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RECONSTITUTING SUDAN'S CIVIL WAR:
SLAVERY, RACE AND FORMATION OF IDENTITIES

By

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A thesis submitted to the Department of History in
conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

My dissertation, "Reconstituting Sudan's Civil War," examines how "African" and "Arab", as competing racial identities, have been created in the Sudan and interprets the role of different actors in creating these identities. The study identifies the historical processes through which the people of the Southern Sudan are marginalized and explores their resistance to these processes. The dissertation provides an alternative interpretation to the genesis of the Sudan's civil war. Contrary to the conventional premise that the present civil war is a conflict between "Arab" Muslim North and "African" Christian/ "animist" South, the study demonstrates that these racial categories were historically created through political and ideological practices.

The dissertation is divided into six chapters. The first chapter deals with my understanding of theory of historical construction. The second chapter demonstrates how the process of marginalization, in particular through enslavement, began for the people of Southern Sudan. The

third chapter focuses on the contribution of the Anglo-Egyptian rule to the creation of the Southern Sudanese identity. Chapter four discusses the role of the Northern Sudanese elites of the 1930s in creating the "Arab" identity. Chapter five deals with the historical development of two phases of the civil war that began in 1955, and continues today. Chapter six examines the potentials for development of a Southern Sudanese political consciousness in the wake of civil war. My dissertation critically examines the work of prominent Sudanese writers and scholars and how they used these invented identities for granted in their understanding of the conflict in the Sudan.

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DEDICATION:

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father, Hassan Idris.

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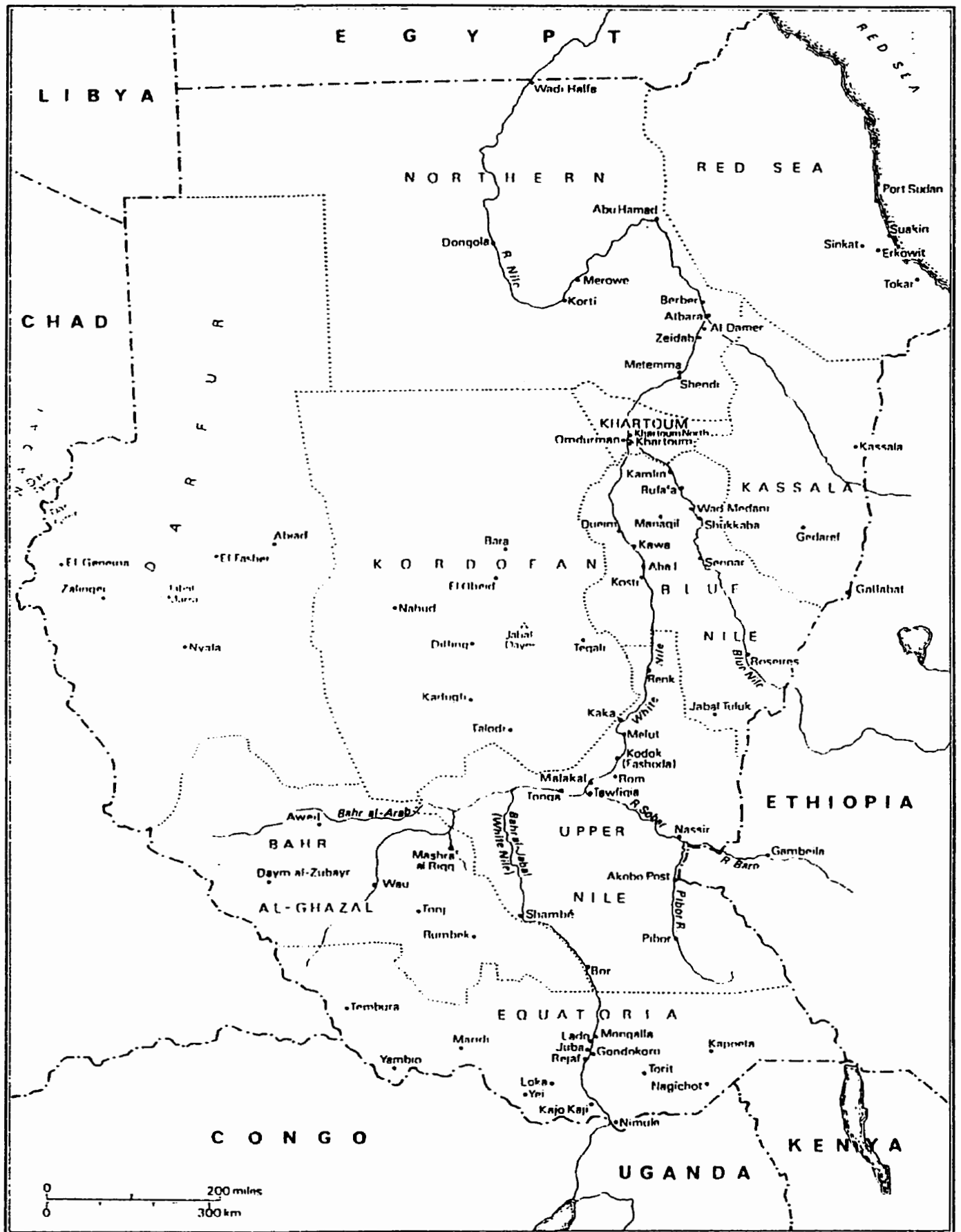
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GLOSSARY

<i>emir</i>	commander
<i>abid</i>	slave plural- <i>abeed</i>
<i>al-hayawan al-natiq</i>	talking animal
<i>al-hadara</i>	civilization
<i>al-jahilya</i>	ignorance
<i>daym</i>	neighbourhood
<i>fikies</i>	holymen
<i>jallaba</i>	pedlar
<i>jihad</i>	holy war
<i>murahalin, or murahiliin</i>	militias
<i>sayyid</i>	formerly a religious title of respect, now roughly equivalent to 'Mr.'
<i>Sharia</i>	Islamic law
<i>sheikh</i>	tribal chief or religious leader
<i>sudd</i>	barrier
<i>tariga</i>	a sufi order or brotherhood
<i>umma</i>	nation

ABBREVIATIONS

CIVSEC	National Record Office classification
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
EACOSS	Elderly Association of Southern Sudanese
FO	Foreign Office
INTEL	National Record Office classification
LC	Library of Congress
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NIF	National Islamic Front
NRO	National Record Office
OAU	Organization of African Unity
SOSSA	Southern Sudan Students Association
SPLA/M	Sudan People's Liberation Army/ Movement
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNP	Upper Nile Province



The Sudan (showing present-day borders)

INTRODUCTION

The Sudan is ill served by those who derive meaning from the past and propose solutions to present problems in terms that are at best empty and irrelevant at worst racist and divisive.¹

The thesis examines how "African" and "Arab", as competing racial identities, have been produced in the Sudan and interprets the role of various actors with different interests in creating these identities. Examining the case of the Sudan, this study identifies the historical processes through which the people of the Southern Sudan are marginalised and explores their resistance to these processes.

Introduction to the Problem:

The civil war in the African State of the Sudan, which began in 1955 and continues to this day, is Africa's longest conflict. This civil war between the North and the South has been loosely understood in both the Sudanese popular

¹ Jay Spaulding and Lidwien Kapteijns, "The Orientalist Paradigm in the Historiography of the late Precolonial Sudan," in Golden Ages, Dark Ages (ed.), O'Brien and Roseberry, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991, 14.

consciousness and external perceptions as being war between an "Arab" Muslim North and an "African" Christian or "animist" South.² The war has religious, economic, and cultural origins.³ People in the South are concerned about the economic deprivation of their region, its limited influence in national affairs, and threats to its cultural identity. For centuries, relations between North and South were hostile and consisted largely of invasions by slave traders and aggression by successive central governments trying to dominate the South.⁴

The practice of slavery and a renewal of the slave trade in the Sudan today are legitimated by the Islamic State policy of the *jihad* - holy war against the South.⁵ For instance,

² In the Sudan, Islam is associated with the Arabic language, culture, and race, perhaps because of the historical association with the Arab world and in particular with Egypt. Omari H. Kokole, in his work, "The Islamic Factor in African-Arab Relations," in Third World Quarterly, vol.5, July 1984, 687-702, argues that while African countries South of the Sahara underwent Islamization, North Africa underwent two processes: Islamization and Arabization, "with time the north Africans came to see themselves as "Arabs", p. 688. Many Sudanese groups such as the Nubians, the Beja and the Fur who live in the Northern Sudan do not claim Arab descent, but they have adopted Islam and Arabic as a second language as well as many Arab customs.

³ See for example, Francis M. Deng, War of Visions, Washington, D.C., 1995.

⁴ For historical backgrounds see Robert Collins, The Southern Sudan in Historical Perspective, Tel Aviv: Israel Press, 1975.

⁵ See "New Face of Slavery Flourish in Sudan," The Toronto Star, June 13, 1998,

Omer El Bashir, President of the current Islamic government, is reputed to have a number of Dinka and Nuer slaves in his own home dating from the time he was military commander in Muglad, south-west Sudan.⁶

Christian Solidarity International has estimated that tens of thousands of children and adults have been taken from their homes in the Southern Sudan and brought to the North by members of the Sudan government militia, known as People Defence Force. As the Economist reported:

Arab tribal militias formed and armed by the northern dominated government are trafficking in slaves from the southern Dinka tribe. Dinka children and women seized in raids are either kept by the militias or sold north. In February 1988 a Dinka child could be bought for \$90; so many slaves are available that the price has now fallen to \$15.⁷

Race and religion have become two major factors during the current Islamic regime.⁸ The implementation of the *Shari'a* (Islamic law) has aggravated the conflict in the Sudan. The Islamic regime has systematically encouraged slavery and the

pp.1, 13.

⁶. See New Africa, July 1990, p.9.

⁷. The Economist, January 6, 1990, p.42.

⁸. The National Islamic Front captured the Khartoum Government through the coup of Omer El-Bashir of June 1989. The effect of the 1989 coup has been to intensify the

slave trade in the Sudan. Many non-Muslim groups from Southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains have been sold in slavery by Muslim militias organized by the government. A. An'Naim has pointed out the relationship between race, religion and slavery in contemporary Sudan.

In my view, it is utterly abhorrent and morally indefensible for Shari'a to continue to sanction slavery today, regardless of the prospects of its practice. Moreover, the fact that slavery is permissible under Shari'a does have serious practical consequences not only in perpetrating negative social attitudes toward former slaves and segments of the population that used to be a source of slaves but also in legitimizing forms of secret practices akin to slavery. In the Sudan, for example, images of slavery under Shari'a and Islamic literature continue to support negative stereotypes of the Sudanese from the Southern and the Western parts of the country which were sources of slaves until the late nineteenth century. Moreover, recent news reports indicate that Muslim tribesmen of southern western Sudan feel justified in capturing non-Muslims from Southern Sudan and keeping them in secret slavery.⁹

Some of these issues were raised during the first phase of the civil war that lasted from 1955 to 1972, and which ended when the central government gave the South relative autonomy. The current phase of the civil war began when the central government unilaterally divided the South into three regions, and implemented the Islamic laws in 1983, in

ideological divide between North and South.

⁹. A.A 'Naim, Toward an Islamic Reformation: Civil Liberties, Human Rights and

violation of the 1972 Addis Ababa agreement that had ended the first phase of the civil war.¹⁰ As a result, the South reacted with a revolt, led by Dr. John Garang, and the formation of what has become the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and its Army (SPLM/A).¹¹

Despite many peace initiatives from 1986 on, the civil war continues. As a result, "southern Sudan has become one of the world's darkest humanitarian nightmares."¹² In the South, a million civilians have died, and more than five million have been uprooted. Francis M. Deng has described the condition of these five million as follows:

Most live either in appalling conditions as squatters in north urban areas or endure the hardship of life in the south war zone. All live deprived not only of their homes and food, but also of education, basic health care, and

International Law, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1990, p.175.

¹⁰ Abel Alier, Southern Sudan: Too Many Agreements Dishonoured, Exeter: Ithaca Press, 1990.

¹¹ The current civil war has been characterised by more sophisticated ideological debate on both sides. The SPLA/M have provided the first consciously articulated secularist political project. In this debate the Sharia- Islamic law has become a central issue. For more see John Garang Speaks, London: Kegan Paul International, 1987 (ed.), by Mansour Khalid. For more details in the SPLA/M, see also P.A. Nyaba, The Politics of Liberation in South Sudan: An Insider's View, Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1997.

¹² Statement made by former Assistant Secretary of State, Herman Cohen before the African Subcommittee of the Foreign Affairs Committee, March 10, 1993.

political rights.¹³

I am dissatisfied with the traditional historical understandings of the Sudan's civil war.¹⁴ "African" and "Arab" identities are not the certainties they once seemed. Rather they can be understood as political constructions that produced particular historical forms of power, self-identity, exclusion, and subjection. What suits my purpose in this study, in Frute's terms, is "not history as interpretation but history as a reconstruction,"¹⁵ in order to account for a reproduction and transformation of past structures in the present bloody civil war. Once the African and Arab are no longer taken as given, we can analyse the

¹³. Francis M. Deng, "Stop the Carnage", The Brookings Review, winter 1994, Vol.12, no.1, p.8.

¹⁴. The dominant historical writings on the Sudan is administrative history, according to Sanderson, "tends to be more informative about the activities of the "ruling institutions" than about the internal development of Sudanese society, and tends to base it self on documentary sources traditionally familiar to historians." See G.N. Sanderson, "The Modern Sudan, 1820-1956: The Present Position of Historical Studies," Journal of African History, 4 (1963), 454-57. For a general survey of these dominant traditional writings see Mohammed Omer Beshir, The Southern Sudan: Background to Conflict, London: Hurst, 1968. For the Southern Sudanese point of view see William Deng and Joseph Oduho, The People of Southern Sudan, Oxford: Institute of Race Relations, 1962. See also Dunstan M. Wai, The Southern Sudan: A problem of National Integration, London: Frank Case, 1973. For Northern and Southern prejudices that aggravated the conflict, see Bona Malwal, People and Power in Sudan: Struggle for national stability, London: Ithaca Press, 1981.

¹⁵. See Francois Furte, "Beyond the Annales," in Journal of Modern History, vol. 55, 1983, pp.389-410. Also see Collingwood, R.G., 1946, The Idea of History,

process of racial/ethnic identities in the Sudan as a political project. This project can be seen as a process of constructing, and grouping, certain identities as African by placing them in subordinate opposition to another group privileged as Arab.¹⁶

By way of introduction, I will begin with two questions that are posed by the very nature of this work. First, does it make sense to take the "North"/"South" or "African"/"Arab" dichotomies in the Sudan as our units of analysis? Second, have people in either Northern or Southern Sudan actually constituted a distinct social entity with a history of their own that can legitimately be taken as an object of inquiry? The first question might be posed more clearly by asking what Northern Sudanese - the Beja in the East, the Fur in the West, the Nubian in the North-actually have in common with each other, other than the fact that most of them are nominally Muslims and the country in which they live has come to be known as part of the Middle East?

London: Oxford University Press, 1946.

¹⁶. However, it would be grossly inaccurate to assume that all Southerners share one distinctive set of attributes and all Northerners another. Many would object to being forced into such rigid categories.

This has not, at least until recently, seemed to be a problem to many contemporary scholars of the Sudan who have simply assumed that the North possesses a high degree of cultural unity in that all of the Northern peoples were shaped by the same set of cultural patterns, often subsumed under the rubric of Islam.¹⁷ I would suggest, however, that such attempts to portray the North as a legitimate unit by virtue of the region's common culture, or the similar historical experiences to which its various parts have been subjected, are bound to be misleading.¹⁸

Although Southern Sudan was only marginally subjected to the influences of Arabization and Islamization,¹⁹ the Northern Sudan was not uniformly affected by them either. The Fur and the Nuba in the west and to a lesser extent the Beja in the east were little influenced by Arabization. In the far North the Nubians retained their language and sense of identity

¹⁷ See work written by, J. Spencer Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1949. Also see, Mekki Abbas, The Sudan Question, London: Faber and Faber, 1952. And see also Abdelwahab El-Affendi, "Discovering the South: Sudanese Dilemmas for Islam in Africa," in African Affairs, vol.89, July 1990.

¹⁸ A very good example of this so called genealogical work is H. A. MacMichael, A history of the Arabs in the Sudan, 2 vols, Cambridge, 1922.

¹⁹ See Stephanie F. Beswick, "Islam and the Dinka of southern Sudan from the pre-colonial period to independence 1956," Journal of Asian and African Studies, 1994,

despite adopting and integrating elements of Arab culture. These non-Arab groups in the North are significant because Islam in the Sudan tends to be associated with Arabism as a composite concept of race, ethnicity, and culture.²⁰

We must therefore take a different perspective and simply acknowledge that the Sudan, as it has come to be known, is an entity of relatively recent invention with no internally generated essence that endows it with coherence. The British historian Eric Hobsbawm has commented on this phenomenon more generally. He argued:

Myth and invention are essential to the politics of identity by which groups of people today, defining themselves by ethnicity, religion, or the past or present border of states, try to find some certainty in an uncertain and shaking world by saying "we are different from and better than the other". They are our concern in the universities because the people who formulate those myths and inventions are educated people.... Make no mistake about it. History is not ancestral memory or collective tradition. It is what people learned from priests, schoolmaster, the writers of history books. . . etc. It is very important for historians to remember their responsibility, which is, above all, to stand aside from the passions of identity politics-even if they also feel them. After all, we are human beings too.²¹

29, 3-4:172-185.

²⁰ For the relationship between Islam and politics in the Sudan see, Abdel Salam Sidahmed, Politics and Islam in Contemporary Sudan, Cornwall: Curzon Press, 1997.

²¹ Eric Hobsbawm cited in Clash of Identities: manipulation, and politics of the

The Sudan that exists today has been reproduced through contemporary political and academic discourse and practice. It is a legitimate entity because it has meaning for many people inside and outside Sudan, regardless of how that meaning was originally produced. This is acceptable to me so long as we remember that these are historically constructed rather than natural entities and that we are alive to the dangers of slipping into essentialism.²² My intention in this thesis is, in Cornel West's terms, "not to focus on the status of these categories [African/Arab or South/North], but to stress the role and function these categories play in various historical periods."²³ In this sense, this study rests on various experiences of social sciences, particularly those of ethnographers, and anthropologists.²⁴

self, edited by James Littleton, Scarborough, Ont., Prentice-Hall Canada, 1996, 6-7.

²² I put strong emphasis on difference, on varied particular identities such as gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality. I stress also the fluid and fragmented nature of the human self, which makes our identities so variable, and uncertain.

²³ See Cornel West, The Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Thought, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1991.

²⁴ From a practical methodological point of view, the study will be focused on texts produced by political leaders, and the state bureaucracies, and anthropologist. This may imply analytical shortcomings in the description of the social realities observed, because the writers do not have enough knowledge about the societies, or he/she is biased by his/her culture of origin. Thus, the use of

After all, people in the Sudan are deeply embedded in many overlapping social relations and enact many different cultural roles, all of which help shape their experiences.

Why Southern Sudan as A case Study?

The Southern Sudanese identity differs in one major way from the other groups in the Sudan. Southerners do not regard the mainstream culture that is Arab-Islamic as superior to their own. Moreover, the assertion of a Southern distinctiveness is not the result of an inability to merge into what is perceived to be the mainstream Sudanese culture. Other non Arab groups, for instance, Fur in the West, Beja in the East, and Western Africans²⁵, however, accepted the superiority of the mainstream social structures and initially strove to become a part of it. It is only when they failed in this endeavour that they turned inward to reclaim their distinctiveness.

Anthropologists tend to forget that the Southern Sudanese,

secondary resources is somehow tricky.

²⁵. By West Africans what is meant are people who came from West Africa on their way back and forth to Mecca, have settled in the Sudan. Most of them have settled in the Gezira area (the Gezira - Arabic for Island - is the area between the White and Blue Nile). The Gezira is the economic backbone of the Sudan. The Northern Sudanese perception towards them does not differ from that towards Southern

even before the British came into contact with them, were people with histories and identities, having their own institutions, and their own ideas of government. For instance, the sense of identity of the Dinka as a nation, the spiritual power of *Ruth* of the Shilluk, the indigenous administrative system of the Bari, and the role of indigenous religion in social solidarity, all these have to be recognized in any historical study.²⁶ Thus, it becomes important to appreciate the difference between what Southern Sudanese society was really like and what the colonial administration came to think it was like. Only against this background can the policies of racialization of the contemporary Sudan be fully understood.

The Southern Sudan: The land And the People:

The word Sudan or "*Bilad el Sudan*" was used by medieval Arab travellers to describe the area extending across Africa from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea. *Bilad el Sudan* means the

Sudanese.

²⁶ Some works have been done on Southern Sudanese societies, For instance, Douglas H. Johnson, "Foretelling Peace and War: modern interpretations of Ngundeng's prophecies in the south Sudan", in Modernization in the Sudan (ed.), by Daly, 1985; Francis M. Deng, The Man Called Deng Majok, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1986. Also his work, Dinka Cosmology, London: Ithaca Press, 1980; Andreas Grub, The lotuho of the Southern Sudan, Stuttgart: Steiner, 1992.

land of the black people.²⁷ Its indigenous peoples, who were predominantly of African origin, were the first to be challenged by the Arab invasion in its "civilizing mission" from the North.²⁸ This Sudan did not include the region presently called Southern Sudan. Southern Sudan became part of the Sudan only during the colonial period.

Southern Sudan is today bounded in the South by Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, in the West by the Central African Republic, and by Kenya and Ethiopia in the East. Many rivers and streams divide the South.²⁹ Its climate is predominantly tropical and characterised by plentiful rainfall. The people of the Southern Sudan can be classified into two broad groups: the agriculturists, who inhabit mostly the equatorial region and parts of Bahr al-Ghazal, and the semi-nomadic pastoralists or cattle herders, who are mostly the Nilotics in Bahr al-Ghazal and Upper Nile regions. The agriculturalists include such peoples as the

²⁷. Arab travellers called Sudan "*Bilad al-Sudan*", which translates into "land of the blacks". They did not however mean it as a compliment, for Arabs in the region have a color superiority complex and have historically regarded the Southern Sudan as one vast slave repository. For more details see Race and Color; and "Color in Northern Africa", in Color and Race.

²⁸. Richard Gray, A history of the Southern Sudan 1839-1989, pp, 8-16.

²⁹. See Robert Collins, Land beyond the Rivers, the Southern Sudan, 1898-1918, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971, pp.38-43.

Bari speaking groups,³⁰ and Nilotes such as the Dinka, Nuer and Shilluk. However, the activities in which these two sets of people engage are by no means exclusive; the agriculturists also keep livestock in limited numbers, while the pastoralists cultivate, though their livelihood is dominated by cattle and other forms of livestock.³¹

In the Southern Sudan, no one ethnic group predominates. The Dinka are the largest group, estimated at 40 percent of the Southerners. The Dinka number 10 percent of the Sudanese population as a whole. The Dinka are an important force in Upper Nile and Bahr al-Ghazal provinces, two of the three provinces that constitute the Southern Sudan. Other related groups in these provinces include: the Nuer (nearly 5 percent of the Sudan's population) and the Shilluk (1 percent). Their languages and customs are similar to those of the cattle-trading Dinka, but they compete for influence with them.

The Dinka themselves are divided into several groups, which have conflicted over local territorial and trade issues.

³⁰. These groups include for instance, Bari, Fojulu, Kuku, Kakwa, Nyangwara, and Mandari.

³¹. See Francis Deng, 1995, p.185-186.

However, the three Nilotic groups - Dinka, Nuer, and Shilluk - are perceived by some historians as a powerful demographic and political bloc in the South. In Equatoria the population is also divided into several groups that differ in language, custom, and religion. These groups spill across the borders into the neighbouring states of Uganda, Zaire, and Kenya. Although the people of Southern Sudan speak many languages and possess many distinctive cultural practices,³² they have shared a history of exploitation and developed a sense of common identity.

There are two dominant themes in the cultural history of the Nilotic peoples during the past 500 years, which are crucial to understand contemporary events - individualism and divisiveness. As these peoples moved from their homeland in the Bahr al-Ghazal throughout the South and on into Uganda and beyond to Kenya, they developed a strong sense, which they retain today, of individual identity in which every man/woman regards him/herself as being as good as any other. These peoples had leaders, those who were elder men in the community, but no chiefs. Disputes were solved and decisions made by those who were kinsmen acting as a body politic in

³². See G. Lienhardt, Divinity and Experience: The Religion of the Dinka, Oxford:

hostility or co-operation with other lineages without the need of an executive or a judiciary.³³ In the latter half of the nineteenth century however the diversified, uncohesive, fluid society of the Southern Sudan was disrupted by the arrival of three waves of invaders - the slave traders, the Egyptian Army, and the Mahdists.³⁴

Organisation of the Study:

This thesis is organised and divided into six chapters. My first chapter deals with the theoretical understanding of this study. I will briefly outline my reading of the theory of historical construction. The theory is useful in this study, for it enables us to deconstruct racial and ethnic identities, which have been considered stable and god given. In the case of the Sudan, it helps us to understand how specific constructions have empowered one particular group and marginalized others. This chapter will show the significance of understanding the historical processes

1961; and also John Middleton, Lugbara Religion, London: 1960.

³³. See A. Southall, "The segmentary state in Africa and Asia," Comparative Studies in Society and History, XXX (1988), 52-82. The limited powers of central authority among most African Kingdoms is a common theme in many others studies of African political development. See for instance, J. Vansina, Kingdoms of the Savannah, Madison, 1966; and P.C. Lloyd, "The political structure of African Kingdoms," in M. Banton (ed.), Political Systems and the Distribution of Power, London, 1965, 36-112.

³⁴. See Major Henry Darley, Slaves and Ivory, London: 1926.

behind the production of these identities. It also critically examines the Sudanese academic discourse on the civil war. The second chapter demonstrates how the process of marginalization, in particular through enslavement, began for the people of Southern Sudan. It investigates the creation of "Southerner" as an ethnic and racial category by the Turko-Egyptian rule of 1821-1885, and the Mahdist rule of 1885-1898, through official discourse and political practice.

The third chapter will focus on the contribution of the Anglo-Egyptian rule to the creation of the Southern Sudanese identity. It examines the colonial policy, namely indirect rule and government attitudes toward slave trade. It shows also how the British administrators had come to label the people of the South as "Africans". Chapter four will discuss the role of the emergent northern educated elites of the 1930s in creating these competing identities. It will examine in particular the nationalist discourse on the Sudanese identity. It will show how competing visions of identities and histories had been raised during this period and how one version of history and identity was legitimised. It argues that Northern educated elites in the Sudan have

supported a specific vision of history based on Arabism and Islamism. Such history involves exclusion of other groups, in particular Southern Sudanese. Chapter five will deal with a bitter war. It covers the historical development of two phases of the civil war that began in 1955, and continues today. It will identify the rise of Southern nationalism in the 1960s. It will also detail some of the cruelties and atrocities that were committed by the government in the South.

Chapter six deals with the issues that lie beyond the above mentioned chapters, namely the potential for development of a Southern Sudanese political consciousness in the wake of civil war. People of the South have been brutalized by the political and cultural violence of the last forty years. This chapter will assess how this political and cultural violence facilitated their representation as a distinct and unified ethnic group within Sudanese society. It will also test the validity of this representation by exploring Southern Sudanese perceptions of their own identities in exile. Research for this chapter was carried out among the Southern Sudanese communities living in Egypt, from September 1996 to December 1996, and from May 1997 to

September 1997. I had previously lived in Egypt and so I was familiar with the social and political environment and the "Southern question". Participant observation, the observation of Southern Sudanese attitudes and participation in their daily lives, and the collection of life histories, group discussions, and interviews were the main research methods. Arabic was the primarily language of research, especially with people not educated in a foreign language. English was used often with Southern Sudanese who had been educated in East Africa during the first civil war. I hope these chapters help us to understand the process of marginalization and politics of resistance in Southern Sudan.

Chapter One

The Theoretical Framework of the Study:

This chapter reconstructs the genesis of the Sudan's civil war and shows how the historical construction of the "orientalist" North and "prehistoric" South have influenced contemporary scholarship on the Sudan. In this chapter, I argue that the civil war in the Sudan is a conflict over history and identity. For the Sudan is the space for a conflict of nationalist struggles that present competing narratives of histories and contemporary forms of identities, constructing Sudan in different ways. In this study, I will use what I call the theory of historical construction to understand the Sudan's civil war.¹ The theory is useful in the case of the Sudan for it is concerned with ways in which we think about and use categories to structure our experience and analysis of the world. It rejects the conventional view that some social categories are natural and essential.² As this suggests

¹ I use the term historical instead of social in this thesis because the study focuses mainly on the historical processes. Therefore, the definition of the social construction theory does apply to the theory of historical construction.

² This definition is based on Peter Jackson and Jan Penrose's work (ed.),

historical construction theory offers a new, as far as Sudan is concerned, perspective on the conception, constitution and application of categories. Also, it challenges our complacency in accepting the inequalities that are permitted by specific kinds of categories and their application. Moreover, by enabling us to deconstruct categories that were previously viewed as untouchable, the theory offers new opportunities for redressing human divisiveness and conflict. In other words, if we can learn how specific constructions have empowered particular categories we can disempower them.

The theory will also help us to understand the historical meaning of the contemporary academic discourse on the Sudan. In this chapter, works written by Edward Said on the Middle East,³ Eric Hobsbawm, and Benedict Anderson on Europe,⁴ and finally, Cornel West and Henry Gates on the U.S.⁵ have

Constructions of Race, Place and Nation, London: UCL Press, 1992,2.

³- Edward Said, Orientalism, New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

⁴- Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities, London, 1983; also see E. Gellener, Nations and Nationalism, Oxford: Blackwell, 1983.

⁵- Henry Gates, "Race", Writing, and Difference, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1986. Also see, Cornel West, The Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Theory, New York: Monthly Review, 1991.

influenced me. Their works have been the central sources of reference and inspiration. In the African context, the work of Kwame A. Appiah is of significance.⁶

As a point of departure, it is important to clarify that theories of historical construction do not deny the need for some kind of categorisation. For the racial, and to a lesser extent, ethnic categories with which a person identifies, or which others ascribe to a person, make an enormous difference in the way a person lives her/his life. People from different races and ethnicities are therefore reasonably presumed to have different experiences and thus to have developed different perspectives and viewpoints. Accordingly, in the case of the Sudan, I have to distinguish between my acceptance of the assertion that Sudanese people operate as if categories (African/Arab or North/South) exist and my rejection of the idea that this existence is grounded in reality as natural and unchangeable truth. All constructions of reality must be seen as a product of the human capacity for thought and, consequently, are subject to change. Yet, in this study, it is important to remember that in specific conjunctures people often do define themselves

⁶ Kwame Anthony Appiah, In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture,

in terms of some essence, for example, as Muslims, Christians, African or Arabs etc., and act collectively as relatively coherent historical subjects. These identities are "real" because at times people act as if they are real: they (we) live through these identities, see them as reflecting a sense of self and community as well as a set of interests, and sometimes even die for them.

Racialized relations and Racism in the Sudan:

Much of the writing on the civil war has not dealt with the issue of racism and racialized relations in the Sudan. Instead, historians and social scientists have reproduced the constructed racist notions about the Sudan.

The idea of race has long been discredited in serious scientific works. As it has become accepted that races are socially constructed rather than biologically given, contemporary work has begun to focus on the process through which specific ideologies of race are mobilised in particular circumstances and with what effects: For instance, Robert Miles argues that:

If races are not naturally occurring populations,
the reasons and conditions for the social process

whereby the discourse of race is employed in an attempt to label, constitute and exclude social collectivities should be the focus of attention rather than be assumed to be a natural and universal process.⁷

Much of the current debate about race, ethnicity and nation has been couched in terms of the theory of racialization, articulated by Robert Miles⁸ in relation to post-war labour migration to Britain and subsequently employed by many others including Smith⁹, Solomos¹⁰ and Anderson¹¹. Instead of accepting the idea of race as biological given, the theory examines the conditions under which specific processes of racialization have taken place. The starting point for many recent theories of nation has been Benedict Anderson's discussion of the nation as "an imagined community". Ideologies of race also make appeals to similarly imagined communities, drawing on notions of common interest between heterogeneous groups of people who may have

⁷ Robert Miles, Racism, London: Routledge, 1989, 73.

⁸ Robert Miles, Racism and Migrant Labour, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982.

⁹ J. Susan Smith, The Politics of "Race" and Residence; citizenship, segregation, and white supremacy in Britain, Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1989.

¹⁰ J. Solomos, Race and Racism in Contemporary Britain, Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989.

¹¹ K.J. Anderson, Vancouver's Chinatown: racial discourse in Canada, 1875-1980,

little in common beyond the ideological appeal of race.¹² The Invention of the Tradition, the fascinating work of Hobsbawm and Ranger,¹³ underlines the fact that most European nations forged their identities during the 19th century. The comparative recency of most nation-states and the sense of mutability that this suggests have given rise to immense investment in the myth of nationhood based on a series of largely invented traditions. Thus, the idea of race, ethnicity or nation is part of a broader set of ideologies and social practices. Stuart Hall has argued that there have been many significantly different racisms - each historically specific and articulated in a different way with the societies in which they appear.¹⁴

In this study, I will move, following Miles, from an analysis of race - race relations, to one of racism - racialized relations. The problem with a focus on race and race relations is that it assumes that races exist and seeks

Montreal; Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991.

¹². Robert Miles, "Recent Marxist Theories of Nationalism and the issue of racism," British Journal of Sociology, 38, 1987, 24-43.

¹³. E. J. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger, The Invention of Tradition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

¹⁴. Stuart Hall, "Racism and Reaction," In Five views of multi-racial Britain,

to understand relations between them. By contrast, a focus on racism and racialized relations questions the existence of races, looks at how groups not previously defined as races have come to be defined in this way, and assesses the various factors involved in such processes. In the case of the Sudan, the racialized structures which were developed put institutionalised constraints on Southern Sudanese liberty and development. These included the entrenchment of a wide array of racialized images. These structures and hostilities have not gone unchallenged. People in the South have mobilised to confront and overcome them and have demonstrated great resilience in the face of the constraints imposed upon them. In the Sudan, like other African countries suffering from the civil war, much of the writing on the conflict¹⁵ has not managed to develop a conceptual framework that could address the issue of racialized structures. Instead, contemporary Sudanese scholars have employed the preconceived racist notions of the Sudan, which had been created in the late 19th century and endorsed by

Commission for Racial Equality, London: 1978, 23-35.

¹⁵. Mohammed Omer Beshir, The Southern Sudan: Background to Conflict: London, C. Hurst and Company, 1968. See also Dunstan M. Wai (ed.), The Southern Sudan: The Problem of National Integration, London: Frank Cass, 1973, and The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan, New York: African Publishing Company, 1981. For a Southern point of view, see Joseph Oduho and William Deng, The Problem of the Southern

such British anthropologists as Evans-Pritchard and Seligman.

The Creation of the Sudan: "orientalist" north and "prehistoric south".

Through history, the people of the Sudan have been described by Arabs and European writers, most of who were explorers or ethnologists in search of the source of the Nile.¹⁶ In their reports, the Sudan was presented to outside world as two different regions in terms of history and culture. The North has been constructed as "oriental"; while the South was considered as inhabited by "people without history".¹⁷ Consequently, the Northern Sudanese have become known as Arabs, Muslims and "civilised", whereas Southern Sudanese have been labelled as "black", "heathen" and "primitive". In the report of Southern Sudan disturbances of 1955, it was stated that the people of the Southern provinces, because they "were almost untouched by the impact of civilization, whether Arab or European... are therefore one of the most

Sudan, Oxford Univ. Press, 1970.

¹⁶ Samuel W. Baker, Albert Nyanza, Great Basin of the Nile, London: vol.1, 1866; also Allan Moorhead, The White Nile, London: 1963; John Lewis Burckhardt, Travels in Nubia, London, 1819; John Petherick, Egypt, the Soudan and Central Africa, London, 1861; James Bruce, Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile, 1768-1773, 5 vols. Edinburgh, 1790.

¹⁷. See works by Edward Said (1978), and Eric Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983).

primitive peoples in the world."¹⁸ The conventional view among many Northern Sudanese scholars is that racism was the product of European imperialism. This view is historically incorrect and misleading.¹⁹ It reflects the poverty of historical knowledge among these scholars.

The Arab Construction of the Black African:

The racist ideologies of fifteenth century Europe grew out of the development of African slavery in the Islamic world as far back as the eighth century. By the ninth century, Muslims were making a distinction between black and white slaves.²⁰ Thus, in the Muslim perception, the Sub-Saharan African emerged as the "son of Ham" destined to perpetual servitude.²¹ Muslims came to view slavery as the condition

¹⁸. See Report on Southern Sudan Disturbances, August 1955; Report of the Commission of Inquiry, Khartoum, Sudan, October 1956, p.7.

¹⁹. For a detail study on Arab's perceptions on black peoples see Samir M. Zoghby, "Blacks and Arabs: past and present," Current Bibliography on African Affairs 3, no.5, May 1970, pp.5-22.

²⁰. These distinctions are best reflected in the two Arabic words for slave. The word *abd* plural *abid* sometimes *abeed*, the traditional word of slave, but in the popular dialect, European slaves came to be called *mamluks*. The white *mamluk* commanded a higher price than the black *abd* because he could bring a substantial Christian ransom or be exchanged for a Muslim captive. For more in this issue see, Bernard Lewis, Race and Color in Islam, New York, 1971, 63-64; Leon Carl Brown, "Color in Northern Africa," in Color and Race (ed.), John Franklin, Boston, 1968, p.163.

²¹. For more details in this perception see the tenth century Arab geographer, Abu Ishaq Ibrahim Ibn Muhammad al-Istakhri, Kitab Masalik al-Mamluk (ed.) by M.J.de Goeje, Leiden, 1870, p.36.

that best suited black Africans.²² Blackness then became a metaphor for servitude and the curse of Ham legitimised the continued subjugation of black Africans.²³

A Persian treatise on world geography described peoples of the Sudan in the following manner:

Most of them go about naked. Egyptian merchants carry their salt, glass and lead, and sell them for the same weight in gold... In the southern parts there is no more populous country than this. The merchants steal their children and bring them with them. Then they castrate them, import them into Egypt, and sell them²⁴

Mutahhar ibn Tahir al-Maqdisi, in the tenth century, described the black Africans as cannibal, pagan and primitive. He claimed that "There is no marriage among them; the child does not know his father, and they eat people... they are people of black color, flat noses, kinky hair, and little understanding or intelligence."²⁵ Black Africans have

²². Estimates of the average number of African slaves that moved from south to north and west to east along the trans-Saharan trade routes, 700-1500, range from 1,000 to 6,000 per year transported across the Sahara during this period; Austen, "The trans-Saharan Slave Trade: A Tentative Census," in The Uncommon Market: Essays in the Economic History of the Atlantic Slave Trade (ed.) Henry A. Gemery and Jan S. Hogendorn, New York, 1979, 23-76.

²³. See Edith R. Sanders, "The Hamitic Hypothesis: its origins and function in time perspective," Journal of African History, 10, 1969, 521-32.

²⁴. cited in Bernard Lewis, Race and Slavery in the Middle East, 1990, p.52.

²⁵. Maqdisi, Kitab al-Bad was'L-ta'rikh, cited in Bernard Lewis, Race and Slavery in the Middle East, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, p.52.

been also described by Ibn Battuta, a Muslim traveller, in the fourteenth century, as monkeys, heathens, naked people and cannibals.²⁶

As reflected in Arabic linguistic constructions, religious assumptions, and literary records like Ibn Battuta's diary, Africans were viewed as morally and culturally inferior.²⁷ Al-Abshihi, an Egyptian writer, described black slaves as "wicked, submissive and evil."²⁸ Fifteenth century historian Ibn Khaldun made a link between black inferiority and slavery. He claimed that "the Negro nations are, as rule, submissive to slavery, because they have little that is human and possess attributes that are quite similar to those of dumb animals."²⁹ As to the habits of these "dumb animals", he claimed that "most of the Negroes of the first zone [tropics] dwell in caves and thickets, eat herbs, live in savage isolation and do not congregate, and eat each other."³⁰

²⁶. See Ibn Battuta, Ibn Battuta in Black Africa (ed.), and trans. by Sid Hamdun and Noel King, London, 1975, 23-58.

²⁷. For more details See, James H. Sweet, "The Iberian Roots of American Racist Thought," William and Mary Quarterly, Vol. LIV, No.1, January 1997, p.147.

²⁸. Shihab al-Din Ahmed al-Abshihi, Kitab al-Mustatrafi fi kull shay Mustazraf, vol.2, Cairo, 1352, 1933, p.75.

²⁹. See Ibn Khaldun, The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History, trans. Franz Rosenthal, Princeton, 1967, 117.

³⁰. *ibid.*, p.59.

Black people are constructed as hopelessly lazy and shiftless and devoid of principles. Al- Abshihi (1388-1446), an Egyptian writer, claimed that:

More vile than black slaves, of less good and more evil than they? As for the mulatto, if you show kindness to one of them all your life and in every way, he will not be grateful, and it will be as if you had done nothing for him. The better you treat him, the more insolent he will be, the worse you treat him, the more humble and submissive.³¹

They were also depicted as not keeping clean and giving off a foul odor. Ibn Butlan, whose work on slavery provided practical advice to prospective slave owners, described Zanj women in the most derogatory manner. He wrote, "the uglier their faces and more pointed their teeth... They can endure hard work ... but there is no pleasure to be got from them, because of the smell of their armpits and the coarseness of their bodies."³²

When the Christian's missionaries and explorers came into contact with Africans, they reproduced the Muslim perception of Africans.³³ For instance, Fr. Emanuele Pedemonte, who

³¹. See Bernard Lewis, Race and Color in Islam, p.97.

³². Ibid., pp.96-7.

³³. Abbas Ibrahim Ali in his work on the Anglo-Saxon images of the Sudan has ignored the development of African slavery in the Islamic world and its impact on

travelled in South Sudan between 1849-50, described the Shilluk people as "wild...like other Africans, the men go naked all their lives... in general they are very fast runners, and they run like gazelles."³⁴ Another example of negative racial stereotypes came from L.G. Massaia who, though he had never been to the South, described the Nuer:

Of all tribes the Nuer have the least intelligence and drive, though they are by no means devoid of either. The reason for this is that their climate is unhealthy as they live on an immense plain covered with swamps. In sailing through the Nuer country traders are exposed to horrible fevers which require for their cure enormous doses of sulphate of quinine.³⁵

Contemporary Scholarship on the Sudan's Civil War:

Since 1920, the dominant academic discourse in the Sudan has come to use these assumptions in its study and research. Contemporary scholarship on the Sudan's civil war has been influenced by the colonial discourse on the Sudan. The discourse has constructed Sudan into a North composed of oriental Arabs and a South inhabited by African peoples without history. This discourse ties up with the common Muslim idea that history begins with Islam and that

forming the racist perceptions towards black Africans. See his work, Anglo-Saxon Teutonic Images of the Peoples of the Sudan, 1772-1881, Khartoum, University of Khartoum, 1969, paper no.6.

³⁴. Nile Basin, p.57.

³⁵. See Nile Basin, 108

everything before was "the ignorance" (*al-jahilya*).³⁶

John Lewis Burckhardt, Swiss scholar, distinguished the Northern "Arabs" from the Southern "Negroes" on the basis of race and class:

It is by the nature of their skin that the Arabs distinguish themselves from the Negroes... their skin is fine as that of the white person, while that of the Negroes is much thicker and coarser. The hands of the latter are as hard as board, while the touch of the Arabs, who are not of the labouring class, is as soft as that of the northern nations.³⁷

Emil Ludwig, in his work, The Nile, described the people who lived in Southern Sudan as "child-like".

If the Negroes are to be compared with children, then on the Nile at any rate, they must be compared with happy children whose cynical innocence lives on in their cruelty. They may kill each other in anger, but they know nothing of the perversions of the white man, everything that darkens white life, hatred and contempt, ambitions and jealousy, above all the curse of gold, is absent from the daily life of the Negro.³⁸

Rev. J. Lowrie Anderson claimed that:

The Arab is very practical and matter-of-fact. Both his religion and temperament combine to make him so. The Negro is less stable. The Arab will

³⁶. See W. James, "the Funj mystique: approaches to problem of Sudan history," in R.K. Jain (ed.), Text and Context, Philadelphia, 1977, pp.95-133.

³⁷. John Lewis Burckhardt, Travels in Nubia, London, 1819,p.199.

³⁸. Emil Ludwig, The Nile, New York: The Viking Press, 1937, 76.

not give up his ways or change his religion easily. The Negro will imitate another religion quickly, and follow other customs readily without giving up necessarily his old customs.³⁹

In 1952, J.S.R. Duncan, in his book, The Sudan, described Southern Sudanese as "primitive, unclothed, pagan, and tremendously virile, keep very much to themselves."⁴⁰

According to the Arabist scholar Trimingham, the Sudan consisted of opposing regions of idealised racial identities whose history and culture were to be understood in terms of race:

The population of the Sudan falls naturally into two great classes, a northern Muslim area and a southern pagan area, the so-called Arab and Negroid areas... The Muslim area embraces the peoples of the dry desert and steppe regions of the north who are Arabic-speaking and Islamic... The southern Sudan ... on the other hand, is totally different in race and culture, and includes all the heterogeneous dark-skinned pagan peoples of the south...⁴¹

These representations, images and metaphors were created by people who considered themselves "civilised", and who saw themselves as carrying out a "civilising mission". They are artefacts of a racist discourse based on idealist premises.

³⁹ Quoted in Ruth McCreery, "Moslem and Pagans of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan," The Moslem World, vol. xxxvi, no.3, July 1946, p.255.

⁴⁰ J.S.R. Duncan, The Sudan: A record of achievement, London: Blackwood & Sons Ltd, 1952, p.45.

⁴¹ See J. Spencer Trimingham, The Christian Approach to Islam in the Sudan, Oxford

These premises created the foundation for racialized academic discourse in the Sudan. The orientalist paradigm of history, as applied to the post-colonial Sudan is idealist in that it reduces concrete reality to two regions of opposing entities which it calls "Arab" or Muslims on the one hand and "non Arabs" or non-Muslim on the other and it assumes the inherent superiority of the former. The persistence of this kind of scholarship on Sudan is dependent on the image that European and Arab writers have created of the African. The image of this "other", the antithesis of the European and Arab self-image, defined it. The image of the African other is a composite of all those things that represent lack of value - "negative" human characteristics. A negative conception of "other" is the basis on which both European and Arabs built their image of other people; a conceptual construct provided by their own cultures.

The contemporary academic discourse on the Sudan began with the Anglo-Egyptian administration at the turn of the present century. The earliest forum for this discourse was the journal Sudan Notes and Records, begun in 1918. In the first

issue, General Sir F.R. Wingate, Governor General of the Sudan, stated the orientalist discourse of the Journal as follows:

There is one corner in particular of the wide field of research to which I suggest careful and early attention should be paid if valuable material is to be rescued from oblivion. The creeds- I refer of course chiefly to those parts of the country untouched by Islamic culture - the superstitions and the folklore of primitive tribesmen are subjects of the deepest interest in themselves and, apart from their anthropological and ethnological values, are of importance as contributing to that sympathetic comprehension of the people and their mentality which is so essential to a successful administrator.⁴²

Consequently, the culture of the "oriental" Northern Sudanese people has been presented as the unifying genius of the Sudan, bringing together disparate "primitive" ethnic groups within a common identity.⁴³ Hassan Makki, an Islamicist scholar, argued that Islam in the Sudan has to be given a chance to help redress the present human tragedy in Southern Sudan.⁴⁴ To support his vision historically, he claimed that:

Southern Sudan became a closed district in the

⁴². See Sir F.R. Wingate, "editorial", Sudan Notes and Records, 1918.

⁴³. For more details in Arab race and Arabization in the Northern Sudan, see Al-Tijani Amar, Al-Sulalat al-Arabiyah al-Sudaniyah fi al-Nil al-abyad (Sudanese and Arab Races in the White Nile), Sudan Publishing House, Khartoum, 1971; also see Abdal-Magid Abdin, "Some General Aspects of the Arabization of the Sudan," Sudan Notes and Records, 1959, 40:58-74.

thirties, free from any Islamic or northern influences. The missionaries became masters of the situation and the policy of separating the south from the north and adding it to British East Africa... In mission schools, the southern students were taught that their brothers from the north were the source of all their hardship. In the teaching of religion and history every opportunity was taken to keep the memory of slavery alive.⁴⁵

Hassan Makki has underestimated the reality that the struggle over histories is struggle to enforce meaning, a vision of the world, and that it is these imposed visions themselves that create the realities of which they speak through the construction of truth, or consensus about the nature and the existence of groups. Struggles for identity are not only conducted on the battlefield but also in the camp of historians and anthropologists. To question the representations of the history in the Sudan is to question the powers that generate them.

In the debate over history and identity much attention has been focused on pre-independence Sudan. Whereas the official history and Northern nationalists seek to emphasise Southern support for unification, the Southern nationalists' narrative regards unification as a creation of the British,

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.76.

the Egyptians and the Northern Sudanese ruling group. At the same time, Northern nationalists claim that there is no distinct Southern identity because the Southern Sudan includes various ethnic groups.

For example, Mohammed Omer Beshir, like many Sudanese scholars, blamed colonial policy for the separation of the South from the Northern Sudan.⁴⁶ Beshir sees the expulsion of the missionaries from the South in the 1960s as 'a logical result arising from the hostility of the missionaries'⁴⁷ to [Islam and the North]. He also rejected separation as a possible solution, arguing that the South had never been a separate independent state nor did it possess the necessary ingredients that made a nation-state. However, Beshir pointed to other factors such as the national divisions and regional economic inequalities that had to be addressed. In doing so, he blamed the Northern political forces that advocated the Islamization of the South, arguing that, "The advocates of an Islamic republic in the Sudan were thus, consciously or unconsciously,

⁴⁶ Mohammed Omer Beshir, The Southern Sudan: background to conflict, London: C. Hurst and Company, 1968, 100.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 83.

playing into the hands of the separatists."⁴⁸ Beshir, like many Northern Sudanese scholars, holds a strongly romantic view about the "integrity" of the country.

Supporting Omer Beshir's argument of the united Sudan, Mohamed Ahmed Mahgoub stated in 1974 that:

What we had been fighting for more than fifteen years was not a religious war, but a war against attempts at secessionism... Responsibility for the situation in the south as we inherited it at independence, rests in the first place with the British administration and in the second with the missionaries.⁴⁹

Kamal Osman Salih, a supporter of the current Islamic regime, has listed the British colonial policies of the 1920s as the major cause of the conflict between the North and the South. Kamal has stated that:

These regulations were intended to exclude Egyptians, northern Sudanese, and other Muslims likely to engage in activities that would threaten the administrative policy in the south... The rigid control of traders and marketing, justified by the need to protect the primitive southern country against exploitation by northern merchants, did not encourage the development of an exchange economy or trade.⁵⁰

⁴⁸- Omer Beshir, The Southern Sudan: Background to conflict, London: C. Hurst and Company, 1968, 99-101.

⁴⁹- See Mohamed Ahmed Mahgoub, Democracy on Trial: Reflections on Arab and African Politics, London: Andre Deutsch, 1974, p. 206.

⁵⁰- See Kamal Osman Salih, "Sudan's Communal Conflict: Background, Causes, and Prospects for Reconciliation," in Sudan: The Forgotten Tragedy, Eds., United

Muddathir Abd AL-Rahim, a strong advocate of Arab identity in the Sudan, blamed the British for governing the South separately from the North. He also believed that Arabism was a basic attribute of the majority of the population of the Sudan'. For him, Arabism was not a racial bond but 'a cultural, linguistic and non-racial link' between a number of races. Abd Al-Rahim overlooked the multiple identities of the Sudan, and the distinctive historical experience of the South, and argued deceptively that 'for although slightly more than one-third of the total population claim Arab descent, over half speak Arabic as their mother tongue, while most of the rest, including the southern Sudanese use Arabic, or a pidgin form of it as a lingua franca.'⁵¹

Abdel Rahim has argued that while some people in the North may have identified themselves as Muslims or Arabs, they never thought of themselves as "Sudanese" unless the person concerned happened to belong to the less sophisticated, non-islamized and non-Arabized section of the population". Thus, according to him, since independence Africanism and Arabism have become fused in the Northern Sudan to the extent that

States Institute of Peace, Washington, D.C. 1994, p.22.

⁵¹. See his work, Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan, pp.5 and 7.

it is more representative of Africa as whole than any other country or region, including the Southern Sudan. Like Omer Beshir, Abdel Rahim has accepted the idealist premise that Sudan's history should be understood in terms of interaction between the racial and religious identities.

Rapheal K. Badal, a Southerner, has joined Muddathir and others in blaming the British for initially creating the "backwardness" of the South, and overlooking the deeper historical process of marginalization in Southern Sudan. He argued that:

Neglect of the south was, therefore, a key feature of British colonial rule in the Sudan... This economic and social backwardness of the south was apparent even to the British themselves... A couple of decades later [1950], the majority of the southern people were still without a cash-crop... Education in the south was left almost entirely in the hands of Christian missionaries whose primary object was evangelisation rather than general uplift or enlightenment.⁵²

Sharif Harir, although he agreed with Beshir, Abdel Rahim and Badal in blaming the British, has gone further and identified some of the domestic factors such as the role of the Sudanese elites, stating that:

⁵² Rapheal K. Badal, Origins of the Underdevelopment of the Southern Sudan: British Administration Neglect, Monograph No. 16, Development Studies and Research

Although it was the British colonial administration which was supposed to be blamed for initially setting in motion these tendencies towards regional inequalities in development, it was the insistence of the Sudanese elites, in this center [central Sudan], on pursuing the same colonial policy that entrenched the initial steps into a seemingly irreversible trend.⁵³

Sharif Harir, however, has accepted the mainstream view that Arabism in the Sudan was a cultural issue rather than one of race. The main problem with this type of understanding is that it mistakenly perceived race and culture as two separate entities. This is particularly important, in a society where culture has been racialized.

Taisier M. Ali has shown the confusion over the construction of the Afro-Arabism and the crisis of identity in the Sudan. Ali has emphasised the role of culture in constructing the "official" national identity that negated the reality of the society as a whole. He has stated that:

Political consciousness and national identity developed along the confines defined by the ruling groups. Interest in and command of the Arabic language, literature, and poetry were important prerequisites for membership in the cultural club organised in major northern cities, which became

Center, Khartoum, 1983, 1.

⁵³. Sharif Harir, "Racism in Islamic Disguise? Retreating Nationalism and Upsurging Ethnicity in Dar Fur, Sudan," unpublished paper presented to conference on Democracy in Sudan, Cairo, 1993, 3.

the harbingers of the dominant political parties...This situation, coupled with an unceasing flood of magazines, newspapers, and modern and religious literature from Egypt, locked the imagination of the budding political leaders northward and made Cairo the intellectual Mecca of Sudan.⁵⁴

Wade Nobles agrees with Ali. Culture in his view, "is a process which gives people a general design for living and patterns for interpreting their reality,"⁵⁵ Thus, in the context of the Sudan, the ideological thrust of culture is inescapable. Arab culture is ideological since it possesses the force and power to form personalities and to pattern the behaviour of the "other".⁵⁶ Both culture and ideology are extremely political in nature, since they are about the definition of group interest, the determination of group destiny and common goals.

El-Affendi, an Islamist writer, presented the Ikhwan [the Muslim Brothers] perception on the South, stating that:

⁵⁴. Taisier Mohamed Ahmed Ali, "Roots of War in Sudan: A Revisionist Perspective," in Sudan: The Forgotten Tragedy, Washington, D.C. United States Institute of Peace, 1994, 55.

⁵⁵. Wade Nobles, Africanity and the Black Family, Oakland, Ca., Black Family Institute Publications, 1985, 103.

⁵⁶. See Awn al-Sharif Qasim, "Al-Sudan fi hayat al-Arab wa-adabihim," Bulletin of Sudanese Studies, Khartoum, 1, 1968, pp.76-92; also see work by Abduh Badawi, Al-Sud wa l-Hadara al-Arabiyya, Cairo, 1976.

For Ikhwan [the Muslim Brothers], the south was perceived as a distant, vaguely symbolic place. Like the rest of the educated, Ikhwan only saw in the south the alienated, lost brother, who had to be retrieved through the spread of Islam, the Arabic language and better communications.⁵⁷

By using these sets of representations, images and metaphors, El-Affendi constructed an imagined South. Yet, the realisation that the south was no longer a spiritual and cultural vacuum to be filled and conquered by whoever controlled power in Khartoum led the Ikhwan to consider new alternatives.

One point of view that emerged called for the separation of the south, since its demands appeared to have become the major obstacle to setting up an Islamic order in Sudan. The opposing view, which won in the end, advocated tackling the problem head-on. If the Sudanese Islamic State were to become a bastion for Islam in Africa, it had to accept the challenge of accommodating a non-Muslim minority.⁵⁸

What El-Affendi, Abdel Rahim, and Abbas have failed to comprehend was that the people of the Southern Sudan were not "Negro" or "pagan", but peoples sharing a history of devastating slave raids, of the plundering of their resources by European and Arabs traders, and the intrusion of and opposition to Islamization and Arabization. Thus, any

⁵⁷ Abdelwahab El-Affendi, Turabi's Revolution, London: Creyseal, 1991, 148.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, 149.

discussion about the so-called synthesis of Arabism and Africanism that these authors advocate is mainly dedicated to the defence of Arab culture and Islam against erosion from outside influences and to the preservation of Arab interests at the international level.

Southern Sudanese Narratives:

The Southern nationalist narrative contends that the shared experience of slave trade and colonialism unified various ethnic groups in the South and that this experience is comparable to that of other colonised peoples who later formed independent states. A main theme of Southern nationalist discourse is the idea of a decisive rupture that created a new identity that is authentic, legitimate and fundamentally different from that of other peoples in the Sudan. This discourse directly challenges fundamental assumptions of the Sudanese official narrative of national identity. It suggests that identity is shaped and modified by changing historical circumstances. For instance, Peter Nyot Kok has argued that,

This conflict has an ethnoregional and cultural dimension because the wielders and beneficiaries of state and economic power are Muslims of Arab stock living in northern and central Sudan, whereas the marginalised people are (with the

notable exceptions of the Beja and the Nubians), black Africans of southern Sudan, western Sudan, and southern Blue Nile.⁵⁹

Francis M. Deng and Dunstan Wai, in their works, The War of Visions and The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan

respectively,⁶⁰ have viewed the conflict in the Sudan as the crisis of identity or a conflict between two identities:

Southern and Northern. In Wai's view:

In essence, it is a conflict of nationalism: one rooted in Africanism and the other in Arabism. It is not a mere case of ethnicity. The northern Sudanese view themselves as Arabs and whether their Arabness is more by acquisition than heredity is of less importance. Whereas the southern Sudanese feel themselves to be authentically Negroid Africans in every way.⁶¹

But Francis Deng went further and identified the driving forces behind the development of these identities. In contrast to those who blamed the British, he pointed out that:

The historical process that has separated the Arab Muslim north and the African south has its roots in the Arabization and Islamization of the north and the resistance to those forces in the south.

⁵⁹. See Peter Nyot Kok, "The Multiple Facets of the Sudanese Conflict and the Search for a Just and Lasting Peace," in Sudan: The Forgotten Tragedy, 1994, p, 37.

⁶⁰. Francis Deng, War of Visions, 1995. See also Dunstan M. Wai, The African Arab Conflict in the Sudan, New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1981.

⁶¹. Dunstan M. Wai, The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan, New York: African Publishing Company, 1981,1.

The assimilation processes favoured the Arab religion and culture over the African race, religions, and cultures, which remained prevalent in the south.⁶²

The war of visions between the North and the South first broke out in August 1955, just four months before independence was declared on January 1, 1956. Consequently, political independence, in Wai's view, marked the beginning of a new hostile era towards the people of the South:

For the southern Sudanese, the end of British colonialism in their land meant the beginning of Arab domination and colonialism. That was unacceptable and needed to be challenged in order to preserve southern Sudanese identity...⁶³

In his book, The Politics of Two Sudans, Deng D. Akol Ruay also pointed out the conflict over identity and history arguing that:

The south is African and Christian and looks to Black Africa for cultural inspiration and to the developed world for scientific and technological progress. The north is Arabized and Islamized and looks to the Middle and Far East for cultural animation... The north claims to be the majority and intends to swallow the south forcibly. Total Arabization and Islamization of the Sudan are of cardinal importance to the Sudanese Arabs for the purpose of perpetuating Arab dominance and control.⁶⁴

⁶²- Francis Deng, War of Visions, 1995, 9.

⁶³- Dunstan M. Wai, 1981, p.2.

⁶⁴- See Deng D. Akol Ruay, The Politics of Two Sudans: The South and the North

The shift in the Sudan's literature of the civil war to the question of identity and race is very significant in the 1990s. F. Deng defines identity "as a function of how people identify themselves and are identified in race, ethnicity, culture, language, and religion and how such identification determines or influences their participation in the political, economic, social life,"⁶⁵ But the renaissance of identity in the Sudan today has raised the question of what kind of identity F. Deng is talking about, old or new?

Thus the contemporary history of the Sudan, according to Deng's, Wai's and Ruay's version of idealism, should be understood in terms of two distinct but related processes: one of Arabization, the other of Islamization. The focus upon these two historical processes was certainly significant, but by accepting idealised entities such as South/African whose content was undefined, Deng Wai and Ruay have accepted the final racialized product without understanding the production process, that is, how and why these entities have been created.

1821-1969, Uppsala, The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1994, p.73.

⁶⁵. Francis M. Deng, War of Visions, 1995, 14.

Sudanese scholarship on the civil war is guilty of abstracting and distorting the Southern Sudanese experiences and of complicity with successive governments in Khartoum in perpetuating the view that Southern Sudanese themselves are the "problem", rather than the racism of a dominant Arabized society. It is not Southern Sudanese or foreigners who should be blamed but the Arabized society in the North. It is not a question of urging Southerners and Northerners to "unity", but of challenging institutional racism, it is not race relations that is the subject for study, but racism. Bona Malwal has nicely summarised the essence of the conflict as follows:

The conflict in Sudan started, therefore, as a result of one group or community- the Arabs- trying to use state power to dominate and control every aspect of national life and to arabise it completely. It was for all practical purposes a racially inspired domination.⁶⁶

In the Sudan, many Northern Sudanese scholars have adopted the discourse of the ruling group. This can be seen most clearly in relation to Southern Sudan, where Southern Sudanese nationalist history was suppressed by the hegemonic mythology of the Northern ruling group. During the pre-

⁶⁶ See Bona Malwal, "Sources of Conflict in Sudan: How Peace Might be Achieved,"

independence period, the British acknowledged the validity of Southern Sudanese claims for independence - by implementing the Southern Policy of 1930, but then dismissed these claims in order to extend their own influence in the Sudan. Numerous scholars accepted the hegemonic mythology created by Sudanese ruling group. Thus struggles for control of representation of history and identity were carried out at various levels and particular versions of these struggles were authorised and legitimised by different types of authorities.

British anthropologists had conducted many studies dealing with "primitive", "backward", and "people without history" of Southern Sudan. These studies were mainly built on biased evidence and stereotypes that affected subsequent observations and research on Southern Sudan.⁶⁷ The main problem with the Sudan's literature on the civil war is the tendency among most of the scholars, particularly those who identify themselves with the myth of Arabism such as Abdel Rahim, Makki and Effendi, to recognize the relationship

In Sudan: The Forgotten Tragedy, p.62.

⁶⁷. See Evans-Pritchard's works including: "The Nuer, Tribe and Clan," Sudan Notes and Records, 16: 1-54, 1933; and Sudan Notes and Records, 17: 1-58, 1934; also The Nuer description of the modes of livelihood and political institutions of a Nilotic people, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940.

between culture, race and ideology. Most of these works, written by scholars from the North and the South, have also apparently been blind to what John Henrik Clark had called 'the imprisonment of a people to image.' The texts of these scholars are still crowded with the image of Europeans and Arabs as superior beings.

The Construction of Histories and Identities: the need for an alternative discourse:

Historians argue that there can be no neutral collection of historical facts and no single representative account of any given phenomenon.⁶⁸ Past, present, and future are not distinct periods but part of one interactive and endlessly self-reflecting process of imagination. In particular, nationalist historiography is part of an effort to create "imagined communities".⁶⁹ Events in the past are emphasised in order to support a specific vision of the future.⁷⁰ Such histories involve exclusion and silencing of certain voices and substitution of a hegemonic mythology.

Official histories, institutionally authenticated, create

⁶⁸ See Howard Zinn, The Politics of History, Boston: Beacon, 1970.

⁶⁹ Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities, London: Verso, 1983.

particular visions of the past and provide instructions on how it should be perceived. The ruling groups in the Sudan have frequently turned to history to develop justification for their own power. Certain key historical events come to provide aspects of a group's image. Thus history gives legitimacy to those in power and in turn defines that group's view of itself.

The Sudan is the space for a clash of nationalist struggles that offer competing narratives of the past and contemporary forms of identity, imagining Sudan in sharply contrasting ways. Many contemporary Sudanese scholars have ignored this historical reality. For example, the Northern based nationalism has created for itself a genealogy that stretches into the Islamic Arab past and suggests a primordial and essential identity shared by all those who live within the current boundaries of the Northern Sudan, regardless of their particular ethnic affiliation.⁷¹

Other forms of national identity exist in opposition to this and insist that this united Sudanese identity is in reality

⁷¹. See S. Tambian, "The nation-state in crisis and the rise of ethnonationalism,"

an expression of northern chauvinism. For example, Southern Sudanese nationalism takes a less essentialist form based on historical transformations created by British colonialism and on the experience of the nationalist struggle itself, while the Beja's nationalism in Eastern Sudan is premised on ethnicity. All of these forms of identities involve different understandings and interpretations of the past. Whereas united-Sudan nationalism has regarded these dissident forms of identity as illegitimate secessionist movements, Southerners and other have argued that their own histories have been stolen from them and suppressed.

Similarly, racism and cultural arrogance shown toward the South, long regarded as primitive, backward, and inferior to the North, is cloaked by assertions that Southerners are fully accepted as "Sudanese" so that claims for a separate South can be delegitimized. Some Northern scholars such as Abdel Rahim, Mekki Abbas, EL-Affendi emphasise the flexibility of Arab identity, the ease with which one can pass as Arab by speaking Arabic and adopting an Arabic name, and suggest that Arab culture provides an open, unifying mechanism for the creation of a national identity. Yet those

in E, Wilmsen and Mcallister, p. Eds, The politics of difference, Chicago:

whose cultures have been devalued emphasise the power relations inherent in such a national identity, the necessity to commit cultural suicide, and the inability of non-Arab Muslims to ever fully succeed.

This dominant discourse has conditioned the official "truths" of the Arab Islamic regime. As Michel Foucault observes, each society has its regime of truth. He explains, "truth is linked in circular relation with the systems of power which it induces and which extend it."⁷² Thus, the legitimising function of the apparatus of truth in the Sudan is the official denials of race as a source of conflict. By abolishing racial otherness as a socially relevant frame of reference, the dominant discourse in the Sudan removed the critical issues of ethnic and racial hegemony and discrimination from realm of legitimate debate.

For instance, as part of the attempt to negate its validity, Southern nationalism is presented as an African, Christian, western and Zionist inspired attempt to destroy the integrity of the Sudan. The argument not only invokes the

University of Chicago Press, 1996.

⁷² Michel Foucault, Power/Knowledge: selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977 (ed.), by Colin Gordon, Sussex: The Harvester, 1980, pp.131, 133.

historical unity of the Sudan but also emphasises the element of Islam as a defining characteristic of the state. Yet this creates a paradox within the discourse: while Northern nationalists' speeches and texts stress that it is the foreign-alien, African, Christian, Zionist character of Southerners that causes them to revolt, and wage war, this character must be simultaneously shown to be superficial so that Southern Sudan can be presented as having been an integral part of the state throughout history.

The African-Christian dimension is consistently stressed so that Southern nationalism can be portrayed as invalid, externally created, and above all "artificial", but it is also denied in order to preserve the idea of a national Sudanese essence. Again, while British influences must be dismissed as superficial in order to reject Southern claims of a fundamental transformation and creation of a new identity, the Western Christian and Zionist are stressed in order to prove the non-authentic characters of the movement and to play upon Sudanese and Arab world fears concerning the Western Christian and Zionist threat to Islamic identity.⁷³

⁷³ One very good example is Hassan Makki claim in his book, Sudan: The Christian

It is better therefore to understand the Sudan as a historical fiction based on and maintained by power. In perceiving Sudan as a created image, however, it is important to recognise that it was not simply an invention of western power. Rather, the image of the Sudan was constructed on the basis of an already existing discourse of domination that of the Northern ruling group. This discourse proposed a particular version of history in which the boundaries of the contemporary state were projected backwards into a distant historical period. The image of the Sudan contained within this discourse is one of an Arab-Islamic identity, part of the Middle East.

Design, he states that: "The CIA had its own men among the mutineers as did Israel and Ethiopia. John Garang was from the Dinka. He was educated in Tanzania and the US and trained in Israel", 1989, p. 152.

Chapter Two:

Slavery and Construction of Race in the Sudan 1800-1898

The whole social system of northern Sudan grew to depend on the possession of slaves, without whom no property could be developed or family maintained.¹

The purpose of this chapter is to show how the process of enslavement began for the people in Southern Sudan by investigating the creation of Arab and "Southerners" as ethnic and racial categories through the practice of slavery in the precolonial Sudan. This chapter focuses on the Turko-Egyptian period (1821-1885), and the Mahdist era (1885-1898). Known as "Southerners", after the geographical area in which they live, the peoples of the Southern Sudan hold a distinct place in Sudanese social and cultural life. The experience of slavery continues to mark Southerners because the constructed ideological perceptions of difference and hierarchy created by slavery have been maintained.

Comments on Scholarship on Slavery in the Arab World:

Despite the long history of slavery in the Arab world and in other Muslim societies, and in contrast to the endless flow of books and articles that have enriched our understanding of slavery and the traffic in slaves from West Africa to the New World, the slavery that for centuries was an integral feature of Arab society has been given less attention by scholars. Muslim scholars especially have written relatively little about this human tragedy.² A conspiracy of silence has prevailed and has blocked out much needed light on this sensitive subject.

Some Muslim scholars have simply rejected the claim of slavery in a Muslim society. Abd-al-Aziz Kamil has argued that in Islam, "the diversity of tongues and colour is simply a manifestation of divine power, and does not imply any notion of preference or privilege."³ However, the painful history of slavery in Muslim societies and

¹. C.A. Willis, *On Slavery*, 1926, NRO Civsec 60/2/7,2.

². See Bernard Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990; and Murray Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World*, New York: New Amsterdam, 1989. See also *Slaves and Slavery in Muslim Africa* (ed.), by John Ralph Willis, London: F. Cass, 1985; *Slavery in North Africa* (ed.), by Shaun Marmon, Princeton, N.J.: M. Wener, 1998, and Daniel Pipes, *Slave Soldiers and Islam: The Genesis of A military System*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981.

³. For this kind of argument see Abd-al- Aziz Abd- al- Gadir Kamil,

application of Islamic laws have shown the difficulty of achieving equality in the modern nation state.

However, in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, Africanists have taken up the challenge and developed an impressive literature on slavery in African society.⁴

The new interest in African slavery since the late 1970s, which followed the larger wave of works on African American and Latin American slavery in the 1970s and the 1980s,⁵ has opened the debate between Arabs and Africans over the meaning of that painful historical experience. The reaction to this debate, however, has been hostile. For instance,

Islam and the Race Question, Paris, UNESCO, 1970, p.63.

⁴. Some of the main works in this area are written by Ralph Austen, "From the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean: European Abolition, the African Slave Trade, and the Asian Economic Structures," in The Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade (ed.), David Eltis and James Walvin, Madison, 1981. See also David Eltis and David Richardson, "West Africa and the Transatlantic Slave Trade: new evidence of long run trends," Slavery and Abolition, Vol.18, no.1, May 1997, pp. 16-35; and also David Eltis, "The British Contribution to the Nineteenth Century Transatlantic Slave Trade," Economic History Review, 32, 1979, 211-29. Frederick Cooper, Plantation Slavery on the east coast of Africa, 1977, and Paul Lovejoy (ed.), The Ideology of Slavery in Africa, Beverly Hills, 1981; Suzanne Miers and Richard Roberts (eds.), The End of Slavery in Africa, Madison, 1988. See also Edward A. Alpers, Ivory and Slaves in East Africa, Berkeley, 1975; Herbert Klein, The Middle Passage: Comparative Studies in the Atlantic Slave Trade, Princeton, 1978.

⁵. See for instance works by Orlando Patterson, Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study, Cambridge, 1982; Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "Writing, 'Race' and the Difference It Makes," in Gates (ed.), "Race", Writing and Difference, Chicago, 1985; Caio Prado Jr., The Colonial Background of Modern Brazil, Berkeley, 1967; Franklin W. Knight, Slave Society in Cuba, Madison, Wisconsin, 1970.

Ghada Talhami complains that 'modern western scholarship on Africa ... has marred that memory of this long and historic association [between Islam and Africa] with detailed emphasis on the nineteenth century Arab involvement in the slave trade.' Ghada attempts to minimise the effect of the traffic by mentioning only the Zanzibar and the Sudanese trade in slaves. She admits that the slave trade constituted "stark exploitation", but she argues that it lasted only a limited period.⁶

In his work on the Sudan, Mekki Abbas, a Northern Sudanese, instead of criticising the practices of the slave trade in the South by traders from the Northern Sudan has rationalised it. Mekki instead offered an apology from a romantic orientalist view in which he has blamed colonial practices and policies for creating the causes of the conflict between the North and South. Abbas has claimed that:

The missions, not unnaturally, saw in the religion and the language of the north challenge to their activities. They therefore took every opportunity in their teaching of religion and history to keep the memory of slave alive.⁷

⁶. See her work, "The Muslim African Experience," Arab Studies Quarterly 4, 1982: 17-33.

⁷. Mekki Abbas, The Sudan Question, London: Faber and Faber, 1952, p.176.

Abbas Ibrahim Muhammad Ali, a Northern Sudanese writer, idealises the plight of slaves in the Sudan to the point of arguing that "by the standards of Western slavery, most slaves, if not all, in the Sudan who were categorised by British writers as slaves were not slaves."⁸

By contrast Dustan M. Wai has argued that the slave trade continues to condition relations between Africans and Arabs.

The African collective memory of Arab participation in the slave trade and proselytization of Islam, more often by sword and through trade, produces a negative attitude towards Arabs. Africans perceive Arabs as cunning, crafty, dishonest, untrustworthy and racially as well as culturally arrogant. Many African do not feel at ease in dealing with Arabs: for educated and westernized Africans, Arab culture is unattractive, and for the masses of Africans, they are mystified in general by most foreigners.⁹

Islamization, Arabization and Slavery in Precolonial Sudan:

Prior to the Turko-Egyptian invasion of the Sudan in 1821, portions of the Northern Sudan had been ruled by Christian

⁸ See his work, The British, the Slave Trade, and Slavery in the Sudan, 1820-1881, Khartoum, 1972, p.75.

⁹. Wai further adds that despite the sense of Islamic solidarity with the Arabs, many African Muslims don't feel at ease with non-African Muslims. Islam doesn't seem to provide the religious bond that would cement relations between African Muslim and Arabs. See Issue: A Journal of Africanist Opinion, 13, 1984; 9-13. The quotation is from p.9.

Kingdoms such as the Nubian Kingdom of Kush (Meroe).¹⁰ Towards the beginning of the 16th century, these Christian Kingdoms were absorbed into the Arab culture and embraced the Islamic doctrine.¹¹ With the Arabization and Islamization of the Northern and Central Sudan in the 16th and 17th centuries, Northern Sudanese tended to produce genealogies that linked them to Arab origins.¹²

Between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries the Islamized Funj and the Fur Kingdoms ruled the Northern regions of the Sudan.¹³ Funj society was divided into three

¹⁰. For detailed study on the Nubian Kingdoms see, Sudan: Ancient Kingdoms of the Nile (ed.), Dietrich Wildung, Paris: Flammarion, 1997, pp.204-252; David N. Edwards, "Meroe and the Sudanic Kingdoms," Journal of African History, 39, 1998, pp 175-193. Also see A.B. Theobald, The Mahdiya: A history of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan 1881-1899, London: Longmans, 1951, pp.4-5; and Gabriel Warburg, Islam, Nationalism and Communism in a traditional Society, London: Frank Cass. 1978, p.3.

¹¹. The Nubian kingdoms of the Sudan became Arabized through intermarriage with the incoming Arabs, and concurrently Islamized. Over the next four centuries the Northern Sudan continued to be Arabized as the Funj kingdom spread its influence over the Northern regions. See K. J. King, "Nationalism, Education and Imperialism in the Southern Sudan, 1920-1970," In Conflict and Harmony in Education in Tropical Africa, edit by, Goderey N. Brown and Mervyn Hiskett, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1975, p.315.

¹². Arab invasion of the Sudan in the ninth century resulted in the intermarriage of the Arabs with the indigenous peoples. In the nineteenth century, the Northern Sudan's cultural norms, social organisations and languages of most people were Arabic. See Yousif Fadl Hasan, 1967 for more details.

¹³. The Funj Kingdom included the *Gezira* (areas between the Blue and the White Niles); the Northeastern parts of the Sudan, and the riverain region North of Khartoum, the present capital city of the Sudan, until the Turkish conquest in 1821. Later on the ruling group of the country

social groups of nobility and subjects and a category of slaves.¹⁴ Relations between the nobility and the subjects were based on subordination. This kind of social structure was maintained by customary laws and was reflected in property ownership, legal rights and marriage forms. While the noble group controlled political and economic power, the subjects provided labour and paid tribute.¹⁵ As with the Funj, rigid social divisions marked Fur society.¹⁶ A Tunisian traveller who visited Darfur at the beginning of the nineteenth century described the inhuman treatment of slaves by the nobles.

Certain rich people living in the town have installed these blacks on their farms, to have them reproduce, and as we sell sheep and cattle, so they, every year, sell those of their children that are ready for this.¹⁷

have come from these areas.

¹⁴. See O'Fahey and Spaulding, *Kingdoms of the Sudan*, Ch.IV; also see Jay Spaulding, "The Government of Sinnar," International Journal of African Studies, VI,I,1973,19- 35.

¹⁵. See Ahmad Alawad Sikainga, Slaves Into Workers: Emancipation and Labour in Colonial Sudan, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996, p.2. Also see Jay Spaulding, The Heroic Age in Sinnar, East Lansing: African Studies Center, Michigan State University, 1985, 75-77.

¹⁶. The ethnic core of the Fur Kingdom were the Fur, an indigenous African group who adopted Islam. They dominated the western parts of the Sudan from the seventeenth century until 1874 when it was destroyed by AL Zubair Rahma, the Northern Sudanese slave trader. After a brief revival between 1898 and 1916, the Kingdom was incorporated into the Anglo-Egyptian rule. For this historical details see Ahmad Sikainga, 1996, p.2.

¹⁷. Cheykh Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Zayn al-Abidin, cited in Bernard Lewis, Race and Slavery in the Middle East, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990,72.

McLoughlin has estimated that twenty to thirty percent of the population in Northern Sudan at the time of Anglo-Egyptian conquest in 1898 was slaves.¹⁸ The tasks performed by slaves in Darfur and Funj societies included the bulk of agricultural labour as well as the tending of herds and the provision of domestic services.¹⁹ Slave institutions however were more effective among riverian Muslims societies of the north than among other such as Fur.²⁰

Arabic speaking riverian Muslims of the Sudan, who have had a recorded history for centuries, considered their cultural norms and values superior to that of the non-riverian Muslims. Landowners, commercial, and religious and political leaders presided over a class structure based on various forms of slave, serf, and bound tenant workers.²¹

Agriculture as such was an honourable pursuit for these people, however the actual performance of farm labour was

¹⁸. See Peter F. McLoughlin, "Economic Development and the Heritage of Slavery in the Sudan," *Africa*, vol. xxxii, 1962, 355-389, 361.

¹⁹. See Jay Spaulding, "Farmers, Herdsmen and the State in Rainland Sennar," *Journal of African History*, XX, 3, 1979, 329-348.

²⁰. See C.A. Willis, Report on Slavery, 1926, NRO civsec 60/2/7,2.

²¹. The main riverain group which is exception to this pattern is the Nubian. At the same time there is a very remarkable absence of theft and a readiness to work, both of which may be attributed to the absence of a slave class... See W.D. C. L. Purves, "Some Aspects of the Northern Province," in Hamilton (ed.), *The Anglo-Egyptian from Within*, London: Faber and Faber, 1935, 171.

not.

In Northern and Central Sudan, to own land was a prerequisite to independence, integrity, and social status, but to perform menial labour precluded all three. The route to higher social status was to relieve oneself of performing menial labour even on one's own land. Performing agricultural labour for someone else was socially humiliating.²² Consequently, slaves became crucial in performing agricultural activities.

The status of slaves in these Muslim societies and their daily lives therefore were determined by the socio-economic reality more than religious norms or values. Being a Muslim in these societies didn't protect many Muslims from being enslaved. In the case of the Sudan, the majority of slaves in Northern Sudan were acquired through raiding and purchase.²³ Captives included many Muslim peoples such as West Africans and Western Sudanese. Indeed, a racialized society, like Northern Sudan, provided a justification for those who practised slavery. Slaves were generally obtained

²². See McLoughlin, "Economic Development and the Heritage of Slavery in the Sudan," 1962, 360.

²³. See Reginald Davies, The Camel's Back, London: 1957.

through organised raids on the non-Muslim/non-Arab population in the Southern Sudan and from the Nuba Mountains.²⁴

A majority of slaves were engaged in agriculture, operation of the shaduf irrigation system, animal husbandry, concubinage and domestic service, while a percentage was exported. In certain cases, slaves had acquired political power and were involved in the process of state formation, as in the eighteenth and nineteenth century kingdoms of Sinnar, Dar Fur, Wadai, Bornu and the Nuba kingdom of Tagali.²⁵ Slaves were drafted into the army and settled around Sinnar, the capital of the Funj Kingdom. Surplus slaves were exported and provided a major source of wealth for the ruling class.²⁶

The eighteenth century was crucial in the history of both

²⁴. According to Islam, the only legal way for enslaving a person was that he or she was a non-Muslim who was captured in the course of the "Jihad" (holy war). For more details see, J.O. Hunwick, "Black Africans in the Islamic World: An understudied Dimension of the Black Diaspora," *Tarikh*, 5, no.4, 1978, 21.

²⁵. See T. Hargey, "The Suppression of Slavery in the Sudan: 1898-1939," unpublished Ph.D Thesis, St. Antony's College, Oxford, 1981. Also see, J. J. Edward, Soldiers, Traders, and Slaves: State Formation and Economic Transformation in the Greater Nile Valley, 1700-1885, The Univ. of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1990.

²⁶. Ibid.

the Fur and Funj kingdoms in the Sudan.²⁷ The Funj kingdom underwent profound political and social changes, which led to the increased use of slaves. These changes included increased commercial contacts with Europe and the Middle East, the arrival of a large number of Muslim merchants and *fikies* - holymen, increased use of currency, and the emergence of an indigenous merchant class.²⁸ Members of the new middle class dominated external trade and adopted an Arab identity by constructing genealogies tracing their origins to an Arab ancestor.²⁹ Both the Funj and Fur kingdoms obtained slaves from South Sudan. With the increased demand for slaves in the late 18th century, the Southern regions of these states were transformed into slave-raiding regions with a complex pattern of racialized interactions between Arab and non-Arab groups. A constructed perception of ideological and ethnic categories emerged along these frontiers.

The adoption of an Arab identity required the construction

²⁷. Some authors argued that the Funj were came from an Arab origin. For more details on this issue see, Yusuf Fadl Hasan, "The Umayyad Genealogy of the Funj," Sudan Notes and Records, 1965, 46:27-32. For other interpretation see, Jay Spaulding, "The Funj: a reconsideration," Journal of African History, 13,1,39-53.

²⁸. See O'Fahey and Spaulding, Kingdoms of the Sudan, p. 81.

of certain perceptions, metaphors and representations about others. Northern Sudanese Muslims invented derogatory ethnic, and racial categories to refer to non-Muslim groups in the South. These invented categories included terms such as "Ibd" or slave for Southerners or *Fallata* for Western African. Thus, with the creation of these categories the people of South Sudan, the Nuba Mountains, and the Upper Blue Nile became prey for Northern Muslims slave traders.³⁰

With some marginal exceptions, all the Sudanese peoples North of the thirteenth parallel had, by the nineteenth century, become Muslims or at least preferred to identify themselves as Muslims. Even those groups that didn't speak Arabic as their first language nevertheless regarded Arabic as the language of "civilization" and religion.³¹ And

²⁹. Ibid.

³⁰. See for instance, R.S. O'Fahey, "Fur and Fartit: The history of a frontier," in John Mack and Peter Robertshaw (eds.), Culture and History in the Southern Sudan, Nairobi: The British Institute in Eastern Africa, 1982, 76-87; or see Wendy James, Kwanim PA: The Making of the Uduk People, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979; and also see "Perceptions from an African Slaving Frontier," in Slavery and Other forms of unfree labour (ed.), Leonie J. Archer, London: Routledge, 1988, 130-141.

³¹. See R.S. O'Fahey, "Islam and Ethnicity in the Sudan", Journal of religion in Africa, XXXVI, 3, 1996, 258-267. By Northern Sudanese "ethnicity", he means the riverian Northern Sudanese, i.e. the inhabitant of the Nile Valley between Aswan and Khartoum and those living in the Gezira between the Niles and to the east and west in the savannas. The riverian Sudanese are overwhelmingly Arabic-speaking

Muslims in the North claimed for themselves patrilineal descent from distinguished Arab ancestors.³² This "conventional acceptance of the claim to be "Arab" was of crucial importance."³³ It demarcated and racialized the people of the Sudan. Colour in itself became quite irrelevant; many "Arab" Sudanese were and are darker than some southerners. But descent did and does matter; even conversion to Islam could not fully compensate for the absence of accepted Arab ancestry. Southern converts to Islam and their immediate descendants were not fully integrated into Northern Sudanese society. They were never quite regarded as equals either politically or socially.³⁴

The racialized barriers between Arab northern and "African" (and therefore inferior) Southerner had its origins in the prolonged failure of the "civilizing mission" of Arabization and Islamization to make any headway in the South except in the western Bahr El Ghazal. From about the middle of the

(with the exception of some Nubians), wholly Muslims and to a greater or lesser degree identify genealogically and culturally as Arab.

³². Yusuf Fadl Hasan, The Arabs and the Sudan, Edinburgh 1967; also see H.A. MacMichael, A history of the Arabs in the Sudan, 2 vols. Cambridge 1922, for much of the relevant genealogical material.

³³. Lilian Passmore and Neville Sanderson, Education, Religion and Politics in Southern Sudan 1899-1964, 1981, 8.

³⁴. K. J. King, "Nationalism, Education and Imperialism in the southern Sudan", in G. N. Brown and M. Hiskett (ed.), Conflict and Harmony in

nineteenth century, the "civilizing" mission was stopped along the approximate line El Obeid - Kosti - Singa - Gallabat.³⁵ The only practical entrance route to the South was the white Nile; and this route was dominated by individualistic and independent Nilotic pastoralists the Dinka, Nuer and Shilluk, in whose proud self-sufficiency alien religious and cultural influences could find no welcome.

Although the North were being assimilated by the Arabs, the South maintained its independent cultural identity. Consequently, the people in Northern Sudan since the 16th century have developed an imagined unified identity coloured by Islamic cultural practices. These two different historical processes of creating identities were further strengthened by the British colonial policy of 1930 which not only governed the North separately from the South, but also legitimised the existence of two invented opposing identities.

Education in Tropical Africa, London, 1975, 313-5.

³⁵. P. M. Holt, "Modernization and Reaction in the nineteenth-century Sudan," in W. A. Polk and R.L. Chambers (ed.), The Beginnings of

The Turko-Egyptian Period 1821-1881:

In 1821, Mohamed Ali, the ruler of Egypt, conquered the Northern Sudan. Mohamed Ali decided to invade the Sudan in search of slaves, ivory and gold in order to finance his project of Egyptian modernization.³⁶ From 1821 to 1831, the Turko-Egyptian government began slave raids, which were first directed towards peoples bordering Ethiopia and those who lived in the Nuba Mountains. But as the number of the slaves obtained from these areas began to decline, the government decided to invade the South.

The chapters of southern history which followed the opening up of the south after 1840 certainly helped to create these problem. The Turco-Egyptians, led initially by the naval officer Selim Qapudan, were able to overcome Shilluk and other local resistance by their better ships and better weapons - above all, by their fire-arms; and by European-influenced techniques of organisation which however ramshackle they might seem to supercilious Western observers, were far superior to those of the indigenous Islamic states of the Sudan.³⁷

Thus, by 1840, both the human and natural shields of the south were broken. This was not achieved without considerable resistance from the Shilluk in particular.

Modernization in the Middle East, Chicago, 1968.

³⁶. See Gabriel R. Warburg, Historical Discord in the Nile Valley, London: Hurst, 1992, pp.2-3; also see Major Henry Marley, Slaves and Ivory, 1926

Little attempt was made to penetrate deeply into the Nilotic areas. Far more attractive were the lands of the far South and south-west where the peoples were accessible, and where ivory, an acceptable substitute for the gold which the expeditions had originally been seeking, could be obtained in return for trade goods of little cost.³⁸

By 1842, the government had invaded the South and established a station at Gondokoro. The opening of the White Nile was a turning point in the history of the Southern Sudan, for it brought the people of the South for the first time in close contact with the North. It was the Northern Sudanese merchants who were the active slave traders. Notable among these was Zubeir Pasha who was in control of the slave trade in Bahr El Ghazal.³⁹ These slave traders regarded the Slave trade as fully justified by their Islamic faith.

The invasion of the Turco-Egyptians in 1821 introduced other

³⁷. See Lilian and Neville Sanderson, 1981, 9.

³⁸. Ibid., 9.

³⁹. For more details in this region see Ahmad Alawad Sikainga's works, for instance, "The Legacy of Slavery and Slave Trade in the Western Bahr al Ghazal, 1850- 1939," Northeast African Studies, 11, no.2, 1989, 75-95; also see The Western Bahr al Ghazal under British Rule, 1898-1956, Athens: Ohio University Press, 1991.

important social and economic changes. New tax policies forced the Northern Sudanese to supplement their tax payments in cash and agricultural produce with slaves. Second, the efforts of the regime to create a slave army removed large numbers of male slaves from agriculture. Ahmad Alawad Sikainga argues that:

It is clear that most desired categories were young boys and young Ethiopian females. The former were drafted into the army; the latter were used as concubines. Slaves were also given to government soldiers in lieu of salaries. This practice was discouraged in the late 1830s as a result of European pressure on Muhammad Ali to stop the slave trade.⁴⁰

The opening of the Southern Sudan to economic exploitation in 1840s brought the slave trade in its wake. The collapse of the ivory market and the practical difficulties of establishing a stable trading system in other commodities encouraged many merchants to turn to the slave trade as the only viable economic activity.⁴¹ As a result, slaves were turned into means of payment to the local agents and soldiers of the merchants or the slave hunters. Despite the socio-economic changes in the nineteenth century, the status of slaves didn't change. Slaves in the Northern Sudan were

⁴⁰. See *Slaves into Workers*, p.11.

⁴¹. For more details see Richard Gary, *A history of Southern Sudan, 1839-1889*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961.

marked by cultural and social attributes and relegated to the bottom of the social hierarchy.⁴² Although the majority of slaves, over time, were assimilated into the culture of Northern society, spoke Arabic and became Muslims, they were still considered as inferior. Slaves were not fully integrated into the Northern society.⁴³

The forcing of slaves into the army of the Egyptian and Northern slave traders was combined with brutal treatment. For example, Abu Ruf, head of the well known Arab tribe of the same name, raided the Dinka on the banks of the White Nile annually. But to enslave the Dinka the people of Abu Ruf were forced to overcome them by force for they resisted and had several times defeated the Arabs. However, slave traders used different means to obtain slaves:

The Arabs use cunning to capture them. When they approach a village they leave their camels on which they are all mounted some distance away and draw near the village by night. After they have made sure that the villagers are asleep they attack them unexpectedly, kill those who resist and carry off all who surrender men, women, and children. After binding them securely with cords which every Arab carries with him they lead the prisoners to the place where they left their camels. Here they tie the children and the weaker ones to the animals backs. They then mount and

⁴².Ibid.,p.20.

⁴³. See Ahmad Alawad Sikainga, Slaves into Workers, 1996.

ride away, driving in front of them the remainder who, though bound, are forced to run.⁴⁴

During the period of Khedive Ismail (1863-79), pressure from the British government resulted in efforts to suppress the slave raids.⁴⁵ The last years of the Egyptian Administration largely brought an end to large-scale slave raiding, especially in the Bahr al-Ghazal and Equatoria under Gordon. The Egyptian administration, however, was never able to convince the peoples of the Bahr al-Ghazal and Equatoria to accept the new administration. Consequently, to maintain their power in the Southern Sudan, the Egyptian Government found it necessary to coerce the peoples to accept their administration and suppress rebellions with punitive expeditions.⁴⁶

Spaulding strongly rejects the misleading interpretation that slavery in the Turko-Egyptian Sudan was "a benign

⁴⁴. See Richard Hill, Trans. On the Frontiers of Islam: Two Manuscripts Concerning the Sudan under the Turco- Egyptian Rule, 1822-1845, 34.

⁴⁵. See Richard Gary, A history of the Southern Sudan, 1838- 1889, Oxford University Press, 1961.

⁴⁶. M. W. Daly and P.M. Holt, A History of the Sudan, 1988, 232. See also, G. R. Warburg, "Ideological and Practical Considerations regarding Slavery in the Mahdist and Anglo-Egyptian Sudan: 1881-1918," in P.E. Lovejoy (ed.), The Ideology of Slavery in Africa, London: Sage Publications, 1981, 251.

institution"⁴⁷ and that "slaves or the offspring of slaves were integrated into Northern Sudanese society at the family level through processes similar to marriage or adoption, culminating in manumission."⁴⁸ His evidence leads him to argue that a slave was considered a "talking animal" (*al-hayawan al-natiq*) and that to prevent integration, slaves were given names that clearly distinguished them from free persons. To save money, in some districts dead slaves were not buried but rather left to scavenging animals or dumped in the river; slaves born in the household were commonly sold, contrary to the custom in other Muslim societies. Rejecting the claim advanced by Abbas Ibrahim Muhammad that "a slave in the Sudan was above all a human being, a member of a society or a family,"⁴⁹ Spaulding brings as a counter example the case of a female slave who in 1877 was sold five times in succession to different men, obviously for concubinage.

⁴⁷. The same argument has been used to explain the myth of Brazil's "Humanitarian" Slavery. For more details see Anthony W. Mark, Making Race and Nation: A comparative of South Africa, the United States and Brazil, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp.27-64.

⁴⁸. See Jay Spaulding, "Slavery, Land Tenure, and Social Class in the Northern Turkish Sudan," International Journal of African Historical Studies, 15/1, 1982:1-20, especially pp.8-13.

⁴⁹. See Abbas Ibrahim Muhammad Ali, p.75.

Slavery during the Mahdiyya period of 1881- 1896.

The period of the Turko-Egyptian government was characterised by slave raiding, corruption and exploitation. These circumstances allowed the Mahdist movement to gain popular supports and finally defeat the Turko-Egyptian rule. The Mahdist movement was a religious movement with a political project. At first, it professed a messianic message, which endorsed the freedom of the people of the Sudan from the infidel Turkish. This message found numerous supporters including some from the South. The majority of the people in the North supported the movement for religious and racial reasons while some groups in the South supported the movement mainly because of their brutal experience with the Turko-Egyptian government.⁵⁰ These Southerners did so with the hope that they would regain their freedom.

When the Mahdists arrived in the South, they regarded success not as a realisation of popular struggle, but rather as a means of creating their political power and their legacy of superiority over the people of the Southern Sudan. The Mahdists believed that people of the South were simply poor, black, non-Muslims who came from an inferior cultural

⁵⁰. See Robert O. Collins, The Southern Sudan in Historical Perspective,

background with no history of their own; therefore they were to be dominated by those who were Muslims - Arabs and who saw themselves as belonging to a superior race. Firm in this perception, during their presence in the South the Mahdists commenced ceaseless slave raiding and took thousands of southerners to Omdurman in the North. This period witnessed one of the worst experiences of slave raiding known in the history of the Sudan.⁵¹ The Mahdist period not only left the wounds of devastation, but also added to the atrocities which were committed during the Turko-Egyptian period.

The attitude toward slavery during the Mahdist State can be reconstructed from several documents relating to problems arising out of the general turmoil created by the Mahdist revolt. The first example is derived from a letter written by the Mahdi on 25 *Rabi' al-Awwal* 1301 (24 January 1884), in which he passed judgement on certain issues raised by his agents.⁵² In one of these the Mahdi was asked how to punish a man who curses a fellow freeman by calling him a slave.

Tel Aviv: The Shiloah Center, 1975, 28-29.

⁵¹. Ibid., 30.

⁵². *Manshurat III, Manshuart al-imam al-Mahdi, Kitab al-ahkam*. Khartoum: Government Print Press, 1964, 2-4.

The Mahdi's verdict was that the culprit should be given 80 lashes as prescribed by the Prophet. The gravity of this judgement clearly indicates the inferiority of the slave in Sudanese society and the offence entailed in calling a freeman a slave. An additional question mentioned in the same letter dealt with female slaves. This concerned the widow of a martyr who had lost his life in the jihad (Holy war). The Mahdi was asked whether she could become one of her husband's inheritors. His verdict was that she should inherit in accordance with Islamic law, as she had been married to a supporter of the Mahdi after the "liberation" and hence could not be regarded a slave.

This verdict was based on the fact that all "Turks" were infidels unless they acknowledged the Mahdi's sublime mission and submitted to the Ansar. If they resisted, their wives and their children could be enslaved, as they were not to be regarded as true Muslims.⁵³ This policy applied to many slaves who were confiscated or captured in the early years of the Mahdist State.⁵⁴

⁵³. See Abu Salim, *Al-Murshid ila watha'iq al-madi*, Government Printing Press, 1969, 422-432.

⁵⁴. Abu Salim quoting letter of Ahmad Sulayman to Madhi, 28 Rabi'al-thani 1302 (15 February 1885), in Abu Salim, *Al-Murshid ila watha'iq al-mahdi*, Government Printing Press, 1969, 280-281.

Based on these verdicts, the Mahdist Islamic State helped to legitimise the institution of slavery in the Sudan, especially as the threat to its continuation emanated from Christian-European worlds. Islamic societies were prepared to enslave anyone, of any color or race, as long as they were infidels. In the Mahdist State slavery was widely accepted and its existence unchallenged, perceived as it was in the context of Islam. It would be wrong, however, to simply see enslavement in terms of Islamic jurisprudence rather than in terms of naked force and economic exploitation. To paraphrase Cooper⁵⁵, slaves might become Muslims, but they could never be as good Muslims as their masters; 'conversion after conquest was no sanctuary from the servile condition'.⁵⁶ "Conversion" did not lessen the distance between the non-Arab Islamised slaves and the Muslim Arabized Northern. From the point of view of the freeborn, Islamized slaves were bound to be perceived as "inauthentic" and assumed savages in their sub-human

⁵⁵. See F. Cooper, "Islam and cultural hegemony: the ideology of slave owners on the East African coast," In The ideology of slavery in Africa, edited by P. Lovejoy, Beverly Hills and London: Sage Publications, 1981, 291.

⁵⁶. Willis, 1985: 16.

essence.⁵⁷

The "pagan" African populations were considered to be enslaveable because they were "pagan", not because they were Africans. But, this was just the first step in the process. When the slaves were Islamized, they were considered to be second class Muslims because they were not "Arabs", that is because of their race and color. Consequently, the importance of race or, as I would put it, of the racialized self in Sudan is associated with the fact that Arab origin and Islamic faith are related to each other. At the ideological level, the slaving area was constructed by those involved in slave trade in terms of Islamic vs. non-Islamic, Arab vs. non-Arab descent, brown vs. black color,⁵⁸ with each category also giving meaning and representation to its

⁵⁷. A similar view is also developed by Willis (1985: 11) in his general discussion of the ideology of enslavement in Islam. As he argues, in a series of similes the Arabs are likened to the pure bred stations, and the non-Arabs are by definition, "hybrid" and thus inferior. In reality of course, the situation was more complex since, as has already been argued, the slave owing Northern groups were also of mixed descent. It must also be noted that this is not a special case that applies only on the nineteenth century Sudan or the Islamic societies, but a reality that is inbuilt in the narrations of colonialism every where in the world.

⁵⁸. The Arabs despised the black color as much as they loved the white color; they described everything that they admired, material or moral, as white. For more in this see Abduh Badawi, Al-Shu ara al-Sud wa-Khasaisuhum fil-Shir al arabi, Cairo, 1973, p.1

opposite in a context of constructing ethnic identities.⁵⁹

After the outbreak of the Mahdist revolt, the majority of Turkish, European, and others foreign merchants and slave traders were forced to leave the frontier in the hands of Northern Sudanese, the so called *jallaba*.⁶⁰ Although these slave traders were coming from a number of distinct Arabised groups, such as the Ja'aliyyun, Danaqla, Bidayriyya and Sha'iqiyya, they described themselves as members of an imagined single Arab community. Allegedly, this community went back to the Prophet and the Islamic Arabian heritage from which their forefathers had supposedly immigrated to the Sudan. In the next century, the descendants of these *jallabas* would come to constitute an Arab elite that would run the country.

Markis describes the process of the construction of the

⁵⁹. For details study on the role of color and race in Islamic society, see Bernard Lewis, Race and Color in Islam, New York: Harper & Row, Publisher, 1971.

⁶⁰. The Jellaba is a group of Arab Sudanese, mainly resident in north-central Sudan, but active all over the country, who have benefited from such activities as trade (including slave trade) and acting as auxiliaries to successive colonial regimes. For more details in the development of this group, see Peter Kok, Sudan: "Between Radical Restructuring and Deconstruction of State Systems," Review of African Political Economy, No.70, 1996,555-561.

other within this context of an imagined Arab community with a past and tradition.

This imagined Arab community, and in a sense defining it as the realm of freedom, humanity, Islamic tradition and heroic history embodied in the principle of patrilineal descent, was constructed its exact opposite; the realm of the pagan African slaves.⁶¹

Such a construction of the collective racialized self through its opposition to the collective other is not something new. Identity in general is articulated as a usually asymmetrical relationship between the self and the other which in the course of time becomes objectified and takes the appearance of a natural principle. In its turn, this principle motivates social practice and rationalises the pursuit of individual and collectives objectives. This sharp distinction between freemen and enslaveable peoples in the Sudan, and the ideology that was articulated around it were deeply embedded into the structure of the society. The implications of this are felt until the present time.

Although at the political level the colonising power over the heads of both the Arab and the non-Arab populations was

⁶¹. See G. P. Makris, "The Construction of Categories: From the era of colonialism to the days of militant Islam," paper presented to conference on nation building in the Sudan, April, 1995, Cairo, Egypt,

the Turco-Egyptians, at the ideological level the dominant force in Sudanese identity was the Muslim Arab jallabas. The reasons for this situation, which continued also during the Mahdist period, was that for extended periods of time the power of the state over Southern Sudan was nominal. At the local level power was in practice controlled by merchants or slave traders mainly from the North. Zubayr Pasha Rahma, a slave trader, known as the empire-builder, is a case of point. For a long time, in Bahr El-Ghazal and Dar Fur the state was Zubayr himself and his army.⁶²

A Ja'li born in 1830 near al-Jaili on the Nile, Zubayr started slave trading in Bahr al-Ghazal in 1856. Ten years later he was the virtual master of Bahr al-Ghazal and had established his headquarters in *Daym Zubayr*, named after him. His slaves had to be transported through Dar Fur and Kordofan to the Egyptian and Mediterranean markets. Faced

p.7.

⁶². El-Zubar Basha, a descendant of the Jimiah branch of the Ja'liyin Arabs, he was educated in Khartoum. Later he became the architect of the Zariba system of trading fortifications based on ivory initially, and then slaves. El-Zubar like many peoples live in the North considered himself genealogically as an Arab. In his own words, he describes himself as, "son of Rahmat, son of Mansur, son of Ali, son of Mohammed, son of Suliman, son of Na-am, son of Suliman, son of Baker, son of Shahin, son of Gumia, son of Gamua, son of Ghanim el Abbassi." For more details, see Black Ivory or the story of El Zubeir Pasha, Slaver and Sultan. Translated by H.C. Jackson, Negro University Press,

with Egyptian restrictions imposed through European intervention, he found local collaborators among the Baggara nomads of Western Sudan who helped him move his slave caravans. His well-equipped private army, consisting of slaves called *-bazingir*, was far superior to its Egyptian counterpart.⁶³

The importance of Zubayr's story, in the context of this chapter, lies in the following aspects: first, in Northern Sudanese popular mentality, this was considered the most prominent example of a "success story". This "success" was not unique, however, as it was the outcome of the socioeconomic conditions prevailing in the Sudan, in which Zubayr and his fellow *jallaba* flourished. Second, many of the suppressed slave traders, alienated by their Egyptian rulers and hostile to the Christian-European emissaries of the Khedive who tried to enforce Egyptian orders to suppress the trade, became natural allies of the Mahdi, since he promised to abolish all restrictions on slavery. The latter brought to the Mahdi's camp not only their own military

New York, 1970.

⁶³. R. Hill, A Biographical Dictionary of the Sudan, London: Frank Cass, 1967, 390-391. Also see H.C. Jackson, *Black Ivory*, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1970,

expertise but also their well-equipped *bazinqir* armies.⁶⁴ I agree therefore with Shuqayr who has identified the suppression of the slave trade as one of the major reasons for the Mahdi's success. Shuqayr stated that:

The Arabs of the Sudan relied on their slaves for all domestic services as well as for cultivating their fields. This use in agriculture was a particularly important aspect of slavery. Agriculture was largely confined to the area along the banks of the Nile, and the activities of the indigenous merchants depended upon the harvests of their slave workers.⁶⁵

The result of the slave trade was a clash of racialized self and identities out of which emerged a violent regime in which the social values of Southern cultures were confronted by the hegemony of the Arab.⁶⁶ The traditions of fighting in Nilotic societies, such as the Dinka, Nuer, and Shilluk, determined their reaction to the Arabs, which was characterised by violent resistance. However, the weakness of political institutions among the Nilotes fragmented their resistance.

⁶⁴. Indeed many early commanders of the Mahdist army, including the Mahdi's *amir al-umara* (commander in chief) Hamdan Abu Anja and his commander of Bahr al-Ghazal, Karamallah Kurqusawi, owed their military training and combat experience to their pre-Mahdist slave-trading days.

⁶⁵. N. Shuqayr, Ta'rikh al-Sudan al-qadim wa'l-hadith wa jughrfiyatuhu, III, Beirut, 1967, 111-112.

⁶⁶. See Robert Collins, "African-Arab Relations in the Sudan," paper presented at the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association, 23-26 November 1985 - New Orleans, Louisiana, 1.

The riverian Arabs began first by playing off one group against another. They soon established their political supremacy over the Southern peoples. This control was combined with enslavement. In alliance with local agents or frequently on their own, the Arab traders and their retainers would carry out systematic raids to collect ivory from supposedly hostile "Africans" South.

By the end of the nineteenth century, it was the destruction in the Southern Sudan, the loss of life and damage to social cohesion that was remembered in the Southern Sudan. This memory has been passed on to emerge as proof of Arab arrogance, racism, as well as contempt for the "African" to feed more contemporary issues of Southern Sudanese resistance. The Mahdist invasions of Southern Sudan through extended raids worsened the relationships between the North and the South. Many of the communities' leaders were killed or carried off with their people to captivity. Believing in their "civilizing mission" to scourge the earth of the infidel, the Mahdists carried the jihad to the Southern Sudan. The Mahdists, however, were never strong enough to establish their hegemony over them.

The Mahdist Islamic State, like the Turko-Egyptian administration, therefore, failed to rule the South. Robert Collins describes the consequence of this failure as follows:

Alienated by their use of force the Africans remained, with a few exceptions, impervious to the appeals to Mahdism preached by the Arabs and resisted attempts by the Arabs to force Islam upon them. Indeed the failure of the Mahdists to spread Islam up the Nile is one of the most significant aspects of the Mahdiya. A generation of interaction between the Africans and the Arabs in the southern Sudan had produced not the acceptance of Islam or of Arab culture by the African tribesmen, but a legacy of distrust and fear and a tradition to resist the imposition of alien ideas and customs upon them.⁶⁷

Indeed, Turko-Egyptian polices expanded the slave-raiding areas and led to large-scale enslavement. Yet these developments should be seen as a culmination of a long historical process. These polices became worse when the Mahdist embarked on a brutal policy of slavery. The enslavement and policy of racism were continued until the Mahdist rule was brought to an end by the third wave of invaders - British and Egyptian.

⁶⁷. See Robert Collins, "African-Arab Relations in the Sudan," 1985.

Chapter Three

THE BRITISH COLONIAL POLICES AND THE MYTH OF UNITY IN DIVERSITY

For a black person, history is a challenge because a black person is supposed not to have any history except the colonial one, we hardly know what happened to our people before the time when they met the Europeans who decided to give them what they call civilisation. For a black person...from the diaspora... it is a challenge to find out exactly what was there before. It is not history for the sake of history, it is searching for one's self, searching for one's identity, searching for one's origin in order to understand oneself.¹

Since the 1920s, there had been a great effort on the part of British administrators to label the people of the South Sudan as "African". This colonially created identity has played a significant role in shaping the course of contemporary Sudanese political history. This chapter examines the contribution of the Anglo-Egyptian colonialism to the creation of the Southern Sudanese identity.

Africa before the European Colonialism: the Myth and reality.

In order to justify their mission into Africa, British

¹. Maryse Conde, "Afterwards: an interview with Maryse Conde," by Anne Armstrong Scarborough, cited in African American Review, vol. 29, 1995, 97.

colonial administrators and missionaries articulated a colonial discourse of British moral superiority.² A key element of this discourse was the characterisation of Africans as "primitive". From the mid-sixteenth century onward, some English writers accentuated the differences between themselves and Sub-Saharan Africans. In the words of Robert Gainsh, after a voyage in 1554 to equatorial Africa, the blacks were "a people of beastly lyvyng, without a God, lawe, religion, or common wealth."³

In the early 20th century the discourse of moral superiority was also associated with the technological power. Christian Britain perceived itself to be morally superior to "heathen" Africa. This sense of moral superiority was reinforced by theories of racial hierarchy.⁴ As a result, Africans came to be seen as children for whom the British were "civilised guardians". Some believed that the African children they watched over could grow up into Europeans; others believed

². Such colonial discourse emphasises the moral appeal to British in terms of the "white man burden" that there were "noble savages" some where in the non-western world that could imitate them. For more details of such ideas see Philip Curtin, The Image of Africa, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964.

³. Cited in David Brion Davis, "Constructing Race", William and Mary Quarterly, vol. LN, no.1, January 1997, p.14.

⁴. See work by Philip D. Curtin, The Image of Africa, Madison, 1964.

the status of Africans as children was permanent.⁵

British colonial administrators were for the most part ignorant of the peoples they colonised. The Southern Sudan, as with the rest of Africa, was considered a primitive region without history. Many colonial historians reproduced this colonial image. For instance, Hugh Trevor Roper argued that:

Perhaps in the future there will be some African history to teach. But at the present [1960s] there is none; there is only the history of the Europeans in Africa. The rest is darkness... and darkness is not the subject of history.⁶

Margery Perham, a British scholar, argued that:

Until the very recent penetration of Europe the greatest part of the continent was without the wheel, the plough or the transport animal; without stone houses or clothes except skins; without writing and so without history.⁷

⁵. For instance, in 1942 Lord Leverhulme at a dinner in honour of the Governor of Nigeria, Sir Hume Clifford said: " I am certain that the west African races have to be treated very much as one would treat children when they are immature and under-developed... Now the organising ability is the particular trait and characteristic of the white man... I say this with my little experience, that the African native will be happier, produce the best, and live under conditions of prosperity when his labour is directed and organised by his white brother who has all these millions years' start a head of him. West Africa, July 26th 1924, cited in Michael Crowder, West Africa under Colonial Rule, 1968, 20.

⁶. Hugh Trevor-Roper, "The Rise of Christian Europe," cited in Michael Crowder, West Africa Under Colonial Rule, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968, p.10.

⁷. Margery Perham, "The British Problem in Africa," Foreign Affairs,

These images and ideas reflect how the European perceived the "African" other. Stefano Santandrea described the Southern Sudan before the British rule as "a Hobbesian state of nature."⁸ To justify the Anglo-Egyptian invasion of the Sudan, C.S. Jarvis Rameses described the situation in the Sudan at the fall of the Mahdist State in 1898 as follows:

The Sudan used to belong to the Sudanese; then the Egyptians took it away from them, misgoverned the country and massacred the Sudanese; after that the Sudanese took it away from the Egyptians, misgoverned themselves and massacred themselves and everyone else; and then in the end either England helped Egypt win it back for Egypt, or Egypt helped England to win it for England..⁹

In reality, people in Africa had created their own indigenous institutions for centuries. Some Africans had developed centralised states, others decentralised but ordered polities. Moreover, they had been able to achieve two things of which British administrators thought they had been incapable. First, they had provided security for their peoples. Second, peoples of diverse ethnic groups had at

no.2, July 1951,p.2.

⁸. Stefano Santandrea's evidence for the "state of nature" was based only on his interpretation of the small groups of the western Bahr al-Ghazal, which Santandrea applied to cover the entire Southern Sudan. See S. Santandrea, A tribal History of the Western Bahr el-Ghazal, Verona, 1964.

⁹. See C.S. Jarvis Rameses, Oriental Spotlight, London, 1937.

times been brought together into one political unit.¹⁰

One of the main concerns of British administration in Africa was the problem of conflict between groups. In order to deal with the problem in the Sudan the administration had implemented a strategy of so called 'unity in diversity', the separation of one ethnic group from another so as to avoid conflict. However, the development of the British administration policies in the Sudan can not be understood without understanding their reconquest of the Sudan.

The Race for the White Nile and Fashoda Incident of 1898:

The race for control of the White Nile that brought Britain and France into conflict during the European scramble for Africa made the Southern Sudan into a strategic region.¹¹

The race began when Egypt was brought under British control

¹⁰. Some ethnographic and historical sources have shown that some groups in Southern Sudan such as Azande, the Dinka, the Nuer and the Shilluk had established their own economic and political institutions. For more details in these aspects see P. Mercer, "Shilluk Trade and Politics from the mid-seventeenth to nineteenth century," Journal of African History, XII, 3, 1971. Also see F. Deng, Africans of Two Worlds; R.G. Lienhard, "The Western Dinka," in J. Middleton and D. Tait (eds.), Tribe without Rulers, London: Routledge & Paul, 1958

¹¹. This conflict is also known as Fashoda incident. It was the first imperialist clash and bargain over the Southern Sudan. During this conflict Britain had the upper hand militarily and strategically because of her control of Egypt and Northern Sudan. For more details see, Patricia Wright, Conflict on the Nile, the Fashoda incident of

in 1882. The major objective of the British invasion of Egypt was the control of the Suez Canal in order to keep other European rivals out of the Suez route to India and Far East. This invasion angered France, which called upon Britain to withdraw.¹² When Britain declined to withdraw, France attempted to find other means to force Britain to back down. Thus France decided to move towards the Upper Nile Valley. In 1896, the French government sent an expedition to occupy Fashoda in Southern Sudan. The expedition arrived at Fashoda on July 1898 and made a treaty with the Shilluk King. After the defeat of the Mahdists, the British government threatened to declare war against France if she did not withdraw from Fashoda. France withdrew her forces from Upper Nile on November 3, 1898 clearing the way for British occupation of the South Sudan.

1898, London: Heinemann, 1972.

¹². Robert Collins, 1967, p.7.

The Reconquest of the Sudan:

In 1898 a joint Anglo-Egyptian force under Kitchener defeated the Mahdists at battle of Omdurman and, except for Darfur, the joint forces took control of the Northern Sudan. Egypt and Britain agreed to govern the Sudan jointly. The Condominium in the Sudan began with the conclusion on the 19th of January 1899 of an 'agreement' between the British government and the government of the Khedive of Egypt.¹³

This agreement recognised the authority of the government of Egypt, which had been ousted by the Mahdist movement in 1885 and vested the supreme military and civil command of the Sudan in one officer called the Governor-General. The agreement stated that "he (the Governor General) shall be appointed by the Khedivial Decree on the recommendation of Her Britannic Majesty's Government, and shall be removed by a Khedivial Decree, with the consent of her Britannic Majesty's Government."¹⁴

¹³. The full text of the Condominium Agreement is to be found in M. Abdel Rahim, Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan, Oxford, 1969, pp.233-5.

¹⁴. It has been argued by Egyptian writers and politicians as well as many Sudanese with pro-Egyptian positions, that the joint administration as set up in 1899, cannot be called a Condominium, because Egypt was not a sovereign state at that time; being under the authority of the Sultan of Turkey. They also contended the distribution of powers under the 1899 Agreement was unequal and that the rights of

The thirteen year rule of the Mahdists had not only effectively destroyed the old Turkish-Egyptian administrative system but also weakened the social fabric of Sudanese society. It has been estimated that the population of the Sudan was reduced in these years from about eight million to less than three by battle, famine and pestilence.¹⁵ The new administration had to begin from scratch in the Sudan. One of the problems that the British had to face in the Sudan was the practice of the slave trade.¹⁶

The British Administration and the Slave Trade in the Sudan:

As we have seen in chapter two the enslavement of the Southern Sudanese in the 19th century was encouraged by Islam and institutionalised by political practice. Deeply rooted in the Northern Sudan, slavery and the slave trade proved a formidable obstacle for the British to overcome. Many groups in Bahr al Ghazal and Equatoria were seriously

Egypt over the Sudan had for a long time remained superficial.

¹⁵. See Duncan, The Sudan, p.81.

¹⁶. It had been argued that one of the reasons for the British reconquest the Sudan in 1898 was to prevent the slave trade in the Nile Valley. For instance, the main justification of Gordon's earlier mission in the Sudan was to put an end to the slave trade.

affected.¹⁷ British policy was to end slavery in the Sudan, but in such way as not to challenge the essence of Northern "Sudanese identity". In a memorandum on slavery, the government stated that its policy was to do

Nothing that will delay the natural ending of slavery, but it was not desirable and would not have been fair to other classes of the people of the Sudan to take active steps to produce that result in too short a time. This natural end will be brought about by the decision of the government that no person born after the reoccupation of the country in 1898 is otherwise than free and by the recognition of the principle that no master has the right to retain Sudanese servant against their will.¹⁸

Lord Kitchener, the first Governor-General of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, declared the policy of his government regarding slavery as follows:

Slavery is not recognized in the Sudan, but as long as service is willingly rendered by servants to masters it is unnecessary to interfere in the conditions existing between them. Where, however, any individual is subjected to cruel treatment and his or her liberty interfered with, the accused can be tried on such charges, which are offences against the law, and in serious cases of cruelty the severest sentences should be imposed. Deeply rooted in the northern Sudan, slavery and slave trade proved a formidable obstacle for the British to overcome.¹⁹

The British had to face the reality of the social and

¹⁷. The Bari group suffered the most, losing not only people but also their cattle as well, *ibid.* p. 24.

¹⁸. Circular Memorandum on slavery, May 6, 1925, INT. 11/43/363.

¹⁹. Cited in Gabriel Warburg, 1978, p.232.

economic foundations of society in the North. Since the 19th century, the cultural fabric of the society was imagined by the dominant ruling groups as an Arab-Islamic one. Those who did not belong to this imagined identity were considered to be enslaveable. In order to avoid a renaissance of Mahdism, the British administration tolerated existing practices of domination. By reason of this policy a particular version of history was reproduced in which people in the Sudan were divided into two categories: enslaveable and freemen, non-Arab and Arab.²⁰

Despite the British discourse of anti-slavery, slavery continued in the Sudan for several decades. For example, Sir Angus Gillan²¹, a British administrator, described his experience with slaves and slavery in the Sudan.

Two or three of my servants were boys whom we managed to pick up being traded as slaves across to Jidda and Saudi Arabia. I know one little boy I had, he and his sister were being run across from some far remote part of the French Sudan and it was quite impossible to discover where one could send them back, so one more or less had to take them on as servants.²²

²⁰. See G. P. Makris, "The Construction of Categories from the Era of Colonialism to the Days of Militant Islam," paper presented to conference on nation building in the Sudan, April 1995, Cairo, Egypt.

²¹. Sir Angus Gillan, born in 1885, he joined Sudan Political Service in 1909. He was Deputy Inspector of El Obied from 1910-12; Governor of Kordofan Province from 1928 to 1933; and also Civil Secretary in 1934.

²². Cited in Charles Allen (ed.), Tales From the Dark Continent, St.

One of the main factors, which contributed to the continuation of slavery, was British administrators' attitude towards Sudanese slavery.²³ They feared that a sudden abolition would lead to "moral" decay and to social problems such as vagrancy and prostitution. Their perception derived from the slave owners themselves with whom administrators were closely associated. As C.A. Willis, a senior British officer, remarked,

The reactionary official takes his cue from the Arab, with whom he, as was pointed out above, is in closer touch than the slave. He likes order and discipline, and he wants to see production increase and habits of thrift and industry encouraged, and all these seem to be available under the system of domestic slavery.²⁴

The strongest defenders of slavery were Provincial Governors in the central agricultural areas who believed that slavery was indispensable to the economy of their provinces.²⁵ The views of those administrators were in harmony with the three main religious leaders of the Northern Sudan: Sayyid Ali al-Mirghani; Sharif Yusuf al-Hindi, and Sayyid Abd al-Rahman

Martin's Press New York, 1979, p.2

²³. One of the strong supporters of domestic slavery was Slatin Pasha—the Sudan's inspector general until 1914. For more details see Gabriel Warburg, "Slavery and Labor in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan," Asian and African Studies, 12, 1978, pp.221-44.

al-Mahdi. These religious leaders appealed in their petition of 1925 to the Director of Intelligence for caution with regard to abolition. They emphasised the "benign" nature of Sudanese slavery, arguing that "those who work for masters were actually partners to the landowners and have many privileges and rights and cannot be called slaves... Slaves were treated as members of their masters' families". The three leaders cautioned the government about the social consequences of sudden emancipation. In their view, male slaves would become "useless for any work" while their female counterparts would turn to prostitution.²⁶

Sheikh Muddathir al Hajjaz, a leading religious figure also wrote:

No slave should be allowed to leave his master before proving that he is badly treated by him. The Government should take this line in dealing with slavery cases for at least seven years until the Sudanese prepare themselves gradually to the state of affairs they will have to fall into after the lapse of the slave period.²⁷

This image of non-Arabs as "morally" weak was not only

²⁴. See C.A. Willis, "Report on Slavery", 1926, NRO Civsec 60/2/7, 18.

²⁵. A.J.C. Huuleston, Governor of the Blue Nile, p. 101

²⁶. Cited in Ahmad Alawad Sikainga, Slaves into Workers, 1996, p.207; also see the petition of the three religious leaders to the Director of Intelligence, 6 March 1925, NRO Civsec 60/1/3.

²⁷. A memorandum prepared on the request of Wingate, cited in Cromer to Salisbury, 11 April 1899, FO 407/151.

rooted in prejudice and racism, but also in the economic realities of the Sudan. The "slow death of slavery" only occurred when wage labour became available in the 1920s. The majority of this cheap labour came from non-Arabs groups such as western African immigrants. Jay Spaulding has explained the relationship between slavery and economic interests:

As money from the sale of agricultural products and wage labor entered many hands, there arose a broadly based demand for slave children, particularly girls, to perform household labor. In response there emerged a commerce that was simple in organization and small in scale; it mobilized large numbers of amateurs to go to Ethiopia to buy one slave.²⁸

The British discourse on abolition of slavery was also articulated to serve the government's own labour needs. The British government was convinced that a sudden death of slavery would lead to economic collapse. The government embarked on several economic projects that required workers. The extension of the railway system, road construction, the building of a new harbour at Port Sudan, all required labour. The Sudan, historically had difficulty maintaining a steady supply of labour during the Turko-Egyptian, and the Mahdist periods. The great number of the population was

²⁸. See Jay Spaulding, "The Business of Slavery in the Central Anglo-

engaged in farming, pastoralism, and trade, and there was no need for them to work as wage labourers.²⁹

The British government divided the peoples of the Sudan into distinct racial categories, namely, "Arabs", "Sudanese" for ex-slave, and "*Fallata*"³⁰ for western African. These categories were based on the anthropological assumption that each had certain qualities in regard to labour. For example, even before the Anglo-Egyptian conquest, some British officials such as Wingate had placed great hopes on enlisting the "cattle owing negroes" of the Southern and Western Sudan as soldiers.³¹ The people of Bahr al-Ghazal were also given a military image and described as the "most warlike in the Sudan" and "capable of making excellent soldiers".³² Such racial stereotypes were common throughout Africa.³³ Influenced by anthropologists, the British administrators reproduced these old stereotypes about people

Egyptian Sudan, 1910-1930," African Economic History, 17, 1988, p.41.

²⁹. See Slaves into Workers, p.65.

³⁰. Word "*Fallata*" is a derogatory term widely used in the North to refer to people who came from Western Africa and Western Sudan.

³¹. See M.W. Daly, Empire on the Nile: The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1898-1934, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986 p.113.

³². Memorandum on the Bahr al-Ghazal, 7 April 1895, SAD 261/1.

³³. See Leroy Vail (ed.), The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989, p.11.

of the South Sudan.³⁴

Anthropologists and Colonialism in Southern Sudan:

The political discourse of British anthropology after World War 1 was marked by the rise of the functionalist school³⁵

led by Bronislaw Malinowski and A.R. Radcliffe-Brown.³⁶

Prominent among their students were E.E. Evans-Pritchard and Meyer Fortes. In discussing the value and limitations of history for the dynamics of culture change in Africa, Malinowski assumed a blank space in pre-colonial African society. He then created his own form of backward narration by first inventing the pre-European situation of absolute sovereignty of chiefs, the right to carry on war, and slave raids and to control wealth and tribe. Projecting his

³⁴. For this point of view see Ahmad Alawad, 1996, 66.

³⁵. The first systematic formation of the concept function as applying to the so-called "scientific" study of society was that of Emile Durkheim in 1895. Durkheim's definition is that function of social institution is the correspondence between it and the needs of the social organisation. On this definition, see Emile Durkheim, The Division of Labour, trans. by George Simpson, Free Press, 1933. Also see, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, "On the Concept of Function in Social Science," American Anthropologist, 1935, p.394.

³⁶. Radcliffe-Brown however did not consider himself a functionalist. Unlike Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown believed that anthropologists should compare systems of interrelated institutions, norms and social conventions. In other words, they should compare structures. See A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, Structure and Function in Primitive Societies, New York: The Free Press, 1965; Also see, B. Malinowski, The Sexual life of Savages, 3rd (ed.), London, 1932, and Methods of Study of Culture Contact in Africa, London: International African Institute, 1938.

prejudices backward on to pre-colonial African society, he claimed that:

Many African tribes before European contact thrived on cannibalism, grew prosperous on slavery or cattle raiding, and developed their political power by intertribal warfare. Would any anthropologist therefore advocate a return to a human flesh diet, or to slavery, or to warfare, and expeditions for loot and booty? Hardly.³⁷

Functional Anthropologists historically constructed the African society as primitive.³⁸ They portrayed indigenous cultures as perfectly integrated societies, inevitably static because all of their institutions were mutually reinforcing and their peoples united in consensual agreement. These racist ideas about the imagined primitive African society also prevailed in the work of C.G. Seligman, who in the 1930s continued to equate race with culture, and military success with cultural superiority.

³⁷. Bronislaw Malinowski, Methods of Study of Culture Contact in Africa, London, 1938, p. 30.

³⁸. Although Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski have treated African society as the primitive, simple and other, they differ in two things. First, Radcliffe-Brown did not consider himself a functionalist. He wrote, "this functional school does not really exist; it is a myth invented by Professor Malinowski". Second, While Malinowski related culture to the fundamental biological and psychological needs of man and to the organised groups of individuals who carry it, Radcliffe-Brown explored the actual structuring of human relationships within such organised groups, and demonstrated how social behaviour is keyed to structure. For more details see, George Peter Murdock, Culture and Society, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1965; also see A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, Structure and Function in Primitive Society, New York: The Free Press, 1965.

In their survey of Southern Sudanese ethnography, The Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan (1932), C.G. and Brenda Seligman claimed that "the manner of origin of the Negro-Hamitic people will be understood when it is realised that the incoming Hamites were pastoral Caucasians, arriving wave after wave, better armed and of sterner character than the agricultural Negroes."³⁹

The anthropologists of the 1920s and 1930s focused on the study of so-called simple "acephalous" or stateless societies. Fortes and Evans-Pritchard's African Political System, published in 1940, summarised the approach of this era in anthropology.⁴⁰ According to their study, the African societies were divided into two: societies with centralised political power, and others without centralised political leadership. According to Evans-Pritchard, Nuer social organisation contains the form known as "segmentary society"; it is made up of autonomous units, which are not joined in a centralised hierarchy but act together only in opposition to some common enemy. The critical feature of the

³⁹. See The Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan, 1932, p.4.

⁴⁰. See M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, African Political System, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970.

Nuer political system is its relative character. Evans-Pritchard claimed that the political system "is an equilibrium between opposed tendencies towards fission and fusion, between the tendency of all groups to segment, and the tendency of all groups to combine with segments of the same order."⁴¹ Then Evans-Pritchard concluded that social equilibrium is not sustained among the Nuer because of the absence of conflict, arguing that conflict becomes a force for social integration.

Evans-Pritchard's representation of the Nuer as people without valued political and cultural institutions is different from later anthropologists such as Howell and Huffman. It minimises the importance of status distinctions in the Nuer society and eliminates strong leaders from their political life. It also minimises those features of their society that reflect their history as people. Other anthropologists have argued that the Nuer have a tradition of strong leadership, particularly evident in times of crisis.⁴²

⁴¹. Evans-Pritchard, The Nuer, 1940, pp.147-48; See also his works, Kinship and Marriage among the Nuer, 1951, and Nuer Religion, 1956.

⁴². See P.P. Howell (ed.), A manual of Nuer Law, London, 1954; and see

These positive patterns, however, were not emphasised in Evans-Pritchard's portrait of the Nuer. In part, Evans-Pritchard's analysis was designed to serve the colonial administration in South Sudan. The purpose of these anthropological studies was to help the British administration in its attempt to govern the people of the South during the 1920s and the 1930s.⁴³ The British officers who entered the South during this period were primarily concerned with establishing structures of administration, which would guarantee submission and maintain security in the south. For instance, Captain Fergusson, like other administrators, had used force of arms to replace the authority of prophets with that of the chiefs in 1923. These officers who began the civil war- "pacification" of the Upper Nile had little interest in understanding Nuer institutions, and their assessment of them, based on old

also R. Huffman, Nuer Customs and Folklore, London, 1931.

⁴³. In her account of British social anthropology, Kuklick remarks of anthropologists of the inter-war period that "their research was conducted largely in Africa, because their patrons expected their findings to prove useful to colonial officials then developing administrative structures there." See H. Kuklick, The Savage Within: the social history of British Anthropology 1885-1945, 1991, p.25; Also see her work, "The Sins of the Fathers: British anthropology and African colonial administration," Research in the Sociology of Knowledge, Sciences and art, 1978, 1:93-119. For a different perspective on the relationships between anthropologists and colonialism, see Jack Goody, The Expansive Moment: Anthropology in Britain and Africa, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955.

government reports and travellers, was that 'the Nuer are a warlike tribe somewhat formidable to the Dinka.'⁴⁴ The Nuer were presented as despoilers of the country and described as intractable and fierce, terms fully consistent with the nineteenth century impressions.⁴⁵ Thus, the perception that the Nuer were aggressive raiders, and their neighbours were harried refugees whose social organisation was in disarray, continued to dominate the government's administrative thinking and policy.

By 1929 the colonial "pacification" programme had failed in Nuerland.⁴⁶ The diversity of peoples within Nuerland and "the lack of any clear territorial organisation convinced the administrators that 'proper tribal' structure among the Nuer, as well as the peoples they had displaced had been lost."⁴⁷ The task of the government during its first two decades in the Upper Nile was to invent, 'a proper tribal' system for the Nilotes. By 1930 Evans-Pritchard was in the

⁴⁴. See Count Gleichen, Handbook of the Sudan, London: HMSO, 1898, pp.121-2.

⁴⁵. Count Gleichen, Supplement to the Handbook of the Sudan, London: HMSO, 1899, pp.62-4.

⁴⁶. The British pacification programme in the Nuerland had involved bombing their herds of cattle and hanging their prophets.

⁴⁷. Douglas H. Johnson, p.214.

Sudan finishing his work on the Azande.⁴⁸ Pressure was put on him by the government to begin study of the Nuer. However, the government's attitudes and objectives forced him to refer to the questions it most wished answered, but the very conditions it created made it impossible to find objective answers to those questions. In forcibly separating Nuer from Dinka in the areas where he worked, the government prevented Evans-Pritchard from observing the Nuer engaged in normal relations with the neighbouring Dinka.⁴⁹

Sharon Hutchinson, in her recent study, has shown the weakness of Evans-Pritchard's work on the Nuer. She argued that "like many anthropologists, Evans-Pritchard was concerned during the 1930s and 1940s with illusions of 'unity', 'equilibrium', and 'order', viewing culture as something shared and ethnography as the compilation of those

⁴⁸. Later on he published his study on the Zande; for instance, "Zande cannibalism", in The position of women in primitive societies, London: Faber and Faber, 1965, 133-64. Also his work, The Azande, history and political institutions, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.

⁴⁹. The words Dinka and Nuer are created by those who first cross the White Nile to the South in the 1840s. According to Fr. Daniel Sorur Pharim Deng, a Catholic priest of the Dinka group, "Dinka is a name foreign to our language, ... According to all maps, it appears that the Dinka once occupied a very extensive area. The name Dinka is common to all the "tribes"[including the Nuer], ...from the Bari tribe to Bahr el Dinka, near Dar-Fazughli in Sennar, and from the River Tschol-Sobat to the Dar-Fertit". See "An Early Manuscript on the Dinka Written by A member of this Tribe", edited and translated by Fr. E.V. Toniolo, Sudan

shared elements."⁵⁰ Rather than seek a unified image of the Nuer, the dynamic social and cultural systems in which these people continued to live and work has to be seen as "open-ended, and riddled with uncertainties."⁵¹

Hutchinson's recent fieldwork among the Nuer has demonstrated that:

The Nuer were no longer the isolated, independent, cattle-minded warriors immortalized by Evans-Pritchard. They had been drawn from an indigenous society allegedly devoid of institutional rulers into a bewildering spiral of local government authorities, districts councils, party bureaucracies, regional assemblies, and national parliaments - all of which were constantly being reshuffled, reorganized, and disbanded.⁵²

Therefore, Hutchinson's work has shown an understanding of how Nuer people have variously experienced the last six decades of dramatic history and have incorporated that experience into their contemporary culture and social life.⁵³ All these changes suggest a very different people and social world from those described by Evans-Pritchard.

Notes and Records, Vol.XLI. 1960, pp.107-113.

⁵⁰. Sharon E Hutchinson, Nuer Dilemmas: coping with money, war, and the state, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1996, p.28.

⁵¹. Ibid., p.28.

⁵². Ibid., pp.25-26.

⁵³. Ibid., p.27.

Douglas H. Johnson in his study on Western Nilotic history has shown that these peoples had lived together for a long time before the emergence of their separate identities.⁵⁴ He has also argued that the Nuer, Shilluk, Anuak and Dinka lived in

A floodplain that is subjected to a regular seasonal alternation between flooding and drought, but over any given series of years the general pattern of flooding can vary so widely that the inhabitants of the floodplain cannot anticipate with any certainty where they will be able to settle or graze their cattle from one year to the next.⁵⁵

The unequal distribution of water affects people's settlements, grazing, and cultivation. They are constantly being forced to move from one place to another in search of pastures and water. As a result, any place suitable for settlement will be occupied, and that occupation will not always be based on political or ethnic affiliations. While there may be general territorial boundaries of Dinka, Nuer and Shilluk, in any given settlement there will always be persons who are not part of the dominant political or ethnic

⁵⁴. Douglas H. Johnson, "Enforcing Separate Identities in the Southern Sudan", in Les ethnies ont une histoire (ed.), J-P. Chretien et G. Prunier, 1989.

⁵⁵. Ibid., 236.

group.⁵⁶ The ethnic identity of the peoples of the floodplain is as fluid as the conditions in which they live.⁵⁷

However, ignoring the facts of nature and life, Evans-Pritchard concluded that "every Nuer tribe raided Dinka at least every two or three years, and some part of Dinkaland must have been raided annually".⁵⁸ Douglas H. Johnson has argued that Evans-Pritchard in his study had to satisfy the government position by reinforcing their perception of the Nuer:

The reports he referred to are specific to only a few areas of all the territory occupied by the Nuer, representing a span of only about forty years in Nuer history. They do not and cannot provide us with a comprehensive survey of Nuer-Dinka relations throughout that period. Some of the reports also contained references to co-operation between Nuer and Dinka, but Evans-Pritchard appears to have overlooked these references in favour of the dominant impression of Nuer victimization of the Dinka which is present

⁵⁶. Ibid., 238.

⁵⁷. Recent linguistic and archaeological study suggests that Western Nilotic speaking pastoralists began to move out of the area between the White Nile and Sobat river, into the Upper Nile floodplain over a thousand years ago. Accordingly, the contemporary political groupings of the region then, appear to have been created through the steady amalgamation of existing Western Nilotic speaking groups, as well as the incorporation of other peoples. For more details see, C. Ehret, "Population Movements and Culture Contact in the Southern Sudan, C.3000 B. C. to AD 1000," in J. Mack and P. Robert Shaw (eds.), Culture History in Southern Sudan, 1982.

⁵⁸. Evans-Pritchard, The Nuer, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940, p.26.

in almost all of these nineteenth century accounts.⁵⁹

As a result, Evans-Pritchard described Nuer society as organised around fighting and whose political stability depended on constant warfare against foreigners.⁶⁰ Evans-Pritchard's works on Nuer have created the myth that Nuer "culture and social life are somehow above history and beyond change."⁶¹ This conclusion became a central theme in his analysis of the Nuer political system. Government perceptions about the Nuer helped to structure Evans-Pritchard's understanding of Nuer society. His acceptance of the Nuer as naturally aggressive had a marked effect on his own understanding of the Nuer political system. Evans-Pritchard, like many European anthropologists, overlooked the historical experiences of the Nuer society. From 1839 to 1930 the Nuer were engaged in a series of conflicts with a number of colonial invaders. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Nuer society was disrupted by the arrival of three invaders: slave traders and the Egyptian Army, the Mahdists, and the Anglo-Egyptian. To maintain their political rule in the South, the Egyptians used force

⁵⁹. Douglas H. Johnson, "The Fighting Nuer: Primary sources and the origins of a stereotype," Africa, 51,1, 1981,p. 519.

⁶⁰. The Nuer, 134.

⁶¹. See Sharon E. Hutchinson, p.21.

to coerce the Nuer to accept the new administration. As a result, prophets were shot, people killed and cattle seized. It was those who wanted to dominate the Nuer who were a violent and warlike people. In order to dominate the Nuer, the latter had to be constituted as a primitive people.

The distinction between what is primitive and civilized is socially and historically constructed. It reflects the convergence of European imperialism and nationalism in the mid to late 19th century which gave birth to the ideas of primitive society.⁶² As Adam Kuper argued: "the idea of primitive society fed the common belief that societies were based either on blood or on soil, and that these principles of descent and territoriality may be equated with race and citizenship, contrasting components of every imperialism and every nationalism."⁶³ In Kuper's view, the idea of "primitive society" began to take place in the 1860s and 1870s and was largely conceived of in legal terms. It perceived primitive society as originally an organic whole made up of exogamous,

⁶². For instance, primitive society in Maine's view, consisted of myriad self-sufficient and largely autonomous village communities, whose members were organised into corporate patriarchal family groups and who held property communally. See Henry Sumner Maine, Village Communities in the East and West, London: John Murray, 1872.

⁶³. Adam Kuper, The Invention of Primitive Society: Transformation of an illusion, London: Routledge, p.9.

corporate descent groups related by marriage exchanges and holding property communally. In Kuper's view, "there never was such thing as primitive society... social anthropologists busied themselves for over a hundred years with the manipulation of a fantasy - a fantasy which had been constructed by speculative lawyers in the late nineteenth century. This is a fact that must provoke thought, and not among anthropologists alone."⁶⁴

In the case of colonial Sudan, administrators employed the preconceived notions of primitive society for Southern Sudan, which had largely been created in the late nineteenth century by such ethnologists as Henry Maine and Lewis Henry Morgan. The remarkable quality of this invention of primitive society, according to Kuper, is its persistence as an illusion, even within the professional anthropological community until very recent times.⁶⁵ Negative representations of peoples of Southern Sudan as "pagan", and "primitive" have served as tools of domination providing "moral" legitimacy for government officials, missionaries, and writers who promoted self-serving images of "savage"

⁶⁴. See Adam Kuper, p.8.

⁶⁵. See Adam Kuper, pp.7-8.

peoples to justify their subjugation.⁶⁶

The Southern Sudan under the Anglo-Egyptian Rule: 1898-1930.

When the British came to the Sudan, they reproduced racialized identities. Consequently, Sudan was divided into two supposed regions; "Arab" North and "African" South.

Unlike Northern Sudan, the South Sudan was perceived as:

A hotch-potch of peoples with very little in common, living in a land with very poor communications and having nothing to bind them into a common culture. There could be no bond between this cattle culture of the Nilotic people, living on the vast grass covered plains liable to devastating floods, and those living in forest or heavily bushed country.⁶⁷

The British administration accepted the racialized ideology of the nineteenth century, that the South was inferior to the North and Muslim people were civilized, while the non-Muslim was not. According to J. Winder, a British officer, the north possesses ethical foundations of a society, and the South does not. He claimed further that:

In the north, Islam controlled the lives and

⁶⁶. For the exchange between the British administrators and British anthropology see, Talal Asad, ed, Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter, 1973; Henrika Kuklick, The Savage Within: The Social History of British Anthropology, 1885-1945, 1991, 182-240; Adam Kuper, Anthropology and Anthropologists, 1983, ch.4.

⁶⁷. See The Condominium Remembered, Proceeding of the Durham Sudan Historical Records Conference, Durham: University of Durham Center for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, 1991, edit by Deborah Lavin, vol.1.p.17

habits of the people, consequently an administrator, once having learnt the basic features of Islam, had the key to understanding the society he worked in. In the south there was no such basis. There was no common ethic foundation to assist the administrator to an understanding of his people. Further, in the north, sharia law governed personal behaviour ... the people were used to a body of law. In the south tribal custom differed from one people to another; no single code of behaviour was recognized.⁶⁸

Unlike other non-Muslims groups in the Sudan, Southern Sudanese resisted the Anglo-Egyptian administration strongly. Southern Sudanese refused to accept easily the presence of the third invader with an alien culture in their land.

Southern Sudanese Resistance:

The presence of the British forces in the South confronted strong resistance. Unlike the Turko-Egyptian or the Mahdists, however, the British succeeded in expanding their administrative control of the South. In Robert Collins' view, however, "Southern Sudanese resistance not only delayed the imposition of British administrative control but conditioned its character."⁶⁹ And southern resistance played a critical role in forcing British officials to find

⁶⁸. Ibid., 20.

acceptable strategy where accommodation was possible.

The nature of this resistance had been determined by the experiences of these societies. Their relationships with each other frequently conditioned the way in which these Southerners reacted to the British. Although the character of this reaction varied from one society to another in the South, they all generated their strength from their rich history of resistance.

Small groups in central Bahr al Ghazal and the Shilluk and Bari along the Nile were the first to accept the new administrative system. These groups had suffered most from the 19th century slave trade and had lost the means to resist. However, British officers faced increasing resistance from the majority of the people in the South. For instance, in the Zande area, the chief Yambio refused to accept the British rule. In reaction to this resistance, one British administrator commented that, "we must smash somebody here sooner or later before we have the country settled."⁷⁰ The Kreish also refused to accept colonial rule until their chief Murad Ibrahim was killed in 1912. In the

⁶⁹. See Robert Collins, 1973, p.33.

Upper Nile, the Dinka also resisted the British,⁷¹ only to be broken by military superiority of British forces. Their resistance created among the British officers the image that the Dinka were "essentially lawless people who only understand the strong arm. They will only be quieted by fear of government and not by love."⁷²

The resistance of Yambio or Murad Ibrahim to the British was little different than the earlier reaction of the Azande, the Dinka, or the Kreish to the slave traders, the Egyptian administrators, and the Mahdists.⁷³ In Southern Sudan, the nineteenth century can be seen as one of continuing resistance against outsiders beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century and continuing to the present.⁷⁴ However, some groups in the South co-operated with the British for several reasons, rooted in the earlier experience of their people. For example, the Bongo, Jur, Ndogo chiefs around Wau

⁷⁰. Sutherland to Wingate, June 20, 1904, Wingate Papers 276/6.

⁷¹. See Robert Collins, The Southern Sudan in Historical Perspective, Tel Aviv: The Shiloah Center, 1975, p.35.

⁷². Phipps to Wingate, September 7, 1904, Wingate Papers 234/2.

⁷³. *ibid.*, p.36.

⁷⁴. See L.L. Mawut, "Nationalism in Southern Sudan 1900-1938," selected papers, University of Juba First Conference, 26-28 Feb. 1985, pp.67-8. See also in Juba papers Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim on Southern Sudan resistance, pp.55-67.

collaborated in order to escape from the Dinka domination.⁷⁵ The Reth of the Shilluk collaborated to protect his position against potential rivals.⁷⁶ The Azande chiefs reacted to British intervention in context of their own internal conflicts. Yambio resisted the British because of their alliance with his main rival Tambura. Tambura and other Avukaya chiefs collaborated, only to find their authority ended by British insistence on changes within Azande society.⁷⁷

The British Pacification Policies Toward Southern Sudan:

The British aim in occupying the South was to control the Nile valley, but the problem, which faced British officers after securing the south was what to do with the people. British officers' attitudes towards the Southern people were full of damaging images, stereotypes and insults. They believed that people in Southern Sudan were too primitive and wild to be developed. Such views were exemplified in the comment of L. F. Nalder, a British administrator in the

⁷⁵. *ibid.*, p.37.

⁷⁶. Those chiefs were attempting to preserve an indigenous way of life and maintain their customary authority. Their reaction whether was resistance or Cupertino was based on a conscious calculation of their own best interests and those of the societies to which they were responsible. See Robert Collins, Southern Sudan in Historical Perspectives, 1975, p.38.

South.

There is the difference of material culture between the sophisticated Arab and the primitive savage, naked and unashamed, so primitive in some cases that in him we can visualize the early ancestors of mankind.⁷⁸

The first two decades of the Condominium periods were characterised by widespread indigenous resistance to British rule. The British used force to rule, burning villages and confiscating cattle. The Nuer, the Dinka and the Shilluk were among those who vigorously resisted British rule in Southern Sudan. By 1903 the British had established administrative units and successfully engaged in the clearing of Sudd from Bahr el-Jebel and Bahr el-Ghazal rivers so as to secure the transportation of supplies from the North. Another important development was the establishment of the Equatorial Corps, a Southern Sudanese army in 1911. The British feared and distrusted every Muslim, including the very soldiers whom they used during the conquest. The Equatorial Corps was established in order to pose as an "African" counter to possible Muslim rebellion in the North. Civilian Northerners were hindered from entering the South.

⁷⁷. *ibid.*, p.37.

⁷⁸. See Deng D. Akol Ruay, The Politics of Two Sudans, Uppsala, The

During the first two decades of the British administration the South had been run by administrators who were professional soldiers⁷⁹ and who primarily engaged in patrols among the indigenous people in order to "discipline" them. Their primary concern was with the security and consolidation of condominium rule in the South.

Like other groups in the Southern Sudan, the Nuer were people with their own social institutions and religious values.⁸⁰ When the British came to their land and wanted to rule them, the British had to deal with the question of the indigenous institution of prophets in the Nuer society. In the words of Kipling regarding such actions, "it is punishment not war - and the mounted police have constantly shown their ability to do this on a small scale."⁸¹

Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1994, p.37.

⁷⁹. Those administrators were known as Bog Barons. They assumed the role of paternal autocrats in the South. They thought that mainly the military force could maintain law and order. For more details in this group, see Robert Collins, "The Sudan Political Service."

⁸⁰. See Douglas Johnson, "The Fighting Nuer: primary sources and origins of a stereotype," *Africa*, 5,1, 1981, 508-527. See also "Judicial Regulation and Administrative Control: Customary Law and the Nuer, 1898-1954," *Journal of African History*, 27, 1, 1986, 59-78.

⁸¹. Cited in, The Upper Nile Province Handbook (ed.), by Douglas

Another British administrator summarised the government strategy and the Nuer responses as follows:

For several years he followed a policy of peaceful penetration, till 1923, the persistently obstructive attitude of certain Kujurs (rain makers)⁸² compelled him to apply for troops...the patrol of 1923 was practically a failure, and was followed by another in 1924 against the same combination of Kujurs. In this case again though casualties were inflicted, both Kujurs escaped. Finally in December 1925 the Kujur again wished to try conclusions with the government and collected support of all other Kujurs they could, and attacked the government troops and received very heavy casualties including practically all the Kujur; since then the sole remaining Kujur has become a staunch supporter of the government.⁸³

Captain Fergusson, a district commissioner, wanted to replace the institution and the authority of the Kujur with that of the 'chiefs'. Like many African societies, the Nuer had no chiefs. The subsequent destruction of the Kujur institution paved the way for the invention of the chiefs, and the establishment of a "tribal" administration.

The Dinka had suffered very severely at the hands of slave

Johnson, p.51

⁸². The Kujurs are like the "*fikis*" of the Northern Sudan. They exploit the superstitions of the people, and their positions and wealth depend on keeping the people ignorant and frightened of their supposed supernatural powers.

⁸³. A letter from C.A. Willis, Governor of Upper Nile, to the Civil Secretary, dated 6th August 1927, cited in The Upper Nile Province Handbook, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995 (ed.), by Douglas H.

traders from the North, as well as from attacks by the Nuer. The result was that indigenous political organisation was weakened. The Dinka, a tolerant and open minded people, have tended to adopt other people's customs and cultural practices⁸⁴ when these did not interfere with their own social values.⁸⁵

The third major Southern group was the Shilluk, whom the British also perceived as people who lacked administrative discipline. In Shilluk society the chiefs had no authority and power. The Shilluk like the Nuer and the Dinka resisted their new rulers, and strongly defended their own identity.⁸⁶ In response to this resistance, one British officer suggested that:

The only way to cure this is to round up refractory characters immediately; and they fly off into the bush, as soon as they suspected any government official coming for them; and probably the only way to catch them is to picket their villages and prevent them getting any food until they surrender.⁸⁷

Johnson, pp. 43-44.

⁸⁴. Some argued that there has been a tendency among the Dinka in the North to adopt the custom of the Arabs, and in the South they follow the customs of the Nuer. See J.P. Newcomer, "The Nuer and the Dinka," *Man*, 8, 109-110.

⁸⁵. Francis M. Deng, *Tradition and Experience*, New Haven, 1971; and *The Man Called Deng Majok*, New Haven, 1986.

⁸⁶. See Mercer, "Shilluk Trade and Politics from the Mid Seventeenth to Eighteenth Century," *Journal of African History*, XII, 3, 1971.

⁸⁷. See *The Upper Nile Province Handbook*, 55.

The strong resistance of Southern Sudanese, however, had forced the British to change the policy of centralised administration in the Sudan. The system of direct administration failed in the Sudan for many reasons. The country was so vast and British officers few, and "African chiefs" were hard to find or create. The administration also could not rely on the Egyptian army and treasury for governing what was predominantly an area of British hegemony. After two decades of centralised administration and growing Southern Sudanese resistance, the Milner Mission in 1920 recommended a decentralised system.

Having regard to its vast extent and the varied character of its inhabitants, the administration of its different parts should be left as far as possible in the hands of the native authorities, where they exist, under British supervision... Decentralisation and employment, where ever possible, of native agencies for the simple administrative needs of the country in its present stage of development, would make both for economy and efficiency.⁸⁸

The Policy of Indirect Rule:

Indirect rule was introduced to the Sudan in 1921. The system was more successful in the Northern Sudan than the South for several reasons. First, the success of indirect

⁸⁸. Cited in C.P. Mair, Native Policies in Africa, London: Routledge,

rule required the existence of administrative units based on the perception of the existence of "tribes" or "ethnic" groups. Unlike the South, the North had developed a series of "tribal" institutions especially among nomadic people of western Sudan. The North also possessed the two crucial actors of indirect rule, chiefs and sheikhs. Thus, the British policy of indirect rule was based on local administrative institutions, which already existed in the North.

In the face of the failure of direct administration, indirect rule was adopted as a strategy for "tribal" administration and development. It focused on the agency of the native "working", as Lugard had put it, "in his own time, in his own way, for his own profit and with the assistance of his family."⁸⁹ The philosophy of indirect rule policy was the development of an African society to govern itself in its own right.⁹⁰ That is governing through

1936, 181.

⁸⁹. See Frederick Lugard, "Education and Race Relations," Journal of the African Society, 32, January 1933, 1-11.

⁹⁰. Lugard's ideas were accepted by the British administrators first as effective administrative tool, then that of a political doctrine, and finally that of a religious dogma. See Lord Hailey, "Some problems dealt with in an African Survey," International Affairs, March/April 1939, 202. For more details also see Lugard's book, Dual Mandate, Edinburgh W. Blackwood, 1922.

existing political and social structures and the use of "tribal" chiefs or sheikh⁹¹ as agents of the colonial power. This policy coupled with the Milner Commission policy of decentralised rule in the Sudan separated "Africans" from "Arabs" and provided the means to pursue a policy of creating two different identities in the Sudan. In the Sudan, the chief advocate of indirect rule was Sir John Maffey, Governor General from 1926 to 1933. In his view, indirect rule was a desirable method of governing by "carving up the Sudan into a number of traditionally based polities, which would ... function as protective glands against the infection of the rural population by the septic germs of democracy and nationalism."⁹²

The experience of the indirect rule in the South was different. According to G.N. Sanderson:

Most southern societies were quite incapable of developing into the Indian-style native states ... southern chiefs who could be groomed for an effective administrative role were very hard to find.⁹³

What Sanderson missed in his analysis was the indigenous

⁹¹. Sheikh is a tribal chief or religious leader whether Muslim or Coptic Christian, also member of the profession of Islamic law, head of a group of villages making an administrative unit.

⁹². See G.N Sanderson's review of Mohammed Omer Bashir's book in Middle Eastern Studies, 12, 1, January 1976, pp.108-111.

Southern perceptions of government. He failed to understand that "the moral relations between peoples and the colonial government provide the most of administrative problems, for the peoples have to integrate into their social system a political system that has no moral value for them."⁹⁴

In the every region where indirect rule was invented, it now meets with the criticism that it merely perpetuates the domination over its subject peoples of what was already an alien oppressive authority.⁹⁵

For the Southern Sudanese, the experience with the Turko-Egyptian and the Mahdist contributed to their rejection of the imposed administrative institutions. The method used in the selection of chiefs was contrary to the existing practice, according to which the chief must first be a spiritual leader and second a strong and respectable person. Instead, the British administrators chose common men - "white chiefs". The anthropologist Evans-Pritchard pointed out the opposition between the government chiefs and the traditional ones:

The functions of a native chief are to represent the unity of the tribe, maintained and expressed by warfare which he initiates; to store and

⁹³. Op.cit.

⁹⁴. See E.E. Evans-Pritchard, "Administrative Problems in the Southern Sudan," Oxford: Oxford University Summer School on Colonial Administration, 1938, 76.

⁹⁵. See Native Policies in Africa, p. 15.

distribute wealth, generally food, which he receives as attribute and dispenses in gifts and hospitality; to embody in his person the sanctity of law and custom, which are exacted in his name; and to be the symbol of his people's purpose and the pivot of their system of values...A government chief, by contrast, acts as the bureaucratic agent of an alien administration...[He] derives his authority not from tradition and the moral backing of his people, but the support of the government...⁹⁶

For instance, Willis, Governor of Upper Nile, influenced by the Hamitic hypothesis, assumed that there was an institution of chief among the Nuer, which had been undermined by the Kujurs.⁹⁷ Thus, Willis thought that by suppressing the Kujurs, he could reinstate the chiefs. By 1928, Willis admitted that the idea of chief was itself invented by the government. In 1929 Willis was advocating the invention of the chief, but in the name of custom and tradition. Willis explained his policy in the Upper Nile to the Civil Secretary as follows:

Is the growth of native administration by the development of tribal institutions and the strengthening of tribal customs and law, and in general to built up on native foundations... He concluded that I am...convinced that the building up of the a native administration on the foundations of tribal custom and organisation is the only sound method of tackling these tribes, even to the point of inventing an organisation where as with the Dinka, they have lost their

⁹⁶. See Evans-Pritchard, 1938,p.77.

⁹⁷. This view also shared by Evans-Pritchard on his works on Nuer, See for example, his work, The Nuer, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940.

own.⁹⁸

Like other British anthropologists and administrators, Willis's vision of the future Southern Sudanese societies was based on the notion of "tribal creed". Accordingly, each tribe was to have its own tribal entity and territory.⁹⁹ The Dinka were to live with Dinka, and Nuer with Nuer, rather than live together. They were to be governed by their own "chiefs" whether created, as with some of the Dinka, or reduced in power, as with some of the Nuer. They were also to be ruled according to their own customs which, whether invented or reproduced, were to be free from external influences.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸. See his letter to Civil Secretary on "Nuer Policy", dated 18 Feb. 1929, NRO UNP 1/44/329. Willis was also not alone in advocating the invention of tradition, either in the Sudan or other parts of British Africa. For this matter see Terence Ranger, "The invention of tradition in colonial Africa," in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), The Invention of Tradition, Cambridge, 1983.

⁹⁹. The Shilluk were the only people to represent the kind of territorial Kingdom and dynastic politics which fit the British model. The Shilluk provided the British with a territory which seemed to fit all the requirements for indirect rule-out of deference to the Reth's rank the district commissioner was referred to by the title of resident. Also the Shilluk Kingdom was already divided into territorial political sub-units, whose leaders played a significant role in the selection and support of the King.

¹⁰⁰. The argument here is that these groups- Dinka, Nuer and Shilluk were each to have their own "tribal" social life and values, uninfluenced by each other. For "tribal" custom and tradition ceased to be natural or exist once it crossed tribal boundaries and inevitably became subversive once it was transported. See Douglas Johnson, "Colonial Policy and Prophets: "The Nuer-Settlement, 1929-30," Journal of the

As a consequence of this invented institution, from the pacification period 1900-1920 on, British administrators were concerned with "tribal purity" in the Southern Sudan. The first step the government took was to cut off the South from the North through the promulgation of the Passports and Permits Ordinance in October 1922 which empowered the Governor-General to declare any part of the Sudan a "Closed District". The new policy of the closed District in the South required the elimination of all the administrative officers who spoke Arabic in favour of local recruits from the missionary schools. Greek and Syrian merchants were to be encouraged in place of Northern merchants; British administrators were to avoid speaking Arabic and to use local languages, and if impossible to do so, use English. Accordingly, Southern Sudan became a closed region that outsiders from other parts of the Sudan were allowed to enter under certain restrictions.¹⁰¹ The British

Anthropological Society of Oxford, 1979, 10, 1-20.

¹⁰¹. The Closed Districts' Ordinance was designed to stop the slave trade. The areas, which were closed, were the ones in which the indigenous peoples (the objects of slavers) lived. These was included the Beja area and the whole of Southern Sudan, that means, the open Sudan was only a small narrow land a long the Nile from Dongola in Northern Sudan to the rich lands of Gezira in Central Sudan. See, Kuniwok Kwawang, "State and Revolt in the Black Sudan," in Mom K.N. Arou and B. Yongo. Bure (eds.), North-South Relations in the Sudan Since the Addis Ababa Agreement, Khartoum: Khartoum University Press, 1989.

administrators in the South were no longer required to attend the meeting of the Governors held annually in Khartoum. Instead, they held their meetings in Kenya and Uganda. The purpose of this policy was to eradicate the Arab-Islamic influences, and to preserve the "African" identity of the South.¹⁰²

The Construction of 'African' Identity in Southern Sudan:
The Southern Policy (1930-1947).

It was not until 1930 that Southerners were finally forced to accept British rule. It was at this time that the British reviewed the pacification policy towards the South Sudan. The review of the policy of the administration in the South was recommended by the Civil Secretary H.A MacMichael and other senior officials to John L. Maffet, the Governor-General of the Sudan. Accordingly on 25. January 1930, the Civil Secretary issued a directive to the Governors of the three Southern Provinces of Upper Nile, Mongalla and Bahr el Ghazal, with an accompanying memorandum. The directive stated that:

The policy of the government in the southern Sudan

¹⁰². "African" here refers to the way that the British colonial government defined or perceived the identity of Southern Sudan. These perceptions and meaning did not necessarily reflect the reality of South Sudan societies.

is to build up series of self-contained racial or tribal units with structures and organisation based to whatever extent the requirement of equity and good government permits, upon indigenous customs, traditional usage and beliefs.¹⁰³

This new policy was based on the principle of native administration and indirect rule, which was instituted by Lord Lugard in Northern Nigeria and later, applied to other British colonies in Africa.¹⁰⁴ The objective was to foster an independent rule and to develop the "natives" politically on the lines suitable to their societies. In the Southern Sudan, the object of the policy of 1930s was to give the people of the South a chance to develop their own cultures and social systems. The implementation of the policy became a necessity when we recall the suffering of the people in the South, at the hands of slave traders, the Turko-Egyptian and the Mahdists regimes.

The British policy of the 1930s was to develop the South Sudan on "indigenous and African lines". This meant a return to "tribal" law and customs; "tribal" family life and

¹⁰³. Memorandum on Southern Policy, January 25, 1930, by Sir Harold Mac-Michael, Bahr al Ghazal 1/1/1.

¹⁰⁴. For detailed study on Northern Nigeria's experience see Robert W. Shenton, The Development of Capitalism in Northern Nigeria, London: Currey, 1986.

indigenous languages.¹⁰⁵ In his book, Harold MacMichael described the situation in Southern Sudan as being "differed widely from those prevalent in the Northern and central area of the Sudan."¹⁰⁶ This policy legitimised the idea of Southern Sudan as a "tribal-African" society. Accordingly, the mode of life of indigenous people was considered to be tied to these "tribal" and racial institutions. In practice, "chiefs" were created and legitimised to rule the people and to follow the government policies. These chiefs applied customs, indigenous usage and beliefs of which the British officials had little knowledge.

MacMichael, Nalder, and some Northern Sudanese scholars such as Yusif Fadal and El Effendi perceived the South as an empty space of discovery and intellectual speculation. The South was defined as a mysterious, unknown space, to be occupied by others who perceived themselves superior. These representations and images were based on the idea that people in the South were lacking history and perhaps even a sense of humanity. Greenwood, a British administrator in the South wanted to see the Southerners remain a "happy, idle,

¹⁰⁵. For instance, the Rajaf language conference of 1928 recommended the adoption of some indigenous languages in schools, namely Bari, Dinka, Moro, Ndogo, Nuer, Shilluk, Zande etc.

contented people, with few wants and cares, singing to their cattle in the sun."¹⁰⁷ The North was consistently perceived by the British as more "civilized", "logical", and culturally "comprehensible" than the South. Arabism and Islam were defined as sources of "civility" and "progress". For example, Nalder stated that:

The culture of the north is one which is easily comprehensible to ourselves ... the political organisation of the tribe and its sections under the Nazir and his subordinate sheikhs is to us a normal and logical one, similar to that under which our ancestors may well have lived. Moreover, the Arab mentality is not so far removed from our own;... His general ideas of right and wrong are broadly similar to our own.¹⁰⁸

He continued arguing that, "western civilization in all its forms is not necessarily good for the African, and that it is the duty of the trustee nations to preserve as much as possible of native institutions and culture, that what is wanted is not an imitation of European but better African."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶. See The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1934, p.257.

¹⁰⁷. Cited in Raphael. K. Badal, Origins of the Underdevelopment of the Southern Sudan: British Administrative Neglect, Khartoum: Development Studies and Research Centre, 1980, p. 19, Monograph, No.16. For the original text see H. L. I. Greenwood, "Escape in the Grass," Sudan Notes and Records, XXIV, pp.189-196.

¹⁰⁸. See his work "The Two Sudans: Some Aspects of the South," p.95.

¹⁰⁹. See L.F. Nalder, "The Two Sudans: some aspects of the South," in The

The Southern policy was aimed at two declared objectives: the ending of slavery and Northern exploitation of the Southern Sudan, and secondly giving the people of the South a chance to develop as African in order to realise their African identity, and nationhood. The first objective, ending of slavery and Northern exploitation was relatively successful. The second objective, however, was not realised because of the government's failure to initiate social and economic development in the Southern Sudan. According to the government, the main reasons for this were that it took much longer to restore public security in the South and that it was impossible for many years to find funds to spend on an area which even now contributes next to nothing to the normal revenue of the country.¹¹⁰

In the field of social services and education, the government put little effort into the South. For instance, at an educational conference held in Juba in April, 1933, the chairman, R. K. Winter, Secretary for Education and Health, made the anti-development statement that education in the Southern Sudan "must be directed to making the individual first of all a good 'tribesman - a good

Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, p. 107.

villager'; to send him back to his tribe to live an improved life in his normal environment."¹¹¹ It was left to the Missionary Societies to provide Elementary Medical attention and education in the South. Until 1926, education in Southern Sudan was left in missionary hands. In 1927 the government instituted a regular system of subsidies to approved Mission schools, thereby becoming directly concerned with the type and standard of education giving in schools. However, it was not until 1946 that the government really got a hold of southern education, consolidated purely government schools with non mission headmasters and teachers. "This late government intervention in education was not in keeping with the race for education, as an end in itself, that was beginning in the Northern Sudan and which was to leave the south behind."¹¹²

Northern Sudanese, however, put pressure on the British government to accelerate the process of unification. They accused the British of either planning to divide the Sudan into two states or of planning to attach the South, or part

¹¹⁰. The Sudan: a record of progress, 1898-1947, p.12.

¹¹¹. CRO, BGP 1/4/19, education- missions, cited in Lazarus Leek Mawut, Dinka Resistance to Condominium Rule 1902-1932, Khartoum: Khartoum University Press, p.16, 1983.

¹¹². See, The Southern Front Memorandum to O.A.U. on Afro-Arab conflict

of it, to Uganda. Strong pressure was exerted by the Northern Sudanese Graduate Congress in Khartoum for self-rule and independence of the Sudan including the South.¹¹³ As a result, in 1943, the Advisory Council for the Northern Sudan was created for the purpose of fulfilling the task of independent united Sudan.

The Southern Sudan policy of two separate regions continued in place until 1940s. By 1945 no decision had yet been made to unite the South and the North into one state. The government reaffirmed its policy as follows:

The approved policy of the government is to act upon the fact that the people of the southern Sudan are distinctly African and Negroid, and that our obvious duty to them is therefore to push ahead as far as we can with their economic and educational development on African and Negroid lines, and not upon the Middle Eastern Arab lines of progress which are suitable for the northern Sudan. It is only by economic and educational development that these people can be equipped to stand up for themselves in the future, whether their future lot be eventually cast with the northern Sudan or with Eastern Africa (or partly with each)¹¹⁴

in the Sudan, Oct. 1965, p. 13.

¹¹³. K. D. D. Henderson describes how the Graduate Congress 'submitted to the Governor-General a memorandum with twelve points' including 'the abolition of ordinance on closed districts- the southern Sudan- and the lifting of restrictions placed on trade and on the movements of Sudanese within the Sudan'. For more in these points see his work, The Making of Modern Sudan, London: Faber, 1953, p.536-7.

¹¹⁴. Dispatch no. 89 (1945) to the British colonial government in the Sudan by Lord Killearn.

Thus, until 1945, the British government recognized the cultural and economic differences between the North and the South. The people of the South were to be developed economically and educationally in keeping with their "African" background and way of life. At the end of 1946, however, the British government decided the future of Southern Sudan. In December 1946, the Civil Secretary, Sir James W. Robertson, former Governor-General of Nigeria, decided that it was the future of the Southern Sudan to be bound to the North. Two other possible choices, that of Southern Sudan becoming a separate state or of becoming part of East Africa, were ruled out as neither in the best interest of the Southern Sudan nor desired by the Sudanese themselves.

The Abandonment of the Separate Development for the South:

The decision to merge the South and the North into one political entity was made following a report of the Sudan Administration Conference held in Khartoum in April 1946.

The conference stated that:

We are fully aware of the relative backwardness of the peoples of the southern Provinces and the advances which they must make therefore before they can reach the height of civilization attained by many peoples in the North. But at the same time

a decision must be made, and made now, that the Sudan be administered as one country. Though parts may be lag behind, yet the aim of the whole is the same and there is no reason why the peoples of the Southern Provinces in the relatively near future should not reach a degree of civilization which will enable them to play their full part in the progressive development of the Sudan.¹¹⁵

The report of the Administration Conference was criticised by Senior British official working in the South. The Governor of Bahr al Ghazal wrote:

The south's future is being advised upon and is even likely to be decided by wrong men in the wrong place, i.e. by a body of people capable and conscientious but without any direct understanding of the south; preoccupied with the political ferment of the north and seeing everything through Omdurman spectacles.... No Southerners was present. No serious effort had been made to extract a consensus of opinion from the educated or leading Southerners.¹¹⁶

As a result of this criticism a conference was held at Juba on June 1947. The terms of reference of the Conference, as set in the Civil Secretary's memorandum of May 1947, did not give the Conference power to decide whether the North and the South should be united. The Conference was a purely consultative, it was to advise as how best the decision already made should be implemented. Thus, the issue of unity

¹¹⁵. See Report of the Sudan Administrative Conference held on 23 April, 1946, and published on 31 March 1947.

¹¹⁶. A letter No. BGA/SCR-C.1 6/3/1947 from Governor of Bahr al Ghazal to Governor of Equatoria

between the North and the South was not at all an issue at the conference as often has been alleged by Northern Sudanese scholars and political leaders.¹¹⁷ The unity of the two regions was already an established fact as far as the Sudan Government was concerned. The main items for discussion were the representation of Southern Sudanese in the proposed Legislative Assembly, the setting up of an Advisory Council for Southern Sudan, and whether there should be some political and constitutional safeguards, so that the people of the South were not hindered in their social and political development as "Africans". However, some British officials had perceived the people of the South as "unqualified to exercise self-government". Margery Perham used nineteenth century racist imagery to justify the exclusion of Southern Sudanese from the representative Assembly of 1947, stating that it was

With great difficulty the government decided to include 13 representatives of the Negro south, as these pagan and newly Christianised people are very much more backward than the Moslem northerners who once raided them for slaves. At present, representatives of these primitive tribes are selected at provincial councils, since any

¹¹⁷. See Mohamed Omer Beshir, The South Sudan; Background to conflict, Khartoum: Khartoum University Press, 1970. See also, Mohamed Ahmed Mahgoub, Democracy on Trial: Reflections on Arab and Arab Politics, London: Andre Deutsch Limited, 1974.

form of election would be meaningless to them.¹¹⁸

Egypt pressed Britain not to keep the South as a separate state from the North in the hope that one day the whole of the Sudan might be united with Egypt. But the British had their own interests. British policy in the Sudan was governed by capital investments, interest in the Nile waters, and the strategic importance of the Sudan as a link with Britain's East African regions. Guided by these interests, the British policy was to establish Sudan, North and South as one independent state outside Egypt's political control should Britain fail to incorporate the Sudan in the British Commonwealth and Empire. This policy was a threat to Egyptian interests and led to the historic pleading of Egypt before the Security Council in 1947 when the Sudan question was discussed at the insistence of Egypt:

I have shown you that Egypt cannot live without the Sudan, and the Sudan cannot live without Egypt. Nor does the life giving Nile alone compel our partnership. Tradition coming down through hundreds of years, giving to us, to a large extent common language and a common culture, forging for us links which neither Egyptians nor Sudanese wish to sever; these traditions make Nile Unity a must for all the people who live upon its bounty.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸. See Margery Perham, "The Sudan Emerges into Nationhood," Foreign Affairs, 27, 1947, pp. 665-77.

¹¹⁹. Mohammed F. Nokrashy Pasha, U. N. Security Council; Verbatim Records of 197th. Meeting, Lack Success, 11th, August, 1947, cited in the Southern Front Memorandum to O.A.U, Accra, October, 1965.

As for the people of the South, they had little in common with either Egypt or the North in terms of history and identity. This was stated clearly by Sir A. Cadogan to the Security Council on 11th August 1947 in reply to the Egyptian attack on Britain's Southern Policy.

If the Sudan government had failed in the past to make certain administrative distinctions between northern and southern Sudanese, they would have failed in a clear duty. The peoples of the south are negro or negroid.... They are not and never were Moslems. They do not and never did speak Arabic and they have no racial affinities with the north. Until the coming of the British to the Sudan, they were constantly being raided by the Northerners and carried off as slaves. Such distinctions as the Sudan Government has drawn in the past between the southern part of the Sudan and the rest of the country has been dictated by the imperative need, in the interest of common humanity to protect.¹²⁰

This was the fatal colonial decision that became a cause of the civil war and the misery of the Southern Sudan. On the end, the decision to unite the North and the South was unilateral. It was in the interests of Britain, Northern Sudan and Egypt. This historical record refutes the Northern Sudanese claim of associating the civil war between the North and the South to the 1930s Southern policy. Some Northern Sudanese historians misleadingly have claimed that Southern Sudanese had accepted to live in a united Sudan

during the Juba Conference of 1947.¹²¹ But in reality, the unity of the South and the North had already been decided upon by the Civil Secretary as a product of pressure from Egypt, Northern Sudanese political leaders and the British. Even the Southern Sudanese participants in the Conference were not chosen by the people but by the Sudan Government, and most of them were invented chiefs who were illiterate. Therefore, whatever decision they made, they had no legitimacy from the people of the South.¹²² Crucially, the unintended result of the Northern attitudes towards the South, and the Southern policy of the 1930s, is that the people of the South have had forged a common experience under the African identity.

¹²⁰. Ibid.,

¹²¹. This argument has been made by many Northern Sudanese scholars and politicians, see for instance, M. Abdal Rahim and Mohmad Omer Beshir's works on Southern Sudan.

¹²². See Amir Idris, "Federalism and Political Stability in the Sudan," Unpublished M. A. thesis, The American University in Cairo, 1992, p. 40.

Chapter Four

Whose Nationalism? And Whose Nation? 1930-1956

"Noble Arab People (*sha'b Arabi Karim*)."
Sulayman Kisha.¹

"Noble Sudanese People (*sha'b Sudani Karim*)."
Ali Abd al-Latif.²

"If the state is going to fall, it is from the belly."³

While the British administrators in the 1930s were gradually constructing an African identity in the South as I described in chapter three, a new politics of Arab identity in the North began to oppose and challenge Southern identity. The emergence of the nationalist movement in the North, and the rise of politically and nationally oriented elites mainly concerned with the future of the Sudan necessarily raised

¹. A leading member of the League of the Sudanese Union (*Jam'iyya al ittihad al-Sudani*). It was a political body which argued that Sudanese people should delegate its rights to Egypt. Most of its members advocated Arab nationalism as slogan against British colonialism.

². The leader of the White Flag League (*Jam'iya al-Liwa'al-Abyad*). It came into being as a result of the split which took place inside the League of the Sudanese Union.

³. Akan proverb from Ghana; it used to express the sentiment that people suffer as a result of their own weakness.

the question of the status of the South. This chapter deals with the role of the emergent Northern Sudanese elites of the 1930s in creating an Arab ethnic identity. It will examine, in particular, the nationalist discourse on Sudanese identity. The chapter will identify the historical development of the Northern-based nationalist movement in terms of its discourse and political practices. It will show first how the movement was influenced by the Egyptian nationalist movement of 1919. It will then show how competing visions of identities and the various histories that augmented them had been articulated during the nationalist struggle against colonialism of the 1930s, and how one version of history was legitimized at the expense of another. I will argue that the Northern elites in the Sudan have supported a specific vision of history based on Arabism and Islamism. This history involved the exclusion of many groups, in particular the people of the South Sudan. The struggle over history and identity also raised the question of which kind of social groups inside the Sudan were entitled to speak on behalf of the Sudanese people.

The Sudan is and has been a space for a clash of nationalist struggles that have imagined the Sudan in sharply

contrasting ways, and have offered competing visions and narratives of the past. In contrast to Africanism,⁴ Northern nationalist historiography has emphasized the Mahdist period in order to support a specific vision of Sudanese identity.⁵ Such history involves exclusion of non-Arab and non-Muslim groups. The nationalist narrative of the 1930s had created for itself a genealogy that stretches far into the Islamic Arab past. It suggested a primordial and essential identity shared by all those who lived in the North regardless of their particular historical experiences and affiliations. Mohamed Omer Beshir, a prominent Sudanese historian, has emphasized this essentialist view in his writing:

The fourteen million people who inhabit the country are divided into four major groups: Nubians, Beja, Negroid and Arabs. There are minor groups such as the Fur, the Nuba and the Ingasana ... None the less, it is generally accepted that culturally the country is divided into two broad regions: the north and the south. The north is on the whole more homogeneous than the south. Islam and Arabic have acted as unifying factors and contributed to the homogeneity of the north, whereas the south is a heterogeneous society. The north, perhaps with the exception of Darfur, had a common history in the past and has a long tradition...

⁴. It refers to the colonially created identity that the British administration constructed through the Southern policy of 1930.

⁵. For instance, many political and historical texts in the Sudan consider and celebrate the Mahdist's period as a "revolution". For instance, Sadiq Al Mahdi. Mustqbal al-Islam fi al Sudan, Saudi Arabi: Tuhama Publishing, 1983; and Salah Hassan, "The Sudan National Democratic Alliance: The quest For peace, unity and Democracy," Issue, A journal of Opinion, vol.xx1/1-2, 1993, 14-25, p.18.

Its history has always been bound up with that of Egypt, its neighbour to the north.⁶

The Impact of the Egyptian Nationalism on Sudanese Elites:

The British government during World War I was mainly concerned with the ties of culture, religion and language, which bound the Sudan to Egypt.⁷ Eve Marie Powell explained this concern:

Sir Reginald Wingate, the head of the Sudan government during the war, faced the additional pressures of Sudanese sympathy for the Ottoman Empire and undermanned British regiments, stretched thin in the Sudan due to the external demands of mobilization. To counter this, Wingate retreated from the strong, anti-Mahdist stance, he had adopted for decades, and supported a rapprochement with the Mahdi's leading supporters, the Ansar, and the tariqas that continued to attract young Sudanese.⁸

With the emergence of the Egyptian Nationalist Movement (*Wafd*) in 1919, and the declaration of Egyptian independence, Egyptian political leaders argued for the incorporation of the Sudan into an independent Egyptian

⁶. See Mohamed Omer Beshir, Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan, London: Rex Collings, 1974, p.2.

⁷. These ties were stroked by the close contact between Egyptian soldiers stationed in the Sudan and their Sudanese colleagues. See Eve Marie Powell, "Colonised Colonisers: Egyptian Nationalists and the issue of the Sudan, 1875-1919," Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Harvard University, May 1995, p. 237.

⁸. See Eve Marie Powell, 1995, p.237; also see P.M. Holt and M. W. Daly, A history of the Sudan, from the Coming of Islam to the Present Day, 4th edition, London and

state. The grounds put forward for Egyptian claims to the Sudan were Egyptian political control during the period 1821-1885, the geographical unity of the Nile Basin as part of a single hydrographical system, the need for a unified allocation of the Nile Water for irrigation, and the necessity of the Sudan as outlet for Egypt's agricultural population.⁹

The British officials of the Sudan government thus exploited the deep anti-Egyptian feeling among many of the Sudanese who had fought for the Mahdiyya when they turned their support to Abd al-Rahman, the Mahdi's son. The British officials found other ways to mine the depths of alienation between Egyptians and Sudanese, particularly in the negotiations that began between the Wafd and Lord Milner's delegation after the revolution of 1919. Thus, racial and cultural differences were emphasized, as an official stance behind the delineation of boundaries between Egypt and the Sudan. Milner's report suggested:

... Such measure of internal self government for Egypt as might be considered right, but would point out the absurdity of claims made by Egypt to

N.Y.: Longman, 1988, pp.129-30.

⁹. See Report by the British Information Service on the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, I.D.730, May 1947.

Egyptian nationalism for the Sudan, stating at the same time how the Sudan differs in race, tradition and sympathy from Egypt, and showing that Egypt only legitimate interests in the Sudan are the safeguarding of her water supply and the protection of her frontiers from external aggression. For these, H.M. Government would assume full responsibility, and, at the same time, take full charge of the Sudan which would develop on lines of Sudanese nationalism under British guidance... ¹⁰

The British plan of shaping Sudanese nationalism was supported by "tribal" *sheikhs*, *tariqas*, and old supporters of the Mahdi. These groups blamed the Egyptians for bringing the British into the Sudan and destroying the Mahdist state. For these groups, the British were colonizers and non-Muslims, but their homeland was far away and one day they would leave. The Egyptians would be harder to chase away.¹¹

Other groups, however, among the younger generation of Sudanese, also felt alienated by the British administration. After the World War 1 many of these groups looked to Egypt for political inspiration and sympathised with the Wafd's struggle for independence. These younger students, clerks and junior officials in the administration and among the

¹⁰. Cited in Eve Marie Powell, p.233.

¹¹. See Eve Marie, p. 96.

military cadets of Gordon College, influenced by the literature coming from Egypt, saw Egyptian nationalism as a model. Ironically, these elites rejected the idea of the "Sudan for the Sudanese", regarding it as a slogan created by the British and a tool of division. For them, nationalism meant unifying Sudan with Egypt, their noble Muslim, and Arabic-speaking brothers.¹²

In constructing this vision of themselves, these elites felt a shared common experience of colonialism with the Egyptians. These groups believed that once the British had been expelled, they could easily convince the Egyptians to leave the Sudan to the Sudanese. According to this mode of thinking, the Sudanese elites after 1919 had developed a consensus over whose domination they preferred rather than about what their own national identity was. The question of the national identity of the Sudan was thus shaped more by external factors than by internal reality. The nationalist

¹². Some British administrators believed that "the educated Sudanese often acquired the attitudes of European civilization without its grace and manners, and this makes them appear on occasion arrogant as if their main desire was to show that they were as good as any foreigner". For this reason some argued that the British had to deal with the "tribal" and religious leaders instead. See "The Sudan: the Road Ahead," Fabian Publications LTD, Research series No.99, Sept. 1945. See also Babikr Bedri, The Memories of Babikr Bedri, vol.2, translated by Yusif Bedri and Peter Hoag, London: Ithaca Press, 1980, p.120.

groups saw Egypt as the intellectual Mecca of the Sudan from which they brought their ideas and perceptions about their own identity. However, Egyptians historically regarded the Sudan as a place in which they did not much want to live, but which they also did not want to lose. For Egypt, Northern Sudan was a source of cheap labour and servants.

These developments show that the Sudanese after 1919 had a stronger idea of whose hegemony they preferred than they did of what their own national identity was or who best represented it. But events quickly developed, leading to more concrete manifestations of Sudanese nationalism. In response to the British idea of separation between Egypt and the Sudan, as articulated in the Milner Report, a group of minor government officials led by a Muslim Dinka military officer named Ali 'Abd al-Latif formed the League of Sudan Union in 1922. Eve Powell described the Union's activities and its aftermath. It was a

Small gathering but its organisation, combined with a pro-Egyptian article written by 'Abd al-Latif in 1922, called "self-determination for the Sudanese", angered the British authorities of the Sudan government, who had him imprisoned. When he was released, he formed the White Flag League, ostensibly with Egyptian support and financial backing. In fact, the British officials considered

him and his colleagues puppets, half-civilized dupes of Egyptian politicians.¹³

The League of Sudan Union however was split in the latter half of 1923. The cause of this split was a disagreement about the nature of Sudanese identity. Different members of the Union had competing visions and interpretations of history and identity.

The formation of the White Flag movement by Ali Abd al-latif in 1924 came as a result of conflict within the League of Sudan Union. The only document that sheds light on his ideas before the founding of the White Flag League is the famous "claims of the Nation", which he signed and took to the office of 'al-Hadara' in May 1922, the document for which he was arrested and jailed. According to the Sudan Government, the document "contained no word in favour of Egypt."¹⁴ It stated that, while the Sudan needed someone to guide it until it reached the stage of independence, it was the Sudanese people themselves who were entitled to choose who should be the guide.

¹³. In Eve Powell, "Colonised Colonisers: Egyptian Nationalists and the issue of the Sudan, 1875-1919," unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Harvard University, May 1995, pp.240-241. See also Holt and Daly, A history of the Sudan, pp.131-2.

During this period the questions of race and descent became very significant in determining the course of Sudanese nationalism. Being an Arab became a criterion for leadership in Sudanese nationalism. Being a Dinka Muslim, Ali Abd al-Latif was considered by Northern religious leaders such as Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi to speak for no one. One newspaper account put the problem more pointedly: "low is the nation if it can be led by Ali Abd al-Latif."¹⁵ The perception of the Sudan as an Arab and Islamic nation, was proposed strongly by some nationalists from the North. Most of them agreed that "tribal" and religious leaders were the real representatives of the Sudanese people, while others, such as Ali Abd al-Latif and Hajj al-Amin, insisted that the Sudanese people should be represented by modern social forces such as government officials and military officers.¹⁶

This new vision of the Sudan's identity divided the elites from notables, and split the nationalists. Ali Abd al-

¹⁴. Egypt and Sudan, F. O. 371/10905, Political Agitation in Sudan, p.5.

¹⁵. Peter Woodward, Sudan, 1898-1989: the Unstable State, 1990, p.56.

¹⁶. For further details, see Yoshiko Kurita, "The Language of Class and the Language of Race in Modern Sudanese Politics: the case of Ali Abd al-Latif and the Revolution of 1924," paper presented to conference on nation building in the

latif's slave descent and his opposition to the religious notables' collaboration with the British alienated the notables and their supporters from the nationalist cause. The tribal and religious leaders who were seeking, by investment in the Gezira Scheme, to become an agricultural bourgeoisie, were allies of the Sudan government and delegated their rights to Britian. The White Flag League delegated their rights to Egypt.

The Japanese historian Yoshiko Kurita has argued that the split in the Sudanese nationalist movement in the early 1920s was more over matters of race and class rather than ideology. The inclusion of descendants of slaves such as Ali Abd al-Latif drove away those who still adhered to the religious notables.¹⁷ She related Ali's vision of identity to his social background in that he belonged to what she called, the "Negroid but de-tribalized" people, the people who were originally from the south or the Nuba Mountains but had settled inside northern Sudan. Thus, Ali believed that Arab "tribal" leaders, and Islamic religious leaders in the North could represent neither the areas like the South and

Sudan, Cairo, April, 1995, pp.2-6.

¹⁷. Group such as the *Hadra al-Sudan* was preoccupied with the propagation of an

the Nuba Mountains nor the people from these regions who were living inside the Northern Sudan in a "de-tribalized" condition.

Ali challenged the mainstream identity of the Sudan. This challenge was provoked by the foreword to a collection of poems published in 1923 written by Sulayman Kisha, a Northerner who considered himself an Arab. Northern nationalists used poems to construct and express their imagined Arab and Islamic identity. Poems were considered very effective tools of communication in Northern Sudanese society. The foreword began with the expression "noble Arab people" (*Sha'b Arabi Karim*). Ali, however, criticized Kisha, saying that he should have written "noble Sudanese people" (*Sha'ab Sudani Karim*), since there should be no discrimination between the Arabs and non-Arabs in the Sudan. By 1930, however, the perception of the Sudan as an Arab nation had become the dominant principle in the discourse among the Northern elites. The *Hadarat al Sudan* newspaper asked, "what lowly nation is this that is now being led by people of the ilk of Ali al-latif. From what ancestry did

Arab identity.

this man descend to merit such fame? And to what tribe does he belong?".¹⁸ Shangetti, a Northern Judge and Sayyid Abd Rahman Al Mahdi's interpreter, spoke very contemptuously of Abdel Latif. He said his mother was a negress, his father was unknown, and that he, Latif, had at one time collected old tins from barracks. "Shingiti is here expressing contempt not only for Ali Abd al-Latif's non-Arab origin, but for the slave status of his parents."¹⁹

In the 1930s and 1940s the Arab-oriented nationalists forces²⁰ were able to take advantage of the economic opportunities that Condominium government policies opened up to them. These were able, by virtue of their different positions as civil servants²¹ or religious and "tribal"

¹⁸. See *Hadarat al Sudan* newspaper, 25 June 1924. *Hadarat al Sudan*, the Sudan's first independent Arabic newspaper, was founded in 1920 by al-Mirghani and al-Mahdi and Sharif Yusuf al-Hindi, with the blessing of the government. It was in part a reaction to the Egyptian nationalist rising of 1919, and adopted a mainly pro-government, anti-Egyptian line, arguing that Britain should continue its presence in the Sudan until such time as the Sudan was capable of governing itself.

¹⁹. See Douglas Johnson, British Documents on the End of Empire: Sudan, part 1, 1942-1950, London, 1998, p.235.

²⁰. These nationalist forces consisted of merchants class, leaders of the religious sects, and the graduates- those eligible for promotion to higher grades in government service.

²¹. Before the final years of Condominium government small percentage of the government employees were in fact Sudanese. It was not only until 1954 that the situation was to change, when 647 out of the 1,111 British posts were handed over to the Sudanese, 87 of the 108 posts held by Egyptians, and 200 British officials

leaders, to gain access to credit, and were able to engage in the trade of various export commodities. Douglas H. Johnson, argued that:

It was their ability to accumulate and re-invest capital which distinguished them economically and socially from other segments in Sudanese societies. This was a long-term development, with some tribal leaders, religious figures and merchants becoming established during the first thirty years of Condominium rule, and then using their accumulated wealth to invest in more areas of the economy.²²

The main change in the economic field during the Anglo-Egyptian period was the consolidation of the economic status of small groups of Sudanese society. As a result of this change, Mansour Khalid argued that:

There was a clear division between those individuals who were in a position to benefit from the condominium economy and re-invest in productive fields of investment which further strengthened their economic position.²³

The main groups who benefited from the colonial economy were the religious leaders, Sayyid Abd al-Rahman al Mahdi of the Ansar sect, Sayyid Ali al-Mirghani of the Khatimya sect, and Sharif Yusuf al Hindi. But it was only the two Sayyids who

resigned voluntarily. This figures were cited in Mansour Khalid, 1990,p.75. For more details see Tim Niblock, pp.59-60.

²². Douglas H. Johnson, "The Sudan Under the British," Journal of African History, 29, 1988, pp.514-546, p.543.

²³. See Mansour Khalid, The Government They Deserve: The Role of the Elite in

received the biggest share of the colonial economy. To win their support, the Sudan Government in 1908 granted Abd al Rahman al Mahdi land on Aba Island in the Blue Nile. By 1936, he was employing a labour force of 4,500 on the Island.²⁴ He was also involved in supplying the government with materials for the construction of the Sennar Dam. Sayyid Ali was also granted land in the Red Sea and Northern provinces to develop agriculture, and Sharif was granted a large portion of land in the Gezira.

Tribal leaders also gained from the colonial economy, especially from the creation of indirect rule.²⁵ The British administration was unwilling, for financial and other reasons, to administer all the regions of the Sudan. As a result, power was devolved onto the tribal leaders such as Ali Altom of the Kabbabish, and Awad Al Karim Abu Sinn of the Shukria. To reinforce the policy of indirect rule, the colonial administration saw to it that those tribal leaders

Sudan's Political Evolution, London: Kegan Paul International, 1990. p.73,

²⁴. Though much of the labour came from migrant Mahdist workers who travelled east from Western Sudan and West Africa in a so-called pilgrimage to Aba Island, but it was his economic position which enabled him to build up the religious position he had by virtue of his heritage. For more details in this issue See Tim Niblock, Class and Power, p.51 and Mansour Khalid, p,74.

²⁵. For more recent study on the legacy of colonialism on Africa, see Mahmoud

possessed the economic status deemed suitable for their positions.²⁶

Colonial economic policy created the basis for post-colonial class formation and the rise of the Northern Sudanese ruling elites. These elites became active in reproducing the constructed vision of the Sudan as unified state. They also played a decisive role in institutionalizing the image of the Sudan as an Arab-Islamic nation. Mohamed Omer Beshir argued that

indirect rule became accepted administrative policy at a time when the Sudan government was trying to create a modern economy and institutions such as the Gezira scheme and the Kitchener School of Medicine. But instead of encouraging the creation of modern institutions suited to the modern economy, traditional institutions based on tribal loyalties were being re-established.²⁷

The majority of the educated during the 1930s, according to

Mamdani, Citizen and Subject, Princeton, University Press, 1996.

²⁶. This was the rationale behind the Promulgation of the Powers of Namad Sheikhs Ordinance in 1922, and the subsequently amended Powers of Sheikhs Ordinance in 1927 which removed the restrictive term "nomad". The chief architect of this policy, Sir Harold MacMichael (then Assistant Civil Secretary), stated the aims of this policy to be the encouragement of "native authorities to manage their own affairs so long as they supported the Government and retained the respect of their own subject". See Sir Harold MacMichael, The Sudan, London, 1954, p.107. For more details on the effects of the Sheikhs Ordinance see Abdel Rahim, Imperialism and Nationalism, pp. 66-70.

²⁷. Mohamed Omer Beshir, 1974, p.107.

Beshir, "believed that the Sudan would benefit more from playing on the contradictions and conflicting interests of Egypt and Britain, and therefore turned down the idea of colonial status under Britain."²⁸ As a result of this view, the educated Northern Sudanese thought of forming an organization, which would voice their demands and coordinate, their efforts in social and political activities. The first call for the establishment of such organization came in 1935, when *Al Fagr*²⁹ (The Dawn) appealed for the formation of a trade union "to represent the graduates, defend their interests and communicate with the governments on all matters pertaining to the working conditions of graduates in government service."³⁰

In the memorandum Congress described itself as representing 'enlightened public opinion' and submitted its proposal as expressing faithfully the inclination and aspirations of the country. In addition to asking for guarantees for exercising the right of self determination, the memorandum listed a number of specifically northern Sudanese concerns: measures

²⁸. Ibid., p.131.

²⁹. Founded by Arafat Muhammad, a graduate of Gordon College, in 1934.

³⁰. *Al Fagr*, Vol.1, no.24, August, pp.1119-1120.

for including Sudanese at all levels of government and for its eventual Sudanization; removal of restriction on indigenous economic activity; the establishment of a Sudanese nationality (as opposed to the extension of Egyptian nationality to the Sudan); a halt of immigrants not covered by the Anglo-Egyptian treaty (a reference to West Africans immigrants); and the reversal of the Southern policy in regards to permits to trade and the missionary education system.³¹

The draft and presentation of the Graduates' Congress memorandum had serious impacts inside the Graduates Congress. A secular group, less conciliatory to the government, called the Ashigga (Blood brothers), formed around the leadership of a mathematics teacher, Ismail al-Azhari. In the Congress elections of 1940 Sayyid Abd al-Rahman became involved through his support of Ansar members, and an Ansar-Ashigga alliance dominated the Congress executive. A new alliance between the Ashigga and Sayyid Ali's Khatmiya sect gave the Ashigga the electoral powers it needed within the main "Three Towns" area (of Khartoum,

³¹. See Sudanese Graduates' Congress: despatch on 536 from Sir M Lampson to Mr Eden. Enclosures: despatches from Sir H. Huddleston, FO 371/31587, no 2664, 22 May 1942,

Khartoum North and Omdurman) in the 1944 Congress elections, returning al-Azhari as president, supported by a strong Ashigga-Khatmiya majority in the Congress.³²

The Ashigga opted for an undefined union with Egypt. The Ashigga-Khatmiya alliance proved to be the strongest in the 1944 Congress elections, and other groups (including Gawmiyyin (populists advocated full independence) sought and received the patronage of Sayyid Abd al-Rahman and the Ansar. The Ashigga victory led to the formation of the pro-independence, "Sudan for the Sudanese" Umma (nation) Party under Sayyid Abd al-Rahman's patronage in January 1945. The elections for the 1946 committees firmly established the control of Ansar-Khatmiya sectarianism on Northern Sudanese politics. The Umma and other pro-independence parties' boycott left Congress entirely under the control of the Khatmiya-backed Ashigga with al-Azhari now referring to Congress as 'a party'.³³

During this time all political activity had been related to

³². See M. O. Beshir, Revolution and Nationalism, pp. 156-164; Daly Imperial Sudan, pp.155-163

³³. See Sudan Graduates' General Congress: despatch no 134 from sir H Huddleston to lord Killearn. Annex: translation of an Arabic letter from Ismail al-Azhri to Huddleston(15 Oct 1945), FO 141/1013, no 134, 8Dec 1945.

the northern Sudan, and revolved around Northern Sudanese identity and political interests. However, the historical conflict of the Sudan as a nation, the division between the Northern mainly Muslim region and the non-Muslim Southern region was never far beneath the surface and was a factor in the strategies of the British Foreign Office, the Egyptian and Sudanese governments, and Northern politicians from the very beginning. The different views on the South were stated at this early stage. To the British the division between Northern and Southern Sudan, being racial and historical, was natural. Sir H. Huddleston, Governor General (1940-1947) argued that:

Any division of the Sudan which exists does not arise from the Advisory Council or from any other administrative arrangement carried out by the Sudan Government, but from the natural, historic and tribal composition of the country, the six northern provinces are predominantly Arab in origin and culture, and the two southern provinces are inhabited by peoples akin racially to the tribes of central Africa and largely pagan.³⁴

To the Egyptian government and many Northern Sudanese elites the division was artificial. Ismail al-Azhari in a memorandum to Sir H. Huddleston argued:

The principle of separation might be approved if there

³⁴. Unity of the Sudan: despatch (reply) from Sir H. Huddleston to Mustafa al-Nahas, Egyptian Foreign Minister FO 371/41363, no 2121, 18 May 1944

exist hostilities or dissensions which might result in the disturbance of public security. But, praise be to God, we have neither seen nor heard of fighting in the streets of large towns between the sons of the north and those of the south, as happens in Indian towns between different sections of the Indian population. In fact the sons of both the Northern and Southern Sudan have participated, since the Funj era, in the army and in the administration of the country; and Sudanese troops under the Turkish regime were mostly southerners of whom there were leaders whose names have been recorded in history.³⁵

Ismail al-Azhari also justified the option of a union with Egypt. He argued:

Our inclination towards the idea of a union, and the selection of Egypt to be the second partner in that union, appear to us as a natural trend dictated by the many vital and close links which derive their strength from our common history and from the union of interests, in addition to the bonds of religion, language, blood, education and the Nile, that vital and great link which confirms the unity of its valley in the same way as it unites its banks.³⁶

The vision of the Northern Sudanese nationalism which al-Azhari advocated, based on "bonds of religion, language and blood" (as calculated by Arab patriline) were absent between Northern and Southern Sudanese. It was a Northern nationalist belief that a common religion, language, education (and eventually blood) were being spread to the

³⁵. Extract from a memorandum from Ismail al-Azhari to Sir H Huddleston, 6 Oct 1943, giving the views of the Graduates' Congress on the legislation concerning an Advisory Council for Northern Sudan. See FO 371/45986, no 3128, 15 Sept 1945

³⁶. Congress' demand for the independence of the Sudan and union with Egypt: letter from Ismail al-Azhari to Mr. Atlee and Sidqi Pasha. See FO371/45986,

South in the 19th century before being restricted by the British. The nationalist discourse of a shared Sudanese past which al-Azhari presented, linking Arab and African Sudanese since the time of the Funj Kingdom was partly true, but it is unfortunate that the examples of common history he listed were all based on the institution of slavery and evoked a very hostile legacy. The non-Muslim peoples conscripted into the armies of the Kingdom of Sennar (sixteenth to early nineteenth century), the Turco-Egyptian empire (1821-1885) and the Mahdiyya (1882-1898) were all slaves.³⁷

By the end of World War II, however, the nationalist movement known as the General Congress of Graduates³⁸ had spawned two main political parties (the Umma Party and the National Unionist Party) competing to inherit power from the British after independence. Britain abandoned its Southern policy as a concession to the Northern Sudanese nationalists, hoping to wean them away from their attachment

no.3152, 23 Aug 1945.

³⁷. See Douglas H Johnson (ed.), British Documents on the End of Empire: Sudan, Part 1, 1942-1950, London: The Stationery Office, 1998,p.96.

³⁸. The formation meeting took place on February 12, 1938, and was attended by 1,180 graduates. The meeting approved the proposed constitution and the congress was named the Graduates' general Congress. Its aims were to serve the interests of the country and of the graduates. See Al Sudan, no.293, 28.10. 1937.

to Egypt.³⁹ Northern nationalism had no roots in the South. Neither of the two Northern nationalist parties established branches in the South, nor sought to rally support there.⁴⁰

Transition Towards Independence and the Hegemony of the North 1948-1956:

The transition to independence began with the creation of a Legislative Assembly in 1948. It was based on the recommendations of the Sudan Administrative Conference of 1948, which called for the rapid development of self-government in the Sudan. The Governor General's Council, in its 559th meeting in July 1947, passed a resolution setting up a Legislative Assembly representative of the whole Sudan, provided that safeguards are included in the Legislative Assembly Ordinance to ensure the cultural and social integrity of the South against domination by a government

³⁹. Egyptian based propaganda in the Sudan during early 1946 came from other sectors and included the first appearance of the Muslim Brothers (*Ikhwan al-Muslimin*), an organization which was to have little impact on the direction of the Sudanese independence movement, but was to become a major political force in the Northern Sudan by the end of the century. For more details see, *Ikhwan al-muslimin* (Muslim Brothers): circular letter from J W Robertson to all governors and the commissioner of Port Sudan. Enclosure: confidential background report on *el ikhwan el muslimin*, FO 371/53251, no 1324, 20 Feb 1946.

⁴⁰. See John Markakis, Resource Conflict in the Horn of Africa, London: Sage Publication, 1998, p.111.

composed mainly of northern Sudanese.⁴¹

These safeguards were contained in Articles 14 and 100 of the Draft Self-Government Statute. Article 100 gave the Governor-General special responsibility for "the public services and the south provinces. It gave the Governor-General powers to protect special interests of the Southern Provinces."⁴² Another constitutional safeguard, found in Article 14(2) stated that "the Governor-General shall appoint not less than ten or more than fifteen Ministers ... on the advice of the Prime Minister. Provided that not less than two Ministers in each council shall be elected Southerners."⁴³ The Legislative Assembly passed these two safeguards for the South.

These safeguards for the South Sudan were considered a necessity in view of the fact that peoples of Southern Sudan were considered to be historically distinct from the North. However, when the Council's resolutions were made public,

⁴¹. For more details in this period see J.S.R. Duncan, The Sudan's Path to Independence, Edinburgh & London: Blackwood, 1965.

⁴². See Minutes of the 559th Meeting of the Governor-General's Council held in Khartoum on 22.July, 1947, Government Archives, Khartoum.

⁴³. Ibid.

Egypt protested the failure of the Ordinance to recognize the unity of Egypt and Sudan. The Northern elites also were strongly opposed to the proposed safeguards for the South. The Northern elites of the Graduate Congress began to work against the safeguards, describing them as "an imperialist plot", "a gross interference in the internal affairs", and "a hidden scheme for partition".

When the Legislative Assembly Ordinance of 1948 was drafted, the Legal Secretary decided not to include specific safeguards for the Southern Sudan. Civil Secretary James Robertson, refused to provide such safeguards. He argued that all Northern opinion was against any special treatment of the South and any specific reference to the South would be exploited by Egypt.⁴⁴ This rejection of the specific safeguards for the South was greeted by strong protests from the educated Southerners, who regarded it as a sell-out of the South. It became evident that the South Sudan had been "crucified by the northern Arabs and Britain played the part of Judas."⁴⁵

⁴⁴. See a Letter from Robertson to T. R. H. Owen, Deputy Governor of Bahr al-Ghazal, May 25, 1948, Bahr al Ghazal 1/1/2.

⁴⁵. See A.M. Yangu, The Nile Turns Red: Azanians Choose Freedom Against Arab

When the discussion on self-determination for the Sudan began in late 1952, there was a new political regime in Egypt. King Farouk had been forced to leave power in July 1952 by the Egyptian Army.⁴⁶ The new government adopted a new approach to the Sudan question. While insisting on the unity of the Nile Valley, Neguib was prepared to "ensure for the Sudanese the freedom of self-determination without foreign influence."⁴⁷ The Egyptian policy towards the Sudan was to assist the Sudanese to self-determination in the hope that such assistance would encourage them to choose union with Egypt.

A conference had been set up in Cairo by the colonial government in 1953 to discuss the Sudan question. Although all Northern political parties attended the Cairo conference, southerners were not invited to discuss the future of the South.⁴⁸ This event demonstrates that the

Bondage, USA, Pageant Press, 1966.

⁴⁶. The leader of new government was Mohamd Neguib- born in Khartoum of Northern Sudanese mother and Egyptian father; educated in Gordon Memorial College, he knew many Northern Sudanese politicians.

⁴⁷. See All Parties Agreement and the Anglo-Egyptian negotiation: note from the Egyptian government to the British government concerning self-government and self-determination for the Sudan, FO 3/1/90911, no 351, 2 Nov 1952.

political establishment in the North had already decided on the future of the Sudan. The conference concluded an agreement on the 10th January 1953 known as "All Parties Agreement."⁴⁹ The Agreement for the first time recognized the right of the Sudanese to self-determination with necessary safeguards. According to the Agreement, Sudanese people were to be allowed to exercise their right of self-determination in a free environment, and in doing so the choice was either to be complete independence from Egypt or to link the Sudan with Egypt in some form. However, the agreement did not consider any safeguards for the South Sudan. In response to the their exclusion and the agreement, a letter was written by Michael Watta Ligo Baraba, a Southern Sudanese from Yei District. On behalf of the Southern Sudanese Committee, he wrote:

It is very surprising to see that the Southern Sudan with a population, of about one third of the entire Sudan population, cannot take part in deciding the

⁴⁸. A southern Sudan Political Emergency Committee demanded a special treatment for the south, which would take into account both its low level of education and the racial, cultural and religious differences between the two regions. The Committee argued that "religion led to the partition of India Committee warned"; "it is what will happen if the... Sudanese Government issues a law that the official religion of the Sudan must be Islam". "See a letter from Southern Sudan Political Emergency Committee, to Governor-General, 23 January, 1953 (signed by M. Abigo Baraba, President), FO 371/102747.

⁴⁹. Deng D. Akol Ruay, The Politics of Two Sudans, 1994, p.64. For the text of the agreement between the Sudanese parties and the Egyptian government see, "All parties agreement", FO 371/102742, no 160, 10 Jan 1953.

future of the country. The above agreement is simply a new item that proves once again, that Northern politicians consider Southerners and want to keep them as well, in a permanent state of social inferiority, and at no rate as a living and effective part of the country. And this appears to be quite more awkward, when one considers the differences in race, culture and religion the peoples of the Southern Sudan have in comparison to those in the North... But the fact is that if Northern Sudanese want a perfectly unique nation, they ought to moderate their pretensions on religious ground by recognising perfectly equal religious rights to all and not always to draw our attention to the Middle East...⁵⁰

Before self-determination there was to be a transitional period, not exceeding three years, during which time the dual administration would be liquidated.⁵¹ The Agreement also set up three international commissions: one to supervise elections; a second to control the exercise by the Governor-General of his discretionary power; and a third consisting of representatives of Egypt, Britain and three Sudanese members to complete Sudanization of administration, the police and, create a Sudanese Defence Force.⁵² Self-determination was also to be exercised by Sudanese through a

⁵⁰. See letter from Michael Watta Alijo Baraba to Mr Eden, Minister of Foreign affairs, protesting the All Parties Agreement for excluding the Southern Sudanese, FO 371/102747, no 291, 23 Jan 1953.

⁵¹. See correspondence in FO 371/96896 and 96910; SPIS10, October- November 1952; See also Muddathir Abdel Rahim, Imperialism, pp. 21-13.

⁵². See M.W. Daly, Imperial Sudan: The Anglo-Egyptian Condominium 1934-1956, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p.296.

Constituent Assembly, which was to choose between union with Egypt or independence for the Sudan.

Intellectuals from the North constantly claimed that the South during the 1950s had no political organization from which to send representatives to Cairo. The celebrated Northern Sudanese historian Mohammed Omer Beshir, influenced by the stereotype of the Southern Sudan's isolation in "the very heart of Africa", used this justification to explain the South's exclusion from his discussion of the forces that shaped the "Sudanese Nation". He considered Southern Sudanese resistance to colonial rule as being based on "tribal concepts of beliefs", meriting no comparison with the religious and nationalist movement of the North.⁵³

Mohamed Ahamed Mahgoub claimed that the unity between the North and the South had already been established in 1947 during the Juba Conference.⁵⁴ Ignoring the exclusive and the uncivil⁵⁵ nature of the Northern nationalism, Salah Hassan,

⁵³. Mohammed Omer Beshir, Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan, London, Rex Collins, 1974, pp.2,52.

⁵⁴. See Mohammed Ahamed Mahgoub, Democracy on Trial, London, Andre Deutsch, 1974, Chapter 3.

claimed that:

Unity has prevailed in spite of the British colonial policies of "divide and conquer". The colonial separatist scheme was first defeated in the Juba Conference of 1947, when northerners as well as southerners agreed on an independent unified country, Sudan gained its independence in 1956... This was not a gift from the British or any other foreign power, but a consequence of the nationalistic struggle of the Sudanese people.⁵⁶

These above-mentioned arguments were historically false, and demonstrated the existence of Northern chauvinism based on the construction of the South as inferior and unnecessary to consult.

The perception that the people of the South had no political organization was rooted in the racist assumption that they were a "people without history".⁵⁷ Although the people of the South were not consulted, they did prepare themselves for the election, which took place in November and December 1953. There were two main political parties in the North, the National Unionist Party, which supported union with

⁵⁵. For more detailed study on ethnicity, nationalism and politics in Africa, see Bruce Berman, "Ethnicity, Patronage and the African State: The Politics of Uncivil Nationalism," African Affairs, vol.97, no.388, July 1998, 305-341.

⁵⁶. See Salah Hassan, 1993, p.18.

⁵⁷. See Kamal Osman Salih, "Sudan's Communal Conflict: Background, Causes, and Prospects for Reconciliation," in Sudan: The Forgotten Tragedy, published by

Egypt, and the Umma Party, which favoured complete independence. Prior to elections in 1953 a party was established in the South whose objective was the independence of the Sudan.⁵⁸ It was called the Southern Party. This party "had the support of the majority of Southern Intelligentsia, who were mostly Government servants in the various government departments."⁵⁹ The Southern Party operated under the leadership of Stanslaus Abdalla Paysama, Buth Diu and Abdel Rahman Sule. In 1954, the name of the Southern Party was changed to Liberal Party. This change in the name was intended to attract members from other parts of the country. The chairmanship of the party went to Benjamin Lwoki. Stanslaus Paysama became the Vice-chairman, Buth Diu the Secretary General, and Abdel Rahman Sule became the patron of Juba branch.⁶⁰

The objectives of the Liberal Party were a continuation of those initiated by the Southern political movement and those

United States Institute of Peace, Washington, D.C., 1994, pp.19-20.

⁵⁸. See despatch no 40 from P Adam to Mr Eden reporting political activity in the Southern Sudan, FO 371/108324, no 159, 25 Sept 1954.

⁵⁹. Report of Commission of Inquiry into the southern Sudan Disturbances, p. 85.

⁶⁰. See A.Magid Ali Bob and Samson S. Wassara, "The Emergence of the Organized Political Movement in Southern Sudan 1946-1972", in The Nationalist Movement in the Sudan, edited by Mahasin Abedlgadir, 1989, p.298.

of the Southern Party. The main objective "was to secure a self-government status for the South in terms of a federation. This demand was reflected in all the tactics and strategies of the party during the parliamentary period of the Sudan."⁶¹ Therefore, the Liberal Party, through the demand of federalism, attempted to advocate the distinctiveness of Southern Sudanese identity.

These competing visions about the self and other soon turned into hostility when the results of the Sudanization Commission were announced in October 1954. Northern Sudanese rapidly began to take over administrative positions in the South previously held by the British. The Commission had been charged with the task of replacing British officials and promoting Sudanese to fill their positions. The Commission not only Sudanized positions, but Northern Sudanized them. Not only were no Southerners appointed to positions in the North but in the South only four minor posts were given to Southerners while all the principal positions were taken by Northern civil servants. This policy of discrimination was aggravated by the exploitation of Southern economic resources by Northern merchants. A

merchant from Gogrial in Bahr el Ghazal summed the Southern Sudanese feeling:

The results of Sudanization have come with a very disappointing result, i.e., four Assistant District Commissioners and two Mamurs. Well as it appears, it means our fellow northerners want to colonise us for another hundred years.⁶²

Unconsulted politically, despised socially, disadvantaged economically, the people of the South were besieged by the discourse of "unity and diversity" and betrayed by the actions and attitudes of Northerners who had little respect for the people of the South and their aspirations.

In Oct. 1954, the Liberal Party called for a conference in Juba to discuss the effect of Sudanization. The conference passed a resolution that demanded federal status with the North, and called for all Southerners "to be ready for sacrifices". A letter written by Benjamin Lwoki, President of the Liberal Party, to Sir Anthony Eden reporting the resolutions of the Juba Conference, stated.

We need to end Condominium opinion just as much as we need to stop the rolling Northerner Colonialism {sic} in the South which now show itself clearly to a fool. That is why we agree to form a Parliament with the

⁶¹. Ibid., 299.

⁶². Quoted in Southern Sudan Disturbances, August 1955, p.114.

North as to a point of policy to liquidate the Condominium power in the Sudan, eventually to be independent of the North. Since the time has now come the machine of Sudanisation is running smoothly on the posts of terminating the Condominium rule, we should like to state that, the independence of the North and the South is no longer in any danger of imperialistic ties and therefore, we disclose that the North should consider whether it likes to form a Federation Government with the South or whether they (the Northerners) like the country to be two separate independent countries.⁶³

In reaction to this demand, the first Prime Minister, Sayed Isamil El Azhari, on June 13th, 1955 warned that his government would not hesitate to use force. If anybody or party threatened the unity of the Sudan, "the government shall not be lenient in this respect, it has army, its police and all its might."⁶⁴

The transition towards independence had institutionalized the hegemony of the North and marginalized the South. The structure of the "Sudanese" state, its organic law, its institutions and basic divisions of power remained as before. The Sudan came to be seen as an independent entity with an Arabic-Islamic identity. The people of the South realized that this institutionalized racism would constitute

⁶³. See Letter from Benjamin Lwoki to Sir A Eden, FO 371/108326, no. 193, 15 Nov. 1954.

⁶⁴. See Report of the Commission of Inquiry, 1956,p.87.

a threat to their identity and future. P. L. Roussel, a former British District Commissioner in the south until 1954, described his last three months in Southern Sudan:

We all had the feeling of being hemmed in by suspicion and intrigue. Everyone knew that something momentous was about to happen but few realised exactly what. Often groups of women would come and sit huddled under the trees in my garden and weep, saying that when I went away the menfolk would fight and their sons be killed. Some used to sing moving songs praising my predecessors and myself for having brought peace in which, unmolested, they had been able to watch their children grow up.⁶⁵

In July 1955, the government in Khartoum dismissed about 300 Southern workers from the Zande Scheme for their protest against Northernization of civil service in the South. By 1955, the Zande Scheme was the only cotton industry in the South, employing many thousands of Southerners, mainly Azande. The Southerners regarded this government action as a "deliberate attempts by the management - which is Northern to deprive Southerners of a livelihood and bring in northerners instead."⁶⁶ A contributing factor to the failure of the Zande Scheme was that the Zande had been `firmly

⁶⁵. See P. L. Roussel, "Last Days in the South Sudan," Time and Tide, 6 August 1955, published in 15 January 1955, p.67.

⁶⁶. Quoted in Southern Sudan Disturbances, August, 1955.p. 102.

handled' by chiefs and administrators, provoking resentment and resistance.⁶⁷ The revolt in the Zandeland quickly spread to all of Equatoria Province.⁶⁸

The Impact of the Army Uprising of 1955:

In accordance with the 1930s policy, the Anglo-Egyptian administration had created two separate army formations: one for the Northern region and another for the Southern provinces. However, following the Sudanization by the Northern Sudanese there was a persistent demand by Northern officials for the stationing of Northern troops in the South. A few months later, in August 1955, a mutiny broke out in the Southern Crops in Torit,⁶⁹ which was followed by disturbances mainly in Equatoria and the two other Southern provinces. The government forces killed more than 300 Southerners. The government also executed a greater number of Southerners when the Southern forces surrendered. Since

⁶⁷. See P de Schlippe, Shifting Cultivation in Africa: the Zande system of agriculture, London, 1956, and C Reining, The Zande Scheme, Evanston, 1966.

⁶⁸. See Southern mutiny: inward telegram no 192 from W. Luce, advisor to the Governor General, to FO reporting early signs of unrest in Torit, FO 371/113614, no. 116, 13 August 1955.

⁶⁹. The troops were drawn up on the parade in preparation to board trucks for Juba and then to proceed by steamer to Khartoum. The troops were apprehensive, for rumours had been circulating that the transfer to Khartoum was a plot to murder them. When the command was given to enter the trucks, No.1 platoon refused to obey and suddenly the whole

the mutiny the South has been continuously occupied by Northern troops of the Sudan National Army.

At independence in 1956, the people in the South viewed Northerners coming into the South as an invading army, a new "civilizing mission", bent on Arabizing and Islamicizing the South. Robert Collins explained the fundamental cause of the uprising in the South.

Long accustomed to the impeccable justice of paternal British administrators, the southern Sudanese could hardly adapt themselves to the rough and tumble politics of the emerging Sudan. The Arab was still a symbol of fear and hostility, and although his predatory habits displayed in the nineteenth century had been modified by British rule in the twentieth, the earlier restrictions against intercourse between the two Sudans prevented neither the north nor the south from understanding the changes undergone during British rule.⁷⁰

The declaration of independence in 1956 lacked the blessing of the South. The Southern Liberal Party in a statement refused to support a declaration of independence.⁷¹ There was no consensus about it in the Sudan, as Dunstan M. Wai noted:

company rushed to the ammunition stored, armed themselves.

⁷⁰. See Robert Collins, p.10.

⁷¹. See inward telegram from Benjamin Lwoki, President of the Liberal Party, to Mr Macmillan refusing to support a declaration of independence, FO 371/113619, no 239,

There is no argument to justify the exclusion of the south at the pre-government negotiations. It must therefore, be concluded that the [union] of the north and south was unilaterally decided upon by the Civil Secretary with the support and pressure from the north and without the prior consultation of the blessing of the south.⁷²

This struggle over history and identity has continued to grow after political independence. One writer has summed up the situation after independence, writing that:

The effect of chance in the formation of the states in this part of Africa have brought into cohabitation populations of Arab origin, and Negroes. The same nationality was given to the Moslems who are often already quite advanced, at times dressed in European garb, and to the Negroes who still go naked. The first govern the country, the latter, pagan with paint-streaked bodies, dance in a ring in their villages. If only they were able to be satisfied with dancing! Hunger, however, pushed them toward the north... Upon arrival from the south, entire families are installed in straw huts in isolated parts of the villages. Segregation is marked, and animosity evident. "If we don't keep these people at a distance" the Sudanese who belong to the "noble race" (from the north) say, "they will soon run the Nile Valley."⁷³

While British policy helped to strengthen the foundations for the construction of two competing identities, "African"

31 Oct 1955.

⁷². Dustan Wai, 1981, p.392.

⁷³. From "Experiment in Independence," New Outlook, vol.11, no.1, Sept. 1958, pp.28-31.

and "Arab", and while the Southern policy of 1930 was partly responsible for the creation of African identity in the South, it cannot be held solely responsible for creating the civil war in the Sudan. By 1956 the two main political parties in the North had consolidated the 1930s nationalist discourse. Consequently, these two parties failed to gain political legitimacy in the South due to their pro-Muslim and Arab identity. Both parties, despite their different political constituencies, agreed on the nature and the content of the Sudanese identity. They perceived Sudan as an Arab-Islamic nation. Sadig al Mahdi stated that:

The dominant feature of our nation is an Islamic one and its overpowering expression is Arab, and this nation will not have its entity identified and its prestige and pride preserved except under an Islamic revival.⁷⁴

Sadiq further argued that Southern Sudanese culture "was not a culture in itself."⁷⁵ Most members of Northern elites were the supporters of this dominant discourse. Two days after political independence, an article written by Mohammed Zieda, a Northerner, argued that:

Some newspapers are trying to convince us that we

⁷⁴. Cited in Dunstan Wai, The African-Arab Conflict, p. 117.

⁷⁵. Ibid.,

are an African state, it's a strange thing to hear it, we are an Arab Islamic state first before being an African state. Our allegiances to Islam and Arab, and then to Africa... Our peoples and politicians should be very careful to avoid this trap which was made by the Anglo-American colonialism, they want to divert us from our Arabism and Islamism so as to accept the idea that we are an African state. But, we are not going to lose our Arabism and Islamism.⁷⁶

The Northern nationalists began to construct their interpretation of the "southern problem". For them, the "southern problem" was a creation of the British administrative policies. In one typical editorial article, the problem of the South was understood as:

a product of the psychological complex among the educated people of the south, which was created by the British ... the demand for federal union by the people of the south was also a product of political factors invented by colonialism so as to gain from it...⁷⁷

Furthermore, it has been claimed that the people of the South were not "real 'Negroid' nations . . . they are not like the real 'Negroes' of the Central and West Africa . . . their (the people of the south) natural 'fate' is to stay within the boundary of the Sudan." ⁷⁸ The purposes of

⁷⁶. See "Mohammed Zieda, "Sudan as an Arab-Islamic state," Sout El Soudan (The Sudan's Voice), January 3, 1956, p.3.

⁷⁷. See "southern Problem", Sout El Soudan (Sudan's Voice), Feb. 15, 1956, p. 1.

⁷⁸. These views had been published in Sudan's Voice, Oct.22, 1956, pp.1, 4.

claiming that Southerners were not a real "Negroid" nation in this context was to represent them as people lacking identity and history, and thus not qualified for a federal state, let alone separation.

These interpretations of history and identity were translated into public policies during the 1956 debate regarding the constitution. For instance, the head of the *Sharia* (Islamic Laws) division of the judiciary argued that "the Sudan constitution must reflect the Islamic and Arab traditions of the Sudan."⁷⁹ Yusuf Fadl Hassan, a historian from the North, claimed that national unity in the Sudan can be based on Arabization and Islamization because these (Arabization and Islamization) could create "a feeling of cohesion among the heterogeneous inhabitants of the country and its gradual absorption into the Arab world."⁸⁰ Sadiq al-Mahdi, leader of the Umma Party, is reputed to have said: "the failure of Islam in the southern Sudan would be the

Interestingly, the author also quoted G.G. Seligman's work, Pagan Tribes, to support his interpretation.

⁷⁹. This line of argument appealed to the Muslim members of the 1967 national constitution Draft Committee, but not to the Christian members representatives of the South, who later boycotted the Committee.

⁸⁰. For more details in this discourse of Arabization and Islamization see Yusuf Fadl Hassan, Islam in the Sudan, Edinburgh University Press, 1967, p. 181.

failure of Sudanese Muslims to the international Islamic cause. Islam has a holy mission in Africa and southern Sudan is the beginning of that mission."⁸¹ Sadiq, then, like many Northern intellectuals, called for the Arabization and Islamization of the South.

Since then, Arabism and Islamism have been consistent themes in all post-independence governments. Isma'il al Azhari, the first Prime Minister, advocated Arabism as the identity of the Sudan, regardless of the country's multiple identities.⁸² As a result, the policy of assimilation has been used in the South to create the myth of national integration in the Sudan. For instance, El-Affendi has argued that:

[the] first leader of the Sudanese Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwan), Ali Talb-Allah, was influenced by the romantic vision which coloured the view of early nationalists towards the south... [H]e campaigned vigorously for north-south unity in the run-up to the 1947 Juba Conference, and even married a southern woman to emphasize his commitment to unity.⁸³

⁸¹. Cited by Gabriel R. Warburg, "The Sharia in Sudan: Implementation and Repercussions, 1983-1989," Middle East Journal, vol.44, no.4, 1990, p.633.

⁸². See Gatkouth James Mabor, "Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Sudan", The Ecumenical Review, vol.47, no.2, 1995, p. 213

⁸³. Abdelwahab el-Affendi, "Discovering the South': Sudanese Dilemma for Islam in

El-Affendi's ideas, viewing Southerners as their lost brothers "snatched away by the aliens and long due back... to be reshaped anew,"⁸⁴ have not fully understood the historical relationship between the formation of the state and the invention of identity in the Sudan.

Writing on the formation of the Sudanese state, Peter Kok, a Southern Sudanese scholar, has concluded that:

British colonialism defined and consolidated the state in the Sudan. Among its legacies are the consolidations of an Arab-Islamic hegemonic bloc in North-Central Sudan, and the conservation of underdevelopment and tribal peculiarities in the South. This evolved into the structural disequilibrium which manifests itself in the conflictual centre-periphery dichotomy. To most Southern Sudanese and indeed to some British colonial officials, the most untenable part of the British legacy was the handing over of the state to the northern Sudanese nationalists, without any safeguards for the South and other marginalized regions in the African belt. The era of *jellaba* rule commenced with the granting of self-government in 1954. The era of crisis and conflict also began then.⁸⁵

In the Sudan, the state was created before a nation. The

Africa", African Affairs, vol.89, July 1990,p.373.

⁸⁴. Ibid., pp.372-3.

⁸⁵. Peter Kok, Sudan: "Between Radical Restructuring and Deconstruction of State

main efforts of the state then were to limit and encourage selective nationalism.⁸⁶ As a result, the official boundaries purposefully defined and enforced who was imagined as part of the "Arab Sudanese nation" and who was not. Thus, specific exclusion has provided a crucial referent demarcating those included. In such instances, group formation and identities are shaped and manifested through the state.⁸⁷ Inclusion then solidifies loyalty among those officially incorporated as Arab and Muslim. While such nationalism may weaken some groups' identities and loyalties in Western and Eastern Sudan by their inclusion, it also reinforces solidarity among Southern Sudanese purposefully excluded. The distinctiveness of Southern Sudanese historical experience has been expressed in Francis Deng's novel, Seed of Redemption. In this novel, one of the leaders of the rebellion on the eve of his flight to the bush argued:

The problem is clearer in the south, because we have retained our sense of identity, pride and

Systems", Review of African Political Economy, No.70, 1995, p.556.

⁸⁶. For a more state-centered analysis of nationalism see Ernest Gellner, Nations and Nationalism, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983; John Breuilly, Nationalism and the State, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

⁸⁷. Paul Starr, "Social Categories and Claims in the Liberal State," in Mary Douglas and David Hull (eds.), How Classification Works, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992, p.169.

dignity as the indigenous Sudanese people. But our kindred peoples in the North have been tortured, subjugated, mutilated and made to deny what they are, preferring instead to pass as "Arab" under the shelter of Islam and Arab culture.⁸⁸

In response to the denial of Southern Sudanese demand for federalism, a new generation of militant nationalist leaders emerged in the South seeking independence from the North. Their immediate objective was to fight against the hegemony of the North.

⁸⁸. See Francis Deng, Seed of Redemption, New York: Lilian Barber Press, 1986, p.171.

Chapter Five

The Rise of Southern Nationalism and Politics of Resistance:1955-1993

We would like to assure the United Nations that we are not against racial harmony, for indeed we are all human beings but were are against harsh and unfair treatment or system which is usually associated with colonial practice.¹

THE FIRST PHASE OF THE CIVIL WAR: 1955-72

The first phase of the Sudan's civil war dates from the uprising of the Equatorial Corps in August 1955, when Southern troops and police revolted in Torit and other main cities in the South. Although the revolt was suppressed by the central government, some Southern troops escaped to the bush in Equatoria. This was the beginning of the modern Southern Sudanese armed resistance to oppression and marginalization. Although it took the form of a "mutiny", as has been described first by Ismail Azhari, Prime Minister of the Sudan, and British officials,² it signalled the rise of

¹. From Sudan African Closed Districts National Union(SACDNU) Petition to United Nations, 1963, p.3.

². See "inward telegram no. 205 from W H Luce to Foreign Office reporting the outbreak of a mutiny in Torit," FO 371/113697, no 1, 18 Aug 1955.

Southern nationalism in response to the Northernization of the civil service in the South. Through this policy, the hegemony of the North was further extended, exacerbated by the attitude of racial and cultural superiority on the part of the dominant groups of the Northern Sudan³ based on their claim to Arab descent.

Given the hostilities and resentment that had built up over decades, civil war in the Sudan was predictable. The revolt of 1955 inaugurated the first phase of war which was to last for seventeen years. The immediate incident which led to the revolt in the South was a telegram, purported to have originated from the Prime Minister, Ismail EL Azhari, and sent to Northern administrators in the South. The telegram confirmed the doubts and suspicions of Southerners. The text

³. By dominant groups I refer to three categories of people who benefited from the British administration: the large merchants; some "tribal" leaders; and religious leaders. In the central Sudan, the primary source of wealth was agriculture, which involved private pump schemes along the Nile. The last category included two prominent families, the Mahdi and the Mirghani, who were able to accumulate considerable wealth through dues paid to them by their followers. These three groups were able to consolidate their economic power prior to independence, and who came to express their group interests through the various political parties that came to dominate politics in the Sudan. For more details see Ahmad Alawad, "Northern Sudanese Political Parties and the Civil War," in Civil War in the Sudan (eds.), by M.W. Daly and Ahmad Alawad.

of that telegram, as quoted by the Report of the Commission⁴ on Southern Sudan Disturbances, was as follows:

To all my administrators in the southern provinces. I have just signed a document for self-determination. Don't listen to the -childish complaints of the southerners. Prosecute them, oppress them, ill-treat them according to my orders. Any administrator who fails to comply with my orders will be liable to prosecution.⁵

Despite Southern efforts demanding federalism to stop a Northern invasion, the government in Khartoum decided to send Northern troops to the South. The first group of Northern troops arrived by air on 10 August 1955. As a result, many Southern civilians took their families and left Juba, the capital city of the South, as they believed that Northern troops were coming to kill them in revenge for Northern Sudanese that had been killed during the revolt. A few days later Southern troops revolted at Torit, Equatoria. There was shooting and many people were killed on both sides.

⁴. On 8th Sept. 1955, just few weeks after the revolt in the South, the government appointed a three-man commission to inquire into, and report upon, the disturbances in the Southern Sudan and their underlying causes. The commission was under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice Tawifik Cotran (Indian born), with a Northern, Sayed Khalfa Mahjoub and a Southern chief, Mr. Lolik Lado, as members.

⁵. Quoted in Southern Sudan Disturbances Report, August 1955, p. 82.

The report on Southern Sudan disturbances also indicated that among other causes of the revolt was the conduct of some Northern Sudanese *jallaba* (traders) in the South. These traders treated Southerners as inferiors and called them *abeed* (slaves).⁶ As we have seen in chapter three, the practice of slave trading and raising by Northern Sudanese traders in Southern Sudan contributed to the creation of an attitude of Arab supremacy in the Sudan. This attitude created serious resentment and ill-feeling among Southern people. The report also gave evidence of the Northerners' attitude stating that:

It is unfortunately true that many northern Sudanese, especially from among the uneducated class, regard the southerners as of an inferior race, and the Gallaba in southern Sudan form no exception to this, as the majority of them are uneducated. The traders refer to the southerners, and often call them *Abeed* (slaves). This practice of calling southerners *Abeed* is widespread throughout the three southern provinces. It is certainly a contemptuous term, and is a constant reminder to the southerners of the old days of the slave trade.⁷

On 20 August the Sudan Government proclaimed a state of

⁶. These Northern traders "have created a process of dependency in which the peoples of the South would increasingly rely on market goods, reduce the productivity of their rich natural environment, and increase the outflow of their local products", See Seed of Redemption, p.47.

⁷. See Report of the Commission of Enquiry, pp. 123-24.

emergency in the three Southern provinces. On 22 August the Prime Minister Ismail El Azhari, called on Southern troops at Torit to surrender. They refused to do so, instead requesting that Northern troops be evacuated from the South. Sir Knox Helm, the British Governor-General, who was on leave in Scotland when the revolt began, came back to Khartoum and sent a message to the Southern troops repeating the Prime Minister's assurance that there would be a full investigation into the causes of the revolt and that they would be properly treated as military prisoners. However, those who surrendered were either executed or imprisoned without trial. About 300 Southerners were executed and about 2,000 Southerners were transported to the Northern prisons for hard labour.⁸ Before the revolt was suppressed some 261 Northerners and 75 Southerners had lost their lives.

Politics in the Sudan from 1956-69 were characterised by Muslim sectarian domination of the main Northern political parties, and the existence of weak Southern political parties. Southern demands for federalism, along with the weakness of the sectarian parties, forced the civilian

⁸. See Joseph Oduho and William Deng, The Problem of the Southern Sudan, London: 1963, 33.

government in 1958 to hand over power to General Abboud, the commander of the army. This military government ruled until 1964 when public discontent over the weak economy, political repression, and an escalating civil war in the South forced the army out of government. Civilian government ruled until Colonel Jaafar Nimeiri overthrew the government on 25 May 1969. Despite the succession of civilian and military governments in the Sudan after independence, the state continued to reproduce the sectarian groups that had benefited from the colonial system. Tim Niblock describes how the process of creating different groupings continued to be reproduced after independence. He argues:

The political history of the 1956-69 period was dominated by one central characteristic: political influence and authority rested with those social groupings which had benefited from the distribution of resources under the Condominium ... those who framed government policy were not inclined to undertake a radical reformation of the country's socio-economic structures. The two kinds of imbalance or inequality which had become prominent under the Condominium- differentiating both regions of the country and social groupings within it- continued and, indeed, became more marked.⁹

Abboud's regime in 1958 put an end to parliamentary politics

⁹. See Tim Niblock, Class and Power, Albany: State University of New York, 1987, p.204.

after only two years of independence.¹⁰ The "southern problem" was the major factor that brought the army into power.¹¹ It had been the intention of the dominant Northern political parties after independence to impose upon the South the racist project of "national unity" through Arabization and Islamization. Civilian governments failed to successfully undertake this task. It was expected that by the dominant Northern parties that the military would carry it through even if this meant the application of brutal force. Thus, the regime had to reproduce the notion of "Sudanese nationalism" in which the values of the past fused with the dominant vision of history and deep emotional identification of being Arab and Muslim.¹² Arabization and Islamization, both of which were alien to the people of the South, became the two main goals of the military government in the Sudan. The first step the Abboud government took was

¹⁰. For detailed study, see Peter K. Bechtold, Politics in the Sudan: Parliamentary and Military Rule in an Emerging African Nation, New York: Praeger, 1970.

¹¹. Ezboni Mondiri's draft of the Federal Party's platform during the election campaign for the first Constituent Assembly in 1958, implied autonomy. Mondiri called for official placing of Christianity and English on a par with Islam and Arabic. He demanded separate administrative, educational and developmental programmes for the South. For more details see Keith Kyle, "The Southern Problem in the Sudan," The World Today, vol. 22, 1966, p.513.

¹². See Robert Collins, p.10.

to restrict the activities of missionaries in the South. The government stated its policy as follows:

The policy of restricting the activity of the missions in the religious sphere in order to protect the country from the danger of their success is now entering upon a decisive phase, after full inquiries on various matters and an exchange of opinions. I ask the governors to keep this policy secret, so that the missionaries do not learn anything of our intentions, and will thus be able to find any counter measures to our policy.¹³

The military government also introduced numerous measures to legitimise Northern hegemony and to facilitate the spread of Arabic language and Islam in the South. For instance, all senior administrative posts in the South were given to Northern officials, while Southerners occupying junior posts were transferred to the North where their influence was marginal. People from the North replaced Southerners in the army and the police. Like the Northern political parties, the military regime thought that cultural and political unification was to be brought about through education in Arabic and religious instruction in Islam. Friday replaced Sunday as the weekly day of rest in the South, Islamic

¹³. An Arabic circular letter from Hassan Ali, the under Secretary of the Ministry of the interior to the Governor of Equatoria, Upper Nile and Bahr el-Ghazal Provinces, 27th July 1960, cited in Two Sudans, p. 98.

conversion and education were encouraged, and all Christian missionaries were expelled from the South by 1964.¹⁴ The government embarked on implementing Islamization. Robert Collins has argued that:

To encourage the growth of Islam the Military government constructed mosques, established Islamic schools (*Ma'had*) and subsidised Muslim propaganda under the direction of the Department of Religious Affairs. Christian missionary activities were increasingly restricted under "The Missionary Societies Act" of 1962 and two years later all Christian missionaries were summarily expelled.¹⁵

During the Abboud period, religion became the key political issue with the government in Khartoum attempting to invent, and implement an Islamic national identity. Abboud refused to believe that people in the South would have a problem with his project of imposed hegemony. He, like many Northern scholars, believed that missionaries were troublemakers, and thus put restrictions on them and their work. This growing political oppression and hostility towards the South was demonstrated in a speech by Ali Baldo, Military Governor of

¹⁴. Christian missionary societies established themselves in the South as early as 1848, but their active role began with the British reconquest in 1898. Among these societies were the Anglican Church, Catholics and the United Presbyterian Church of America. For more detailed see Ch.2, and appendices in, Education, Religion and Politics in South Sudan, 1899-1964, 1981

¹⁵. See Robert Collins, p.11.

Equatoria, delivered in Juba in 1961. Baldo stated that:

We thank God that by virtue of the marvellous efforts of the Revolutionary Government, the country will remain forever united. You should turn a deaf ear to any evil talk which comes from politicians, as you well know what has come of them in the past few years and you certainly don't want 'bloodshed again in the south'. You are aware that any body who influences with public peace and tranquillity will be dealt with severely and at once. During the days of Parliament, the southern parliamentary members advocated a federal government for the south. Such ideas are gone with politicians.¹⁶

After the military coup of 1958 Southern resistance continued to grow both inside and outside Sudan. Southern leaders went underground and/or left Sudan to exile thus marking the beginning of what would grow into large-scale migrations of Southern refugees into Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and Central African Republic. This exodus grew to millions as fear was generated by Abboud's violent policy. In Feb. 1962, Southern leaders in exile established the Sudan African Closed District National Union (SACDNU). Joseph Oduhu, school teacher and a prominent Southern nationalist, became its President and William Deng, a public administrator, its Secretary General, with Aggrey Jaden, a graduate of Gordon College, becoming Assistant Secretary

¹⁶. Cited in Khartoum Morning News, 29 March 1961.

General. The policy of SACDNU was to obtain complete independence for the South. This was to be achieved by diplomatic and political means.¹⁷ SACDNU sent petitions to the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity,¹⁸ urging these bodies to support the South in its struggle against the North. The relationship between the North and the South was characterised in these petitions as

Relations between the two ethnic groups in the Sudan, one of born masters for the Arabs and of slaves for the southerners and descendants of exslaves who live in the north. Some of the latter have accepted their inferior position as 'natural'. This is the position the Arabs want to create in the south, one of inferiority.¹⁹

Regarding education in the South, the petitions argued that:

In the educational field, southern Sudanese benefited nothing since independence of the Sudan, 1st January 1956. Education is going backward both in quantity and quality. The military Junta which seized power in 1958 was so engaged with military matters that it had no time to pay attention to education in the south. Instead of building new schools, both Arab civil and military Governments busied themselves in closing private Mission schools and transferring some of them to new sites far away from Christian atmosphere. Some of the

¹⁷. The awakening of Africa and the rise of nationalistic pride in the African identity in the 1960s, contributed to the rise of Southern determination to fight for what they saw as his/her dignity.

¹⁸. Sudan African Closed District National Union Petition to the OAU, 1963, 16 Dec. 1963.

¹⁹. See SACDNU Petition to O.A.U., 1963, p.12.

schools for there were no Muslim teachers were closed down. Example of schools closed down are: Bussere, Mundri training colleges and Yambio Agricultural school. Maridi Institute was transferred north and its building used as Army barracks.²⁰

Political independence was seen by Abboud's regime as a means of maintaining the Sudan's territorial "integrity" and removing an artificial barrier to the progress of Islam and Arab culture in Southern Sudan. The regime's approach to "national unity" was based on the assimilation of Southerners to Northern Sudanese cultural norms. This could be achieved through education, the construction of mosques, and the restriction of Christian missionary activities. The rise of Southern nationalism and its military activities were viewed by the Northern politicians as part of "external plan" against the Sudan, of a Christian-Zionist strategy against Islam.

Despite these attacks, the Southern nationalist movement continued to educate the international community about its struggles and views. Regarding the role of religion in diversified society like the Sudan, the Southern petitioners stated that:

²⁰. Sudan African Closed District National Union Petition to the United Nations, 1963, p.14.

Christianity and Islam have not divided Africans elsewhere in Black Africa. We can see this among the African members of the French Community, Tanganyika and Nigeria of the Commonwealth and other places. If Islam and Arabic language are essential to unity, why have not all the Arab Muslim countries united into a single nation? If the answer is no, then the south will never unite with the north under these circumstances.²¹

This peaceful approach failed to force the government in Khartoum to have any regard for the demand of Southern Sudanese for their rights. In response, militant Southern leaders came to realise that peaceful means had failed, and that the military option had to be considered. Southern nationalists, convinced that they had to achieve independence for the South, decided that they would have to fight for it. Thus, exiled civil servants and politicians formed a political movement in 1962. This was shortly followed by military operations in 1963 when many students and local police fled to the bush and made contact with those who had revolted in 1955. By 1963, SACDNU changed its name to Sudan African National Union (SANU) and its head office was transferred from Kinshasa to Kampala in Uganda.²² SANU also established a military body called Anya-

²¹. Ibid., p.12.

²². "Southern Sudanese to hit back," Africa, no.20, 1965, p.4

Nya.²³

Yangu Alexis Mbali, a Southerner, in his book, The Nile Turns Red, has argued that for the south, the military regime meant the silencing of any talk of federation. Every enlightened southerner was considered to be a "politician" and therefore a potential trouble-maker. At the time, according to Albino, "enlightened appears to have meant anything from being educated, to merely being neatly dressed, and failing to behave as an inferior to northern Sudanese."²⁴ Reproducing the old images and stereotypes, Abboud's regime considered Southern Sudanese little more than animals. For example,

In August 1959, at Katire village, northern police, saw some children playing with rocks and asked them if they were monkeys. When told ... that they were a group of children, he shot one - a six year-old boy. The case was heard at Torit by a District Commissioner, who told the father of the boy that the case was simple because the police man did not know if what he was shooting at was a human being or a monkey.²⁵

²³. Anya-Nya means in the Madi, Moru and Lotuko languages snake poison. Also according to Oliver Albino, it means literally the 'venom of the Gabon viper'.

²⁴. See Oliver Albino, The Sudan: Southern View, London, 1960, p.44.

²⁵. See War and Peace in the Sudan, p.58.

The military regime's aggression against civilians increased with the purpose of intimidating people suspected of helping the nationalist movement in the South. For instance:

The Grinti prison in Bahrel Ghazal gained an infamous reputation. Reports by Verona Fathers told of floggings at this prison and tortures - including the use of metal rings and metal balls which almost pushed the eyes out of the head - to get confession. One of the tortures involved the use of a red chilli, pepper or powder known as shatta. A bag was filled with this and the victim's head - was forced into the bag and kept there until he could not breathe any longer and his eyes were inflamed.²⁶

Also in March 1964,

(A) school teacher at Diem Zubeir was tortured by government soldiers who first cut off one of his arms, then one of his legs and finally slit his throat. His wife was forced to bury his body and get out of her government supplied house. She was sexually assaulted by the soldiers and beaten, shatta (Red pepper) was then rubbed into the open wounds on her body and on her children.²⁷ (Sic)

With the increasing of cultural and physical violence, the Anya-Nya,²⁸ the military wing of SANU intensified the fight

²⁶. Eprile Cecil, War and Peace in the Sudan, p.57.

²⁷. Ibid., p.57.

²⁸. The Anya-Nya at first were armed with only spears, machettes and bows and arrows, a part from the few guns they captured from the Army. However by 1965 their military position changed when they came into possession of quantities of arms which had originally been transported, with Khartoum's help, from Algeria and Egypt through Southern Sudan to the Congolese rebel Simbas. These arms were either abandoned by the rebel Simbas, following the defeat of their revolt against Tschombe government, or were sold by them for food as they fled across the

for the right of self-determination for the South, with independence as the option.²⁹ The name Anya-nya was not applied to all groups until late in the 1960s. For some years Southern guerrilla forces organised themselves along ethnic lines, and declared 'republics' which represented very restricted localities.³⁰ It was only during the last two or three years of the first war that those Southern nationalists' forces became one united military body.³¹ By 1964, the Anya-Nya was in control of the countryside of the South. Many government military posts in the South were abandoned and taxes ceased to be collected from the people by government officials.

By the end of the Abboud military regime in 1964, a faction of the SANU, led by William Deng abandoned the demand for

border into the Sudan.

²⁹. See Sudan Resistance movement, the Anya-Nya Struggle, Background and Objectives, p. 7, 1971.

³⁰. For instance, they were Samuel Abujohn's 'Sue River Republic' in Zande country in western Equatoria, and Akuot Atem's 'Anyidi Republic' in Bor District of Upper Nile.

³¹. According to Douglas Johnson and Gerard, "the unification of the Anya-Nya army came about in 1970 largely because Joseph Lagu, a senior Equatorian leader, was supported by Israel through the brokerage of General Idi Amin Dada, then chief of staff of the Ugandan army, who had close personal alliances with Lagu's ethnic group, the Madi." See Civil War in the Sudan, 1993, p.119.

separation and returned to the Sudan to become legally recognized by the government.³² Its main internal rival was the Southern Front.³³ The differences between SANU and the SF were based mainly on personal ambition, rather than stated goals.³⁴ On these differences among the Southern politicians, Wai argued that:

All these politicians are confused and have lost contact with the real issues involved in the north-south conflict...Sheer personal ambition has led to power struggles resulting in internal divisions, thereby creating a meaningless government purporting to represent the southern Sudanese...All these factions suffer from the lack of a serious intention to serve the people they claim to lead, and egoistic pursuits occupy much of their time.³⁵

³². William Deng, the President of SANU was assassinated on 9 May 1968 after he returned from exile. His car was ambushed in the district of Rumbeck in the Southern province of Bahr al-Ghazal. Although the identity of his assassins was not revealed, many Southern Sudanese accused the ruling parties of committing the crime.

³³. See Voice of Southern Sudan, vol.2, no.4, February 1965, p.10.

³⁴. After the Round Table Conference William Deng remained in Khartoum and founded SANU-inside the Sudan. Also in June 1965, in East Africa, Joseph Oduho, Father Saturnino and other broke a way from SANU in exile formed a new group called the Azania Liberation Front. Aggrey Jaden then organised another new organization which he called the Sudan African Liberation Front. The two groups later on merged to become African Liberation Front. Meanwhile, inside the Sudan, two other small Southern parties had been established in 1965: the old Liberal Party revived by veterans Stanislaus Paysama and Buth Dui, and the Sudan United Party founded by Santino Deng. These last two parties were mainly control by Northern political parties.

³⁵. Dunstan Wai, " Political Trends in the Sudan and the Future of the South," in The Southern Sudan (ed.), by Dunstan Wai, London, 1973, p.165.

After the negotiations between the army and the United Front of professionals and trade unions, a caretaker government was established. Sirr al Khatim al Khalifa, a civil servant with no political affiliations, was made Prime Minister. The 1964-5 caretaker government of Sirr al-Khatim, which was dominated by an alliance of professionals and trade unions, made an attempt at a political settlement of the conflict. This attempt culminated in the convening of the Round Table Conference in 1965.³⁶ The Round Table Conference was a product of Southern people pressure on government to stop the war and to seek an immediate solution.

In a letter to the Prime Minister, Southern Sudanese students, who were only a handful³⁷ at the University of Khartoum, wrote:

... The six years of military rule characterised

³⁶. Round table Conference was attend by 27 Southern delegates selected from within the Sudan and from the exile leaders. 18 Northerners representing six Northern political parties, and observers from Algeria, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, United Arab Republic and Uganda.

³⁷. In 1977, only 250 universities students from the South were undertaking undergraduate studies. For more details about the problem of education and manpower in the South Sudan, see "International Bank of Reconstruction and Development, Project Performance Audit Report, Sudan -Southern region," Credit 476-SU, Washington, 1981.

by campaigns of genocide in the south, the flight of thousands of southerners...to the neighbouring countries. But, inspite of these terroristic methods adopted by the government, the southern people stood up to resist the military tyranny...One would have expected that the first concern of the new government and the political parties would be to seek an immediate solution to the southern problem. But, unfortunately, the government has only admitted the existence of the problem without taking any positive measures (sic)³⁸

In a letter to the Prime Minster in Nov. 1964, SANU suggested a round table Conference of all Sudanese political parties to discuss the constitutional relationship between North and South³⁹. This was the second conference in which representatives of the two regions met to discuss their mutual concerns. During the conference, Southerners demanded federation, self-determination, or separation be included as options. Northerners rejected all these demands and even insisted that there was "no place in the Sudan for a federal system."⁴⁰

The conference also illustrated the competing visions of

³⁸. A letter from Southern Sudanese students at University of Khartoum, to the Prime Minister of the Sudan, 13th. December 1964,p.2.

³⁹. SANU letter to Prime Minister of the Sudan on political relations between North and South, Nov. 1964.

⁴⁰. See Mohammed Omer Beshir, Southern Sudan Background to Conflict, 1968, p. 175.

identities in the Sudan. Aggrey Jaden of the Sudan African National Union (SANU) argued that:

There are in fact two Sudans and the most important thing is that there can never be a basis of unity between the two. There is nothing in common between the various sections of the community; no body of shared beliefs, no identity of interests, no local signs of unity and above all, the Sudan has failed to compose a single community. The northern Sudanese claim for unity is based on historical accident and imposed political domination over the southern Sudan.⁴¹

Some Southern Sudanese wrote in supporting Jaden's view. One Southern newspaper stated in an editorial that:

There is little in common between the north and the south except our mother the Nile and the accident of common colonial masters...It was the belief of the southerners that Sudan was a multi-racial and multi-national state and it should have developed as such...Unfortunately, the experiment of co-existence between the Arabs and the Africans has failed.⁴²

In response to Aggrey Jaden's argument, Ismail el-Azhari, the Prime Minister asserted Arab-Islamic identity in his speech to the conference.

We are proud of our Arab origin, of our Arabism and of being Moslems. The Arabs came to this

⁴¹. Quoted in Francis Mading Deng, Dynamics of Identification: A Basis for National Integration in the Sudan, Khartoum University Press, 1973, p.41.

⁴². Francis Deng, Dynamics of Identification, p.41.

continent, as pioneers, to disseminate a genuine culture, and promote sound principles which have shed enlightenment and civilization throughout Africa at a time when Europe was plunged into the abyss of darkness, ignorance and doctrinal and scholarly backwardness. It is our ancestors who held the torch high and led the caravan of liberation and advancement; and it is they who provided a superior melting-pot for Greek, Persian and Indian culture, giving them the chance to react with all that was noble in Arab culture, and handing them back to the rest of the world as a guide to those who wished to extend the frontiers of learning.⁴³

At the conference, the dominant Northern political parties suggested a regional government, which the Southern parties dismissed as the equivalent of unconditional unity. As a result the conference failed to agree on a formula for unity.⁴⁴

General elections were held in 1965 and an Umma-DUP coalition government was formed with Mohammad Ahmad Mahjoub as Prime Minister. Mahjoub was known for his open racism towards the Southern people. Mahjoub announced his new Southern policy on 26 June 1965:

⁴³. *ibid.*, p.74.

⁴⁴. See scheme of proposals by the Northern political parties for the settlement of the "southern question" during Round Table Conference. About the Southern problem and the conference see also Mohamed Omer Beshir, The Southern Sudan, London: C. Hurst and Co., 1975, p.13. Beshir was also a secretary to the conference.

(My Government) will face the southern problem, which was inherited from the imperialists, by adopting a clear and firm policy which will affirm the unity of the country and the prosperity of the people without discrimination. We will not permit any foreign intervention and will liquidate terrorist organizations and unlawful blocks by making a full seizure of arms. Security forces will be fully empowered to deal with whoever attempts to endanger the security of the people or obstruct their progress.⁴⁵

He had also said that the "only language southerners understand is force."⁴⁶ Mahjoub insisted that the resolutions of the Round Table Conference would not be implemented until 'law and order' was restored in the South. The policy of Arabicization and Islamization was resumed. Arab countries declared their support for the Sudan in its war against the South and supplied it with weapons. One newspaper reported that, "Cairo has placed different types of weapons at the disposal of the Sudan ... it is also learnt that the Saudi government has offered the Sudan weapons valued at LS 2.5 million."⁴⁷ Mahjoub's rule saw one of the bloodiest campaigns in the South.⁴⁸ Many villages

⁴⁵. The Vigilant, 27 June 1965.

⁴⁶. See Oliver Albino, p.40.

⁴⁷. See El Sahafa Newspaper 25th Sept. 1965.

⁴⁸. The total number of Southerners killed between 1963 and 1966 was estimated at more than 500,000.

were burned and the peoples fled to neighbouring countries. One of the most ruthless massacres took place at Juba on 8-9 July 1965 when an estimated 1,400 people were killed. Also during the same month another massacre took place at Wau, in Bahr el Ghazal province, where 76 people were killed while attending a wedding ceremony.⁴⁹

Mahjoub also applied the strategy of divide and rule to turn Southerners against each other. He also applied the British colonial method of pacification to suppress the Southern nationalism.⁵⁰ A Northern newspaper justified these policies on the basis that:

Struggle against the mutiny is to determine the future of Arab civilization in this part of our country. The restoration of the Arab Islamic civilization in the south does not mean Arab colonisation but it means the sharing of one civilization which is the natural venue for the southerners to civilization.⁵¹

The reaction of the Southern Sudanese to Mahjoub's policy was expressed in an editorial in The Vigilant, the only

⁴⁹. Dunstan M. Wai, 1981, p. 109.

⁵⁰. During this period the government began to call Southern people as, imperialist stooges, and enemies of Islam and Arabism.

⁵¹. AL-Nil editorial, issue 14 July, 1965.

Southern newspaper:

There are many southerners who did not believe that there had been a change of heart from the part of the north, and that all talk of peaceful solution was nothing but double-talk. their case has been made out. We deeply regret to tell the Prime Minister that the chances of a permanent solution of the southern problem by military force are extremely remote...The Prime Minister talks of peaceful solution after he has crushed the resistance movement...By peaceful solution, we mean a solution by which we get rid of shedding of more blood.⁵²

Mahjoub, like many Northern politicians, believed in the racial and cultural superiority of the Arabs. According to one Southerner:

He applied terror and destruction of life and property as a means of solving the problem of the south. He had no sympathy for the suffering of the southern people as a result of the operation of his policies because, it seems he was only interested in the land and not its people who were racially and culturally different from his own.⁵³

In response to the Mahjoub policy of Arab and Islamic supremacy, Aggrey Jaden wrote a letter to the Mahjoub calling for independence for Southern Sudanese.

... Southern Sudan is determined to resist and to liberate itself from Sudan Arab Political and

⁵². The Vigilant, 27 June 1965

⁵³. Deng D. Akol Ruay, The Politics of Two Sudans, Uppsala: The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1969, p.129

Racial domination. We began to defend ourselves against Arab violence with bows and arrows. Now, we control large areas of the southern Sudan despite the fact that your army has very modern weapons. This fact should be enough to show you that we have a just and natural cause to fight for and are determined to have it at all costs...⁵⁴

By 1969 the civil war had escalated in the South while the Southern political and military forces had fragmented and divided along ethnic lines. However, Joseph Lagu, a former army lieutenant, was able to bring together all Southern forces, and form the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM) in 1970.

Nimeiri's coup on 25 May 1969 banned all political parties.⁵⁵ The new regime proposed a secular socialist state with regional autonomy for the South, arguing that the Islamic State favoured by the main Northern parties was detrimental to national unity.⁵⁶ One of the first declarations of the regime was the June Declaration of 1969.

⁵⁴. A letter from Sudan African Liberation Front, to Mohamed Mahjoub, Prime Minister, Kampala, Uganda, 5th December, 1965, p.1.

⁵⁵. On 25 May 1969 a group of junior army officers led by Col. Nimeiri managed to assume power in a successful bloodless coup d'etat. Unlike the first military regime, this second military coup established a regime that lasted for sixteen years.

⁵⁶. Douglas Johnson, "The little Known Conflict: Southern Sudan," The Minority Rights Group, p. 5.

This declaration provided a new interpretation of the Southern problem, recognising that there existed historical and cultural differences between the South and the North, and that the South was entitled to a system of regional autonomy.⁵⁷ In 1972 the new regime signed the Addis Ababa Agreement with SSLM.

The Addis Ababa agreement, which ended the first phase of the war in March 1972, led to the formation of a Southern Regional Government and was the first serious attempt to give the South constitutional guarantees for its relative autonomy.⁵⁸ The agreement provided for a single Southern region with a regional assembly, which elected a president to preside over its own High Executive Council.⁵⁹ The HEC was to be in charge of internal administration and security, while the assembly had legislative powers and the right to raise some of its revenues. The agreement also provided for

⁵⁷. See Opening Address by Mansour Khalid, Minister for Foreign Affairs, in Makerere College, Kampala, Uganda, Monday 21st. August 1972.

⁵⁸. Democratic Republic of the Sudan, Permanent Constitution, Khartoum, May, 1973, p.15.

⁵⁹. Abel Alier became the first Vice President of the Sudan and President of the High Executive Council, Southern Region in 1975. See Peter Woodward, Sudan 1898-1989: the unstable state. London: Lester Crook Academic Publishing, 1990, pp.144-145.

the absorption of the military wing of Southern movement into the national army, police and prison service.⁶⁰

However, in the Permanent Constitution of 1973, which incorporated the Addis Ababa Agreement, the President of the country was given many powers not anticipated in 1972. These powers enabled Nimeiri to intervene several times in Southern regional elections and in decisions regarding the economic development of the South. In fact, Southern people got little from the economic plans of the Nimeiri government and thus remained marginalized. The regime's attempts to exploit Southern resources, which threatened pastoralists and agriculturalists, was one factor in the renewal of civil war. The government sought to place newly discovered Southern oil fields within the Northern area of influence.⁶¹ When Chevron discovered oil in South Sudan in 1974, the government redrew the boundaries of the area so that the oil

⁶⁰. For more details in this agreement see James E. Sulton, "Regional Autonomy in the Southern Sudan: A study in conflict regulation", Ph.D. Thesis, The Johns Hopkins University, 1980.

⁶¹. This plan as met with serious opposition from the South that the government decided to implement an alternative plan- pipeline would be constructed to pump the oil directly from the south to Port-Sudan where Northern interests could be served.

and the refinery would be located within the North.⁶² The government also planned to construct the Jonglei Canal to divert waters from the South to Egypt.⁶³ The Canal was a joint project between Egypt and the Sudan. Southerners perceived the project as an example of Northern interests being more tied to Egypt than to the Southern Sudan.

In the period 1980-1983, Nimeiri's regime began to end the regional autonomy in the South that had been established by the Addis Ababa Agreement. Nimeiri's strategy was to win the support of the Northern opposition, in particular the Muslim Brothers, and weaken the unity of the South. Nimeiri and Turabi, the leader of the Muslim Brothers, had orchestrated the re-division of the South as part of their plan to weaken the South in anticipation of imposition of Islamic Sharia on

⁶². Raphael K. Badal, "Oil and Regional Sentiment in Southern Sudan," Discussion Paper no.80, Syracuse University, Dept. Of Geography, 1983. See Also Peter Woodward, Sudan. 1898-1989: The Unstable State, London: Boulder; Rienner Publisher, 1990.

⁶³. What angered the Southerners was a possibility that large numbers of Egyptian settlers would come to the South and 6000 Egyptian troops would be drafted to guard the area. The Southerners considered the scheme as a threat to their national security. The Canal also aroused the Southerners' fear of Egyptian penetration of the Upper Nile Valley. For more details see G.T. Lako, "The impact of the Jonglei Scheme on the Economy of the Dinka," African Affairs, 84,334:15-38, Also see Nelson Kasfir, "Southern Sudanese Politics Since the Addis Ababa Agreement," Journal of the Royal African Society, vol. 76, no.1, p. 164.

the whole country. Nimeiri divided the South into three separately governed regions and imposed Arabic as the official language.⁶⁴ Clement Mborra, a veteran Southern politician, summarised the weakness of the Addis Ababa Agreement as follows:

If the northern political parties accepted our southern view that the regional Assembly should elect the president of the Regional Government, we could have solved the southern problem a long time ago. The mere fact that the north was to elect a leader for us was to give the south a government without powers and void of the basic principle of democracy which advocates that the governed should elect their own representatives. Thus we were not able to move from square one.⁶⁵

THE SECOND PHASE OF THE CIVIL WAR: 1983-1991

As Nimeiri prepared for the dismantling of the Addis Ababa Agreement by transferring Southern troops to the North, many incidents of mutinies occurred in the South. On May 1983 a company of the Sudan Army Southern Command from Juba attacked forces of the 105th Battalion of the Sudan Army stationed at Bor in an attempt to suppress the forces that had refused orders to be transferred to the Northern Sudan.

⁶⁴. See Abel Alier, Southern Sudan: Too Many Agreements Dishonoured, Exeter: Ithaca Press, 1990, pp.183-185.

⁶⁵. Interview with Clement Mborra after his release from prison, Omdurman, 28 August 1977. Cited in Elias Wakoson, p. 40.

The immediate cause of the revolt was the decision to transfer these troops to the North. However, there were deeper historical grievances, which culminated in this revolt. Southern Sudanese experiences with slave trade and colonial and post-colonial policies of domination toward the South were detrimental to the relationship between the North and the South. Robert Collins outlined these historical grievances as follows:

The history of exploitation of the southern Sudanese is 150 years old, beginning with the taking of slaves and ivory in the 19th century, the subsequent isolation of the south during the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, the disparity in education and economic development between the northern and southern Sudan following independence in 1956, the 17 years of conflict and killing between southerners and government forces from 1955-1972, the political ineptness of the Sudan Government by unilateral dissolution of the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972 which had given the south a broad degree of autonomy, and the rising tide of militant Islam in the north which threatened the traditional and Christian religions of the south. Perhaps, most important, was the growing realisation by the southern Sudanese that they were second class citizens in their own land subject to all forms of discrimination, both overt and subtle, despite no differences in pigmentation.⁶⁶

In response to these historical grievances, a numbers of soldiers from the South, led by Major Kerubino Bol, revolted

⁶⁶. Robert Collins' Statement to hearing before the Sub-Committee on African Affairs, first session, May 4, 1993, p.30.

and fled into the sanctuary of neighbouring Ethiopia. These soldiers were later followed by Colonel John Garang, then head of the army research department and a supporter of the Addis Ababa Agreement, who had been sent by the government to negotiate a settlement with the soldiers of the 105th.⁶⁷ These soldiers formed the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and its political wing, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). Like SANU and the Anya-Nya in 1963, the SPLM and its military wing SPLA were formed in 1983 to protect Southern Sudanese identity from the Northern hegemony. In Ethiopia, Garang assumed command of the movement and published the Manifesto of the Movement and its military wing.⁶⁸

In the beginning, the SPLA/M unlike the Southern nationalist forces during the first phase of civil war was not a secessionist movement. Instead, the SPLM/A under Garang sought full incorporation into a democratic nation that recognized the rights and equality of all citizens. The

⁶⁷. A former Sudanese army colonel and an agricultural economist with a doctorate from Iowa State University.

⁶⁸. See John Garang De Mabior, "The Shaping of a New Sudan," Mediterranean Quarterly, Fall 1996, pp.6-16. Also see Mansour Khalid (ed.), John Garang Speaks, London: KPI, 1987. Also see L.L. Mawut, The Southern Sudan Why Back to Arms? Khartoum: St. George Press, 1986.

Movement introduced a new discourse in Sudan's politics known as a "new Sudan". The SPLM/A raised the very fundamental question for the first time in the Sudan's political history as to whether Sudan wanted to be defined as a country with one history and one identity, or a country possessing multiple histories and identities.

The SPLA/M shifted the discussion from "the southern problem", to 'the problem of the Sudan'. In so doing the SPLA/M argued strongly that in order to keep the country united, a new structure and regime of governance would have to be introduced. This discourse of "New Sudan" demonstrated Southern Sudanese political creativity and the ability to influence the political discourse in the Sudan.⁶⁹

The SPLA/M demanded the repeal of the Islamic laws, the creation of a secular constitution, and the economic development of the South. According to the SPLA/M, Islamic law denied full citizenship to non-Muslims, and relegated them to second-class citizenship. The introduction of the

⁶⁹. The SPLA/M discourse of a "New Sudan" has become very popular not only in the South but also in the North. Ironically this discourse has been appropriated and used by many Northern Sudanese parties including the Umma Party and DUP, both of them are pro-Arab and Islamic State in the Sudan.

Islamic laws in 1983 by the Nimeiri government, which imposed them on both the North and South, aggravated the relationships between Southerners and the government. According to Islamic laws a non-Muslim Southerner could be stoned or flogged or sentenced to the amputation of his/her limbs or even crucified for crimes ranging from consuming alcohol to murder.⁷⁰ Although the SPLA/M's political vision won the support of many Southerners and some Northerners, the SPLA/M's discourse of new united Sudan did not go unchallenged by its rank and file.

A group of military officers led by Gai Tut, William Abdullah Chol, and Gordon Kong provided the argument that the south should strive for an entity separate from the Northern Sudan. Gai Tut and his supporters, who had never accepted the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972, led a group of armed forces known as Anya-Nya II.⁷¹ The issue of the objectives of the struggle was debated for months until resolved in February 1984 by a shoot-out in which Gai and

⁷⁰. The serious problem stems from the fact that acts that were considered as criminal by Islam might not have been so for adherents of Christianity or indigenous religions in the South Sudan.

⁷¹. See Abel Alier, 1990, p.251.

William Abdullah Chol were killed.⁷² However, while SPLA/M separatism was suppressed by the killing of Gai and William, it remained deep in the blood of many its members.

By the 1985 the SPLA/M was in control of all rural areas in the Southern Sudan. On April 6, 1985 Nemeiri's regime was overthrown by a popular uprising. Demanding the end of the war in the South, and the restoration of democracy, the people, particularly trade unionists, professionals, political activists, intellectual and workers, had risen in protest against the military regime. In October 1985 a transitional constitution was introduced that granted basic human rights to all Sudanese, but did not repeal Islamic laws. Despite this the SPLM/A signed the Koka Dam Agreement, promising the South autonomy, in March 1986 with the National Alliance for National Salvation.⁷³ The Koka Dam conference was boycotted and the agreement rejected by the

⁷². Later on many of their supporters joined the SPLA without abandoning their hard-line position, while the remnant of Anya Nya II led by Gordon Kong made unstable alliances with the Sudan government forces, and sometimes with the SPLA.

⁷³. The National Alliance for National Salvation is a consortium of political parties and trade unions that spearheaded the popular Uprising which brought down the Nimeiri's regime in April 1985.

Democratic Unionist Party and the National Islamic Front.⁷⁴

The National Islamic Front considered the agreement a direct threat to its plan for an Islamic State. However, the transitional constitution and the Koka Dam declaration proved to be betrayals by the Khartoum government. Islamic laws were never repealed; instead they were enforced with vigor against southern Sudanese. The regional autonomy promised at Koka Dam was never implemented. In 1986 because of the continuing civil war in the South, 36 of the 67 Southern constituencies could not vote; thus the SPLA/M refused to participate. As a result, the North dominated the government headed by Sadiq al Mahdi of the Umma Party.⁷⁵

The return to the civilian government did not resolve the

⁷⁴. The participants in this conference made a commitment to hold a constitutional conference to discuss the basic problems of the Sudan, and to order a cease-fire, provided the government carried out specific measures. These measures are: 1) repeal of the 1983 Sharia laws and all others laws which restrict freedom; 2) abrogation of military pacts which compromised national sovereignty; 3) lifting of the state of emergency; 4) replacement of the 1985 transitional constitution with the 1956 constitution as amended in 1964. See Abel Alier, Southern Sudan, 1990, p.269.

⁷⁵. Abdul Rahman El Mahdi died on the 24th. March 1959. He was succeeded by his son, Sadiq. Sadiq had led the Umma Part from 1964 to 1969 and had been Prime Minister from 1966 to 1967. Like his predecessor, Sadiq on many occasions argued that the spread of Islam would solve the problem in the South.

crucial issues responsible for the civil war in the Sudan.⁷⁶ The political future of the Sudan continued to hang on the issues of Islamic laws and content of regional government not only in the South but also for the whole country. Sadiq did not change his old views, which favoured an Islamic revival and the elimination of "paganism" in the Southern Sudan. Like Nemeiri's government, Sadiq also feared united South, favouring a politically divided and economically weak South. During Nimeiri's regime many militias were established on ethnic bases to fight the SPLA. These appeared first in the South in 1983 with the arming of the *Murle* and the *Mundari* ethnic groups, who had a long history of disputes with the Dinka neighbours over cattle. Both groups, with the help of the government forces, raided neighbouring Dinka for their cattle more than they fought the SPLA. Sadiq's era saw the increased use of Arab Militias (*Murahalin*) among the *Rizeigat* and *Missiriya* Baggara Arabs of Southern Darfur and Southern Kordofan. Both groups also had a history of conflict with the Dinka neighbours over cattle grazing. These forces attacked mainly civilians and

⁷⁶. "Peace talks on Sudan collapse," Boston Globe, Dec.6, 1989,p.23.

looted their cattle.⁷⁷ The aim of Sadiq's militia policy was:

To depopulate northern Bahr al-Ghazal through Arab militia activity, just as earlier raids tried to drive the Dinka out of Abyei. The outcome of such plan, if successful, would be to place the crucial pastures of the Bahr al-Arab completely under Baggara control, and also to place any oil found in the Muglad-Abyei area beyond dispute...The main recruits of the Arab-militias, especially among the Rizeigat, are young men ...They have concentrated almost exclusively on Dinka civilian targets, looting cattle, women and children.⁷⁸

As a result of Sadiq's militia policy, many Southern civilians were massacred in Al-Da'ein in Southern Darfur on 27-28 March 1987.⁷⁹ Attacks by local militias began on the town's one Christian church on 27 March and resulted in the massacre of over 1000 Dinka and other Southern civilians at

⁷⁷. For instance, Wau, the capital city of Bahr al Ghazal was in 1987 divided into two war zones: one for the Dinka and Jur civilian population and their police force, and other for the Fertit population, its military and a guard of the Sudan army. The army command was for a year on the side of the Fertit. During that collaboration Wau witnessed a lot of killing of civilians from the Jur and the Dinka. In one single incident of slaughter in 1987, witnessed counted 354 Dinka dead. For more details see Abel Alier, p.255.

⁷⁸. See Douglas Johnson, "The Southern Sudan," Minority Rights Groups, Rep. No.78, 1988, p.10.

⁷⁹. Al Da'ein is a major road and rail junction of about 60,000, some 17,000 of which were Dinka labourers and refugees from the war. It also an Umma Party stronghold. For more details see Sudan Times, 21 July, 23 July, 21 August, 23 September 1987; The Independent, 30 October 1987; Also see Ushari Ahmad Mahmud and Suleyman Ali Baldo, Al Da'ein Massacre- Slavery in the Sudan, Khartoum, 1987.

the train station and police post.⁸⁰ As a result, many Southern children were captured and sold into slavery.⁸¹ As revenge for the SPLA victories over the army, the army and the militias also killed thousands of Southern Sudanese civilians in Wau, most of them educated. The SPLA's response to such activities was to recruit local peoples to protect their lives and property from the militias' attacks. The war was the main cause of the famine of 1984-9 in the South Sudan through the destruction of villages throughout large areas of the South.⁸²

In 1986, Sadiq's government also used food as a weapon to weaken Southern Sudanese resistance. His government denied there was a famine and refused Western relief workers access to war and drought areas. Millions of Southern Sudanese during this period suffered from hunger and starvation. In 1988 alone, more than 250,000 Southern Sudanese died from starvation as the military leaders on both sides refused to allow food to reach civilian populations believed to be

⁸⁰. Ibid.

⁸¹. Ibid.

⁸². See Alex de Waal, "Starving out the South 1984-9," in The Civil war in the Sudan, p.182.

loyal to one side or the other. The greatest numbers of the dead were among women, children and the elderly. One hundred eighty thousand of the dead alone were said to have been children.⁸³ Both sides burned villages and farms, frequently killing the civilians and stealing their cattle. The Northern-based government hoped that depopulating the South by destroying its natural and human resources would bring victory. Millions of Southern Sudanese were forced to flee their homeland. Estimates in 1988 reported up to 85 percent of Sudan's Southern population as being displaced.⁸⁴

Thousands of the refugees died on their way to the major towns. In some towns the death toll was as high as 100 per day. Judy Mayotte described the refugees' condition as follows:

Hospitals were empty structures without beds or medical supplies. Throughout the south, nearly one out of every five children died before the age of one. In many towns and villages virtually all children under the age of three died. In one town with no vaccines available, almost every child

⁸³. Lance Clark, "Internal Refugees- The Hidden Half," U.S. Committee for Refugees: World Refugee Survey 1988 in Review (Washington, DC: American Council for Nationalities Service, 1989), p. 18.

⁸⁴. Roger Winter, "In Sudan Both Sides Use Food as a Weapon," Washington Post, 29, November 1988, p. A25.

under five died during a measles epidemic.⁸⁵

Since the renewal of the civil war in 1983, Southern Sudanese have sought refuge in the South and neighbouring countries. As well, almost two million fled North to Khartoum, Sudan's capital and to outlying areas in Northern Sudan. As part of its policy of Arabization and Islamization, the government made it difficult for Southerners to live in or flee the Southern garrison cities of Wau, in Bahr El Ghazal, Juba, in Equatoria, and Malakal, in Upper Nile, to further South. Rather the government forced them to move North to undergo Islamic indoctrination. In Khartoum, ten of thousands settled in

unplanned areas of the city by poking sticks into the dry ground and covering them with discarded burlap bags, empty cardboard boxes or whatever they could find in the surrounding garbage dumps. Many of the approximately 100 squatter camps ringing the capital were built on garbage dumps. They housed as many as 10,000 to 100,000 civilians each with no water, sewage, electricity or easy access to roads. There were no schools, no primary health care centers, medicines or vaccines".⁸⁶

These refugees were not allowed to dig deep wells in any of

⁸⁵. See Judy Mayotte, "Civil War in Sudan: The Paradox of Human Rights and National Sovereignty," Journal of International Affairs, Winter 1994, vol.47, no.2. See also Africa Watch Report, pp.119-24; and Burr, pp.27-35.

⁸⁶. Ibid.

the camps.

In 1989, a group of military officers, supported by the National Islamic Front (NIF), made a military coup that deposed the civilian government headed by Sadiq El Mahdi. The main objective of the military coup was to stop the peace process, which was underway between the civilian government and the SPLA/M. As I have argued above, the National Islamic Front saw the Koka Dam Agreement as a threat to its plan of an Islamic State. Since the military coup of 1989, racist policies have been dramatically increased. The Islamic regime has pursued a *jihād* against the South and the civil war has escalated.⁸⁷ In 1992 Islamic legal traditions were used to justify the *jihād* against apostates and "heathen",⁸⁸ and the officers and ranks of the Sudan Army replaced by a Muslim militia. The most insidious of these new forces were the Popular Defence Forces consisting of existing Arab militias, which were to become

⁸⁷. The National Islamic Front grew out of the bosom of the sectarian parties. Dr. Hassan al-Turabi is the intellectual and spiritual leader of the party. The party believes in the implementation of Islamic laws. Since 1989, their government has begun to set the foundation of the Islamic State in the Sudan. The party implemented an aggressive policy towards the South.

⁸⁸. See Scott Straus, "Sudan's Lords use Islam to justify rule," Houston

the infamous *Murahiliin*.

The dominant "Sudanese" discourse had always equated the membership in the state with being Arab and Muslim. For instance, the National Islamic Front now argues that only a Muslim state can legitimately exercise power over a Muslim majority.⁸⁹ The commitment to the expansion of Arab culture and Islam into the Southern Sudan implies that only a Muslim of Arab descent could enjoy full rights within the Sudan. The labelling of Southern Sudanese as "Pagans", and the use of the term *jihad*, reveals the racial supremacism of the Sudanese Islamic State.

Applying racist measures, the government rounded-up and forcibly removed Southern refugees to Northern cities.⁹⁰ However, when Southern refugees began to arrive in large numbers, the government feared the formation of SPLA forces

Chronicle, March 16, 1996, p.24.

⁸⁹. See Sudan Charter of the National Islamic Front, Khartoum, January 1987.

⁹⁰. Khartoum's governments always justify this racist policy by arguing that "it is for reasons of security and public health". For more in this issue, see Millard Burr, "Khartoum's Displaced Persons: A Decade of Despair," U.S. Committee for Refugees Issue Brief (Washington, DC: U.S. Committee for Refugees, 1990), p.3.

in the North, and the contamination of Khartoum, the perceived "pure" Arab and Islamic capital of the Sudan. As a result, since 1990, the Sudanese government has forced nearly 750,000 Southern Sudanese from their Khartoum squatter settlements to areas far beyond the city.⁹¹ Here they are forced to live in inhuman circumstances, while undergoing indoctrination in government propaganda.

Children many of whom had been living with family members ... were snatched by government agents from public places in major northern population centers and summarily taken to juvenile camps... These children, who were largely displaced African Christian or animist boys between the ages of 6 and 20 years, described being abducted by police, grouped together with other children like themselves, smuggled out of the city by night in screened trucks and taken to ... closed camps in remote areas.... Once incarcerated, they were given new Arabic names, indoctrinated in Islam, and forced to undergo military style training.⁹²

In 1991 two events changed the course of the civil war and created even greater insecurity for displaced Southern Sudanese civilians. First, Mengistu Haile Mariam, the dictatorial leader of neighbouring Ethiopia, fell to

⁹¹. Government forces killed some of those refugees who resisted to resettlement.

⁹². Testimony by Kevin Vigilante, Representative of the Puebla Institute, before the Subcommittee on Africa of the U.S. House of Representative, March 22, 1995, p.82.

Eritreans and Ethiopian resistance forces. Mengistu's regime had assisted and harboured SPLA forces, but the new government forced both the SPLA and Southern civilians refugees back across the border.⁹³

Second, in August 1991 the cultural history of individualism and divisiveness of the South caught up with Garang. Some of his senior leaders such as Dr. Lam Akol Ajawin, a Shilluk and Garang's closet advisor, Dr. Riak Machar, a Nuer, broke with him and the SPLA to form a splinter group known as the Nasir Faction. By late 1991, the SPLA/M had divided into three rival factions.⁹⁴ Riak Machar, Lam Akol and others broke away first, forming the Nasir faction. The Nasir faction charged Garang with dictatorial rule and human rights violations, particularly the impressing of children into active military service. They also argued that Garang did not call for secession of the South. Fragmentation, individualism and lack of a consensus characterize the

⁹³. While they made their way back into Sudan, Sudan government forces bombarded them, killing mostly civilian women and children.

⁹⁴. For recent detailed study on the SPLA/M and the problem of factionalism in Southern Sudan, see Douglas H. Johnson, "The Sudan People's Liberation Army and the Problem of Factionalism," in Christopher Clapham (ed.), African Guerrillas, Oxford: James Currey, 1998, 53-72.

political culture of Southern Sudan. This political culture would come to determine the course of relationships between Southern Sudanese and their political institutions in the post-war Southern Sudan.

A second faction headed by William Nyong Bany, one of the SPLA founders, and Kerubino Kuanyin, a former senior SPLA commander who had been imprisoned for six years by Garang, broke away and later united with the Nasir. Although some have argued that this was a Dinka versus Nuer split, others have characterized it as Dinka versus non-Dinka. The desertion of Commander William is a classic case of Nilotic divisiveness and individualism. William, a Nuer, was commander of the 105th Battalion at Ayod when he decided to join Garang in Ethiopia in June 1983. Although he had become increasingly sympathetic to separatism during the long years of war with the Northern Sudanese, his disagreement with Garang was personal. Both factions called for separation of the South from the North. A third faction is headed by Garang called the mainstream SPLA. John Garang, a Dinka from Bor, built and led the SPLA to victories, and forces loyal to him remain in control of the countryside in Equatoria, the Upper Nile, and the Bahr al-Ghazal.

By the mid 1980s most of the forces loyal to Garang's Torit, or mainstream, faction were Dinka, while the Nuer comprised most of the Nasir, or united, faction. The ethnic war within the civil war that pitted Dinka against Nuer proved to be as brutal as that between the once-united SPLA and the government forces. Unlike the first civil war, this second civil war destroyed the entire social and economic structure of Southern Sudan.⁹⁵ The only unchanging reality was that civilians remained targets. Both sides ravaged the countryside - killing cattle, destroying crops, poisoning water sources, and razing villages. They displaced hundreds of thousands of civilians, raped women and young girls, and massacred whole villages. By 1993, the total number of the people who died in Southern Sudan was more than 1.3 million. At least one in every five Southern Sudanese has died in the country's most recent decade of civil war.⁹⁶

Meanwhile, the Islamic regime in Khartoum heightened

⁹⁵. Douglas H. Johnson, "Destruction and reconstruction in the Economy of the Southern Sudan," in Sharrif Harir and Terje Tvedt, Short Cut to Decay, Uppsala: The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1994, pp.126-143 ,

⁹⁶. See report by Millard Burr, "Quantifying Genocide in the Southern Sudan 1983-1993," Washington DC. US Committee for Refugees, 1993.

religious and racial discrimination in almost every aspect of society. Discrimination in the North by the government against several million displaced Southern people has been common.⁹⁷ The Islamic government has endorsed forced Arabization. Government forces, especially the Popular Defence Forces PDF,⁹⁸ routinely steal women and children. Some women and girls are kept as wives; others are shipped North, where they perform forced labor on farms or are exported to other Arab countries, notably to Libya.⁹⁹ Arab soldiers are encouraged to rape the Southern women they capture. Soldiers who have children from these rapes receive special benefits. In one documented instance "when the military train reached one town, Meiram, in March 1993, soldiers raped scores of displaced women. Medical workers note an unusually high rate of pregnancies among the women,

⁹⁷. See Joyce Hackel, "Ethnic cleansing by bulldozer? Islamic Sudan ousts non-Arab," Christian Science Monitor, July 26, 1995, p.7. See also Benaiah, Yongo-Bure, "Islamism, Arabism and the Disintegration of Sudan," Northeast African Studies, 1:2-3, 1994, pp.207-22.

⁹⁸. PDF a militia, organised along the lines of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, who help train its members. See James Dorsey, "Iran- armed Islamic forces target Sudan rebels," Washington Times, Feb.3, 1993, p.9.

⁹⁹. See "Witness to Slavery," a report on Slavery in the Sudan, published by, Baltimore's Sun, June 17 and 18, 1996.

who say the PDF raped them."¹⁰⁰ Such instances of cultural and ethnic cleansing are consistent government policies towards non-Arab groups. One regional PDF Commander, Col. Ismail Ahmad Adam, has stated that opponents of the Khartoum government would face the same fate as that of Bosnian Muslims- ethnic cleansing. He warned that his forces would "cleanse every stitch of territory sullied by the outlaws."¹⁰¹

The systematic destruction of Southern Sudanese culture and identity through the practice of slavery, militia attacks and denial of Southern Sudanese basic human rights, led millions of Southern Sudanese to flee their homeland to neighbouring countries.

¹⁰⁰. See "Sudan's Islamist Regime Continues Ethnic cleansing," Near East Report, May 24, 1993, p.96.

¹⁰¹. See "The Sudan: Another Case of "Ethnic Cleansing?" Near East Report, March 15, 1993, p.51. Also see Africa Report, Nov./Dec. 1992.

Chapter Six

Political Consciousness and Identity: The Case of Southern Sudanese Refugees in Egypt

Our history with the Arab since the self-rule in 1953 should remind you clearly that the enemy means no peace. Enemy reinforcements and bombings are going on, as they talk peace. The history of the struggle to be free from the Arabs must be taught to the children, while in exile. We who are inside are already living this history from day to day through constant enemy attacks. These are grave times and we should refrain from considering enemy pretences and instead focus on hard work in order to achieve our destiny of total freedom.¹

It is, of course true that the African identity is still in making. There isn't a final identity that is African. But, at the same time, there is an identity coming into existence. And it has a certain context and a certain meaning.²

The current civil war has led to the massive displacement of about 5.5 million Sudanese. About 2.1 million of these people lives in shantytowns within the country, especially around Khartoum, the capital city. There are also about 2 million who are displaced within the South both in the areas held by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the

¹. From an appeal letter prepared by chiefs and elders of Equatoria to Southerners abroad. Those chiefs represented Juba, Yei and Kaji Kaji counties in the liberated areas of Southern Sudan. The appeal letter was urged for reconciliation, unity and the need for general mobilization. See Sudan Democratic Gazette, November, 1996.

². Interview with Achebe, cited in Kwame Anthony Appiah, In My Father's House, p. 173.

government garrison towns. The rest took refuge in neighbouring countries mainly Uganda, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, and Egypt.

This chapter deals with the experience of Southern Sudanese refugees in Egypt and its implications for society and identity in South Sudan. Focusing on Southern Sudanese as cultural beings, not as individuals stripped of culture, in this study, I respect them as people with a history and for whom that history is critical.³ I trace how an awareness of shared refugee status served to consolidate political consciousness and a sense of identity. The study is based on an ethnographic case study completed in 1997 among Southern Sudanese and their associations in Cairo, Egypt. The methods of participant observation, interviews, and the recording Southern Sudanese life histories in exile were used during this research.

The study will show that Southern Sudanese are actively involved in reconstructing their identity, and illuminates stereotypes that have been shaped by Sudan's historiography.

³. But rather than focusing on the history of the refugees community, this chapter examines the processes which influence its formation and the contexts which structure the emergence of a strong sense of collective history among Southern Sudanese refugees in Egypt.

The research suggests that the meaning of place is neither constant nor essential, and that the shifting nature and meaning of place has serious implications for the formation of identities. In this chapter, I argue that the crossing of borders, being away from home, has made a significant contribution to the emergence of Southern Sudanese identity. As people live these processes of displacement, their notions of self and society shift, and in the process, they construct and reconstruct their own identities. As we have seen in chapter five, the lack of democratic political culture and unity in South Sudan had weakened the Southern Sudanese resistance after political independence. Rather, inter-ethnic conflicts, corruption and nepotism had dominated the politics of Southern Sudan.

This research shows that Southern Sudanese in exile have not entirely overcome the constraint of ethnic divisions, which had had a negative impact on Southern Sudanese unity in the past. As we will see in this chapter, many of the newly established Southern Sudanese associations and communities were based either on ethnic or religious affiliations. Political fragmentation and regionalism have had a negative impact on Southern Sudanese unity. However, the future of Southern Sudan resistance and struggle against the Northern

hegemony depends largely on the way in which Southerners respond to their state of displacement and exile.

Exile, Identity and Purification:

Scholars in anthropology and cultural studies have explored the relationship between movement, exile and identity. Iain Chambers has argued that "our sense of being, of identity and language, is experienced and extrapolated from movement: the 'I' does not pre-exist this movement and then go out into the world, the 'I' is constantly being formed and reformed in such movement in the world."⁴ As I have argued above, being in exile allows new identities to emerge. What changes in identity occur? Martin J. Waters in his writing about Ireland has observed that:

For emigrants the experience of an alien environment often had the effect of heightening national consciousness. The sense of remoteness encouraged the tendency to think of Ireland in terms of unity rather than its diversity: the nation rather than the parish became the focal point.⁵

This observation confirms an argument made by Madan Sarap who points out that when migrants cross a boundary, a

⁴. Iain Chambers, Migrancy, Culture, Identity, London: Routledge, 1994, pp.24-5; also see R. Cohen, Global Diasporas: An introduction, London: University of Central London Press, 1997, p.133.

⁵. See Martin Waters, "Peasants and Emigrants: Consideration of the Gaelic League as a Social movement," in Casey, D. And Rhodes, R. (eds.), Views of the Irish Peasantry, 1800-1916, Hamden, Conn: Archon

frontier, and are faced with a hostile reception, they draw in on themselves and reinforce their own culture, their collective identity.⁶ Thus, the question I wish to explore in this chapter is whether Southern Sudanese in exile become more imbued with a "Southern identity" as opposed to what may have been a dominant ethnic identity. To what extent have Southern Sudanese turned the state of exile and displacement into a way of resistance? Resistance as Edward Said put it "is an alternative way of conceiving human history,"⁷ thus opening the way for a new future. The exile experience for Southern Sudanese today is a state of rewriting history and imagining the future of returning to the homeland. Therefore, displacement and exile constitute a period of tests and lessons, "a process of purification"⁸ which would make Southern Sudanese a people "worthy" of liberating their homeland.

The Setting:

Since the late 1980s, Egypt has witnessed an increasing number of refugees from both North and South Sudan- Sudanese who were forced to leave their country because of the

Books, 1977,p. 166.

⁶. See Madap Sarap, "Home and Identity," in Robertson, G. et al (eds.), Travellers' Tales, London: Routledge, 1994, p.96.

⁷. Edward Said, Culture and Imperialism, 1993,p.216.

Islamic regime's policy of oppression, the civil war and the economic difficulties that resulted from it. Despite this growing number of Sudanese refugees in Egypt, there are no reliable statistics on the number of Sudanese in Egypt.⁹ In Egypt, Cairo plays an important role for the Sudanese Diaspora, particularly as Southern and Northern opposition political groups already have established a strong base in Cairo.

Until July 4, 1995, the Egyptian government did not treat Sudanese citizens as refugees in Egypt, instead calling them "citizens in their second home". On July 4, 1995, following accusations that the Sudanese government was behind the June

⁸. See Liisa H. Malkki, Purity and Exile, 1995, p.222.

⁹. Sudanese refugees represent the largest foreign community in Egypt. The Egyptian government estimated the number of Sudanese in Egypt as 3 million, other conservative source estimated between 200,000 to 300,000 Sudanese. However, regarding the number of people from South Sudan, South Kordofan, and South Blue Nile regions, is estimated over 20,000. Among these are about 700 families with four children or more in addition to dependents. There are also about 3,000 children out of whom less than half attend school. Furthermore, there are 7,000 to 10,000 singles or unmarried youth some of whom are in Egypt for studies and those who do not study or work live with relatives or friends. Large proportions of these people are women and children who are facing grave problems of survival. Quite a number of the households are headed by women." For more details see, Sudan Cultural Digest Project, "Coping with Dynamics of Culture and Change: the case of displaced Sudanese in Egypt", Research Report, no.1, December 1996. Also see, D. A. Buolo, "The Situation of Displaced Sudanese in Egypt," a paper presented to the workshop organised by the Sudanese Women's Forum, Cairo July 5-7, 1994.

29, 1995 assassination attempt of President Hosni Mubarak,¹⁰ the Egyptian government issued a Presidential Decree requiring all Sudanese entering Egypt to apply for a visa. Problems between Sudan's Islamic regime and the Egyptian government accelerated when Egypt accused Sudan of training "fundamentalist terrorists" and sending them across the border. Sudan responded by expelling all Egyptian teachers from Sudan, and nationalizing Egyptian institutions such as the Khartoum branch of Cairo University, and cutting off all stipends to Sudanese university students in Egypt.

Place and Identity:

Southern Sudanese refugees in Egypt share a number of commonalties: their origins and continuing attachment to the places of Southern Sudan, the collective experience of displacement, and a concept and practice of national resistance. Host country settings have acted to add another dimension to Southern Sudanese identity.¹¹ Exile and the specificity of host population-refugee interactions have become salient factors in Southern Sudanese identity,

¹⁰. As a result of this decree, the UNHCR office in Cairo has begun to process Sudanese asylum cases. Some foreign countries such as the United States and Canada have begun to process Sudanese resettlement cases.

¹¹. The use of the word identity - in singular - in this study should not be considered the negation of the multiplicity of Southern Sudanese

incorporating feelings of otherness, discrimination and marginalization. A southern Sudanese woman, a mother of three, described her feeling in Egypt:

I was born in Juba where I lived among my people. Our life in Juba was wonderful. Everybody knew everybody; even during the war we had not experienced difficulties like what we are facing in Egypt. Life is difficult here, and we don't feel being respected as human beings. Our daily life here is causing us a lot of pains and miseries.¹²

Yet, places of exile are also sites of resistance to displacement and the construction of desired identities. Individuals in any society carry the potential for multiple forms of identity whether these are gender, age, class, race, region origins, kinship, religion, sexuality, etc.¹³ A young Southern Sudanese student living in Cairo argued that:

I have learnt many things in Egypt. In the South, I used to see myself as Southerner belongs to the Dinka tribe. But here in Egypt, I am not only a Southerner and a Dinka person, but also a refugee, black, African and student living in one of the poorest areas in Egypt.¹⁴

However, neither culture nor experience are so totalizing and coherent as to constitute a singularity of identity. One can speak of the Southern Sudanese of Egypt, Southern

experiences.

¹² . Mary, interviewed in Cairo, September 26, 1996.

¹³ . A. Alonso, "The Politics of Space, Time and Substance: State Formation, Nationalism and Ethnicity," Annual Review of Anthropology, 1994, 23:379-405.

Sudanese of Kenya, Southern Sudanese of Uganda, etc. Unlike the colonially created identity of Southern Sudan in which "African" identity was referenced solely to a single place of origin, what emerged during my research was a sense of Southern identity that was multi-referenced in terms of places of exile.

Defining Southern Sudanese:

So far, the term Southern Sudanese has been used without a precise definition.¹⁵ In broad terms, a Southern Sudanese refers to the idea that South Sudan has its own genuine character and, thus, must be perceived as an entity, which is independent from the North.¹⁶ Southern Sudanese do not deny the Arab and Islamic identity of the inhabitants of the North. They stress, however, that their own identity and their culture have genuine features which not only differentiate them from other people of the Sudan, but also create collective ground between different ethnic groups of

¹⁴ . David interviewed in October 11, 1996.

¹⁵. Francis Deng in his latest work, War of Visions, has attempted to define Southern Sudanese identity. Although he correctly has shown the relationship between the Southern resistance and Northern hegemony, he did not free his analysis from the colonial anthropological discourse on Southern Sudan. Deng has repeatedly quoted Evans-Pritchard's and Seligman's works on Nilotic people. See War of Vision, pp.193-195

¹⁶. Here I mean by South Sudan the historical South that consists of three provinces of Upper Nile, Equatoria and Bahr el Ghazal. These three provinces differ historically from other marginalized areas of

South Sudan. Although Southern Sudanese define themselves in terms of different ethnic groups, they claim to also share a Southern Sudanese culture and history. Southern culture includes the embodiment of diverse, rich, indigenous spiritual, and material practices. These material and spiritual heritages have been reproduced and passed to younger generation. Thus, to be Southern Sudanese is to own Southern culture including affiliation to an ethnic group, and to preserve this culture through resisting Arab assimilation and liberating the homeland.

Becoming a Southern Sudanese in Egypt:

In chapter three, I charted out how the indigenous people of South Sudan were transformed from people to 'African' or "southerners" slaves - by the slave traders from the North. In Egypt, however, Southern refugees are creating a new identity, first through undergoing the hardship of exile and achieving moral worthiness and second, through liberating their homeland and resisting any assimilation.

One of my respondents said: " we as Dinka, Nuer, Kuku, Bari and others, we all Southern Sudanese. We suffered from those Northerners. Today we live in Cairo because of them, what we need is just freedom for our people."¹⁷ Another respondent gave a historical reason for calling himself a Southern Sudanese rather than using his ethnic group name: "I am a Southern Sudanese because the name Nuer ... was which the British named us because we were considered savage and warlike."¹⁸

As Egypt found itself an unwelcome host to a large number of refugees from Sudan, Southern Sudanese experienced Egyptian

¹⁷. Sustin interviewed in Cairo, 27, September 1996.

¹⁸. Sebit interviewed on 28 September 1996.

hostility towards them. Historically, Egypt has not considered the struggle of the South Sudan sympathetically, regarding the establishment of an independent state in the South Sudan a threat to the "unity of the Nile Valley". Therefore, Egyptian policy rejects Southern Sudanese claims for self-determination and favours a united Sudan. Egypt, like other Arab countries, perceives Southern Sudan as an obstacle towards the expansion of Arab and Islamic civilization to eastern and southern Africa.

In addition to being unwelcome and politically unfavoured by the Egyptian people and government, Southern Sudanese also faced the problem of being non-Arabs and non-Muslims living in an Arab-Islamic country. A former police officer described his experience with his Egyptian landlord:

My landlord is an old woman; she has five grandsons. She is a very devoted Muslim. Although she rented her apartment to so many Sudanese, she does not consider me Sudanese because I am not a Muslim. She thinks Sudanese people are all Muslims. She speaks Egyptian Arabic, and I do speak Arabic like many Northern Sudanese. Any time we chat together, she asked me to convert to Islam. I told her several times that I am a Christian. One day she said that if I am a Sudanese, I should be a Muslim.¹⁹

There is no positive relation between the Egyptians and displaced Southern Sudanese in Egypt. One respondent said'

we only interact with Egyptians in public places such as in the market, transport etc.' They were cast as "others". Refugees found their rights to work, travel, and engage in political activities constrained by the Egyptian government. Work permits, necessary to be legally employed, were impossible to obtain, while political activities and organisation had to conform to Egyptian government policies. One of my respondents recounted how

The Egyptian government treats us differently from northern Sudanese who are also refugees in Egypt. Northern politicians can practice politics freely and organise meetings without restrictions. For us - Southern Sudanese - we don't have this freedom. We can't organise political meetings easily except in church building. The Egyptian security forces deported many southern Sudanese because of their political affiliations.²⁰

Thus, it is in exile that Southern Sudanese have experienced themselves being collectively identified as Southerners. Egyptians do not see Southern Sudanese in terms of different ethnic groups.

In Egypt, as in many other Arab countries, color has a very significant role in identifying and determining a person's status. Being black in the Egyptian society has negative

¹⁹. Samuel interviewed in Cairo 26 October 1996.

²⁰. Joseph interviewed in Cairo 30 September 1996.

consequences. One young Southern Sudanese argued that:

Egyptians call us *Samara*- black. When we walk in the street, they call us names, even their children do that, and they sometimes attack us physically. They don't even differentiate between us. They only know one thing; we are all *Samara* and inferior to them. When we go to the police to report an abuse, the police officer doesn't take us seriously, and sometimes even they chase us away.²¹

When Southern Sudanese talk of identity, they speak of culture: religion, language, "proper" ethnic behaviour, and the customs and heritage passed to them from their elders. To lose these characteristics is to lose Southern identity. Thus Southern Sudanese in Egypt place great importance on preserving Southern culture, on their survival as a people, on the preservation of what they believe, on their ways of acting, the things that they produce, and their homeland. An elderly man commented "these days our children in Egypt can hardly know their traditions and ancestral values, because of the war and migration their parents don't have time to teach them."²² This man, like many Southern Sudanese, worries that the young generation will lose its Southern identity. Other respondents stated that "we are trying to help people not to forget their traditions, and homeland.

²¹. Benn interviewed on 3 October 1996.

²². Joseph interviewed on 29 September 1996.

Egypt is not our home, our home is South Sudan.' Southern Sudanese in Egypt believe in the temporariness of exile. A respondent supported this view by saying that "nobody can take refuge in Egypt for ever, you know what happened to Jesus when he came to Egypt. He (Jesus) had to go back to his home."²³

Being Southern Sudanese in Egypt means having experienced displacement, having suffered, being a struggler and a survivor. A respondent told me that "there is not a Southerner in Egypt who lived through the current Islamic regime experience who did not lose a relative or a friend to civil war, starvation, disease, or execution."²⁴ Southern Sudanese processes of collective becoming focus on the re-establishment of ties with family and friends, practising indigenous customs, and creating a social environment in which the identity of Southern society can be expressed in language, social relations, food, music, and ritual. These widespread social practices among the refugees have reinforced the emotions, memories, and legitimacy of the indigenous ways of life.

²³. Nelson interviewed in Cairo, 11 October 1996.

²⁴. Ibid.

Southern Sudanese Communities and Organizations in Egypt:

The majority of Southern Sudanese refugees came to Egypt after the military coup of 1989, which was led by the National Islamic Front. Most refugees had lived in Khartoum as displaced persons before leaving for Egypt. A letter from a Southern Sudanese group in Egypt described their journey from Southern Sudan to Egypt as follows:

To arrive in Egypt, the southern Sudanese first would invariably begin the journey into exile by fleeing out of his home in the south to the presumed "safer" Northern part of Sudan. But, to his/her horror and disbelief, even there in the so-called "safer" area, he/she is subjected to persistent harassment, persecution and denial of his inalienable rights by the same authorities that victimized him in the South. So, inevitably, the Southern Sudanese finally flees to Egypt.²⁵

They came to Cairo either by train or air. They lived either in extended households - many female-headed - or as students sharing cheap flats. They lived in apartments in lower socio-economic areas of the city. Most of their neighbours are poor and uneducated Egyptians. A former Professor from Juba University, living in one of these neighbourhoods for three years, expressed his frustration by saying:

I couldn't imagine myself five or six years ago that I would be one day living in this neighbourhood. You can hardly find one person who can make sense of the world

²⁵. From a letter of introduction of the Elderly Advisory Committee of Southern Sudan EACOSS.

here. Yes, we are poor like them now, but at least we can read, write and understand our situation in exile. It's a painful thing for me to experience in my life. Sometimes I feel it is better for me to go home and live among my displaced people than go through this suffering.²⁶

The main source of income for many displaced Southern Sudanese men is activities in non-formal sectors of the Egyptian economy. These activities include the low paying jobs at construction sites and small scale profit-making jobs at homes, such as basket making.

The only casual employees paid higher wages, slightly more than L.E 10 daily (about \$2.5), are those working underground in Metro and sewage construction sites... Health wise this job is very dangerous... Fatalities have been witnessed in the past among the displaced Sudanese.²⁷

Many Southern Sudanese have failed to secure their basic needs in Egypt. However, during my research, I observed that some women and men were engaged in potentially life-threatening activities, such as selling body organs and prostitution, especially in the rich areas of Cairo, to secure their basic needs. A recent study by the Sudan Cultural Digest Project described the social impact of

²⁶ . Akol interviewed on December 6, 1996.

²⁷ . See Nelson Leben Moro and Lee Samuel, "Economic Situation," in Coping With Dynamics of Culture and Change: The case of displaced Sudanese in Egypt, research Report no.1, conducted by Sudan Cultural Digest Project, Cairo, December, 1998, p.23. The minimum cost of living for a single person in Cairo is L.E 700 a month (about \$200).

economic hardship on Southern Sudanese displaced in Egypt:

In Egypt some people - Southern Sudanese spent the whole day without eating and have problems of paying their rent, while a few women are living well practising prostitution with the help of some boys who connect them to men for little tips, free food, shelters and drinks. Still others have chosen to sell their organs such as kidneys and testicles and live the rest of lives on the remaining vital parts.²⁸

However, in spite of their economic hardships, Egypt, especially Cairo, became a center for refugees communities and organisations. Two reasons may explain the development of Southern Sudanese communities in Egypt. First, cut off from their roots, their land, and their past, refugees felt an urgent need to reconstitute their broken lives. Second, Egypt, with a relative freedom of expression and association, provided an opportunity freely to exchange feelings and ideas about the war and exile and thus to begin to restructure their shattered world.

Since 1983, many Southern Sudanese have been mentally and physically abused by the government policies toward the South. Some of them spoke of how Northern security forces treated them in South Sudan. One recounted that "people often were taken by the security or army in the middle of

²⁸. Ibid., p. 26.

the night and never seen again."²⁹ This experience of pain and the ways in which it is interpreted contributes to their sense of themselves as Southern Sudanese. One of my respondents recounted.

I came to Egypt in 1993, when I was in Juba-southern Sudan; I worked as an army officer. In Juba I saw many people had been taken by the security forces, some were beaten, tortured and killed. The security forces of the government see southern Sudanese either as SPLA/M agents or foreign agents. Some of my friends were accused by the government and put to death. When the situation became worse, I decided to come to Egypt.³⁰

The pain was not only physical but also psychological. Southern Sudanese in Egypt exist in a state of insecurity as they struggle to re-create their identity. In this environment of insecurity they are constantly under surveillance by the host country authorities.

Although Southern Sudanese refugees in Egypt were subjected to numerous legal disabilities and severe economic difficulties, they nevertheless formed many new organisations with cultural and political goals and for mutual aid and economic self-help. The purpose of forming these organisations was to reconstruct and preserve the

²⁹. Samuel interviewed on 23 November 1996.

achievement of the Southern Sudanese, and to restructure the basis for its continuing development.

The idea of building communities and associations was not new to the Southern Sudanese who had fled to Egypt in the 1980s and the 1990s. A number of these associations had been established in Southern Sudan in the late 1980s, while the Southern Sudan Students Association (SOSSA) had been formed in Egypt in 1974. During the democratic period of 1985-89, many Southern Sudanese had been involved in establishing new organisations, building up their membership, and developing or carrying out their programmes. They had been involved in developing Southern educational, cultural, literary artistic, scholarly, and religious institutions. Groups such as the Sudanese Christian Association, the Pojulu Family, Nyangwara community, and Tailoring Project were formed in 1988, 1980, 1985 and 1987 respectively. However, Southern Sudanese initiatives and activities were brutally interrupted by the cultural and ethnic cleansing of the Islamic regime. Exile provided an opportunity for Southerners to continue their unfinished work. The relative freedom of expression, association, and worship in Egypt stimulated these activities.

³⁰. Samuel interviewed on 23 November 1996.

After the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972, the number of Southern Sudanese students in Egypt increased.³¹ The number of refugees from Southern Sudan in Egypt increased again in the late 1980s due to the NIF policies of ethnic and cultural cleansing. As a result, new associations and community groups emerged. By the time I conducted my research, there were about 34 informal groups established by the Southern Sudanese refugees in Egypt. Most of these were based on ethnic, regional, cultural, or gender identification. Some were formed for income generating and humanitarian purposes.

These ethnic-based organizations played a significant role in teaching the various Southern Sudanese indigenous languages to the younger generation.³² Some groups established language teaching classes in the Sacred Heart Church premises in 1992. The cultural associations also promoted the cultural rituals and practices of the Southern Sudan. These cultural associations challenged the idea that

³¹. It was part of the Arabization policy of the government to send Southern Sudanese students to Egypt for studying in Arabic language. The declared objective was to give Southern Sudanese more educational chances to catch up with the North. But the hidden agenda was to expose Southern Sudanese students to Arab and Islamic culture.

³². Some of these languages were Bari, Nuer, Dinka, Moru, Shilluk,

Southern Sudanese had no culture and history. Southern Sudanese used various strategies to reconstruct and preserve their cultures and heritages. For instance, the representative of the African Cultural Society in Cairo stated that one of the objectives of the society was "to promote African woman to realise and protect her rights and encourage her to fully participate in the society."³³ Other groups such as the Daniel Comboni Show Jazz Band,³⁴ and the Akwa Group and the Azande Dancing Group³⁵ were active in celebrating the Southern Sudanese music and dancing heritage. Their songs reflect the Southern Sudanese experiences of displacement whether in the Sudan or in exile.

Church, Christianity and Southern Sudanese Identity:

The pressure from Islam in the North has contributed to the

Azande, among others.

³³. From interview with the Secretary of finance, 20 October 1996.

³⁴. The name is dedicated to the memory of Bishop Daniel Comboni, who believed to be "devoted his life" serving the African people.

³⁵. Challenging the European and Arab representation of the Azande as 'cannibals', the Azande Dancing Group in Egypt stated its purpose as "to maintain and preserve the Azande cultural and traditional values and norms while we are in exile- to show other people who have no idea about it". On how European and Arab represented Azande in their writings see works by, William B Cohen, 1980, The French Encounter With Africans, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, p.242. Also see Christopher Miller, 1985, Black Darkness: Africanist Discourse in French. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp.3-4.

expansion of Christianity in the South.³⁶ Southern Sudanese see Christianity as a strong political, social and cultural movement against the North. The assertion of Political Islam in the North, and the identification of the ruling Islamic regime with the Arab-Islamic world, invited Southern Sudanese to internationalize their ideology of resistance in a similar way.

Displacement also influenced people's spiritual beliefs. The church in Egypt has played a major role in helping Southern Sudanese refugees in Egypt. Catholic and Anglican Churches such as the Sacred Heart Church, All Saints Cathedral, Saint Andrew's, and many others provided for some of the displaced people's needs. For instance, the Sacred Heart Church in El Abasia, together with some active refugees, was able to initiate projects and programs within the church premises in which the refugee community could participate freely. These projects and programs included among others, the Christian Training Center, and the Saint Luwanga Education Center.³⁷

³⁶. "Sudan: Church Grows Despite Severe Hardships," Christianity Today, vol.38, no.4, April, 4, 1994; also see, Hugh McCullum, "New Sudan Council of Churches," One World no. 206, June 1995.

³⁷. Most of these information is based on a research work has been done by Jane Edward Lado on Southern Sudanese informal groups. The research came out in a paper, entitled "Southern Sudanese Informal Groups: obstacles and strengths of collective activities among southern Sudanese in Cairo", which was presented to the International Sudan's

These programmes created some educational and job opportunities for the Southern Sudanese refugees. Socially and spiritually, the church also offered the Southern refugees spiritual support through prayers, Sunday mass, and Bible sharing. Most importantly, the church provided a space for the refugees to carry out activities, such as celebrations during Christmas and weddings, without interference from the host population. It was within the church premises that Southern Sudanese felt at home and free of the verbal and physical abuse that they routinely faced in the streets.

Before the war, Christianity in South Sudan was associated with the educated. Living in towns, and largely formally employed, they were separated from people living in the countryside. However, the civil war of 1983 destroyed this urban life. The administrative and economic functions, which sustained the towns, collapsed. The politicization of Islam by the government in Khartoum made religion a political issue in the Sudan. Consequently, the churches in South Sudan had to step into the political conflict and seek ways to protect their followers.

One of the most observed social developments among the refugees was a growing Christianisation. This trend has increased the numbers of baptised Southern Sudanese in Egypt. Southern Sudanese saw the need for creating a new moral order, starting with themselves. Many people explained their baptism in terms of resistance to Islam and Arab domination. One said "the war is political, but it is a religious conflict also, Christians are dying every day in the Sudan. They want us to become Muslims, but we are Christians."³⁸ Growing Christianisation has not only a spiritual but also social function, that is, the creation of unity among Southern Sudanese in exile. The Sudanese Christian Association in Egypt has argued that:

The main objectives of the association are spiritual, humanitarian and social. Spiritually the association tries to extend the Gospel of the Lord to its people through prayers, Bible teaching and worship. Socially and humanitarian the association tries to create unity and understanding among the displaced Sudanese living in Egypt.³⁹

Traditionally, Southern Sudanese believe in a God that is helping them to overcome their pain and defeat their enemy. They believe in a God who is protecting them from lack of

³⁸. Michael interviewed on November 7, 1996.

³⁹. See Jane Edward Lado and Tayba Sharif, 1996.

food, clothing, and shelter. In the past, Southern Sudanese saw the Christian mission as a source of literacy and modern skills rather than a provider of spiritual order. Today the church is provider and protector. Christianity among Southern Sudanese is not just a coping strategy, it is an essential component of Southern identity. Unlike Islam in Northern Sudan, religion in Southern Sudan is a personal matter rather than state affair. In Francis Deng's view:

Nilotic beliefs and practices [are] structured along autonomous territorial and descent-oriented units. This provides for autonomous and personal linkages with god through the ancestral spirits, thereby allowing for a measure of religious pluralism and freedom.⁴⁰

The flexibility of these values helped the Nilotics in the past to adopt aspects of foreign religions and culture selectively.

Political Consciousness among Southern Sudanese in Exile:

Displacement changes people in profound ways. It changes their perceptions of themselves, other people, and the world. Refugees experience loss, cultural change and regeneration. Exile involves insecurity and instability, and refugees have to adjust to rapidly changing situations. In exile the refugees are safe physically but the war affects

their life continuously through the experience of exile. The displacement and exile of Southern Sudanese caused by war produced homelessness, diversity and new identities.

The state of refugeness also allowed Southern Sudanese to see differences, to see others differently. Southern Sudanese in Egypt realised that there were some groups in the North that also suffered and were brutalized by the Islamic regime.⁴¹ A Southern Sudanese activist told me that:

When I was in the south, I used to divide Sudan into two hostile regions: north and south. People who live in the north I considered them all as Arabs and enemies. Today, things have changed, when I came to Egypt, I found many people from the north, (Fur, Nuba, Beja) are also running from the Islamic government. Like us, the government attacked them because they are different. I don't consider them now Arabs anymore.⁴²

Southern Sudanese demonstrate a pride in presenting their cultures to outsiders. Representing Southern cultures became a way of reclaiming the past and shaping the future. For instance, during the cultural festival of 1995 in Cairo,

⁴⁰. Deng, 190.

⁴¹. Many Sudanese ethnic groups have fled to Egypt since late 1989. Fur, Beja and people from Nuba Mountains are among them. Before coming to Egypt, many Southern Sudanese used to consider these groups as Northern Sudanese, that is, Arabs and Muslims. However, the experience of being refugee has changed this perception. It becomes clear that being a Muslim in the Sudan is not enough credential to be fully part of the "noble Islamic nation". Therefore, descent and race are essential requirements.

Southern Sudanese were the dominant groups in the festival. The presentation of Southern Sudanese culture has been politicised by Southern Sudanese refugees. The message of their discourse was a resistance and militancy that pervaded social relations and provided the foundation for a new, dynamic cultural "authenticity". One old man said, "we are suffering, dying and starving, but nobody is listening to our cries. Our only hope is to continue fighting to protect our dignity."⁴³ When, as is the case of South Sudan, a nation remains a vision and not a territorial reality, constructing a unified national past is a crucial task. The past is seen as a crucial battlefield in the war to safeguard the Southern present for the future. It assumed great importance in the face of the Arab Islamic denial of Southern Sudanese culture.

This political identity is articulated through expression of a culture distinct from that of Egyptians, and a historical and emotive experience that sharply distinguishes Southern Sudanese from other Sudanese groups who are living in Egypt:

For the first time in the history of the Sudan, the Southerners is sharing the same fate of refuge with the Northern Sudanese, some of whom were themselves perpetrators in the Sudan tragedy.

⁴². Luke interviewed on 15 June 1997.

⁴³. Michael interviewed on 22 July 1997.

However, despite the shared commonalties of the current predicament, this new phenomenon does not augur well with the Southern Sudanese. First, in contrast to the Southerners, the people of the North Sudan can easily adapt into the culture and, secondly, many of them have established economic and family roots in the host country.⁴⁴

As the national liberation movement developed, and Southern Sudanese saw themselves as betrayed politically by the Organization of African Unity and the Arab League and subjected to attacks by Egyptian police and security forces, their cultural identity increasingly took on a specifically Southern Sudanese orientation.⁴⁵ A Southern Sudanese argued:

Our problem with the north is that Arab people when [they] came to the Sudan, did not respect the indigenous people. They came to the south Sudan to obtain our people as slaves. They also deceived the British with the help of the Egyptian, to control political power after independence. Today they are trying to destroy our culture and heritage. They want us to be Arabs and Muslims, and they forget that we are southern Sudanese first and African second.⁴⁶

Conceding that they are Africans and as such share general historical and cultural orientations with other peoples of the region, Southern Sudanese distinguished themselves from other Africans by reference to certain moral qualities. A

⁴⁴. Quoted from EACOSS letter, pp.1-2.

⁴⁵. Whereas the Arab League and O.A.U. can voice support and outrage about what was happening in Bosnia, and Somalia respectively, they are completely blind to the atrocities committed by the Islamic government of the Sudan against Southern Sudanese.

woman said to me that, "We are Africans, but not like Nigerians", whom she considered morally "corrupt", and "dishonest".⁴⁷ Southern Sudanese see themselves as honest and morally strong unlike Northern Sudanese Arabs whom they considered to be dishonest and possessed of a *Jallaba* (Northern trader's) mentality. One says, "we can not live with *Mondocrats* (Northerners), they are untrusted people."⁴⁸

Exile and displacement have challenged some norms and values that had governed the patriarchal Southern Sudanese society.⁴⁹ For instance, with men finding it difficult to secure employment adequate to feed, clothe, shelter, and educate large families, Southern Sudanese women entered the wage labor market in Egypt.⁵⁰ Egyptian and foreign employers eager to exploit a new supply of cheap labor hired them as maids and babysitters. For the first time many women were faced with the double burden of domestic and wage labor. In the past, women's domestic labor had been a co-operative

⁴⁶. Nicolus interviewed on 18 July 1997.

⁴⁷. Rose interviewed on 4 December 1996.

⁴⁸. Ibid.

⁴⁹. See Mary J. Malou, "Uprooted Sudanese women between today and tomorrow," paper presented to the international Sudanese Studies Conference, Cairo 11-14 June, 1997. Also see What Women Do in Wartime: Gender and Conflict in Africa (ed.), by Meredith Turshen and Coltilde Twagiramariya, London: Zed Books Ltd., 1998.

⁵⁰. See What Women Do in Wartime, p.90.

task, with those who shared a household engaging in collective housework and childcare. The scattering of extended families and neighbourhoods broke up large domestic work groups and women increasingly became individual household labourers. This pattern was evident by the time I did my research. Women - kin or friends/neighbours - still shared some cooking and childcare tasks but certainly not on the level possible before exile. In exile many households were dispersed and co-operative tasks were more in the nature of helping out a friend rather than a well-defined division of labor within a household. A woman described her daily life as follows:

For me as a mother of two children living in Egypt without my husband, life is very difficult. I am working and taking care of my housework. Here I have to do many things alone. For instance, cooking; taking kids to school; going to work, etc. I am trying to raise my children because we lost everything back home.⁵¹

However, many men have been compelled to assume roles that they would never have dreamt of performing back home such as baby-sitting. "While the women are a way taking care of rich people's children for money to sustain their families, the men (new and reluctant "mothers") take care of the babies at

⁵¹. Asha interviewed on 22 August 1997.

home."⁵² However, the changes in women's role in exile have created problems between those who want change and those who are opposed to it:

The difference of income, which is in favour of women, has enhanced their status at the expense of the men's, resulting in misunderstanding between husbands and wives in some cases. Some women began despising their husbands because they are idle and are consumers only. Some persons contend that in their new position, women have become arrogant towards men and other family members.⁵³

The meaning of work was transformed during this period. Women perceived work not just as a temporary task brought upon them by the difficulties men faced in finding employment and feeding their families. Work had become part of struggle and a statement of women's increased autonomy and participation in public life. These perceptions were conveyed in women's public discourse, as well as in the discourse officially also propagated by the Sudan People's liberation Movement/Army. Women activists had to occasionally spend time away from home, and this became acceptable as Southern Sudanese recognized the need for women to help the liberation cause. The SPLM/A and other grass roots organisations also recognized the role of women

⁵². See Coping with Dynamics of Culture and Change, p.24.

⁵³. See Benaiah Duku and Jane Edward Lado, "Gender Relations," in Coping With Dynamics of Culture and Change: the case of displaced Sudanese in Egypt, p.34.

in public life. For instance, the SPLM/A Secretary for Women's Affairs, argued that:

The national convention resolution no.16 article 1,2, and 3, that gives women the right to establish women secretariat office from the grass roots to the national level... At present there are women associations committees in all their counties, payams and villages. We are soon going to form committees in the five regions of the New Sudan, these regions are: Upper Nile Bhar El Ghazal, Equatoria, Southern Blue Nile and southern Kordofan...All our women in the new Sudan want to see the leaders of villages, Payams, counties, and regions to be elected by them not just to be appointed from above.⁵⁴

The Sudanese Women's Voice for Peace in Cairo stated its objective as follows:

To identify the constrains and obstacles hindering women's participation in the peace process in the Sudanese armed conflict and prescribe ways and means to fully involve them to work towards the elimination of prejudices and negative stereotyping on the basis of sex, "tribe", religion, etc.⁵⁵

The war of national liberation, and the experience of displacement and exile, encouraged Southern Sudanese women to affirm the pride of the nation. Women recruits summarised their struggle for the assertion of identity in a song:

O, the liberation struggle for my country

⁵⁴. From a paper presented by Ms. Keziya at Models Development Workshops, Kaji Kaji and Yei counties, South Sudan, July 17-19, 1997.

⁵⁵. See Jane Lado and Tayba Sharif, Survey of Sudanese and International Organisations Serving the Displaced Sudanese Communities in Egypt, Ford Foundation, January, 1996.

*When I rose and hoisted my weapon high
To shoot and chase away the one who has transgressed on
me
And has betrayed the pride and dignity of my nation!
Man, rise and shoot to kill the coward who has betrayed
the cause of your life
And the virtues of your nation
Prove to him your existence...
Rise, sister and shoot the coward
Prove to him your existence
O, land of our forefathers
We have dedicated to you our blood and our last breath
Let it be liberation or death
Let the struggle continue until victory is won
Martyr after martyr
The struggle will continue until victory is won.⁵⁶*

Displacement also affected the practice of oral literature that passes indigenous values to younger generations. Ethnic groups in Southern Sudan before displacement had shared a rich heritage of stories, poems, and songs. For instance, it was a common practice among Southern Sudanese that in the evening a family sat around the fire to listen to the elderly recalling their ancestral wisdom and heroes. This was a reflection of pride and self-confidence rooted in their indigenous life. In Egypt, Southern Sudanese were able to initiate programs of language teaching and cultural practices for children. These cultural and educational practices had been initiated to challenge the Arabization

and Islamization policy which was implemented by the successive Khartoum governments. Consequently the SPLA/M also set out its policy for education in Southern Sudan. Samson Kwaje, the SPLM/A Secretary for education argued that:

It is useful to the child to learn about his/her immediate environment without a problem if we use their vernacular. There in our policy, mother tongue is used in lower primary level as a medium of instruction. We have English language, which is taught as a subject in the lower primary, but also as a medium of instruction at primary four up to six year where English become the medium of instruction. We want to introduce Swahili. Swahili is going to be the lingua franca in the Eastern and Central African regions... It could be a very important language of trade. Therefore, Swahili is going to be encouraged to be taught as subject in primary four to primary eight and there after it will become optional. Arabic will be taught in primary five. The first four years of primary education there will be no Arabic until primary five and then teach it until primary eight, then from there also it becomes optional. It is not going to be a medium of instruction.⁵⁷

The purpose of this new educational policy is to forge and strengthen Southern Sudanese identity. It rejects the imposed Northern educational system, which alienated Southern students. Showing the relationship between identity and the need for a new curriculum in Southern Sudan, Samson

⁵⁶. Cited in Francis Deng, 1995, p. 227.

⁵⁷. From a paper on education presented by Dr. Samson Kwaje at the Model Development Workshop held in the liberated areas of South Sudan, Kaji Kaji and Yei Counties, July 17-19, 1997.

argued:

In the old Sudan curriculum was developed without involving people from the southern Sudan and other marginalized areas... Consequently in the past we were taught the geography and history of the Arab land. So in our present education policy we have to concentrate on our history first which is disappearing very fast. We are told by the Arabs that we don't have culture, we don't have history and these are precisely what we are fighting for, we have culture, geography, history...⁵⁸

The alienation of exile and sense of insecurity in Egypt have acted in concert to forge a new Southern identity derived from cultural affiliations and experiences. In the face of repression by the host population and the Sudan Islamic State, Southern Sudanese have strengthened sentiments of brotherhood and sisterhood with one another. Regardless of the degree of suffering in exile, all Southern Sudanese are without a state of their own, constantly at the mercy of the host country's policy toward them, and feel the precariousness of their situation in Egypt.

In exile, the bases of community have not been fixed. The meaning of the space within which the Southern Sudanese community in Egypt was constructed is in flux as well. While one can speak of a Southern community in Egypt, one must be careful not to over-generalize and to keep in the forefront

the multi-layered nature of both community and identity.⁵⁹ First, Southern refugees came to Egypt from a variety of ethnic groups and regions in South Sudan. A common point of reference for refugees was the past and origins in, and a sense of belonging to the physical and social space of Southern Sudan. The past is not distant from the present, and gives meaning to one's historical sense of self. Other Southern Sudanese refugees who fled to Uganda, Kenya or Ethiopia, developed a sense of themselves as Southern Sudanese. Those who came to Egypt formed a community of refugees who shared an experience of being refugees in an Arab-Islamic country.⁶⁰

Though a process of cultural reconstruction has begun to unfold, the commonalty of struggle informed new categories of meaning. The defining quality of the Southern Sudanese

⁵⁸. Ibid.

⁵⁹. The growing sense of solidarity among Southern Sudanese communities in Cairo does not negate the existence of conflicts among them. For instance, in 1993 one of the serious conflicts that occurred involved South Sudan Students Associations (SOSSA). This conflict resulted in dissolution of the association's Cairo branch. The main reason for the conflict was political. Students supporting the rival SPLA's factions struggled for control of the SOSSA. This conflict turned violent as the two groups confronted each other. For discussion on ethnicity and politics see J. Pietas, "Varieties of ethnic politics and ethnicity discourse," in Willmsen, E. and Mcallister, P. (eds.), The politics of Difference: ethnic premises in a world of power, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996; also see M. Levin, "understanding ethnicity," Queen's Quarterly, 102,1: 71-84.

culture of resistance is militancy or *Doushman* struggle - whose concrete expression is the SPLA/SPLM in all its myriad forms and armed struggle. Since 1994, the SPLA/M has managed to gain the support of the overwhelming majority of Southern Sudanese inside and outside of Sudan. But this support was not transformed by the SPLA/M into a unified political consciousness that could cross cut across the ethnic and racial sentiments. The SPLA/M policies towards some ethnic groups in the South, in particular Equatorians, were hostile.⁶¹ During the earlier years of the movement, the majority of Equatorians did not support the SPLA/M. Many Equatorians perceived the formation of the SPLA/M as an attempt to restore the Dinka hegemony in the South. Policies of human rights abuses and ethnic nepotism created further division and inter-ethnic wars in the South.

Cultures of resistance are built upon "expressions of ethnic identity and group solidarity ... retained in part from pre-colonial traditions, but they are also reshaped, altered, and created anew and involve along process of redefinition

⁶⁰. Southern Sudanese in Egypt are predominately Christians.

⁶¹. In the beginning, the majority of Equatorians opposed the formation of the SPLA/M. They considered SPLA/M as a Nilotic movement attempting to restore the Dinka hegemony in the South.

of cultural identity."⁶² Although there is a recognition of the existence of multiple ethnic identities among Southern Sudanese, there is also a growing awareness of the commonality of cultural and ethnic violence against them. It is logical for Southern Sudanese to respond to repression and exploitation by emphasising the bounded nature of their national community and their cultural distinctiveness - a sense of separateness, a sense and meaning of the national and cultural self as quite distinct from that of colonial discourse. Despite its weakness, this new identity is intermingled with new forms of political and military organisation and categories of meaning to respond to hegemonic structures of the Northern Sudan.

Southern Sudanese refugees are learning from their experiences in the Sudan and Egypt to be united as Southerners. As one informant said, "we are all here in Egypt for one reason; because we are southern Sudanese."⁶³ Southern Sudanese did not simply discover this consciousness in Egypt, it has been created collectively through long historical struggles. The experience of Southern Sudanese in Egypt in particular has had a serious impact on Southern

⁶². See Caulfield Mina Davis, "Culture and Imperialism," in D. Hymes (ed.), Reinventing Anthropology, pp.182-212.

Sudanese society. Cairo has become a kind of melting pot for Southern Sudanese ethnic groups, and as a leveller of differences and conflicts which have been present before displacement and exile.

After the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1973, regionalism had become a threat to Southern unity. What has changed in Egypt is exemplified by the relative rarity of references to region among Southern Sudanese refugees. During my research, I learned that Southern Sudanese often regarded regionalism as a creation of the Northern dominated governments. As such, it was perceived as a problem of the past. One Southern politician explained that:

In the past, our people did not know the threat of factionalism. Our enemy in the north encouraged this regionalism in the south in order to prevent our unity. Today we learn that it is easy to get kill if you divided into groups, but you will not get kill if you are united. [sic]⁶⁴

Refugees as a collective entity have become an essential part of making a new Southern Sudanese society. Their status as refugees promised to challenge illegitimate Arab domination. Informants pointed out proudly that they have been active in reconstructing their lives despite all

⁶³. Sara interviewed on 11 October, 1996.

difficulties. Consequently, the process of displacement has been transformed into a political consciousness that is crucial step towards liberating the homeland.

Southern Sudanese and the Future of the Sudan:

When the SPLM/A was formed in 1983, its declared objective was the formation of a new united Sudan. That is, a new Sudan to which all Sudanese could pledge allegiance irrespective of race, religion, class or other identities. The movement has rejected the present Sudan on the basis that the present Sudan is Islamic and Arab. The non-Arabs and non-Muslims are excluded from the old Sudan. This idea of united Sudan dominated the movement's discourse until 1991 when the SPLM/A was split into two groups. The SPLM/A by its nature is not a homogeneous body; it represents different social, cultural, regional and political groups, with different historical and political backgrounds. After the split of 1991, the SPLM/A objective shifted its position to advocate the right of self-determination for South Sudan. This shift has come as a result of growing political consciousness among the SPLM leadership and pressure from the SPLA and the grass roots.

⁶⁴. Susan interviewed on 18 July 1997.

In June 1995, the SPLM/A and Northern opposition groups signed the Asmara Declaration.⁶⁵ This declaration laid the foundation for Cooperation between the opposition forces from both the North and the South under the National Democratic Alliance. According to the declaration, confederal and federal arrangements will be put in place in all Sudan to be followed by a referendum on self-determination in Southern Sudan, Abyei, the Nuba Mountains, and the Ingessena Hills after a four-year interim period.

Although the Northern political forces accepted that the people of these areas should exercise their rights to self-determination, many Southern Sudanese expressed fears and doubt about the commitment of these Northern parties. A Southern Sudanese commented that:

It is not a matter of agreement between these forces and the SPLA/M, but it is a question of trust and practice. Our history with those political parties was full of crimes and oppression. I don't think they are genuine in this agreement, they are using the SPLA to fight for them the war against the NIF.⁶⁶

Another said:

I don't trust the Umma Party and Democratic

⁶⁵. See National Democratic Alliance (NDA), Documents of the Conference on Fundamental Issues, Asmara, 15-23 June 1995.

⁶⁶. Hran interviewed on 30 July 1997.

Unionist Party. Both are responsible for killing thousands of people in south Sudan. They are talking about the right of self-determination now because they want us to bring them to power. Without the SPLA/M they know that they will never overthrow the NIF.⁶⁷

The Asmara Declaration also adopted military struggle as a means to fight the current Islamic regime in Khartoum. However, the majority of the Northern political parties have so far failed to commit their followers to combat against the regime. Thus, the SPLA/M remains the main military force of the NDA. A Southern Sudanese told me that the "northern political parties especially the Umma and the DUP would never take this issue seriously because they will be very happy to see the SPLA fight alone and get finish, in the field." ⁶⁸ It is quite clear among Southern Sudanese in Egypt that the myth of "unity in diversity" has no strong support. Unlike the 1970s, Southern Sudanese have become aware and conscious of the culture of Sudanese politics. P.A. Nyaba eloquently frames the dilemma of the National Democratic Alliance, and the SPLM/A.

I look at The National Democratic Alliance not as a bridge to the formation of one secular democratic Sudan, but as a convenient forum for a peaceful dismemberment of the Sudan, and the formation of two separate, independent and sovereign entities, just in the same way the Czech

⁶⁷. Merriam interviewed on 3 August 1997.

⁶⁸. Ahmmed Interviewed on 27 November 1996.

and the Slovak republics were formed from the former Czechoslovakia following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The baseline for the NDA is the overthrow of the NIF regime. The people of the Sudan should not re-enact the experiences that have escalated the conflict between the Arab-dominated North and the South. To do that would be as futile as the war the Serbs fought in Croatia and in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The alliance of the SPLM with these parties should be based on clear objectives acceptable to the people of south Sudan.⁶⁹

The idea of united Sudan reminds them of the entire human misery and suffering that they have been through. The old Sudan, inherited from the British colonialism, does not exist in their daily public discourse of national liberation. A respondent argued that:

You see what is happening now in Eastern Europe. People are freeing themselves from the domination of one group. We can not accept oppression; we will fight like our elders who fought against the colonial power. Today not only southern Sudanese should fight also groups such as Fur, Beja, Nuba, and others.⁷⁰

Southern Sudanese in Egypt often refer to Mr. Sadiq El Mahdi, the leader of the Umma Party, as the enemy of the South. A respondent argued that "Mr. Sadiq was responsible for the failure of Koka Dam Declaration when he was Prime Minister, he was purposely refused to implement it because

⁶⁹. See P.A. Nyaba, The Politics of Liberation in South Sudan: An Insider View, Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1997, p.174.

⁷⁰. Francis interviewed on 20 June 1997.

he believed on Islamism and Arabism."⁷¹ The major change among Southern Sudanese in Egypt was the tendency to emphasize the question of identity in their conflict with the North. During the first civil war of 1955-1972, Southern Sudanese were concerned with administrative arrangements such as regional government or federal system. By the time I conducted my research they were not concerned with these issues anymore. A former civil servant explained this new tendency in the following manner:

During Addis Ababa agreement we thought we could live together with those of the north, but they deceived us, and even succeeded on dividing us into regions and hostile ethnic groups. Instead of treating us as equal partners, they disrespected us and treated us as inferior to them. Thus, our demand today is not getting jobs or posts in government but to protect our cultures, history and identity.⁷²

During the time I conducted my research, most of my respondents did not see the idea of united Sudan as an acceptable basis for ending the civil war. The brutality of the current Islamic regimes against Southern Sudan and the absence of a credible alternative among the Northern opposition groups have convinced many Southern Sudanese to prefer separation. A southern Sudanese student supported this position by saying, "even here in Egypt Northern

⁷¹. Ahmmmed interviewed on 22 October 1996.

Sudanese failed to convince us that they could be trusted. For instance, during the cultural festival of 1995, the Sudan Culture and Information Center (which is dominated by the Northern Sudanese) used money as a tool to divide Southern Sudanese."⁷³

It is obvious that Southern Sudanese in Egypt are engaged in the process of creating and reconstructing their identities. This collective, dynamic process of reconstruction involves redefining themselves and others. It is a product of historical process of marginalization and resistance. The colonially invented identity of "African" in Southern Sudan has been given new meaning and content. This new meaning and content have questioned the colonial and the post-colonial discourse of otherness. The brutality of the civil war, and the experience of violence and slave trade which are inflicted on South Sudanese, have led them to challenge the

⁷². Benn interviewed on 1 November 1996.

⁷³. The Cairo-based Center organised Sudanese cultural festival in 1995. This cultural festival was funded by the Ford Foundation to promote dialogue between Sudanese communal groups in Egypt within the framework of united Sudan. Northern Sudanese dominated the Center, and some of its executive members were even responsible for the marginalization of Southern Sudanese culture in the past. The Center, however, had been criticised by many Southern Sudanese for using money to buy off Southern Sudanese and divide them during the festival. Thus, the majority of Southern Sudanese refugees in Cairo see the center as a tool for dividing them rather than a forum for unity and integration. See The Ford Foundation Report, Summer/Fall, 1995.

imposed stereotypes and representations.

The experience of displacement and the contact with the host population have not only strengthened their unity, but also helped them to imagine their future. Experiencing exile in an Arab country has encouraged Southern Sudanese to think of themselves in different terms from other Arabized groups of the Sudan. Their negative experiences with the Egyptian and Northern Sudanese have consolidated the Southern Sudanese demand for an independent state. However, it will be a mistake to regard the "Southern identity" as a single entity. Southern Sudanese identity is broadened and deepened by displacement and exile after 1983, the resultant complexity of Southern Sudanese society cannot be represented by a single entity. For instance, one aspect of the Southern Sudanese resistance in Egypt is that it puts on the table discussion of the basic political as well as social fabric of what is hoped eventually would be a Southern Sudanese state. This development is evident in the emergence, on the one hand, of women's activism, marked by conscious efforts to maintain a focus on gender issues, and on the other, of ethnic and cultural groups which put specific emphasis on indigenous languages as part of a broader social and cultural program.

Although the SPLA/M and Northern opposition groups are uniting against the Islamic regime, the idea of a united Sudan has become less favourably viewed among Southern Sudanese.⁷⁴ The growing disbelief about the "integrity" of Sudan has occurred as a result of an emerging new political identity and consciousness among Southern refugees. However, the SPLM/A has not yet reflected the political aspiration of the majority of Southern Sudanese,⁷⁵ that is, a political commitment that could foster and legitimise the growing sense of a new political identity in the South.

⁷⁴. See Sudan Democratic Gazette, No.100, September 1998, p.1.

⁷⁵. Many of my informers argued that the SPLM/A has become hostage to NDA's agenda of a united Sudan rather than Southern Sudanese claim for independent.

CONCLUSION

The preceding chapters examine how "African" and "Arab" as competing racial identities have been produced in the Sudan. The study provides an alternative interpretation to the genesis of the Sudan's current civil war. Contrary to the conventional premise that the present civil war is a conflict between "Arab" Muslim North and "African" Christian/ "animist" South, the study demonstrates that these racial categories were historically created through political and ideological practices. These racial categories were invented in the Sudan to assign some groups to perpetuate inferior status, while others were permitted access to privilege, power and wealth. Their political creation produced particular historical forms of power, self-identity and exclusion. In the Sudan, the form of governance that emerged in the 18th century created groups of peoples with inferior status in relation to the state. Its implication was/is felt in the present civil war.

When the North became fully Arabized and Islamized in the 16th century, Islam played a major role in dividing people into two categories: Muslims and non-Muslims. In the North

many people produced genealogies that tied them to Arab descent. Northerners who invented their imagined Arab and Islamic identity considered their cultural norms and practices superior to that of the non-Muslims and non-Arabs. When slavery appeared in Sudan's history, it brought about a powerful transformation in people's perceptions of human differences. It imposed social meanings on social, cultural and religious differences among people of the Sudan and served as the basis for the structuring of the society.

The classification of people based on religion and race opened the door for slavery and slave trade in the Sudan. Justified by their religious faith and the ideology of *jihad* (holy war) against infidel, many Northerners practised slave trading. Slaves were obtained through systematic raids on the non-Muslim and non-Arab groups in the Southern and Western Sudan. The status of slaves however was more determined by the socio-economic conditions than religious beliefs. Being a Muslim in the Sudan did not protect many Muslims from Western Sudan for example from being enslaved. In a racialized society like the Sudan race and descent are very significant in determining the status of people. This binary opposition between freemen and enslaveable peoples

and the ideology of domination articulated in political practices was embedded in the structure of the Northern Sudanese society. The Christian missionaries, British administrators and the Northern-based nationalist groups reproduced the racial classification of Sudanese people.

Thus, being a Muslim couldn't fully compensate for the absence of the Arab descent. The role of descent was evident during the split of the nationalist movement in the 1920s. The Northern-based nationalist movement did not address the issues of Sudan's histories and identities, instead attempted to build an imagined national unity based on Arab identity. Therefore, Northern nationalists supported a specific vision of history and identity based on Arabism and Islamism. Race and descent, not citizenship, became the two criteria for defining who should or should not lead the emerging imagined nation.

This process of racialization laid the seeds for the invention of two competing identities, which were strengthened by the British colonial policy toward the Southern Sudan. Inequalities in economic, educational and political development during the colonial period aggravated the conflict between the North and the South. The colonial

state legitimized the myth of primordial tribalism in South Sudan through the policy of indirect rule. During this period, negative representations and stereotypes of Southern Sudanese as pagan and primitive peoples served as tools of domination providing moral legitimacy for government officials, Christian missionaries and anthropologists who promoted self-serving images of savage people to justify their subjugation and marginalization.

Many contemporary Sudanese scholars assume and operate on the assumption that all people who live in South Sudan shared and maintained certain unchangeable racial and cultural qualities that mark them off from other peoples. Scholars who assert a common Arab Islamic identity in the North reflect the degree to which the ideology of race has been implanted in them. Other scholars find it difficult to think beyond the racial view and draw upon the same strategies as "Arab" racists in claiming superior status for an "African" South. Of course, denying inferiority while asserting African superiority does nothing to change the racism that exists in contemporary Sudan. Contemporary writings on Sudan's civil war have not dealt with the fundamental issues of racialized relation and racism in the Sudan. They have not raised the basic question of how the

people of the Sudan have come to be defined in these racial terms. Instead, the majority of Sudanese writers have continued to employ the 18th century racist conception of the Sudan.

It is true that colonial policies contributed to the creation of Africanism in South Sudan. But what makes Sudan's civil war continue today is not the artificiality of Africanism in South Sudan, but the artificiality of the Sudanese State. Sudan attained independence through agreement between Egypt, Britain and the Sudanese ruling groups, not through the emergence of strong national consensus that could establish effective control over territory and extract the resources necessary to sustain an independent state. At independence, Southern Sudanese considered the Northern political hegemony as a new "civilizing mission", determined to eradicate their histories and identities. The threat of Islamization and Arabization caused people of South Sudan to revolt and resist through armed struggle. Since political independence, Southern Sudanese have struggled to resist the Northern hegemony and oppression. Successive Northern governments have implemented different strategies to weaken this struggle. The current government of the National Islamic

Front has used slavery and ethnic cleansing systematically to force its project of Arabization and Islamization among Southern Sudanese.

Research among Southern Sudanese refugees has shown that Southern Sudan is not a single society, but a set of societies embodying cultural and ethnic variations. Unlike the colonially created identity of Africanism, identity in South Sudan is not a constant phenomenon but is shaped and reshaped by individual experiences in their daily life. Southern refugees in the midst of civil war have attempted to restore a sense of pride and dignity among their communities. By learning about and being involved in certain festivals and rituals that focus on their arts, dance and music, refugees feel that they are engendering this pride and helping to remove the stereotypes and mythologies that have accompanied the colonial ideas about the South. These refugees also recognize that for too long many Southerners have been conditioned to the same negative beliefs about Southern Sudan and its people and that there is a need to eliminate self-depreciation.

Although Southern Sudanese have become vocal about separation, they have not yet addressed some of the

fundamental issues regarding the future of Southern Sudan. These issues include the problem of inter-ethnic conflicts, the weakness of civil society, and the lack of democratic political culture in the South. These are crucial issues for any attempt to restore peace and prosperity in the Southern Sudan. Only when Southern political leaders confront these problems that will Southerners be able to resist effectively and protect their histories and identities. Although the SPLA/M succeeded in restoring a sense of pride and dignity, it has not forged a unified political consciousness among the various Southern ethnic groups. Since its formation in 1983, relations between the SPLA and civilians in Equatoria in particular have been strained. It is the failure of the SPLA/M to address these internal problems that has produced a lack of civilian support for the movement. In general, the future success of the Southern Sudanese struggle lies in the inclusion of all of the various Southern Sudanese ethnic and political groups, and the ability to reconcile their conflicting interests.

The tragedy in the Sudan today is that the policies and practices stemming from the current Islamic government have succeeded in reproducing and legitimizing the persistence of racism and politics of exclusion. Contemporary scholars of

Sudan's conflict thus need to seek an alternative discourse of history that can be used to understand the root causes of the tragedy. Always there are ways forward, but to discover them one must first know how one got to where one is. To explain how people of the Sudan have reached their present position has been the intention of the preceding chapters.

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I have not used the real names of the informants in this list so as to protect the safety of the refugees.

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- 3-Joseph Adam
- 4-Hran B.
- 5-S. Ahmmed
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- 7-Mary Edward
- 8-David Waya
- 9-Sara Frank
- 10-Sustin A
- 11-Merriam John
- 12-Sebit Tutu
- 13-Susan Lunga
- 14-Rose Deng
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