

text would have needed more time—time for analysis and time for re-writing. However, the final portion of the text (Mother Moon's story) unified as it is by the image of the wedding, can stand on its own as a short piece with some more work.

The CPTE was a complicated project requiring a large budget, a wide variety of skills and resources. It can be divided into the process (the creation of the piece) and the product (the play). The play *Ida* used an 'ambush technique' to reach people who ordinarily might not be interested in theatre. It reached a wide cross-section and especially working-class people because it was a street form of entertainment. It involved its audience as participants in dance and procession. *Ida* shocked, enchanted, and confronted its audience with a hidden experience in a form which is also often forgotten in the present time. It stirred the collective memory through physical image.

The CPTE process threw up a great number of methodological and theoretical problems, such as the relationship between the theatrical process and the feminist political perspective, the arts and science, traditional cultural expression and women's history, Caribbean cultural similarities and differences. The 1985 workshop was merely the beginning of a long process. To draw clear conclusions from this effort, far more experimentation and analysis are needed at an interdisciplinary level. Perhaps the most important achievement of the project has been the way it has created the possibility of new forms of discourse through the juxtaposition of different disciplines and methodologies.

#### NOTES

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## 8

### Somalia: Poetry as Resistance against Colonialism and Patriarchy

*Dahabo Farah Hassan*

*Amina H. Adan*

*Amina Mohamoud Warsame*

When speaking of Somali women it is essential to look at them in the context of the general Somali society of which they are an inseparable and integral part. They share with the men all the problems and benefits of this society and all other particulars that make it distinct from all others. But as we shall see, they also suffer specific forms of gender subordination that are unknown to Somali men.

Most African countries had to contend with one colonial power. But in the Congress of Berlin in 1885 Somalia was colonized by and divided between France, Britain, Italy and Abyssinia under the Menelik dynasty. Somali resistance to the colonial forces was organized by various parties and groups, of which the Somali Youth League (SYL) and the Somali National League (SNL) were the most prominent. The present republic of Somalia became independent from colonial rule in 1960, when the former Italian Somaliland joined the Northern region of the country, a British protectorate since 1887.

Historically, Somali women were shaped and moulded by their roots in nomadic life, both in culture and thought. Today their lives are, to some extent, influenced by an Islamic environment, although they are not far removed in their daily existence from the rest of African peoples. The colonial rulers not only introduced new customs, they also codified Islam and made it more inflexible. A paid religious official, the qadi, was installed. Together with the European officials, various changes were introduced in especially the marriage system which increased women's dependence upon their husbands.

Tradition, as transmitted orally from generation to generation, has the force of law among the nomads. The distinctive characteristics of the Somali nomad are strong egalitarianism (that is, along class, but not along gender lines), political acumen and fierce traditional pride. Islam adds depth and coherence to these common elements. The patrilinear kinship system is the basis of the society. The social unit is defined by a husband's property and residence. Access to grazing lands and water depends on the strength of one's clan or family.

The country is semi-arid, its economy is predominantly pastoral, with camels, goats and sheep as the main livestock. There has been continuing migration to the cities. Although urbanization has not yet progressed very far, the traditional fabric of society is being eroded by recent developments. Many men migrate to oil-rich neighbouring countries; yet the remittances they send home, however important for the national economy, are often irregular. When men lose their jobs or stop sending money for other reasons women are left to fend for themselves. There is an increasing number of female-headed households in the country today.

Although men and women had different sets of work to attend to, the nature and environmental conditions of traditional nomadic life did not permit women to be confined only to household chores. They also made and produced all the components of their temporary homes such as ropes, strings, beams, mats, as well as all the containers and utensils of the household. In fact Somali women were required to possess two major qualities: industriousness, and charm and regal bearing. They were also responsible for the upbringing of children and feeding all members of the family, besides caring for small animals such as goats and sheep. When the men were away fighting battles or exploring new pastures, the women took over their chores as well. And added to all these, there were the natural disasters, such as famine and drought.

Somali women, whether nomadic or urban, have never been submissive, either to natural calamities or to social oppression. They expressed their grievances, hopes and philosophy through poetry handed from generation to generation, from grandmother to mother to daughter, 'bearers and transmitters' of the female cultural heritage.

In this chapter we will trace the various forms women used to protest against conditions they felt were unjust, with the focus on the poetry of nomad women. We will also look at the formal women's organizations as they came into existence in the wake of the struggle for independence.

#### *Oral history*

The Somali language did not achieve its written form until as late as 1972. Therefore, from the moment we undertook the project on the history of Somali women's resistance, we knew we would not be able to find many written sources to refer to. Even the few pieces written about women were mostly produced by men who wrote about how they viewed women but not what women's real lives were or how they themselves felt. However, in every society that does not have a written script, the past is transmitted to the new generation through oral traditions. By merging our abundant oral sources with the meagre written sources a lot has been discovered of the lives, struggles, movements and organizations of Somali women.

The main thrust of the research was to piece together whatever fragmented knowledge existed about women and document everything before it was too late. We also focused on women's responses to the specific kinds of oppression they faced in their nomadic life. The effect of later urbanization was also looked into.

Analysis of the findings led to many important revelations, including the fact that Somali feminism was no borrowed western ideology. It was indigenous to Somalia. We discovered that whereas the early feminists in the west expressed their dissatisfaction with gender oppression through writing books or journals, the early Somali nomad feminists expressed their protests with the means at their disposal—poetry, work songs, children's lullabies—and tried to change things by addressing both men and women. Sometimes, because of their strong faith in God, they addressed Him to do something about the oppression they were experiencing. While those in the west formed clubs, their nomad counterparts formed informal networks, kinship groups, work groups or religious associations to strengthen themselves and fight oppression.

As we wanted to represent both regions of the country, we chose areas from both the northern part or the former British colony and the southern or former Italian colony. We selected women from the coastal towns that were open to outside influences such as Mogadisho, the capital, and Berbera.

As mentioned earlier, the Somali script, a modified Roman script, was officially created in 1972. Before 1960, the administrative language was Italian in the south and English in the north. From 1960 to 1972, English became the administrative language of both regions of the Somali Republic. But whether Italian or English, only the few government employees could speak or write it and they formed a miniscule percentage of the population. The records of the vast majority of the Somalis depended on their memory—maintaining their history by passing information from one generation to another orally.

Poetry is important in Somali life. As Said put it: 'The Somalis are often described as a "nation of bards" whose poetic heritage is a living force intimately connected with the vicissitudes of everyday life.'<sup>1</sup> Yet you will never hear of a great woman poet in Somali history, while there have been many celebrated male poets, whose poems have been documented and memorized by a large number of people.

This, of course, does not mean there were no women poets; but the reality is that nobody, neither the foreigners who ruled the country nor the Somalis themselves, bothered to view women's literature and the themes they talked about as important enough to be recorded. Even the women themselves did not see their importance because they had internalized the idea that their culture was of less significance than men's. Whenever we tried to document the poems of specific women who were said to be talented, we mostly ended up with two lines or so of a whole poem. In the same way women's private lives escaped the few written records.

In her article 'Women and Words', Amina H. Adan wrote:<sup>2</sup>

The activities of Somali women have been neglected by most foreign writers and travellers. Richard Burton commented on Somali poetry, but being a male chauvinist from Victorian England, he absolutely overlooked women's literature, even though he had a keen eye for every passing beauty!

Even Margaret Lawrence, a woman herself, overlooked her sisters' talents and like her fellow countrymen paid tribute to male poets only.

Where women's lives have been ignored throughout the ages, oral history is a most suitable methodology to document women's experiences. Furthermore, when the interviewer is a woman who can socially and culturally relate herself with those she is interviewing, she can skilfully bring to light aspects of their lives that have been left unrecorded.

Through the process of interviewing, women become aware of the importance of their lives. One woman activist who took part in the liberation struggle put it this way: 'At last somebody remembered to ask us what we did in those years.'

Oral history can fill many gaps in mainstream Somalian history. A case in point is the accepted notion of the part that Somali women played in the struggle for independence. In history books one mostly comes across Somali women donating their jewellery for the liberation struggle, and a rare case or two of a woman killed while taking part in a demonstration. Until we talked about actual experiences of the women who lived through the independence movement, we had no idea of certain facts about women's contribution to the movement.

For example, we learnt how Somali women struggled to have their rights recognized within the broader movement; how they used the occasion to take part in public activities and break away from their seclusion. They fought to become party members, to have equal rights with men as citizens, and they fought with their husbands to break away from seclusion. Many of those experiences were related to us in poetry composed by the women themselves.

We found group interviewing to be the best method of documenting, raising the consciousness of women and reviving women's history while at the same time stimulating their struggle. This was because of two factors.

First, the Somali society is egalitarian, with few class distinctions and people mix together freely. Within one Somali family you may come across a senior academic and an illiterate, a successful businessman or woman and a small stall owner, a nomad and a city dweller, an ambassador or a highly placed



government official and a non-governmental employee. It is common to find women from diverse economic backgrounds the best of friends, sharing experiences without feeling self-conscious about their differences.

Second, the nature of the information we sought, did not pose any threat to anybody. For example, one of the topics we found most suited to group interviews was the traditional network or solidarity groups women had. We would ask one of the women present to tell us about a specific traditional solidarity group she had heard about or was part of. When that woman finished, another would talk about a different group or the same group from a different point of view.

Somali women have their own poetic form, the *buraanbur*, through which they express their joys and sorrows. Their songs are a spontaneous response to their lives and realities. As part of the process, we not only recorded songs with the interviews, but also took photographs as we went along. Photographing nomadic people can be difficult, especially since some of them believe that making a paper image of a human being is attempting to imitate God's powers. One old woman told us bluntly that she has been photographed once already, and that was when God created her in her mother's womb.

Other constraints were the lack of transportation and the fuel shortage. We also encountered women who were not willing to talk. These were women who had internalized the idea of their work and life as less important than men's, and thought some of the things we asked too trivial to talk about.

We remember one day we were having an informal discussion with an old woman and we asked her to recite to us some of the women's poems she could remember. She laughed uproariously and asked some other women present to come and hear what we wanted. She then asked us why did we not go and ask the men to tell us their poems. 'Men's poems have more important themes; women's poems are only on simple common things,' she said.

#### *The Somali women's movement*

The women's movement in Somalia came into being in the form of organizations linked to the struggle for independence. But,

even before it emerged there was a feminist consciousness well under way in the traditional nomadic life of ordinary women, where they had their own means of protesting and conscientizing other women through songs and poems. It is safe to say that this consciousness was carried over to their urban life and their later participation in the struggle for independence.

During the 1940s, Somali masses actively organized themselves against foreign domination. Somali women participated in large numbers in this struggle. From the oral accounts of women such as Halimo Yusuf Godane, Kaha Ahmed and the gifted poetess Hawo Jibril, it appears that women from all ranks of life joined the struggle, although it is difficult to ascertain how far the rural women were involved.<sup>3</sup>

Later, within this broad struggle, they began to feel increasingly conscious of their subordinate position in the society and at home. As a result, they began a struggle against their oppression as women within their own political environments. After some time women felt the need to form their own separate organizations and in 1959 the first women's organization, the Somali Women's Association (SWA), was set up. The leadership was composed of wives of the leaders of the political parties and although SWA voiced women's rights, most of its activities were in the area of social welfare.

In 1960, Somalia attained independence. The new leaders did little to improve the condition of women in the country. A period of disillusionment followed, in which tribalism, nepotism, corruption, inefficiency and mismanagement were rampant. Women's aspirations, such as equal access to education and employment, and political participation, were not fulfilled. Many oppressive traditional customs were retained. As before, Somali women expressed their grievances in poems, such as this one by Hawo Jibril:

Sisters you sold your jewellery  
Depriving yourselves,  
Enriching the struggle.

Sisters, you stayed as one,  
United, even when your brothers  
Divided and deceived our nation.

Sisters, you joined the fight—  
Remember the beautiful one,  
Hawa—stabbed through the heart.

But, sisters, we were forgotten!  
We did not taste the fruits of success  
Even the lowest positions  
Were not offered  
And our degrees were cast aside as dirt.

Sisters, was this what we struggled for?

Out of those grievances in 1967, the Somali Women's Movement (SWM) was born. The SWM was founded by educated middle-class women and one of its major aims was to fight for the social, political, cultural and economic rights of Somali women. It was the most radical women's organization that Somalia was to know, but it was short-lived.

In 1969, when the new revolutionary government came into power and General Mohammad Siad Barre became president, all political parties and social organizations were banned and what we could call the first phase of the women's movement was over. On the first anniversary of the new regime, Barre announced that henceforth the country would be guided by the principles of scientific socialism. Thus, as in some other African countries, socialism came into the country 'from above'.<sup>4</sup> To the majority of the population, Islam rather than scientific socialism remained the guiding principle in their lives.

For women, however, socialism was an instrument in their struggle for equal rights. In that same year, in 1970, a women's section was founded under the Political Office in the Presidency of the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC). Most of the members of this section were recruited from the banned SWM. This women's section established a committee in each village, district and region of the republic. Among its other tasks were mobilizing women and raising their political consciousness and cultural level, training cadres and expanding leadership in women's groups and the community, and establishing priorities in the process of change. Also, they set achievable goals for each women's group, raising their image of themselves and

their image before society and inspiring, motivating and stimulating them to action.<sup>5</sup>

When the new revolutionary government called for equality, women were the first to respond. They actively participated in all the national goals for action.

It was not surprising, therefore, that in 1977, the important role played by Somali women was acknowledged by the government and the Somali Women's Democratic Organization (SWDO) was founded. At the moment SWDO is the only national women's organization.<sup>6</sup> If we reflect on the activities of SWDO and its contribution to the present women's movement, we find that a lot has been done within its present scope under the wing of the ruling party. Under the banner of equality and social justice, SWDO has indeed a lot of room to manoeuvre. In many cases SWDO, as the sole agent for voicing women's rights, promotes women's issues and inspires their awareness.

SWDO makes use of the government machinery in matters that the State advocates and which are also in the interest of women. The organization has become a vehicle of women's equality and a voice of justice. Ordinary women come to the organization and ask the leaders of the organization to intervene on their behalf where the court or an employer has proven unfair. Also, in all the government ministries, SWDO has a representation whose sole responsibility is to safeguard and watch women's rights and see that no discrimination is practised.

SWDO's aim of fighting against genital mutilation also coincides with government objectives. Somalia has of old known the most severe form of genital mutilation, the pharaonic circumcision, whereby female genitals are excised and infibulated. SWDO tries to break the taboos and secrecy surrounding this issue by using education programmes on radio and film, organizing seminars and involving religious leaders and medical personnel. The campaign is nationwide and is supported both by the ministries of health and education and by local voluntary groups.

These are a few major examples of how a women's organization can benefit from issues which coincide with the aims of a socialist government advocating social equality and which can be taken up without fearing conflicts with the State.

But, what about the other side of the coin? When women

want to struggle on their own lines and on issues they consider to be their priority as women, then the need to be autonomous is felt more and more. An example is the issue of polygamy which Somali women unanimously think of as a degradation. A majority of Somali women would like to see the institution abolished.<sup>7</sup> It is a grievance frequently mentioned in women's poetry. Yet, SWDO is not able to take it up. In the Family Law, the issue is tackled in a vague and ambiguous manner. In cases where this law would provide some protection for women, SWDO is not able to defend them: if for example high level Somali men take secondary wives without the consent of their first wives. Also, fundamentalist pressure to allow polygamy is rising. At present, with the civil war, it is uncertain whether SWDO will ever be able to campaign effectively for the abolition of polygamy.

#### *Somali women's poetry*

Poetry is the country's most popular form of expression. Generally speaking, in Somali society poets are the traditional spokesmen of their groups and have a powerful voice in inter-clan politics. In the old days poetry had the power to start wars and forge peace.<sup>8</sup>

Poetry in Somalia is generally classified into eight categories and the *buraanbur* is the highest of women's literary genre. Other female minor literary forms are the *hobeeyo* (lullaby) and the *hoyal* or work songs. *Gabay*, the highest of all poetic forms, is considered male territory and women are discouraged to participate in its composition. A Somali saying goes: three qualities that are considered a virtue for men, are considered vice for women: bravery, generosity and eloquence. The explanation is that if a woman is courageous she would be likely to fight her husband, if she is generous she might give away her husband's property which is entrusted to her and if she is eloquent she will defy him, this diminishing his prestige among his clan.

So women developed their own poetic forms of expression which belongs to them only: *buraanbur* and its sub-categories of which the *hobeeyo*, the *hoyal* and the *sitaat* (religious song) are the main ones. The following songs are an indication of how

women reflect on their lives through this literature. The importance of the work songs is not only that they break the monotony of the work; usually they convey messages in which people express their daily problems, desires and aspirations, grievances and protests against any form of oppression and subjugation:

Once the colour of a date had I  
I was destined for a wicked one,  
Of each other nothing knowing.  
We went far in deepening our relations,  
Like the woolly-humped camels by a lion killed  
Before noon my cry was heard.  
Weep with me fellow women  
If to our alliance you belong.

Women always feel the necessity of aligning with other women folk since they are all subject to the intimidation and whims of their male counterparts.

The poem below is an illustration of a mother alerting and preparing her young daughter about the heavy load of work and hardships of life awaiting her as she grows into womanhood. The mother is graphically demonstrating the various tasks the young daughter is expected to perform simultaneously without help, mercy, or gratitude.

After a journey so long  
and tiring indeed,  
Like a fully loaded camel,  
tired as you are under the load,  
You at last set a camp,  
beside a hamlet with no blood ties to you,  
Your livestock will need,  
to be always kept in sight,  
Your beast of burden will need  
to be tied to their tethers.  
The newly born baby sheep  
have to be taken out to graze.  
The house will always need  
to be tidy and in shape.





her parents—the dowry which can drain their finances. Of course the bride price balances the scales. The dowry and bride price are important political features in a nomadic economy where a marriage is often a political alliance between different clans.

Another theme embodied in the song is that of the battered wife. Historically the court that protected women was a strong family. Where there was no family there was always the clan or the chieftains.

#### *Men's literature about women*

Even though women hold a prominent role in nomadic pastoral society, the oral traditions and legends give of them a distorted image. The legend of Queen Araweelo is a case in point. Araweelo was a fearsome ruler, who was supposed to have castrated males in her attempt to keep them from dethroning her.

The legend not only bears witness to the fact that women actually ruled the land sometime in the past, but it also illustrates the way men have traditionally looked upon powerful women.

The picture that Somali male poets give of women is not very different from that in the west. Women are expected to be passive and obedient. A woman who would stand up to a man is seen as uncontrollable and a deviant:

Better an obedient woman  
Than one who is intemperate  
or intelligent from a better family.

There is a Somali proverb which goes: the breast that contains milk cannot contain intelligence. This crude statement demonstrates the measure of disrespect offered to women. The following poem leaves the reader in no doubt:

My death will bring ruin upon the family;  
Your death, camel, will bring  
Empty vessels and starvation;  
But a woman's death brings  
Fresh groomings and remarriage.

Nomad men hold camels in high esteem. They use them in marriage for the bride price and their finest poetry is very often about their camels.

#### *Women's poetry on independence*

I warn you, Somalis  
Disarm yourselves  
Leave each other in peace!  
Your women mourn every spring, while the  
vultures feast  
On their flesh  
I warn you, Somalis  
Leave each other in peace!

This poem is by Kadija Muse Mattan, one of the pioneers who supported the political parties morally, politically and materially. Her support was most vivid in her verses. She loathed tribalism, factionalism and described the fragmentation which was a consequence of tribal wars and their aftermath of orphans and widows in white mourning clothes.

Raha Ayanle was another woman poet who supported the struggle for independence with her witty verses. Somali literature is full compositions by women poets using their medium as a weapon to combat colonialism.

A verse by an unknown woman poet addresses Abdullaahi Essa Mohamoud, a prominent leader of the struggle for national freedom and former Prime Minister of the first independent Somali government. The verse was composed on the eve of Mohamoud's departure to participate in the UN General Assembly, with the aim of voicing the cause of the Somali nation:

Since you are leaving oh Abdullaahi  
Permit me to recommend you that,  
If we are not slain by bomb or  
Other lethal weapons,  
Our fighting will never stop  
till the final victory!

One might well ask how did Somali women of the 1940s,



without education or specific formal organization of their own, come to participate in the struggle for independence with such vigour and determination? Especially since in the cultural and religious context, women's involvement in political decision making was extremely limited, if it existed at all. The answer, paradoxically, is to be found within the very culture, which while appearing to an outsider to be extremely limiting, did contain the necessary elements that allowed future political development for women.

Women saw in the struggle for independence not only a chance to achieve general improvement in Somalia's socio-economic situation, but more specifically, an opportunity to bring about a dramatic change in their own situation. Women were oppressed by the tribal nature of society, since tribalism is an institution which consolidates men's dominant role, based as it is on male pride and aggression. In their effort to join the national struggle, they drew on a weapon they had been using for ages, their poetry.

We conclude with two poems. The first one is by Hawo Jibril:

We wanted to break away from our seclusion.  
 We wanted to have the responsibility  
 to express our feelings and our views.  
 We wanted to show our concern for our country.

The last one is by Dahabo Elina Muse. It depicts more generally the conditions under which Somali women live, and against which Somali feminists rebel:

Pharaoh, who was cursed by God  
 Who did not listen to the preaching of Moses  
 Who had strayed from the good word of Torah  
 Hell was his reward!  
 Drowning was his fate!  
 The style of their circumcision—*butchering*,  
*Bleeding*, veins dripping with blood!  
*Cutting*, sewing and tailoring the flesh!  
 This loathsome act never cited by the Prophet  
 Nor acknowledged by the Hadith!  
 Non-existent in Hureera...

No Muslim ever practised it!  
 Past or present the Koran never preached it.  
 When the spouse decides to break the good tie,  
 When he concludes divorce and desertion,  
 I retire with my wounds.  
 And if I may speak of my wedding night—  
 Awaiting me with caresses, sweet  
 Kisses, hugs and love.  
 No, never!  
 Awaiting me was pain, suffering and sadness.  
 In my wedding bed I lay groaning, grovelling  
 like a wounded animal.  
 Victim was I of feminine pain.  
 At dawn awaits me ridicule. My mother announces  
 Yes, she is a virgin.  
 When fear gets hold of me  
 When anger seizes my body  
 When hatred becomes my companion  
 I get feminine advice,  
 Because it is only feminine pain,  
 And I was told feminine pain perishes  
 Like all feminine things!  
 The journey continues or the struggle continues  
 As modern historians say!  
 As the good tie of marriage matures  
 As I submit and sorrows subside  
 My belly becomes like a balloon  
 A glimpse of happiness shows  
 A hope, a new baby, a new life!  
 Ah a new life endangers my life  
 A baby's birth is death and destruction for me!  
 It is what my grandmother called the three  
 feminine sorrows and if I may recall or record  
 Grandmother said the day of circumcision  
 The wedding night and the birth  
 Of a baby are the triple feminine sorrows,  
 As the birth bursts and I cry for help  
 The battered flesh tears.  
 No mercy, push they say!  
 It is only feminine pain!

And now, appeal!  
 Appeal for love lost,  
 Appeal for dreams broken  
 Appeal for the right to live as a whole  
 Appeal to Aidos.  
 And all peace loving people  
 Protect, support give a hand  
 To innocent little girls, who do no harm,  
 Obedient to their parents, elders  
 And all they know is only smiles.  
 Initiate them to the world of love  
 Not to the world of feminine sorrow!<sup>9</sup>

## NOTES

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6. This chapter was written when the civil war which was to completely destroy Somalia had not yet reached Mogadisho or other vital parts of the country. By 1992, one of the authors of this article was in refuge in Sweden. The whereabouts of the other authors and members of the team are still unknown. Mogadisho, the university, the documentation and research centre started by this project are in ruins. -Editor's note.
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## 9

## The State and the Sudanese Women's Union, 1971-1983: A Case Study

*Tomadur Ahmed Khalid*

This chapter is an examination of the relationship between the State and women's organizations in Sudan. It is limited in its scope to the second period of the May Revolution (1971-1985).<sup>1</sup> After the failed Communist coup in 1971, all political parties were banned except the State's own Sudanese Socialist Union (SSU). The Sudanese Communist Party (SCP) and the Women's Union (WU) which was affiliated to that party, went underground. Some elements of WU joined the newly established government organization known as the Sudan Women's Union (SWU). This organization was a branch of SSU, which became the ruling party.

Not surprisingly, this period in the history of the Sudanese women's movement witnessed many fundamental changes in political, social, and economic relations which more or less reflected State ideology.

Nimeiry's 1969 May Revolution had seen radical changes in Sudanese political system. It ended a democratically elected but unstable parliamentary system, replacing it with a one-party State. In the beginning, the revolution strongly believed that a radical transformation in the government system would act as a preface to the easy application of its new policies and programmes. These programmes of action were supported by the Communists and other broad left elements who believed in the necessity of change in Sudanese society.

The government of Sudan, following a socialist path, wanted to redirect its economy through major reforms, to follow an anti-colonial foreign policy, and to set up SSU to encourage popular participation. It also wanted to 'settle' the southern problem through a scheme of regionalization.<sup>2</sup>