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of the Somali Revolutionary  
Socialist Party

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## THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE SOMALI REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST PARTY

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**Somali Democratic Republic**  
**The Historical Evolution of the**  
**Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party**

The solid unity which the Somali masses attained under the leadership of the Somali Youth League (SYL) made possible, in 1960, the achievement of independence and unity by two of the five parts into which the colonialists had divided the Somali people. However, as is their want, the colonialists handed over the power of government to their trained puppets who served their own interests as well as those of colonialism. Thus the struggle and aspirations of the Somali people were temporarily checked and thwarted.

In its eagerness to identify with and satisfy former colonial powers, the new regime promoted the notorious policy of "Divide and Conquer" that it inherited from the colonial administrations, by the instrumentality of tribalism, bribery and all forms of corruption. That policy resulted in general disappointment, moral disintegration, decline of patriotism and cut-throat competition in the furthering of personal interests. The socio-economic formation being at a pre-capitalist stage, the situation of underdevelopment in the country was aggravated by neo-colonialism.

There was economic bankruptcy, salaries and other essential expenditures could not be met, not to speak of development the country had become an indebted and helpless captive in the hands of world imperialism.

The rise of an immense number of "political" and "social" organizations added to the prevailing atmosphere of chaos and confusion. Actually, these so-called organizations were created with the intent of sowing the

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seeds of discord among the people, and to halt the people's struggle for total independence and national development, so that the interests of neo-colonialism could freely flourish.

### **The Birth of the Revolution and the Creation of the Public Relations Office**

The Revolution of the 21st October 1969 which was carried out by progressive officers from the armed forces led by Comrade Major General Mohamed Siad Barre came to change that desperate situation and to save the Somali people from their hopeless predicament under the reactionary and corrupt post-colonial regimes. These officers could not tolerate the maladministration and exploitation of their people; they could not remain indifferent to the danger that threatened the very existence of the nation, so they took their courageous and historical step, representing the true interests and enjoying the confidence and the support of the masses.

In its First Charter, the Supreme Revolutionary Council, chaired by Jaalle Major General Mohamed Siad Barre, abolished the constitution, dissolved the parliament and the cabinet and suspended all the laws which were contrary to the objectives of the Revolution. The Charter clearly outlined the political orientation of the Revolution, committing the nation to "the creation of a new society based on justice, the right to work and social equality". Revolutionary Councils, composed of officers from the armed forces, were set up at the regional and district levels. They represented the authority of the Revolution in the regions and districts.

Besides the nationalization of the basic economic sectors, the Revolution also took other measures designed to restore the pride, patriotism and unity of the

people. One of these measures was the immediate formation (in November 1969) of a Public Relations Office with the assignment of being a liaison between the SRC and the general public. The task of the office was, among other things, to transmit SRC decisions and directives to the masses on the one hand and, on the other hand, to transmit letters, petitions and messages of support or counsel up the ladder to the SRC.

Then gradually the Office began to fulfill its main task of mobilizing the masses. The first step taken by the PRO in this direction was to organize mass rallies in support of the major decisions of the Revolution such as the nationalization of the main economic sectors and the adoption, in 1972, of scientific socialism as the ideological system of the country. It also mobilized the masses for the programme of development, and to root out such evil and backward practices as tribalism, regionalism, nepotism and corruption. Mass rallies were also organized in support of National Liberation Movements and in condemnation of the intrigues and machinations of colonialism, imperialism and their lackeys.

With the responsibilities of the office thus executed, in order to further facilitate the task of organizing and mobilizing the people, directives were issued to recruit and train progressive cadres for office. This was carried out in 1970 and early 1971.

In September, 1971, Mogadishu was divided into 13 districts or quarters in order to facilitate the PRO's task of mass mobilization and organization. PRO branches were established in all 13 quarters, and a 25-member people's committee was set up in each district with representatives from the various sectors of society and chaired by a PRO representative. The responsibilities of these committees were:





1. To hold regular meetings with the people in order to brief them on SRC decisions and to convey to them the guiding directives of the leader of the Revolution, Jaalle Mohamed Siad Barre.
2. To mobilize the masses for participation in the "Self Help" national construction programme which consisted of the building of schools, hospitals, offices, roads, public parks, etc. (The money saved by the free and voluntary labour of the masses was utilized in the implementation of more and more projects).
3. To organize mass rallies in support of major SRC decisions, in commemoration of National Days, and to express solidarity with progressive forces and liberation movements around the world.
4. To recruit and train patriotic and revolutionary cadres who would implement the programme of the Revolution.
5. To safeguard the achievements of the Revolution.

### **The Establishment of Orientation Centres and Committees.**

As the tasks of mobilization, organization and orientation expanded, the SRC decided, in February 1972, to establish orientation centres in all quarters of Mogadishu. By availing the people in these quarters enough space to get together, these centres greatly facilitated the tasks of mass mobilization, organization, and orientation. They were big enough to seat a large audience and to provide conference halls and offices for the various committees. The Quarter Committee was supplemented by three parallel committees:

Workers' Committee, Youth Committee and Women's Committee. These Committees assisted the main committee in its tasks of administration, organization and mobilization of the various social groups for participation in self-help schemes and other national development activities.

The members of these committees were nominated by the PRO after consulting the PRO representative in the concerned quarter. To be eligible for membership in any of these committees, one had to be a hard worker and a dedicated Revolutionary. The main committee conducted its work in a candid and friendly manner and reached its decisions by majority votes.

The PRO representatives were authorized to deal with unexpected situations and to decide on urgent matters that could not await committee sessions. Everything was done to ensure that PRO representatives possessed a high sense of responsibility, a considerable degree of political consciousness and loyalty to the Revolution. Those found incapable of properly fulfilling their duties were immediately replaced.



In addition to the various social committees, a force of Victory Pioneers (Gulwadayaal) was formed. Recruited from the youth of the capital, Mogadishu, the victory pioneers were given training courses within the framework of the campaign for the propagation of scientific socialism, in order to raise the level of their political awareness. On the occasion of the formation of the "Gulwadayaal" force, the leader of the Revolution, Jaalle Mohamed Siad Barre, declared, "We have entrusted the flag of the Revolution to the Somali Youth who will defend it against both internal reactionaries and external enemies"

Meanwhile the "Flowers of the Revolution", which consisted of children aged between six and fourteen years, was also being formed in all orientation centres.

The quarters committees of that period included political representatives nominated from the workers of the government departments to act as the liaison between the PRO and the workers and to help in the organisation and mobilisation of workers.

The Public Relations Office had no regional or district branches. The task of mobilizing and organizing the masses in the regions and districts of the country rested on the shoulders of the Revolutionary Councils and their sub-committees known as the National Guidance Committees which composed of workers, women, youth and community elders. Because of the continuous stream of resolutions and directives issuing from the SRC and the council of Secretaries, the masses there had maintained a great measure of eagerness and enthusiasm for participation in the national construction and development campaigns.

In March 1972, the SRC issued a law which expanded both the power and responsibilities of the PRO. In addition to its former duties, the PRO was given the task of creating social organizations such as trade unions, youth unions and women associations. At the same time, the organizational structure of the PRO was enlarged to include departments of youth, women, training etc. By mid 1972, it became possible to send PRO representatives to all the regions and districts of the country (16 regions and 79 districts at that time). That period was marked by the transition of mass organization and mobilization from its experimental stage in the capital to nationwide application.

Since the main objective behind the organization and mobilization of the masses and the uplifting of the political awareness was to transfer public administration to the people themselves, the SRC issued the Local Government Law in June 1972. Under this law, which went into effect on 21 October 1972, new regional, district and village committees were set up. These committees replaced the Revolutionary Councils which were formed in the regions and districts immediately after the birth of the Revolution and whose membership consisted of only four officers from the Armed Forces.



The members of these committees were selected from among the workers who had shown a long record of struggle, hard work, patriotism, revolutionary zeal and adherence to the principles of socialism. The PRO proposed the members of these committees, but the SRC had the final decision in their selection. The Regional, District and village Revolutionary Committees were given full powers to conduct the affairs of the government at their respective levels. These powers included budget management, project planning, and matters pertaining to social and security affairs. Under these committees came sub-committees such as a security Committee, an Economic Committee, a Reconciliation Committee and an Audit Committee. These Revolutionary Committees functioned from October 1972 to September 1976.

Although these committees had realised significant achievements during that period, yet they had their shortcomings and were not immune to criticism. The main defect in the work of these committees was caused by their ex-officio members. The heads of the various government departments in the regions and districts of their revolutionary record. The automatic membership of these officials with their low revolutionary spirit and dedication resulted in the considerable slackening of committee functioning.

With a view to preparing the ground for the establishment of social organizations, the PRO organised seminars, scientific studies, inter-region tours and training courses in socialist countries for the members of the temporary workers, youth and women committees.

On 23 July 1973, the President of the SDR, Jaalle Mohamed Siad Barre, issued a circular empowering the

PRO to form 7-member committee in all ministries, autonomous agencies, factories and private companies. These committees replaced the appointed representatives who previously served as a liaison between the PRO and the workers. They later gave rise to the General Federation of Somali Trade Unions (GFSTU) which is now fully established. Subsequently, youth committees, which until then remained only at the level of residential zones, were formed at schools and work places. The duties of youth and workers committees included the boosting of production, the defending of the Revolution, participation in the decision-making process of administration and the safeguarding of the workers' interests.

The organisation of the workers, youth and women and their committees rested on the PRO departments dealing with these three social groups.

Through the participation of these groups in the decision-making process, the Revolution had achieved a great measure of democracy in the fields of administration and politics.

### **THE PRO RENAMED AND EXPANDED**

In 1974, the SRC, having realized the need to pay greater attention to the PRO tasks of mass mobilization and organization, renamed the office as the Political Office of the Presidency of the Supreme Revolutionary Council (POPSRC), and appointed an SRC member to head it.

This was a clear indication of the emphasis the Revolution laid on the consolidation of the POPSRC so that it could fulfill its duties in the face of stiff resistance from the forces of reaction and the bureaucracy. The responsibilities of the Political Office were greatly



expanded to include the preparation of cadres for a political Party to guide the course of the Revolution. In order to enable the POPSRC to effectively carry out both its previous duties and its newly added responsibilities, more serious attention was paid to its structure and it was staffed with more progressive cadres.

In order to further enhance the effectiveness of mass mobilization and organization, the Political Office of the Presidency of the SRC arranged training courses of six months and one-year durations which cadres spent in the Party, Workers and Youth schools of the Soviet Union and GDR. Other courses varying in length from one to three months, and two week or one-week seminars were given at home. In addition, the social organizations and the general public received regular orientation lessons.

Under the guidance of the POPSRC, the Somali People achieved a great success in the successive development and self-reliance campaigns. The most notable among the self-help schemes implemented successfully by the Somali people were the literacy and rural development campaigns which were enthusiastically carried out in response to the appeal made by the Leader of the revolution, Jaalle Mohamed Siad Barre, with the Motto: "If you know (the Somali script), teach; if you don't know, learn." Likewise, the historic success with which the Somali people, under the direction of the POPSRC, implemented such challenging tasks as the drought relief operations and resettlement campaign in 1974-75 remains a source of inspiration and excellent example of what self-reliance and unity of purpose can achieve. The Sand-Dunes Stabilization Campaign was another challenge which showed the real mettle of the Somali People.

In fact, all these campaigns were so successful that they earned the SDR international acclaim.

These campaigns raised the masses to a higher level where the individual became directly and actively involved in the building of the new socialist society and felt proud of it. The Somali masses gained much experience in this struggle and emerged more committed than ever before to continue the march along the righteous revolutionary path.

Implementing the directives of the Supreme Revolutionary Council, the POPSRC established close contacts with the people so as to be able to tell the hard worker and the revolutionary from the lazy and the reactionary. This enabled the POPSRC to discern and encourage meritorious people. This was done by means of public and written certificates of honour issued at the district, regional and national levels as well as national medals ranging from bronze to gold. These incentives also included promotions and job awards to those who had distinguished themselves as self-abnegators in the campaigns of national construction.

The establishment in 1975 of the Institute of Political Sciences with the help of the Soviet Union was one of these outstanding achievements of the POPSRC. The founding of this institute was significant in view of the country's mounting need for cadres equipped with the ideas of Scientific Socialism. Today, hundreds of workers and youth who received their training at this institute are working in the Political and economic fields.

The Institute was later upgraded to the level of a faculty in the Somali National University with a B.A. degree in such subjects as the philosophy of Scientific Socialism, Political economy, etc.





## **POPSRC AND FOREIGN RELATIONS**

Since its inception as the PRO, the Political Office represented the SRC in handling external relations with socialist and progressive parties as well as social organizations. However, with the establishment of the workers, youth and women's branches the task fell to them of establishing direct co-operation relations with their corresponding organizations all over the world.

During that period, the Political Office through its social organization branches, scored a remarkable success in the field of establishing firm relations of friendship and mutual co-operation with the various social organizations of the world. This is attested to by the fact that Somalia was at one time or another a member of the executive committee or the permanent secretariat of the following international and progressive social organizations:

The World Federation of Trade Union (WFTU), the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), the International Union of Students (IUS), the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), the Organization of All African Trade Unions (OATU), the Pan-African Youth Movement (PAYM), The all African Students Union (AASU), the African Women Organization (AWO), the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions (ICATU), the Arab Youth Organization (AYO), the Arab Students Union (ASU) and the Arab Women Organization (AWO).

The vivid role played by the Somali Youth in the Tenth Youth Festival in Berlin (GDR) in 1973, in the WFDY Conference on Apartheid held in Mogadishu in April 1974 in which the leader of the Somali Revolution,

Jaalle Siad, was awarded the medal of the WFDY, and in the Conference of African Women's Organization held in Mogadishu in April 1975. are all examples of the successful performance of the POPSRC and its social organization branches.

## **THE FOUNDING OF THE SOMALI REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST PARTY**

During the period 1972-1974, mass mobilization and organization under the direction of the POPSRC reached its highest peak. However, after 1974, the great surge of patriotic and revolutionary fervour began to lose some of its momentum. This was due to the fact that the capacity and power of the POPSRC had fallen short of effectively meeting the greatly expanded responsibilities entrusted to it. Hence, it became apparent that the POPSRC had exhausted its usefulness and that the time was ripe for the establishment of a party with its full-fledged structure as well as its programme and constitution.

The idea of a party to take over the organization, mobilization and leading of the masses was not a new one. In fact all the measures taken through the POPSRC and its predecessor, the PRO, in the direction of orienting the masses, unifying their ranks and efforts, and involving them in the national construction programme were all designed to pave the way for the formation of a revolutionary vanguard party.

On several occasions, from 1973 to 1975, the chairman of the SRC, Jaalle Mohamed Siad Barre, had pointed out the need to prepare the necessary pre-conditions for the formation of such a party. Accordingly, the SRC sub-committee for social and Political



Affairs was assigned in 1975 the task of preparing the programme and constitution of the projected party.

Finally, the SRC decision to form a party of the new type came in June 1976, and the political office of the Presidency of the SRC was given the task of preparing the party membership, relying on its close contacts with the masses.

Immediately after this, a preparatory committee was appointed to pave the way for the Party-Foundation Congress.

At this stage, the difficult question arose of who should be a member of the Party. In this respect, some people suggested that the Party should be made up of educated people who believed in the principles of Scientific Socialism.

But this would have obviously resulted in a very narrow selection since the number of people who could qualify on this basis was relatively small. Another suggestion was that the party membership should be recruited from among those people who had shown a sense of patriotism and revolutionary zeal, and reliance schemes. Examining the matter from all its angles, the SRC decided in the end to adopt for this second suggestion.

At last, the congress of the Foundation of the Party was held at the Military Academy in Mogadishu between June 26 to 1st July 1976. Numbering 3000, the founding members were drawn from 82 districts in the country's 16 regions, and from various socio-economic organs. Most of the delegates had been selected by the POPSRC for their distinguished role in the revolutionary struggle and for their commitment to national development along socialist lines.

The Congress adopted the programme and constitution of the Party (which was given the name of "The Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party"). It also elected a 75-member Central Committee, a 5-member Politbureau from the Central Committee and a 3-member Central Inspection Committee.



The Congress also awarded gold medals to the members of the Supreme Revolutionary Council in recognition of their glorious role of carrying out the Revolution of 21<sup>st</sup> October 1969 and in appreciation of their clean administration of the country and willing transfer of power to the people.

The Organizer and Leader of the Revolution, Jaalle Siad, whose distinctive services to his country and people were unequalled, was awarded by the Congress both the Medal of the National Hero and the Highest military rank of Field-Marshal. He refused the latter award saying, "I had not launched the Revolution in order to get a promotion."

In its first session, the Central Committee of the SRSP constituted 17 Party departments and Control Committee. These were to implement the permanent duties of the Party.

When the higher structure of the Party was completed, attention was turned to the consolidation of its base with the recruitment of more members and the establishment of Party organizations at both the district and regional levels. District Party Committees were formed first. These consisted of 8-9 members, and had a 3-member executive committee composed of the district Party Committee Secretary and two assistants. The First Assistant dealt with Party affairs, while the second was responsible for co-ordinating government administrative matters. The District Party Committee is composed of five departments:

The Department of Ideology and Organization, the Department of Economy and Co-operatives, the Department of Social-Affairs, the Secretariat and the Department of Justice and Security.

The Second step was the formation of Regional Party Committees which were elected by District Party delegates. The Regional Party Committee has the same structure as the District Party Committee except that it has more members (18-24). Almost all the member of the District and Regional Party Committees are ordinary workers who devote part of their time for Party activities. Only the Secretary and his two Assistants are full-time Party Officials.

Next, the formation of Party units and cells was tackled. These units and cells were formed both at working places and at residential zones. The unit is established where there are three or more party members; when the unit has 51 members or more, then it elects a 5-member committee with a secretary and an assistant, and three branches dealing with organizational, ideological and secretariat matters. The cell is formed where there are one or two party members.



## • TRAINING COURSES FOR PARTY OFFICIALS

Since the foundation of the Party, great attention was paid to the proper training of the Party cadres and the raising of their educational levels through the arrangement of regular seminars at home and training courses abroad.

During the second half of the Party's first year of existence, training seminars of 20-30 day durations had been given to 90% of the Regional Party Committee Secretaries, 100% of the First Assistants of Regional Party Committees, 100% of the District Party Committees, and 60% of the cadres of the various social organizations.

In addition to this, all Party members were required to take part in a seven-year party education programme in which party functions and the principles of scientific socialism would be studied.

Party members whose educational standard is below the intermediate level were also required to attend special schools in which they would receive full intermediate level education within three years.

All these measures demonstrate the fact that the Central Committee of the SRSP fully appreciates the need to avail Party members of proper education in order to enable them to develop a firm grasp of the teaching and principles of Scientific Socialism. The education and training of Party members are implemented on a permanent basis so as to create enlightened cadres who are able to lead their society on the socialist road of development.

## THE FOUNDING OF THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

As has been already mentioned, Youth, Women's and Worker's organizations were established before the founding of the Party though not in a complete and fully legalized form. Congresses were held by these social organizations in 1975 and 1976 which discussed their respective organizational structures and the means and ways of raising the political consciousness of their cadres, creating their own economic resources, intensifying their participation in the national development campaigns and defending the achievements of the Revolution.

However, Central Committee were not elected in these congresses neither were programmes nor constitutions adopted. These had to wait until after the foundation of the Party.

In its Third Plenary Meeting held on 4-16 January 1977, the Central Committee of the SRSP appointed a preparatory Committee which was assigned the task of re-structuring the social organizations. Accordingly in 1977 Youth, Women and Workers, congresses were held in which constitutions and working programmes were adopted, and Central Committees to lead these organizations were elected.

Although these congresses were convened at short notice and in rapid succession, yet they were conducted efficiently and democratically. The General Secretary of the SRSP, Jaalle Mohamed Siad Barre, and the members of the Central Committee participated in these exhausting sessions. The presence of delegate from social organizations at the continental and international levels gave additional importance to the congresses.





Considering the vital role that the social organizations play in the orientation of the masses and the implementation of the national development programme, their ranks were filled with the albest and most devoted people, while entrusting their leadership to Party Committee or People's Assembly members.

For membership of the youth and Women Organizations, one has to submit a written application as stipulated in their constitutions. However, in the case of the General Federation of Somali Trade Unions, every worker automatically acquires its membership and is required to regulary pay subscription to its funds.

## **THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE SOMALI REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST PARTY**

### **1. The Congress of the Party**

It is the highest organ in the Party's organizational structure with the following functions :

- (a) To approve the Party Programme and constitution and to elect the Central Committee and the Auditing Committee.
- (b) To hear, discuss and finally approve the reports of the Central Committee and the Auditing Committee.

The Congress meets normally once every five years, but an extra-ordinary meeting can be called for.

### **2. The Central Committee.**

It is the highest organ of the Party in the period between two ordinary Congresses with the following functions :

- (a) It meets regularly every six months.
- (b) It elects the Secretary General, the members of the Political Bureau, the Chairmen of the various bureaus and the members of the controlling Committee.
- (c) The Central Committee delieates the general policy to be followed by the government and the social organizations; it is also responsible for the Party in foreign relations matters.
- (d) It approves the nomination of cadres
- (e) It is responsible for the training of the cadres
- (f) It is responsible for the promotion of propaganda and the publication of ideological writings.

### **3. The Political Bureau**

It is the highest organ of the Party in the period between two sessions of the Central Committee.

### **4. The Secretary General**

The Secretary General is the leader of the Party.

### **5. The Central Committee Bureaus**

The bureaus are headed by members of the Central Committee who are appointed by the Central Committee after being recommended by the Political Bureau. The bureaus are responsible for the day to day work of the party.

### **6. The Controlling Committee**

This Committee is appointed by the Central Committee of the Party and is responsible for ensuring the smooth functioning of the Party organs.



## **THE LOWER ORGANS OF THE PARTY**

- 1) **The Regional Party Committee** is elected every three years by Party delegates from the districts that make up region. The Regional Party Committee is headed by its executive body composed of three members :
  - a) The Regional Party Committee Secretary
  - b) The First Assistant Secretary who is charge of the Party affairs, and
  - c) The Second Assistant Secretary who assists the secretary in government administration matters.
- 2) **The District Party Committee** is elected every two years by Party delegates from the various parts of the district. This Committee is headed by the Party District Committee assisted by a) The First Assistant Secretary in Party affairs and b) the Second Assistant Secretary in district administration matters.
- 3) **The Party Unit** is elected every year in meetings held by the various units in the (a) working premises (b) educational institutions (c) villages, etc.
  - (i) If the unit is composed of 3-50 members, it will elect a secretary and an assistant.
  - (ii) If the unit is composed of 51 members or more, it will elect a committee of five members: a secretary, an assistant and three members.
- 4) **Party Cells** with 1-2 members are required to collaborate and establish co-operation ties with the nearest unit.

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