Barton, The Princes of India. London: Nisbet and Company Ltd., 1934; Sir William Lee-Warner, The Protected Princes of India. London: Macmillan and Co., 1894, and "Kathiawar," Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, LXI, 3, 145 (1913), 391-405. In his informative article, originally read before the Indian section of the Royal Society of Arts, Lee-Warner argues that Kathiawar was a model of the virtues of British administration of Indian India. A general description of Kathiawar is found in Andrew Wilson, "A Run Through Kathiawar-Junghar," Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, CXX, 1,230 (1876), 191-210 and "A Run Through Kathiawar-The Sythian Kathis," Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, CXX, 1,232 (1876), 399-416. A more cut and dried account is Lieut. Col. J. W. Watson, Statistical Account of Bhavnagar Being the Bhavnagar Contribution to the Kathiawar Portion of the Bombay Gazetteer. Bombay: Education Society Press, 1880.

Aden, an important and strategic imperial possession, has yet to receive proper attention from scholars of empire. The classic work on Aden Protectorate is Capt. F. M. Hunter, An Account of the British Settlement of Aden in Arabia. London: Trubner and Co., 1877. G. Waterfield, Sultans of Aden. London: John Murray, 1968 is a modern study of British conquest and early administration in Aden. Conflict in South Arabia during the early 1960's occasioned

such examinations of the problem (with initial chapters on the historical background of Aden) as Tom Little, South Arabia, Arena of Conflict. London: Pall Mall Press, 1968, and James Lunt, The Barren Rocks of Aden. London: Herbert Jenkins, 1966. Three Hours in Aden, Being a Description of the Settlement. Bombay: Times of India Press, 1891; Mgr. Le Roy, D'Aden A Zanzibar. Tour: Alfred Mane et Fils, 1894; and Paul Nizan, Aden Arabie. Translated by Joan Pinkham. New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1968, present a varied description of Aden during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Finally, H. T. Norris and F. W. Penhey, "The Historical Development of Aden Defences," Geographical Journal, CXXI, 121, part 1 (1955), 11-20, provides a useful geographical-historical survey of Aden as a fortress.

The bibliography for the background to Harrington's years in Somaliland can be divided into three main divisions: contemporary accounts, secondary monographs, and journal articles. A number of British administrators wrote personal reminiscences and memoirs relevant to northern Somalia. Ralph E. Drake-Brockman, British Somaliland. London: Hurst and Brackett Ltd., 1912, unsuccessfully attempts a Harry Johnston-like comprehensive study ranging from administration to flora and fauna. An equally disappointing work is Major H. G. C. Swayne, Seventeen Trips Through Somaliland and a Visit to Abyssinia. London: Rowland Ward Ltd., 1903. Despite his experience, Swayne

is generally uninformative. Capt. Francis B. Pearce, Rambles in Lion Land. London: Chapman and Hall, 1898, would be just another sporting account had the author not travelled far into the interior and witnessed first-hand Ethiopian expansion. For the 1897 Mission to Ethiopia, the two memoirs are Capt. Count Gleichen, With Mission to Menilek, 1897. London: Edward Arnold, 1898, and Sir James Rennell-Rodd, Social and Diplomatic Memories (Second Series) 1894-1901. London: Edward Arnold, 1923. Gleichen is self-righteous and racist, but does make important observations. Rodd is a key figure and his memoirs are important; unfortunately he reveals only the bare outline of events in northeast Africa. As contemporary accounts of the early campaigns against Muhammad 'Abdille Hassan the following are good background: War Office, Military Report on Somaliland and Official History of the Operations in Somaliland, 1901-1904, vols. I-II. London: HMSO, 1907; Capt. Malcolm McNeill, In Pursuit of the "Mad" Mullah. London: C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., 1902; and Major J. Willis Jennings and Christopher Addison, With the Abyssinians in Somaliland. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1905. The latter is the reminiscences of members of the small staff of British liaison officers attached to the Ethiopian army which was cooperating with British troops against the "Mad Mullah." As the expedition saw no action, it is a more revealing source of organization and methods of the Ethiopian military.

The starting point of secondary literature on Somaliland is the authoritative work, I. M. Lewis, The Modern History of Somaliland. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965. Equally important, but more anthropological in scope, is I. M. Lewis, A Pastoral Democracy, A Study of Pastoralism and Politics Among the Northern Somali of the Horn of Africa. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1961. The Somali Peninsula, A New Light on Imperial Motives. St. Albans: Information Service of the Somali Government, 1962, is a virtual lawyer's brief for Somali irredentism. John Drysdale, The Somali Dispute. London: Pall Mall Press, 1964, is an attempt by a British advisor to the Somali Republic to treat the international dispute impartially.

Robert L. Hess, Italian Colonialism in Somalia. Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1966, and C. J. Lowe, Salisbury and the Italians. London and Toronto: Routledge and K. Paul, 1965, are background of a different sort. The former examines developments in neighboring Italian Somalia, and the latter provides an overview to the Italian campaign to acquire Zeila during the Italo-Ethiopian war of 1895-96.

Much of the important scholarship on northern Somalia is found in journals. Leo Silberman, "Why the Haud Was Ceded," Cahier d'Etudes Africaines, II, 5 (1961), 37-83 was one of the initial critical studies of the 1897 Rodd-Makonnen negotiations. Negussay Ayele, "Rhetoric and Reality in

the Making of Boundaries on the Horn of Africa," Ethiopian Observer, XIII, 1 (1970), 16-30, argues that it was the Ethiopians, rather than the British, who really ceded territory in the Somali Protectorate-Ethiopian boundary negotiations in Harar. Such distinctions are largely semantic: as Harold G. Marcus, "The Rodd Mission of 1897," Journal of Ethiopian Studies, III, 2 (1965), 25-53, points out, there was little the British could have done to avert such an outcome.

On a more general level, Arthur Marsden, "Salisbury and the Italians in 1896," Journal of Modern History, XL, 1 (1968), 91-117, provides valuable information on the European background to the Italian campaign for Zeila. Harold G. Marcus, "A Background to Direct British Diplomatic Involvement in Ethiopia," Journal of Ethiopian Studies, I, 2 (1963), 121-131, clearly defines the basic reasons for the Rodd Mission of 1897 (reasons which held true for Harrington's permanent mission). The Somali anti-colonial movement is highlighted in Robert L. Hess, "The Mad Mullah and Northern Somalia," Journal of African History, V, 3 (1964), 415-433. T. O. Ranger, "Connections Between 'Primary Resistance' Movements and Modern Nationalism in East and Central Africa, parts I and II," Journal of African History, IX, 3 (1968), 437-453, IX, 4 (1968), 631-641 is stimulating background reading for placing the Somali movement in broader perspective. Despite this substantial literature, the definitive history of the Somali war from

either the British or African side (preferably both) is yet to be written. One final original source is worth noting: Alfred Pease, "Some Account of Somaliland, With Notes on Journeys through the Gadabursi and Western Ogaden Countries," The Scottish Geographical Magazine, XIV (1898), 57-73. Pease was a Member of Parliament at Westminster and the leading opponent of the 1897 treaty with Ethiopia.

After 1896, Ethiopia acted as a magnet for European travellers, sportsmen, explorers, adventurers, and journalists, many of whom recorded their experiences. Memoirs of British administrators in areas contiguous with Ethiopia are also important original sources. H. H. Austin, With MacDonald in Uganda. London: Edward Arnold, 1903, is a first-hand account of the MacDonald expedition of 1897-99. Earl of Cromer, Modern Egypt, Vol. II. London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1908 gives limited background on Egypt's interest in Ethiopia. Sir Charles Eliot, The East Africa Protectorate. London: Edward Arnold, 1905, is the official memoir of the commissioner of British East Africa, 1900-04, and is useful in understanding the dilemma British administrators faced in trying to compete with Ethiopian expansion in the north. The same holds true for C. W. Hobley, Kenya from Chartered Company to Crown Colony. London: H. F. & G. Witherby, 1929, the personal reminiscences of a longtime Kenya administrator.

An important original source for the railway controversy is T. Lennox Gilmour, Abyssinia: The Ethiopian

Railway and the Powers. London: Allston Rivers Ltd., 1906. As Gilmour was an official of the British-controlled Ethiopian Railway Trust and Construction Company, his account has no claim to impartiality. The railway imbroglio occasioned serious disagreement in French colonial and business circles; some factions (generally the chambers of commerce of industrial towns) desired early compromise with London and Addis Ababa, while interested financiers backed by the government at Paris held out for recognition of French railway predominance. La Question Ethiopienne et Les Chambres de Commerce (Extraits de la Dépêche Coloniale). Paris: Levallois-Perret, Imprimerie Welloff et Roche, 1905, gives shape to this controversy.

Two original sources for the unrelated but equally important Marchand mission are Dr. J. Emily, Mission Marchand. Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1913, and Charles Michel, Vers Fachoda. Paris: Librairie Plon, Plon-Nourrit et Cie, n.d. [1900]. Michel is more informative about the mission and its objectives, but Emily gives a good account of Marchand's reception in Addis Ababa and a favorable assessment of Harrington. A totally unreliable, although illuminating, original source is Dedaj Comte N. de Leontieff, Provinces Equatorials d'Abyssinia. Paris, n.d.; a copy of this dubious short account of the Russian adventurer's expeditions has been saved in the FO 1 series at Chancery Lane.

A more reliable work is Hughes Le Roux, Menelik et Nous. Paris: Librairie Nilsson, n.d. [© 1902], the keen observations of a French journalist who was invited to tour Ethiopia by Menilek, and who became a leading advocate of French forward policy in the Solomonic empire. Le Roux outlines the French position in Ethiopia and skillfully analyzes rival British policy. An English observer of the Ethiopian scene, of lesser stature, is P. H. G. Powell-Cotten, A Sporting Trip through Abyssinia. London: Rowland Ward Ltd., 1902. He was a guest of Harrington at the British agency and describes life there. Unlike most sportsmen authors, Powell-Cotten saw more than what was at the end of his gun barrel.

The major Ethiopian contemporary source is Guebre Sellassie, Chronique du Règne de Ménélik II Roi des Rois d'Éthiopie, Vols. I-II, trans. and annotated by Maurice de Coppet. Paris: Librairie Orientale et Américaine, Maisonneuve Frères, 1930. The work of the Ethiopian "minister of the pen," this chronicle is court history meant to glorify the achievements of Menilek and his advisors. Richard K. P. Pankhurst, ed., The Ethiopian Royal Chronicles. Addis Ababa, Nairobi, Lusaka, London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967, reprints extracts of Sellassie's chronicles of general significance.

An interesting source is Robert P. Skinner, Abyssinia of Today. London: Edward Arnold, 1906. Skinner headed the first American diplomatic mission to Addis Ababa, and

his book includes perceptive observations of the emperor and his court, Ethiopian life and politics, and European rivalries. Unfortunately, Harrington was on leave during Skinner's sojourn so the American could make no first-hand assessment of Sir John. Another original source which just predates British presence in Ethiopia is J. G. Vanderheym, Une Expedition avec le Négus Ménélik, Vingt mois en Abyssinie. Paris: Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1896. Vanderheym accompanied Menilek and his Army during conquest of the south.

In 1899-1900, Pearson's Newspapers Ltd. sent a journalist, Herbert Vivian, to Addis Ababa to cover the Ethiopian scene. Vivian spent a number of months in the Ethiopian capital and apparently became quite friendly with Harrington, whom he greatly admired. The eventual result was Herbert Vivian, Abyssinia: Through Lion Land to the Court of the Lion of Judah. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969 (reprint, orig. pub. London: C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., 1901). The work is rabidly anti-French, and must be, in part, a reflection of Harrington's own prejudices. Another closer friend of Sir John was M. S. Wellby, a cavalry officer who spent much of his time exploring remote areas. From August 1898 to March 1899, Wellby travelled through southern Ethiopia to the Nile. His reminiscences, Capt. M. S. Wellby, 'Twixt Sirdar and Menelik. New York and London: Harper and Bros., 1901, includes perceptive comments on Ethiopian personalities and methods of expansion

in the south. Wellby was enthusiastic about Menilek and Ethiopia in general. Augustus B. Wylde, Modern Abyssinia. London: Methuen and Co., 1901, is the account of a former British consul who journeyed to Ethiopia after Adwa on behalf of the Manchester Guardian. Wylde was on friendly terms with Ras Alula and was suspicious of Menilek and Shoans. He is anti-French, pro-Italian, and admits he would like to see Ethiopia as a British protectorate. Generally it is an excellent background source.

Geographical journals provide further contemporary source material for a study of Harrington's career. S. H. F. Capenny, "The Proposed Anglo-Abyssinian Boundary in East Africa," Scottish Geographical Magazine, XXI (1905), 260-63, is a proponent of the Boran Galla and opposed to the proposed Menilek-Harrington frontier as detrimental to their interests. Major C. W. Gwynn, "A Journey in Southern Abyssinia," The Geographical Journal, XXXVIII, 2 (1911), 113-39 is a summarizing article by the surveyor who delimited the western and southern boundaries and is supplemental to his official reports. Numerous sportsmen-globe-trotters came to Ethiopia in search of adventure, and many recount glimpses of life in Addis Ababa. James J. Harrison, "A Journey from Zeila to Lake Rudolf," The Geographical Journal, XVIII, 3 (1901), 258-75 was one such account. Harrington did not always appreciate these guests, who often were not "the class of men" Great Britain wanted in Ethiopia. For example, when on caravan, Harrison supposedly

induced his camelmen to lengthen their marches by threatening to shoot them if they stopped.

Dejaz Comte N. de Leontieff, "Exploration des provinces equatoriales d'Abyssinnie," La Géographie, Bulletin de la Société de Géographie (Jan. 15, 1900), 105-118, is another source relating to Ethiopia's use of secondary imperialism, which should be used with caution. Capt. Philip Maud, "Exploration of the Southern Borderland of Abyssinia," The Geographical Journal, XXIII, 5 (1904), is a popular account by the surveyor who did important preliminary work on the Ethiopian-British East African frontier. It supplements his official reports.

The last two important journal articles are the work of close friends of Harrington. Herbert Weld-Blundell, "A Journey Through Abyssinia to the Nile," The Geographical Journal, XV, 2 (1900), 97-118, is an invaluable source, since Weld-Blundell accompanied Harrington on his first trip to Addis Ababa, and then proceeded on to the Nile through southern Ethiopia. Capt. M. S. Wellby, "King Menelek's Dominions and the Country Between Lake Gallop (Rudolf) and the Nile Valley," The Geographical Journal, XVI, 3 (1900), 292-304, did approximately the same thing on Harrington's second October 1898 mission to Addis Ababa.

There have always been good historical analyses of Ethiopia and European imperial rivalry, but the later 1960's and early 1970's have witnessed an explosion in secondary sources on Ethiopia, its international relations,

and European imperialism in northeast Africa. Of the earlier sources, George F. H. Berkeley, The Campaign of Adowa and the Rise of Menelik. London: Constable and Co., 1902, although written almost entirely from Italian documentation, is perhaps still unsurpassed as a detailed military history of the first Italo-Ethiopian war. Following the Hobson tradition, Leonard Woolf, Empire and Commerce in Africa. London: Labour Research Dept. and George Allen and Unwin Ltd., n.d., casts a brilliant, critical eye over British policy in northeast Africa and examines the early history of the Ethiopian railway. John B. Christopher, "Ethiopia, the Jibuti Railway and the Powers, 1899-1906." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1942, provides a useful narrative based on secondary sources. A generally valuable study of the reign of Menilek and French interests in Ethiopia is Pierre-Alype, L'Empire des Negus. Paris: Librairie Plon, 1925.

A pioneering study of Ethiopia and European diplomacy is Ernest Work, Ethiopia, A Pawn in European Diplomacy. New York: By the author, 1935. This account by "a former Advisor to the Ethiopian Government" is full of errors and distortion, and is most definitely best laid to rest. A much better general source is Margery Perham, The Government of Ethiopia. London: Faber and Faber, revised edition, 1969 (orig. pub. 1947) which includes a résumé of Ethiopian history and an examination of Ethiopian government, geography, society and institutions.

Two more recent works of a general survey nature are Robert Hess, Ethiopia, The Modernization of Autocracy. Ithaca and London: Cornell Univ. Press, 1970, and Richard Greenfield, Ethiopia, A New Political History. N.Y., Washington, London: Praeger, 1965. An interesting and sometimes difficult analysis of Ethiopian life is Donald N. Levine, Wax and Gold, Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture. Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1965.

The two most important secondary sources for Harrington's career in Ethiopia are Harold G. Marcus, The Life and Times of Menilek II, 1844-1913. Mss., in press with Clarendon Press, Oxford, and G. N. Sanderson, England, Europe, and the Upper Nile, 1882-1899. Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1965. The latter is the massively documented study by a longtime specialist, which, despite some faults, is still an impressive undertaking. The Marcus biography of Menilek, the culmination of over ten years of research, is a crucial secondary source which will overshadow the brief summary, Harold G. Marcus, "Menilek II," Leadership in Africa, edited by Norman Bennett. Boston: Boston Univ. Press, 1968. Also consulted was Harold G. Marcus, "Anglo-Ethiopian Relations, 1896-1914." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1963. Most of this dissertation was later published in articles which will be cited below. A reference work of value to those interested in Ethiopia is Harold G. Marcus, The Modern History of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa: A Bibliography. Stanford: The Hoover

Institute Press, 1972.

The following works are important collateral reading related to northeast Africa: James Barber, Imperial Frontier, A Study of Relations between the British and Pastoral Tribes of North East Uganda. Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968, which adds substantial detail to Anglo-Ethiopian competition for empire in the small area north of Mount Elgon and west of Lake Rudolf; Robert O. Collins, King Leopold, England, and the Upper Nile, 1899-1909. New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1968, a well-documented work based on archival research in London and Belgium, and The Southern Sudan, 1883-1898. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1962, which fills in the earlier part of the southern Sudan story. The most useful collateral reading on the Mahdists, however, is P. N. Holt, The Mahdist State in the Sudan, 1881-1898. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958. An interesting, although poorly organized, study of Russian imperialism's abortive sortie into Africa is Czeslaw Jésman, The Russians in Ethiopia. London: Chatto and Windus, 1958. No one has yet written a satisfactory biography of Lord Cromer, but for Cromer's years in Egypt, John Marlowe, Cromer in Egypt. N.Y. and Washington: Praeger, 1970, based on substantial work in public and private archives is a partial answer. Cromer so dominated British imperialism in northeast Africa and the middle east that a study which deals solely with his interests outside of the actual confines of Egypt and the Sudan would be a

welcome addition. Fortunately, Lord Kitchener, another giant of British imperialism, is the subject of an excellent biography, Philip Magnus, Kitchener, A Portrait of an Imperialist. A Dutton Paperback. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1968 (orig. pub. 1959). Finally there is G. H. Mungeam, British Rule in Kenya, 1895-1912. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966, standard "colonial history," which, nonetheless, adds to an understanding of the inability of the East African Protectorate administration to counter Ethiopian pressure in the north until financial self-sufficiency was achieved in Kenya.

Numerous articles on Ethiopia and related subjects have appeared in such journals as the Ethiopian Observor, The Journal of Ethiopian Studies, Africa Report, International Journal of African Historical Studies, and The Journal of African History. To mention them all is impossible, given the limits of time and space. Instead those articles which bear most directly on Harrington's career in Ethiopia will be dealt with in some detail.

Articles by Harold G. Marcus make up the bulk of this short list: "Ethio-British Negotiations Concerning the Border Between Ethiopia and British East Africa, 1897-1914," Boston University Papers on Africa, edited by Jeffrey Bulter. Boston: Boston Univ. Press, 1966, is essential background for my chapters V and VI. For the Tripartite Treaty, Harold G. Marcus, "A Preliminary History of the Tripartite Treaty of December 13, 1906," Journal of Ethiopian Studies, II, 2

(1964), 21-40 is a good starting point.

The controversy between Professors Marcus and Sanderson over the direction of Ethiopian foreign policy has been commented upon in the text. The relevant sources are G. N. Sanderson, "The Foreign Policy of the Negus Menilek, 1896-1898," Journal of African History, V, 1 (1964), 87-97, and Harold G. Marcus, "The Foreign Policy of the Emperor Menilek 1896-1898: A Rejoinder," Journal of African History, VII, 1 (1966), 117-122. Of a related, although more general, nature is G. N. Sanderson, "Contributions from African Sources to the History of European Competition in the Valley of the Upper Nile," Journal of African History, III, 1 (1962), 69-90.

A study of Harrington's southern frontier inspector, which is woefully weak on analysis, is Charles Chenevix Trench, "Why a Greek? An East African Frontier in 1905," History Today, XV, 1 (1965), 48-56. Of more substance is Harold G. Marcus, "Some Reflections on the Development of Government and Taxation in Southern Ethiopia around the Turn of the Century," Paper presented at the 4th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, Rome, April 14, 1972. Also useful are Harold G. Marcus, "The Black Men Who Turned White: European Attitudes Towards Ethiopians, 1850-1900," Archiv Orientální, 39 (1971), 155-166 and "The End of the Reign of Menilek II," Journal of African History, XI, 4 (1970), 571-589.

An important group of secondary sources valuable to this dissertation are studies of European diplomacy and imperialism 1898-1914. The classic is William L. Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1956. Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, with Alice Denny, Africa and the Victorians. A Doubleday Anchor Book. Garden City, N.Y., 1968, is especially useful background. Its thesis is particularly applicable to Ethiopia after 1896, although as a tool for understanding the entire partition of Africa it has its limitations.

Lord Salisbury played a crucial role in Harrington's early career and he is the subject of a number of studies. Lady Gwendolin Cecil, Life of Robert, Marquis of Salisbury, Vol. V, mss. (typewritten), Christ Church, Oxford, is the draft of the last volume of Salisbury's daughter's biography of her father, which does not mention Ethiopia at all. A better source is J. A. S. Grenville, Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy. London: The Althone Press, Univ. of London, 1964. George Monger, End of Isolation, British Foreign Policy 1900-1907. London and N.Y.: T. Nelson, 1963, carries the story into the twentieth century. Together these two studies are essential background reading. An informative source, not only for foreign policy, but also for the internal workings of the Foreign Office, is Zara Steiner, The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1898-1914. Cambridge Univ. Press, 1969.

At the center of French policy during Harrington's years in Ethiopia was Théophile Delcassé. An older, although still useful, study of his career is Charles W. Porter, The Career of Théophile Delcassé. Philadelphia: Univ. of Penn. Press, 1935. A more current reappraisal is Christopher Andrew, Théophile Delcassé and the Making of the Entente Cordiale. London: MacMillian, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1968. Samuel R. Williamson, Jr., The Politics of Grand Strategy, Britain and France Prepare for War, 1904-1914. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1969, provides information on Anglo-French relations after the Entente Cordiale.

Finally, George Baer, The Coming of the Italian-Ethiopian War. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1967, while concentrating on the 1930's, provides some analysis of the 1906 Tripartite Treaty.

The bibliography for the epilogue is a separate entity and will be treated as such. The main sources were primary ones, newspaper accounts of Harrington's various campaigns for Parliament which are housed at the British Museum Newspaper Library in Colindale Avenue, N.W. 9. They were local newspapers, usually weeklies, which were often partisan in politics. The procedure followed was to begin reading pertinent issues two to three months before polling and follow the campaign to its conclusion. The Crewe Chronicle, a Liberal paper, and the Crewe Guardian, a Tory bi-weekly, were the principle sources for Harrington's first bid for

Parliament. For his second try in 1910, The South West Star and The Wadsworth Boro' News, both Conservative inclined, were the original sources. For Sir John's post-war campaign The Southwark and Bermondsey Recorder and South London Gazette, "neutral in politics, interdenominational," The South London Press, and The South London Observer and Peckham Times were used. The latter two sources displayed no particular political bias.

A few good studies of British domestic history provide the background for the last chapter. The classic is still George Dangerfield, The Strange Death of Liberal England, 1910-1914. New York: Capricorn Books, 1961 paperback edition (orig. pub. 1935), which is more useful for its entertaining narrative account than its cataclysmic thesis. The constitutional crisis is the subject of Roy Jenkins, Mr. Balfour's Poodle. London: Collins, 1968. The same historian-turned politician has written the now standard biography of Asquith: Roy Jenkins, Asquith, Portrait of a Man and an Era. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1965. Trevor Wilson, The Downfall of the Liberal Party, 1914-1935. London: Collins, 1966, and Peter Rowland, The Last Liberal Governments: The Promised Land, 1905-1910. London: Barrie and Rockliff, The Crescent Press, 1968, delineate one of the most important political phenomena of the period, the decline of the Liberal party.

More specialized is Bernard Semmel, Imperialism and Social Reform: English Social-Imperial Thought 1895-1914.

Doubleday Anchor Books. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1968 (orig. pub. 1960), which is useful background since Harrington presented himself in his parliamentary campaigns as imperialist-social reformer. Even more limited is a collection of essays, D. C. Watt, Personalities and Policies, Studies of Formulation of British Policy in the Twentieth Century. London: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1965. While it is generally geared to a later period than Harrington's diplomatic career, it is useful collateral reading, especially chapter IV which discusses Anglo-American marriages and foreign policy.

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