

DIFFUSION OF ISLAM SOUTH OF
THE SAHARA GENERAL SURVEY
AND
THE SOUTHERN SUDAN
A QUESTION OF NATIONAL UNITY

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PREFACE

A. T. Grove wrote recently¹ "Islam and Cristianity brought into Africa ideas about God that were in some ways new." These new religions claiming to be universal, made little impression on Africa south of the Sahara before the Colonial Period. Christian missionaries until that time were confined to certain coastal stations.

Muslims had made a greater impact and had been at least partly responsible for the emergence of large political states which evolved in the Sudan Zone* from medieval times onwards, and embraced several groups. But until the end of the last century the impress of Islam had been restricted mainly to the big towns at the southern end of the trade routes across the desert, the mass of the people, country dwellers, remained animists.

Now a large proportion of the people north of latitude 10 North are Muslims and increasing numbers of Muslim converts are being made towards the Guinea coast particularly in Western Nigeria and also down the east coast into Tanzania and Mozambique.

My purpose in this study is to find out how Islam has been diffused throughout Africa south of the Sahara and what were the means of its

¹Grove, 1970, p. 44.

*Sudan Zone: Term used by Arab geographers to identify the semi-arid area from Atlantic Ocean to Red Sea south of the Sahara.

diffusion. And to find out the role of Islam and its political significance among the Africans south of the Sahara.

Islam was carried to Africa by the Arab Muslims who invaded Egypt and the Northern Africa during the seventh century (A.D.). Later the Berbers carried out the task of its diffusion across the Sahara during the following centuries. Islam also came across the Red Sea from the Arabian Peninsula at Bab-Elmandab where Arab settlements played a major role in establishing Islam on the Somalian coast.

Factors of diffusion were: Trade, migration, Pilgrimage and the Jihad.* Modern writers depended in the first place on the writings of the Arab geographers such as Ibn-Khaldoun or El-Masoudi and El-Edrisi who wrote about the Muslim Emirates in the Sudan Zone during the Medieval times. Scientific research which is based on statistical data was not available during their era, and their writings could be labeled as general observations. There is much work that may be done to investigate Islam and its role in Africa. I am restricting my study in this paper just to survey the diffusion of Islam and its socio-political significance south of the Sahara where newly independent states have emerged: Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, Sudan,** and Somalia. Also to investigate Islam in Ethiopia where Muslims are not the majority of the population. Recently the progress in communications and transportation makes the

*Muslims believed the Jihad (the Holy Wars) was an obligation to carry the Words of Allah (The One God) to other peoples who either accepted Islam or remained non-Muslims but paid taxes.

**The Republic of the Sudan in the Nile Basin.

spread of ideas more easy, which of course
has increased the chances of Islam to
penetrate among Africans and to become
a more important factor in shaping their
social and political life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE	ii
 CHAPTER	
I. EARLY SPREAD OF ISLAM	1
Islam: The Religion	1
North Africa: The Arab Invasion	2
Islam and the Coming of the Europeans	3
East Africa: The Arab Penetration	4
Coastal Stations	4
Spread of Islam into Interior Africa	6
West Africa: The Role of the Berbers	7
The Arab Writers and their Contributions	8
Islam before Thirteenth Century	9
Islam from Thirteenth to Nineteenth Centuries	10
II. FACTORS OF DIFFUSION	12
The Trade	12
Migration and Pilgrimage	14
Al-Jihad (The Holy Wars)	15
Islam and Social Structure	16
Islamic Culture	16
Europeans and Missionaries	17
III. SOCIO-POLITICAL ROLE OF ISLAM IN THE SUDAN BELT	20
The States of the Sudan Belt	21
Mauritania	21
Mali	24
Niger	27
Chad	29
The Sudan Republic	31
Eritrea-Ethiopia-Somalia	36
CONCLUSION	40
APPENDIX	42
BIBLIOGRAPHY	44

CHAPTER I

EARLY SPREAD OF ISLAM

Islam: The Religion

The religion of Islam brings together Muslims regardless of race or nationality in a fellowship constructed upon faith in The One God, Allah. It has much in common with both Christianity and Judaism.¹ The term Islam means Submission to God. In the eyes of the believers, Mohammed, like Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, is a Prophet of God. He was called upon by God to deliver His eternal message to the unbelieving Arabs and the rest of mankind. Unity in belief strengthens solidarity in Islamic society and brings dynamism to the Faith. Islam has been one of the greatest motives which inspired millions of peoples to enrich cultural inheritance for many centuries.

The historical development of Islam may reflect how it has been decisive in winning over millions of the Africans in face of strong competition from Christianity. Within the short life of the Prophet Mohammed, Islam provided a revolutionary transformation in the Arabs' beliefs and social values. Considering the social and political institutions during the rise of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula, one had little to anticipate that out of a land as characterized by sharp and contrasts there would emerge a powerful force for uniformity and unity.²

¹Farah, 1963, p. 1.

²Ibid., p. 16.

Islam became a powerful zeal that carried the Arabs out of their hostile environment to establish an empire larger and far beyond their imagination.

The Arabian Peninsula occupied a position between the great ancient centers of trade. This strategic position encouraged its inhabitants to become middlemen in the transit of trade, particularly when some of the best utilized trade routes of ancient times were those which crossed the peninsula along the west coast from south to north terminating on the Mediterranean, or in the lower Nile and Mesopotamian Valleys.³ The Peninsula, however, was very limited in its natural resources and its peoples were divided. Only with Islam the Arabs became united and were able to strike out on a new course of the World history.

North Africa: The Arab Invasion

With a new-born Faith, Islam advanced over divided and helpless communities.⁴ The progress was noticeably rapid over the Roman Empire which was dominating most of North Africa during the seventh century.⁵ Christianity was the religion of most of the people and Alexandria* and Charthage** were great centers and seats of two powerful churches.⁶ But with passing years when the power of Rome was declining North Africa was an easy gain to Islam.

³Farah, 1963, p. 20.

⁴Atterbury, 1899, p. 57.

⁵Ibid., p. 72.

⁶Borer, 1963, p. 85.

*In Northwest Africa

**Occupied what is Tunis today

Islam has brought the Arabs and the Berbers of North Africa to become gradually a new distinctive power north of the Sahara. Camels which were brought to Africa around the fourth century⁷ carried the Muslim Berbers across the Sahara southward into North Central Africa. From the eighth until the eleventh centuries Islam made great progress and deep influence in western Sudanese towns that became centers from which Islam could make waves of progress into West Africa.⁸

The Arabs who penetrated into North Africa, Mauritania, Central and Eastern Sudan, migrated as large groups and such was their effect that they have changed the language and culture of the Berbers and other Hamites.

Islam and the Coming of the Europeans

The establishment of European rule and the suppression of the slave trade led to speed the expansion of Islam. Peaceful conditions and the opening of the interior gave the trade an access to new areas. British and Germans employed Muslims as officials, agents, policemen, soldiers and schoolmasters. This rapid spread of Islam increased considerably during the expecially after World War I (1914-1918) but was slowed down in 1930's, and since then Islam makes progress by means of individual conversions.⁹

⁷Singleton and Shingler, 1969, p. 32.

⁸Hatch, 1970, p. 40.

⁹Trimingham, 1962, pp. 27-28, "East Africa".

East Africa: The Arab Penetration

Islamic influence and expansion in East Africa is an indication to understand Islam today. There were two phases of Islamization:¹⁰

- 1) The formation on the coastal fringe and off-shore inlands of a new African Islamic Society.
- 2) The spread of coastal Islamic culture into the interior.

Coastal Stations

The monsoon winds made navigation possible and predictable from Persian Gulf. From an early date the people of the East African coast were brought into contact with South Arabia and Persian Gulf as well as India, Indonesia, and even China.¹¹

People of Southwest Arabia had long turned to the sea for their livelihood. When they became Muslims they had in their hand the power to give Islam a unique maritime expansion.¹² Navigators sailed the shores of Somalia for aromatic and incense. Ivory of African elephants were also important. A series of settlements were formed along the coast. This era of Muslim influence was essentially restricted to the coast. Islam remained town-based and directed towards the formation and development of urban commercial centers.¹³ Islamic civilization which diffused primarily from South Arabia and secondarily from the Persian Gulf, has created the urban civilization of the coast.¹⁴

¹⁰Ibid., p. 10.

¹¹Ibid., p. 2.

¹²Ibid., p. 2.

¹³Lewis, I. M., 1955, p. 12.

¹⁴Trimingham, 1964, p. 159.

The nature of the coastal Muslims' settlements were essentially Arabic. These settlements looked towards the sea, across the lands with which they maintained family, cultural and commercial links. They had no direct link with the interior. They developed no caravan routes, and no market centers.¹⁵ The majority of the inhabitants of these towns were black men, but the towns themselves were the creation of the Arabs, some of whom were probably themselves black and some of whom intermarried with the people of the coast.

Even the center of gravity of early Muslim settlements were not so much on the coast itself but on the offshore islands: The Comores, Zanzibar and Pemba. And despite the exploitation of the African interior resources by Arab traders: ivory, gold, and slave, there seems until recent times little evidence of any powerful political or economic centers in the hinterland.¹⁶

These coastal towns first felt the full impact of Islam in the late thirteenth century. The famous medieval traveler Ibn-Battuta who visited Mombassa in the early 1330's wrote of the inhabitants that they were honorable, upright and had well built Mosques. Buildings were probably of lath and mud. In the fourteenth century there was a marked expansion in the material culture of the coast followed in the fifteenth century by full flowering of Islamic influence.¹⁷

¹⁵Trimingham, 1964, p. 159.

¹⁶Lewis, I. M., 1955, p. 10.

¹⁷Ingham, 1962, p. 4.

The immigrants who settled on the East African coasts came as individuals. They were the descendants of Arab merchants who married African women. Many of these families trace their origins back to southern Arabia and the coastal regions of the Persian Gulf. Many of them maintain contact with their paternal homeland.¹⁸

Christian Ethiopia was not invaded because its highland formed an obstacle against the waves of expansion of Islamic civilization from the Arabian Peninsula and East African coast on one hand and from the Nile Valley on the other.¹⁹ Therefore, Ethiopia was not exposed to Islam or to the Arabs' influence. Its people who were generally Amhara Christian, have rejected and resisted Islam.

Spread of Islam into Interior Africa

✓ Diffusion of Islam along inland trade routes must be assumed to have been discouraged by the nature of the land and its lack of large centers of population. The spread into hinterland was gradually increasing with the increase of the trade and the establishment of more population centers in the interior which gradually had become of more economic interest.

The carrying of Islam into the interior coincided with the great series of Somali-movements of expansion which from perhaps as early as the tenth century, brought Islam to northern Kenya. The Somali nomads

¹⁸Triningham, 1964, p. 4.

¹⁹Ibid., 1952, p. 15.

carried Islam to the people of the interior. Islam reached Uganda but with not much progress. Kenya was too unsettled and Islam did not gain any important centers on the coast except the Digo.²⁰ There is no evidence that the medieval Arabs ever reached as far inland as Zimbabwe.²¹ The Arab writer, Al-Masudi records the existence of a great central African Kingdom in the tenth century.²²

West Africa: The Role of the Berbers

The Berbers with an immense range of activity transformed the whole Sahara life. They were the middlemen between the Mediterranean lands in the North and the Savannah-Lands of the South. The use of the camel gave them an easy means to transform the life of the northern African Sahara.²³

The first currents of Islamization into West Africa had an economic basis. The Arab conquerors of North Africa had no desire to conquer the Sahara and the Sudan, but they were concerned with the gold trade.²⁴ Early in the eleventh century A.D., Islam had begun to spread among black peoples.²⁵ Islam spread southwards along the western Sahara trade routes and then eastwards up the valley of Senegal.²⁶

²⁰Ibid., 1964, p. 14.

²¹Borer, 1963, p. 97.

²²Ibid., p. 97.

²³Singleton and Shingler, 1969, p. 32.

²⁴Trimingham, 1962, p. 27.

²⁵Ibid., p. 27.

²⁶Ibid., p. 25.

The primary Islamization of the Negro, therefore, was almost the work of Berber merchant.²⁷ Over western Sahara roamed the nomadic groups known as Sanhaja who inhabited the west areas of the Sahara from Mauritania to Ahaggar, as far south as the Sudan, their present day descendants are the Moors of the West and the Tuareg of Central Sahara.²⁸ The arrival of these nomadic groups affected the social structure of the people who lived on southern fringes of the Sahara desert. One of the group known as the Zaghawa and thought to be of Berber origin was probably being pushed southwards by the Arab invasion of North Africa.²⁹

The Arab Writers and Their Contributions

Before the coming of the Arabs little was known of Africa south of the Sahara. They were travelers and writers. Their writings have become the basic source of information available about western Saharan Sudan. Al-Masudi, Ibn-Haukal, Al-Bakri, Al-Edrisi, Yagut, El-Omari, Ibn-Battuta and Ibn-Khaldoun³⁰ were mentioned by many Europeans as firsthand writers.

The Arabs called the Savannah south of the Sahara, Bilad El-Sudan, that means the land of the Blacks. They spoke of the whole area from the Nile Valley to the Atlantic Ocean.³¹

²⁷Ibid., p. 20.

²⁸Ibid., p. 20.

²⁹Crowder, 1962, p. 31.

³⁰Bouvill, 1933, p. 33.

³¹Hatch, 1970, p. 33.

Four empires of medieval times were known to the Arabs: Songhai, Ghana, Mali, Kanem-Bornou. They were inhabited by Negro Africans and one of the Arab writers: Ibn-Said indicated that Islam was established between 1085-1240, since then it has been diffused all over the Sudan.³² First among the ruling class and in the trade centers, and later among the whole majority of population.

Islam before Thirteenth Century

Until the seventh century Africans had followed the religions of their ancestors in a wide of cults, customs, traditions and beliefs.³³ Islam has begun to make a recognizable progress since the eleventh and twelfth centuries onwards. Kanem-Bornu established a dynasty that lasted almost a thousand years. Islamic ideas began to be known to the population and the Koranic Law and the Muslim administration systems were widely used. The introduction of Islam to Kanem was highly significant. Its location made Kanem the obvious center for diffusion of Islamic Faith and civilization in the Central Sudan and therefore became a principal meeting point for the trade Mediterranean coastal Magreb, the Sudan and the Middle East. Pilgrimage to Mecca was also passing this focal site. Islam of course flourished and progressed in this kind of economical and cultural atmosphere.

The African Kingdom of Ghana was invaded during the eleventh century by the Almoravid Muslims who began as a fanatic reform movement.

³²Ibid., p. 33.

³³Ibid., p. 36.

The royal family converted to Islam and Ghana became one of the powerful kingdoms by the eve of the eleventh century. Islam brought the Arab language to most of western Sudan and the Arab writers could travel with no difficulty throughout the whole savannah belt south of the Sahara. The fact that the Muslim writers had not mentioned the Hausa states till later during the thirteenth century, indicated that there were no commercial centers of such importance. Trade was very important and in fact it was one of the major factors that stimulated the Muslims to travel and to spread their Islamic thoughts. Ibn-Battuta³⁴ passed through Takedda and Air in 1353 A. D. Around that time, the fourteenth century, Islam might be more established and the Muslim influence was seriously felt. Islam gave the Hausa the chances to develop good systems in government and administration based on Islam.

Islam from Thirteenth to Nineteenth Centuries

No doubt that the interaction that happened among people in trade centers has given Islam a chance to proceed and flourish. Progress was taking place throughout hundreds of years. According to the Moroccan Arab Leo-Africanus³⁵ who visited Timbuktu in the early sixteenth century, the economical situation was healthy and the Islamic learning centers* were everywhere. Timbuktu was the most important town³⁶ in the Songhai

³⁴Trimingham, 1962, p. 130.

³⁵Hatch, 1970, p. 41.

³⁶Ibid., p. 41.

*I assume that the centers were small in size. In the Muslim world there have been the Koranic schools where one teacher can do the job.

empire and the seat of its ruler. And Kano had the same importance to the Hausa states but since the seventeenth century, Katsina had replaced Kano and became the center of activities.³⁷

Until the eighteenth century Islam was only practiced in towns.³⁸ Islamic civilization has been making progress among the rest of the peoples and in the nineteenth century almost the half of Africa north of the Equator could be considered within the range of that civilization.

³⁷Crowder, 1962, p. 45.

³⁸Trimingham, 1962, p. 143.

CHAPTER II

FACTORS OF DIFFUSION

The Trade

There was an early association of long distance trade and the march of Islam.¹ All the main centers of trade were strongly influenced by Islam²: from Mali, Songhay and Kanem-Bornu through Darfur and Sennar. Many centuries of trade relations with Arabia began with the establishment of commercial stations along the eastern coast of Africa. These stations were known to the ancient world long before Arab and Muslim traders. Islam in the east of Africa began to infiltrate with the trade through stations on the Red Sea coast: Badi, Aydhar and Swakin. The first reliable account of external trade with the East African coast is mentioned in the Periplus of Brythrean Sea.*³

On the Sahara desert the absence of geographical barriers was stimulating to the trade and consequently to the spread of ideas.⁴ Foreign caravans and Negro traders were traveling between the great

¹Lewis, 1955, p. 23.

²Ibid., p. 23.

³Grove, 1970, p. 64.

⁴Bouvill, 1933, p. 267.

*A pilot book of about 120 A.D. written in Alexandria.

markets.⁵ Movements was a factor that helped change of ideas and skills from one side to the other. The introduction of both the horse* and the camel made movements available over thousands of miles. The main routes of Muslim traders were often those which already linked tropical Africa with the Mediterranean influence as far as the Gulf of Guinea. Thus by the tenth century the interior Africa was exposed to the trade and to the Islam along three principal axes: (1) through North Africa (2) through the Red Sea coast (3) through the ports of the Indian Ocean. The River Niger flowing to the East gave a good access to the central trans-Sahara trade roads.⁶

Timbuktu was originally the meeting place of the desert nomads and the Africans who navigated the Niger. The town attained greatly increased importance in trade and Islamic culture. It was regularly visited by caravans from Egypt, Fazzan, Ghadames, Tuat, Dara, Fez, and Sas.

The establishment of the ancient Emirates** was mainly after the trade had flourished and the towns attracted more people. Islam helped to build a good administration system. Emirates were established at the focal points of the trade routes between the Tropical forests, commercial centers in the west and north Sahara and the Nile Valley.⁷ The gold

⁵Ibid., p. 267.

⁶Fage, 1969, p. 21.

⁷Hatch, 1970, p. 34.

*Brought to Africa around 1700 B.C. (Fage, 1969, p. 14).

**The term derived from the Arabic word, Amir, which means Prince.

and ivory of the South were exchanged for the salt which was needed to meet the demands of the people in further south. Salt was mined at Taghaza in the northern Sahara.⁸

The trade of the trans-Saharan declined after the European had conquered Africa to begin a new era of a maritime trade.⁹

The buying and selling were always accompanied by the exchange of ideas and cultural Islamic influences which drifted across the Sahara. The only barrier to the spread of these influences were the great forests of the South, and the highlands such as the Hombori mountains, Bauchi plateau and the swamps around the Chad Lake.¹⁰ Throughout the Sudan the trade developed a great wealth, established towns and Emirates and helped the expansion of Islam.

Migration and Pilgrimage

Despite the establishment of the new modern states and the restrictions to ban movements of migration across their recognized boundaries, the African peoples shift or combine with their neighbors. Nevertheless, another type of migration has been developed to fill the need for workers in the new industrial and agricultural areas in remote places from the centers of African population. This type of migration is known as Labor Migration which is now one of the features of the human geography of Africa today.

⁸Ibid., p. 34.

⁹Fage, 1969, p. 158.

¹⁰Bouvill, 1933, p. 267.

¹¹Ibid., p. 267.

Pilgrimage is considered by some writers as a migratory pattern. A Muslim has to make the trip from where he lives to Mecca at least once in his life if he can afford the costs of traveling. Africans who live in the Sudan cross the Sahara to Tripoli and then across Cairo to Mecca or make the trip east to Suakin on the Red Sea. The significance of Pilgrimage is that the person who visits Mecca and comes back to his people tends to preach the Islamic Faith.

Al-Jihad (The Holy Wars)

The idea of Al-Jihad means the struggle against non-believers in the One God. Al-Jihad has also an important non-military meaning: each Muslim must do his best to live up to the requirements of the Faith. The great expansion was promoted by the reforms in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. In the west there were the Jihad's movements of Fulani, Futa, Toro, Jolan, Masina and Sokoto.¹² Fulani Jihad had extended as far South as the Yoruba land.* The Fulani was a Muslim reform movement. At the beginning of the nineteenth century a series of Fulani Jihads undermined the Hausa States.¹³ In the East there were the Somali Jihad and the Mahdia of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.** Some writers explained these movements as a result of the network of communication which Islam had established in the eve of the nineteenth century.

¹²Lewis, I. M., 1955, p. 18.

¹³Hatch, 1970, p. 110.

*South West Nigeria.

**Independent since 1956.

Besides these factors which gave Islam a great success in Africa: the trade, migrations and Pilgrimage and the Jihad, Islam has given the African the feel of equal brotherhood. Islam breaks down any barriers that may desegregate peoples of different countries. All in all Islam gives the African the sense of equality and dignity.

Islam and Social Structure

Islamic Culture

Islam is a religion and above all a new way of life. It has influenced and changed the social structure of many peoples. Koranic* instructions and Islamic laws draw the limits that a human being should maintain in relation to Allah (The One God) and to his fellow human beings. In Africa Islam has developed its own cultural pattern that have African and Islamic characteristics. Religion and society are considered by most of the people as one thing. Islam changes customs such as in marriage and death and replaces them with its own equivalent. In West Africa Islam has affected the customs of the people more than it did on the East coast. Islamic influences were also more effective in urban centers more than in rural areas.¹⁴ The rural peasants continue to practice their traditional cults in the present as well in the past. The division between towns and countrysides is relatively clear. Islam has brought to Africa a wealth of learning and richness of culture.¹⁵

¹⁴Hatch, 1970, p. 41.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 41.

*Koran is the holy book of Islam.

The process of culture change and influence of Islam are still going on. In part three of this paper I study the political influence of Islam among the peoples of the newly independent states south of the Sahara to see how much Islam is being an active factor in changing social structure.

Europeans and Missionaries

Africa had no contact with Europe until the fifteenth century.¹⁶ And even after the contact was made the activities of the Europeans were confined to the coasts and just in the nineteenth century when they began to penetrate into the interior. During that period they had made a considerable in roads in the continent.¹⁷ With the growing power of their traders and with Christian missionaries, the African way of life has been changed. The chances of further positive European influences were increasing and a great part of it was against the revived medieval Muslim emirates of the nineteenth century.¹⁸ Christian missionary activities, which were also increasing with the increase of Europeans involvement in Africa, had brought western cultural changes to the people. Through the missionary activities the peoples of Africa were exposed to different way of thinking as well as a different way of life. Islam has been a strong factor that prevented Muslim Africans to be converted to Christianity or to adopt the western way of life. Islamic traditions have been kept and the change has been slow to

¹⁶Trimingham, 1962, p. 220.

¹⁷Fage, 1969, p. 159.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 159.

accept the European influences especially in the areas where Islam is most dominant.

Missionary societies had achieved a degree of success among the Africans south of the Muslim states but never among the Muslim themselves. Most of the missions in Tropical Africa were strengthened during the years between 1890-1914.¹⁹ Only where Islam was already well established in Senegal, Guinea, Niger, Northern Nigeria, Chad, Sudan and in the coast of East Africa, that Christianity did not succeed to make much progress.²⁰ In those areas Islam carried out a wide expansion, spreading from bases in towns into the surrounding countrysides. The development of Koranic schools and religious brotherhoods movements were amazingly successful in spreading Islam. In Southern Nigeria the Yoruba people, being located between the Muslim North and the Christian coastlands had experienced both religions.²¹ Christianity failed to integrate itself with the African life. It demanded a complete change in the belief and the way of living of the Africans. Instead Islam had something in common with the African life. For example, polygamy which for centuries has been practiced in Africa, was recognized by Islam but was completely denied by Christianity. In the Muslim community any person who has the knowledge of Islamic laws could lead the Muslims in their daily activities. In the contrary, Christianity requires a person to become a clergyman, to pass special

¹⁹Oliver and Atmore, 1967, p. 155.

²⁰Ibid., p. 155.

²¹Ibid., p. 155.

examinations. Another contrast is provided by comparing the immobility of the Christian church and the mobility of the Islamic mosque. Not to mention the freedom of Islamic worship technique and the ties of fixed churches and mediating priesthood. Islam offers all stages of transition and a considerable degree of accommodation to African life and therefore it appealed to Hamite and Negroid-Hamite pastoral nomads. There is scarcely a nomad people north of the Equator which has not accepted Islam, because of the territorial freedom of its worship and the simplicity of the Faith. Christianity on the other hand has failed to attract any such people. At the same time with the decay of nomadism, Islam appeals just as strong upon the Hamite when he adopts a settled agricultural or urban life. The reason for the rapid spread of Islam during the last century are complex. All one need to say is that it has become an African religion whose agents are African. Islam can be assimilated gradually without causing great disruption in communal life.

During the present century, spreading of Islam is much faster due to the development of the communication systems. Also sources of employment which carry away young African men from their traditional way of life. The Muslim traders were free to move and live in a close contact with the population and spread the ways of Islam along with their trade. Although the peoples in the far south are little influenced by Islam, it is no longer that Islam is limited to the desert and northern steppe but it is making some progress to penetrate and become the dominant religion in the Tropical Africa.

CHAPTER III

SOCIO-POLITICAL ROLE OF ISLAM IN THE SUDAN BELT

The social and political processes in sub-Saharan Africa may be attributed to a variety of influences. Among these is the impact of Islam. Its introduction into Africa has been a factor for the rise of nationalism. Zolberg¹ indicates that the existence of a lingua-franca and the vast penetration of Islam have encouraged the growth of a sense of nationality. Islam came to Africa as a social and political system. Its influence in politics is most evident where Muslims form the majority along the Sudan Belt: in Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, Sudan, Ethiopia and the east coast in Somalia.² Islam over many centuries provided a cultural and social unity in various areas of Africa. Any investigation of the African political trends would take into account the role of Islam. So far, not many observers have mentioned Islam as an important factor.³ Between 1956 and 1962 many parts of Africa have gained independence. Political changes are taking place so rapidly. In this part of the paper I investigate the role of Islam among the peoples of these recently independent states. The fact that these states are inhabited by peoples of many diversities in

¹Zolberg, 1966, p. 26.

²Trimingham, 1963, p. 144.

³Abu-Lughod, 1964, p. 425.

languages, types of life, customs and religions, make the task of investigation more difficult especially because of the lack of adequate statistical data concerning the Muslim communities.

In this part I view Islam as a political factor that shapes and affects everyday life. As far as we know, African societies may be considered according to the western standards, as primitive or traditional communities. In this type of community people live fairly in a stable condition and religion plays an important role in their lives. Religious rituals were one of the factors by which the African chiefs maintained control over their peoples.⁴ Muslims were able to maintain a higher prestige since they had become the rulers of most of the Sudan Belt after the twelfth century. They were able to spread their rich culture and more advanced civilization. The process of mixing all elements of society in the Sudan Belt, is in progress, but because of the diversity of these elements the process is slow. The Sudan Belt was the frontier where Islam has come to counter black Africa. It was also where the Arab and the Berbers had met with the Negro Africans. And later study the area where the colonial forces had to confront the Muslim African communities.

The States of the Sudan Belt

Mauritania

Gerteiny said that everything of national importance in Mauritania is conditioned by racial and ethnic factor. The reason lies in

⁴Doro, 1970, p. 46.

Mauritania's geographic location and historical background and the resulting racial and ethnic constitution and traditional social structure of its society.⁵ Multiracial population is the major problem that faces Mauritania today. Its inhabitants include:

- A. Hassaniyya who speak Arabic
- B. White Moors (Bidan) most of them speak Berber dialects
- C. Some other black skinned minorities -- Negroid or Lekur (Tokolor) whose tongues are for the most part African⁶

Arabian and anti-Arabism is a strong issue which influences the make-up of Mauritania and may cause unity or destruction to its society. Contacts between ethnic groups have been unfriendly and warfare resting upon racial consideration. This problem, shared by all the countries in sub-Saharan Africa is a source of social instability and also of a great threat to national unity.

The name of Mauritania reflects the political and social dominance of the Moors. Mauritania's population is estimated at 850,000 with the Moors comprising 620,000 or 73 per cent of the total. Other population figures for Mauritania range from 655,657* to 1.2 million.^{7**}

The Moors consider themselves a superior race and look down upon the black people. The distinction between white and black has little to do with skin coloring, it rests on paternal descent. If a father

⁵Gerteiny, 1967, p. 319.

⁶Kritzek and Lewis, 1969, p. 320.

⁷Gertiény, 1967, p. 46.

*official French census of 1958

**Mauritania government estimate 1964

is considered white, his children inherit his superior status no matter what the color of his skin. Among the Moors, the classification of black and white concern status and social condition.⁸ The society is composed of classes which are very common in Mauritania - Whites, Blacks and the Casts Black minorities in Mauritania are the: Fulbe, Halphoolaren, Sarakoles, Woolf and Bambara. They occupy the area along a narrow strip of the northern shore of the Senegal river. They live also in parts of the Senegal Republic.

When Mauritania gained its independence, the lack of qualified high status* to handle the apparatus of the new state, gave the Negroes the chance to dominate the government. They were educated during the French occupation and were available to take over the executive jobs. That matter upset the historical racial relationship ever to the Negroes, as a larger percentage of them were of lower levels in the society. The White Moors are trying to regain positions in the government and to stop the Black dominance.

The struggle between the two racial groups was clearly illustrated when Mauritania wanted to adopt a new official language, whether it should be Arabic or French. The Negroes forced the National Assembly to vote for the adopting the French as an official language and for the Arabic to be the national one. The importance of Arabic stems from the fact that it is the language of the Koran.

⁸Ibid., p. 146.

*The Muslim White Moors

In Mauritania Islam has been introduced as movements or Tariquas* and the Muslims therefore understand Islam and practice it as it was introduced by these movements. The two most important Tariquas in Mauritania are the Qadiriyya and the Tijaniyya beside their numerous splinter groups.⁹ Trimingham explained how the Qadiriyya came to the west of Africa as a Berber reaction against the Arab domination in the North. He said it came with the Maraboutie movement during the sixteenth century where it affected the western sahil (coast). The Tijaniyya spread throughout Islamic Africa including the Sudan and in Ethiopia among the Galla.¹⁰

The main object of Mukhtar Ould Daddah, the first President of Mauritania, was to achieve national unity in a short time. But the political parties such as the Nahda (renaissance) failed to take into consideration the country's socio-political problems and the aspirations of the important minorities.¹¹

Mauritania still has a long way to go to build an indigenous, linguistic or cultural unity.

Mali

Over a long period of time, Mali was a center of an important African trade. Several ethnic groups lived beside each other and each group developed their ethnic culture. Prestige could be gained by

⁹Ibid., p. 75.

¹⁰Trimingham, 1968, p. 75.

¹¹Gertieny, 1967, p. 126.

*An Arabic word which refers to a special way in practicing Islam

adapting certain habits of the more prestigious groups, such as the dress, occupation and the Islamic Faith.¹² That may indicate that Islam was a religion by which a person could gain a high status in a society was known generally as illiterate and poor.

In today's Mali the distribution of the population falls as the following:

- a. The Upper Niger where the Mande and the Puels are about 70 per cent of the country's population.
- b. The Voltaic circle where Senufo (20 per cent) and the remainder (10 per cent) fall into the category of the Sanara nomads.¹³

A greater proportion of Mali lies outside the Sahara and although it is almost the same size as the Niger Republic, Mali's population at 4 million is considerably greater. The majority of the people live in the riverside lands and further south.¹⁴

The Negro Africans are considered among the elites who began to appear during the French occupation. They were different from the rest of the opulation because of their education¹⁵ which became a vehicle to their elite status. The French following their general policy of assimilation granted French citizenship to all the natives who were able to read and write French fluently and who had completed military service in the regular army.¹⁶

¹²Zolberg, 1966, p. 181.

¹³Ibid., p. 178.

¹⁴Grove, 1970, p.98.

¹⁵Snyder, 1965, p. 9.

¹⁶Wiesshoff, 1944, p. 44.

When the Republic of Mali was born as a separate political unit in September 1960*, the Union Sudanese** decided to continue as the heir of the Mali empire of the West African Middle Ages and to build socialism as a blend with Islam. Its ideology as Snyder indicates¹⁷ was phrased in French-Marxist and Leninist vocabulary. An ideology sought to combine Islam with the integrative traditions of the ancient empires of Mali, Songhay and the old cities such as Timbuktu and Gao.

Modebo Kieta who was Mali's President, had gone so far to the left which upset the Muslim population. He encouraged his followers. "The Militia," numbering about 3,000 armed and undisciplined youth to operate what was known as an active revolution. The army officers who were deposed of any real authority and who were used to pacify and administer dissident Tuareg in the North, have carried out their coup d'etats in November 1968 and overthrew Kieta and his regime. They were encouraged by the moderate elements who are generally Muslims. Mali's Foreign Minister Kone said that the army wanted to end radicalization of the Marxist regime.¹⁸ Muslims were against the collective farms. They used to farm their own land and sell what they produced.

Such projects of Kieta's government did not succeed because they were against the belief and therefore were not acceptable to a great part of the population.

¹⁷Snyder, 1969, p. 17.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 22.

*After the failure of the Mali Federation to unite Senegal and Mali

**Mali's only political party

Niger

The Republic of Niger is bordered on the north by Algeria and Libya, on the west by Mali, on the east by Chad and on the south by Dahomey and Upper Volta. It is about 489,000 square miles and its population is 3,750,000.* The Niger River cuts across the extreme southwestern portion of the Republic 50 miles from its border with Upper Volta and the river provides water for less than 5 per cent of the total area. The rest of the country is poor steppe which soon becomes desert to the north and northeast. In an illiterate state such as the Niger, where just about 6 per cent of the school-age children can go to school in 1960** the process of making a new developed nation would be hard to accomplish. The difficulty lies, not because of this poor educational performance but also because the multiracial society. Hempstone indicates¹⁹ that the Niger should be three countries because of the fact that it has three main areas occupied by three ethnic groups:

- a. The Tuareg in the north
- b. The Hausa in the south
- c. The Songhai in the west

The semi-arid climate in the south and the arid climate of the north account for the great variety of landscape and for the uneven distribution of the population. Muslim Tuareg nomads (350,000) occupy

¹⁹Hempstone, 1961, p. 267.

*Government 1970 (The 1971 World Almanac, p. 546)

**U. S. Government printing office -- Niger, 1961, p. 3.

40 per cent of the land and live around the foothills of the Air mountains. The Peuls (414,000)* live merging with the Tuareg. They all roam the desert in search of water except around the Air mountains (Air Massif) where there is little of sedentary cultivation.

In the south in about 40 per cent of the land live the Hausa (one million) and the Fulani (300,000) closely akin to the people of northern Nigeria.²⁰ They are farmers and most of them are Muslims.

In the West along the banks of the Niger lives the rest of the population: Kjermas, Songhais and small numbers of animistic groups. They are also farmers. Among them falls the 11 per cent of the non-Muslim population.

The Republic has gained its independence in 1960 after it was an autonomous member of the French Community and formerly a territory of the French West Africa. The French power was felt over the Niger River valley as early as 1896, but did not establish their colony in the Niger until 1921.**

The variety of the Niger's population led to a state of instability in the country. The northerners look toward Libya, the southerners towards Nigeria and the westerners towards Mali. Islam was used during the World War I to agitate the Tuareg against the French colonizers who were in war against the Muslim Turkey.

²⁰Ibid., p. 267.

*Amb. de France, 1960, p. 9.

**U. S. Government printing office Niger, 1961, p. 4.

The Niger government recognizes the importance of Islam in the political life. A regular election of many Muslim chiefs is carried out to maintain the traditional and religious authority among its people. After independence the constitution refers that the Republic is to be a democratic and secular state. The French is the official language. Urban life is confined in Niamey the capital of the country (population 30,000) with its inhabitants: the Zinder, Tahoua and Maradi (population about 10,000 each).

The feeling to achieve a national unity was due to the French Colonization. Political leaders seized the opportunity to forge gradually the idea of nationhood and a common destiny.

The Niger Progressive Party was found in 1946 by Hamani Diori. It had the credit to lead the country to its independence.

Chad

Isolated in the center of Africa, the Republic of Chad has remained one of the most obscure countries of the continent since it gained independence in August 1960. Its inhabitants (4,000,000)* occupy an area of 496,000 square miles. In the north, the people (70,000) are nomads, constantly on the move in search of grazing for their herds. In the eastern part of the country, live also nomadic people, who speak Arabic and Islam is their religion. Central and southern zones are the most inhabited. The area receives fairly abundant rain (20 - 30 inches annually) and contains most of Chad's populations.

*Government 1969 (The 1971 World Almanac, p. 507.

Population of Chad is different ethnically and religiously. 52 per cent are Muslims, 43 per cent animists, and 5 per cent Christians.²¹ Muslim groups inhabit the north, central zones and Quaddi prefecture on the Sudan border. Non-Muslims of Bantu origin predominate to the south and west -- the 600,000 member Sara group being the largest.

Principal languages are Sara (30 per cent), Sangho (43 per cent) and dialectal Arabic (52 per cent) but the French is the official language, though Arabic has a recognized status in the school system.²²

The real problem in Chad is the competition between the Muslim north and the non-Muslim south -- between nomads and settled peoples. Outside the country a "Chad Liberation Movement" has announced its existence. It claims that the government of Chad is being oppressed to the large Muslim community. The Head of the Republic, Tombalbay, is a Sara himself and his government is generally black French educated administrators though half of his cabinet members are Muslims.

The Moubi people who live to the central east of the country, have been the first to take up arms in 1965 against local administrators and lead most of the dissident bands to be found in Chad.²³ Negotiations have taken part between President Tombalbaye and the leaders of the Chadian National Liberation Front (FROLINAT) to sign an agreement that may end the civil war.

²¹Africa Report, January 1968, p. 57.

²²Ibid., p. 57.

²³Africa Report, January 1971, p. 1988.

Libya has backed the FROLINAT with funds and arms to continue the fight against Chad government. Libya announced in September 1971 that the Chad people were living under extreme conditions of poverty, ignorance and sickness. Libya also announced that the Islamic religion and Muslims were being subjected to religious persecution by the Chad leaders. The Muslims were being deprived of education and medical treatment and from exercising their rights in their country. Libya also claimed that many Muslim had been thrown in jail and that Chad was exercising racial discrimination against those who were of Arab origin.²⁴

The government of Chad should give more attention to the development of the northeast part of the country where most of the people are Muslims. Better education and the increase of the Muslims in the civil and military services may relax the situation and unite the country. Chad should become again a crossroads between Northern and Southern Africa. Chad has been always on the land route between West Africa and Mecca. Therefore maintaining good relations among its ethnic peoples is very important to its prosperity.

National unity is the most important aim of the Republic, but would Chad be able to achieve unity when a state of unrest seems to be an everyday life!

The Sudan Republic

After more than fifty years of occupation, the Condominium Administration* Britain and Egypt recognized the Sudan as an independent

²⁴September 1971, p. 2218.

*Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (1898-1955)

state. Declaration of its independence took place on January, 1956. But although the Sudan was ready to carry out its responsibilities, the society was torn up between Arab Muslim north and non-Muslim African south. A tragedy that caused the Sudan more than half a million victims of its people, since the day of the independence.

The northern part of the Sudan, from the Egyptian borders to the north of Khartoum, consists of desert or semi-arid areas, largely uninhabited. Life is only possible along the banks of the Nile or in the eastern region. The Central Sudan is a steppe and savannah with a rainfall of 8 - 25 inches per year. It contains the Gezira between the Blue and White Niles with its abundant acres of fertile land and its famous for cotton plantations. Kordofan to the west is a semi-desert where nomadic people, the Kabbabish, with their camels and the Baggara, the cattle owners live. Sedentary cultivators live in Darfour. To the East live the Nulsa people. In spite of the differences in the way of life of these people they all share a common feeling that they are Arab Muslims. They always look to the Arab north for their aspiration and identity. Islam has been the dominant religion of the Northern Sudan since the seventh century.

The Southern Sudan may be roughly defined as the region lying south of the tenth parallel and extending to the north of Lake Albert in Uganda. It consists of the three provinces of Bahr al Ghazal, Equatoria and Upper Nile. The Southern Sudan covers an area of 250,000 square miles or about one fourth of the total area of the Sudan.

Communication between north and south was always difficult because the flood area in the north part of the Upper Nile. It is either

grassland or swamps, known as the Sudd.* It has always been a natural barrier. The Equatoria region is dominated by forest and woods. Over the south of the Sudan live the black people, Dinka, Nuer, Bari, Zande, Latuka and many others. They live on fishing, hunting and gathering or on shifting cultivation where it is possible.

Since the last century there was a fear from the northerners who shared the Europeans in the slave trade. They raided the South with their superior firearms.

The British while in the Sudan, thought that the confidence of these people could only be won by building up a protective barrier against northern merchants. This policy was later known as the "Southern Policy." Northerners were not allowed to visit the South except for the administrators and in a limited number. Christian missionaries were allowed and encouraged by the British to operate in the South. Missionary societies and Government agreed that Islamic influence should be excluded as soon as possible from the Southern Sudan. They aimed to restrict Islam only to the northern part and prevent any further expansion to the South.

Within the span of time of the British rule, the differences between North and South became more distinctive. The 1956 census recorded 572 tribes and subtribes which range in size from one million (Kinka) down to groups of a few dozen individuals. Thirty-nine per cent of the population** claimed Arab descent and more than 50 per cent spoke Arabic as their mother tongue. The others spoke other languages

*Arabic word means a dyke

**The total 10,263,000 (1956)

which were classified in the census as Nilatic, Nilo-Hamitic Furawi and African languages.²⁵

By 1928 the process of creating a Southern Sudan separate from the North, had progressed a long way. The basic principles governing southern policy were:²⁶

- a. Building a series of self-contained racial or ethnic units with structure and organization based on traditional usage and beliefs.
- b. Gradual elimination of the Northern Sudanese administrators, clerks and technicians in the South, and their replacement by Southern Sudanese.
- c. Use of English where communication in the local vernacular was impossible.

The drive against Arabic culture was carried out, and the suppression of Islam went hand in hand with the suppression of the Arabic language. The Northern Sudanese, became more suspicious of the southern policy which has been heavily criticized. In 1954, the Southern Liberal Party was formed and the Southern Sudanese became convinced that their regional interests were of greater value than the whole association with the Sudan. The idea of becoming a separate Sudan with African identity has been the main factor of the Civil War that took place since the year of the independence.

The take-over by the Army in 1958 had made a major escalation to the problem of the South. The military regime set out to suppress opposition and to step up the spread of Arabic and Islamization in the

²⁵Beshir, M. O., 1968, p. 28.

²⁶Ibid., p. 5.

belief that this would be the only way to achieve unity in the future. The plan did not work since the southerners escaped to the forests to begin their rebel, forming a military organization (the Anyanya). The Sudanese government agreed to meet with the rebels in Addis-Ababa in February, 1971. The assistant secretary general of the OAU announced the terms of agreement between both sides that formally were ineffective in March, 1971. The agreement based on:²⁷

- a. Both the Army and the Anya-nya would cease fire and stop fighting.
- b. The Southern Sudan would become one region instead of three provinces and to be called the Southern Sudan.
- c. The region (the Southern Sudan) would have an Assemble elected by local inhabitants.
- d. The Southern Sudan would have its own premier to be named by the President of the Republic, but the premier would choose his own cabinet members.
- e. The Southern Sudan would be given full power to direct economic development and public services.
- f. English would be recognized as the working language of Southern Sudan even though Arabic would remain Sudan's national language.
- g. The Southern Sudan would maintain its representation in the National Assembly in Khartoum.
- h. The Republic of Sudan would handle foreign affairs.
- i. The Anya-nya fighters would be incorporated into the Sudanese Army under the law and during a transition period of five years would represent half of the Army stationed in the South.

With this agreement the Civil War came to its end, and it seems that the Sudan would enjoy peace since it has gained its independence. National unity is still a dream which has not been fulfilled.

²⁷African Research Bulletin, February, 1972, p. 2328.

*OAU-Organization of African Unity

Eritrea-Ethiopia-Somalia

Eritrea became part of Ethiopia in 1952.* Its inhabitants (3 million) are a variety of ethnic groups, religions and languages. The Muslims demanded separation but the United Nations granted Eritrea a degree of autonomy within the Ethiopian Empire.²⁸ The struggle has been carried out by the Eritrean Liberation Front who receives considerable help from Arab countries in its fight against the Christian-oriented imperial government of Ethiopia. They formed their guerrilla fighters who are engaged with 20,000 soldiers of Ethiopia's Army. The guerillas (shiftas) would probably number 1500 fighters. The fighting has the overtones of a religious war. It is unlikely that Ethiopia would give up Eritrea to be a separate state simply because Ethiopia cannot afford to loose the access to the sea which it was denied for centuries through Massawa and Assab where an oil port and refinery have been built.²⁹

Eritrea is about one-eighth the size of Ethiopia and it is extremely heterogeneous. The highlands of Tigrai, which extend to the shores of the Red Sea and receive about 15 - 25 inches of rain and upwards of 40 inches locally, north of Asmara, support about half of the population, principally Tigrai speaking Christians. Negro cultivators live south of the Mareb River. Beja live on the hot dry plains bordering the Red Sea. Arabs have long been established in Massawa and Assab.³⁰

²⁸Grove, 1970, p. 171.

²⁹The Economist, September 11, 1971, p. 40.

³⁰Grove, 1970, pp. 170-171.

*U. N. General Assembly voted to return it to Ethiopia September, 1952. It was part of the Italian domain.

In Ethiopia the majority of people are Amharic speaking Christians. They are the ruling class who occupy the best lands on the top of the plateau. Lower down on the escarpment are the Hamitic peoples and at the bottom in the hot lowland are the Negroid groups. The Galla on the other hand are light skinned people who occupy much of the central highlands. They form about one-third of the total population of Ethiopia, about the same proportion as the Amharas.³¹ The Somali of Ogaden who live in Ethiopia occupy the semi-arid eastern plains -- the Afar or Dankali bordering French Somaliland (Afar-Issa). With such a variety of people, religions and languages, it is not surprising that national feeling scarcely developed at all.

Somalia constitutes the Horn of Africa. The northern part is mountainous. The mean annual rainfall at Dalch is 25 inches. The plains to the north are much drier. In Southern Somalia the brief rains come in the summer months. Of the two million inhabitants, about three quarters are pastoral nomads or semi-nomads living mainly on milk, and a little corn, speaking the Somali tongue, but often claiming descent from immigrant Arabs.³²

Somali pastoralists move from Ogaden into Somalia and back again, across a board zone where the Ethiopian frontier has never been defined. Although the United Nations has offered its assistance in solving the frontier problem no solution has been found acceptable to both sides.

³¹Ibid., p. 166.

³²Ibid., p. 173.

The Ethiopians are in a large part Christians, the Somali are Muslims. Following an uprising of the Somali Ogaden against the Ethiopian authorities at the end of 1963, open hostilities broke out between the armed forces of Somalia and Ethiopia and were brought to and only by the intervention of the Organization of African Unity.³³

The Somali government demanded that the Somalis living outside the Republic have the right to determine their future. It asserts that the principle of self-determination mentioned in the United Nations Charter, and applied in many other areas in the decolonization process following World War II, is also applicable to the million or so Somali in Ethiopia, Kenya, and the French Territory of the Afar and Issa (formerly French Somaliland) who have had no opportunity to express a choice of their political destiny. The main goal is to join their ethnic brethren in an enlarged Somali Republic. The Somali Republic reached an agreement* with Kenya concerning the Somali of the northern eastern part of Kenya. The agreement would normalize the relationship between the two countries, meanwhile an understanding on the resettlement of the refugees from both sides should be reached.

In Ethiopia, the Somali of Ogaden, are cut off from the modernizing processes that are slowly but surely underway in both Somalia and Ethiopia. They are difficult to govern. They are tied by kinship, language and religion to the Somalis governed from Mogadiscio. But their intense spirit of independence defies control from any capital. And the

³³Thurston, 1969, p. 6.

*Arusha understanding, October, 1967

problem would probably stay unsolved unless the borders become more adjusted to contain the Somali people in one great Somalia.

CONCLUSION

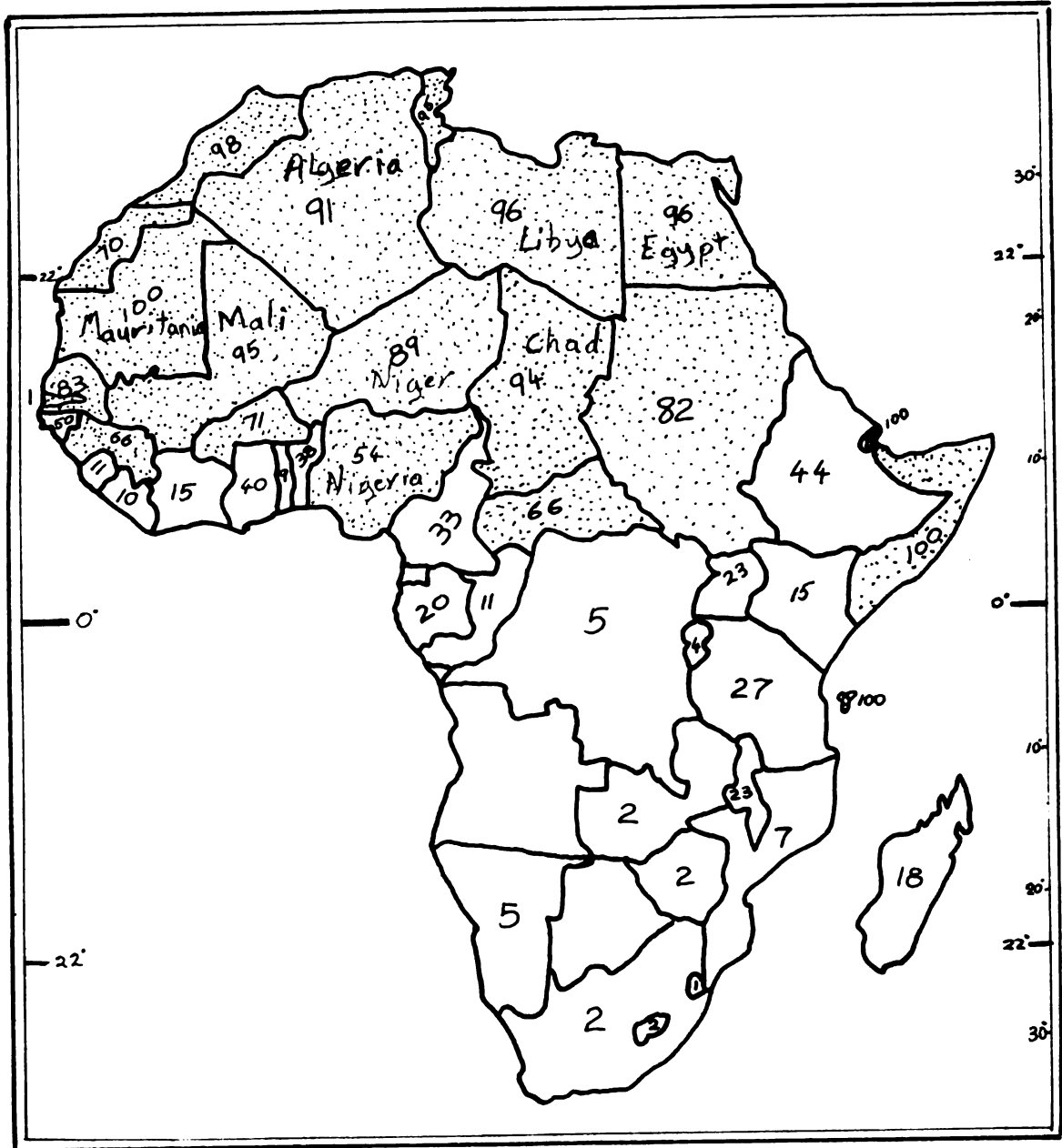
In this paper I generally reviewed the diffusion of Islam south of the Sahara since the Arabs have dominated Egypt and the Mediterranean Africa in the seventh century A.D. The diffusion to the south of the Sahara was mainly a task of the Muslim Berbers of North Africa. They were traders who carried Islam along their trade routes across the Sahara to the towns where their caravans ended.

Islamic movements during the eleventh and twelfth centuries which carried out a series of holy wars (Al-Jihad), were in fact the main drive behind the vast spread of Islam. Muslim emirates flourished until the nineteenth century when they had to face the new and more powerful force of the European colonization. And since that time the western culture influences have countered Islam. The European brought with them Christianity and secular education. Many Africans who became Christians as a result of the missionary activities tend to look out for the western culture and its education. They dominate the administrative systems such as in Mauritania and Chad, a situation that generates hate and protest among the Muslim population. Education and economic development in those states will help the people to get together and decrease their loyalty to ethnic origins or to different beliefs. Projects of settlement for the nomads may give them the feeling of belonging to a certain state instead of roaming the Sahara. This kind of feeling is very important to achieve national unity.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize these following points:

- a. Traditional institutions of Islam such as Tarigas, are no longer the dominant factor in Muslim's life today. Secular understanding or modernization is the new way of life. For example, the military regime in the Sudan Republic has shifted the center of power from the hands of the traditional religious leaders to its own hand.
- b. The newly independent countries, where Islam constitutes the majority of population, are more attractive to the ideas of nationalism and Pan-African rather than ideas such as Pan-Islamic. Struggle among ethnic groups makes situations so sensitive, that the political leaders have no choice but to emphasize the need to a national unity with no favor to one group or other.
- c. With the rise of national movements and its overwhelming the African political life, Islam tends to become a civic religion, though its spread in today's Africa is increasing.
- d. Islam is still the major factor that spreads the use of Arabic language as it is the main language of the Koran.

PERCENT OF MUSLIMS TO POPULATION



After (Brelvi , 1964)



 over 50%

APPENDIX

AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

Country or Territory	Area in Sq. M.	Total Population 1962 Est. (in '000)	Muslims 1962 Est. (in '000)%	Capital	Political Status
Algeria	847,500	11,000	10,000-- 91	Algiers	Republic
Angola	481,350	5,500	25	Luanda	Portuguese
Basutoland	11,716	750	15-- 2	Maseru	Self-governing
Bechuanaland	275,000	400	10-- 3	Serowe	British
Cameroons	183,750	4,800	1,600-- 33	Yaounde	Republic
Central African Republic	240,000	1,500	1,000-- 66	Bangui	Republic
Chad	495,000	3,200	3,000-- 94	Fort-Lamy	Republic
Congo-Brazzaville	135,000	900	100-- 11	Brazzaville	Republic
Congo-Leopoldville	905,500	16,000	800-- 5	Leopoldville	Republic
Dahomey	45,500	2,000	750-- 38	Cotonou	Republic
Egypt (U.A.R.)	386,198	27,000	26,000-- 96	Cairo	Republic
Ethiopia	395,000	16,000	7,000-- 44	Addis-Ababa	Kingdom
Gabon	103,000	500	100-- 20	Libreville	Republic
Gambia	4,004	350	250-- 71	Bathurst	British
Ghana	91,843	5,000	2,000-- 40	Accra	Republic
Guinea (ex-Fr.)	105,500	3,000	2,000-- 66	Conakry	Republic
Guinea	13,900	600	300-- 50	Bissau	Portuguese
Ivory Coast	124,000	3,300	500-- 15	Abikjan	Republic
Kenya	224,960	6,500	1,000-- 15	Nairobi	Republic
Liberia	43,000	2,000	200-- 10	Monrovia	Republic
Libya	680,000	1,400	1,350-- 96	Tripoli & Benghazi	Kingdom
Malagasy Republic	228,500	5,500	1,000-- 18	Tananarive	Republic
Mali Republic	500,000	4,200	4,000-- 95	Bamako	Republic
Mauritania	419,200	1,000	1,000--100	Nouakchott	Isl. Rep.
Morocco	162,000	10,500	10,300-- 98	Rabat	Kingdom

Country or Territory	Area in Sq. M.	Total Population 1962 Est. (in '000)	Muslims 1962 Est. (in '000)%	Capital	Political Status
Mozambique	302,300	6,000	400-- 7	Lourenco-Marques	Portuguese
Niger	494,500	2,800	2,500-- 89	Niamey	Republic
Nigeria	390,250	38,900	22,900-- 54	Lagos	Republic
Nyasaland	49,177	3,000	700-- 23	Zomba	Republic
Rhodesia, N.	288,130	3,000	50-- 2	Lusaka	Republic
Rhodesia, S.	150,330	3,000	60-- 2	Salisbury	Self-governing
Ruanda-Burundi	21,000	4,650	200-- 4	Usumbura	(Ruanda Republic)
				Kigali	(Burundi Kingdom)
Senegal	80,000	3,000	2,500-- 83	Dakar	Republic
Sierra Leone	27,925	2,800	300-- 11	Free-Town	Republic
Somaliiland	9,071	100	100--100	Djibouti	French
Somali Republic	293,000	2,300	2,300--100	Mogadishu	Republic
South Africa, Republic of	472,685	16,000	250-- 2	Cape-Town & Pre- toria	Republic
South-West Africa	317,725	500	25-- 5	Windhoek	U.N.T.T. (under South Africa)
Spanish Possessions	117,126	500	350-- 70		
Sudan	967,241	11,000	9,000-- 82	Khartoum	Spanish Republic
Swaziland	6,705	300	3-- 1	Mbabane	Self-governing
Tanganyika	362,688	9,000	2,500-- 27	Dar-es-Salaam	Republic
Togolese Republic	21,893	1,100	100-- 9	Lome	Republic
Tunisia	48,195	4,000	3,800-- 95	Tunis	Republic
Uganda	93,981	6,500	1,500-- 23	Entebbe	Republic
Upper Volta	106,000	3,500	2,500-- 71	Ouagadougou	Republic
Zanzibar	1,020	350	350--100	Zanzibar	Kingdom
Totals	11,612,363	253,200	126,688--50.4%		

Note: The 1963 officially published figures for the populations of the U.A.R. (Egypt) and Nigeria were over 28 million and 40 million, respectively.

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THE SOUTHERN SUDAN
A QUESTION OF NATIONAL UNITY

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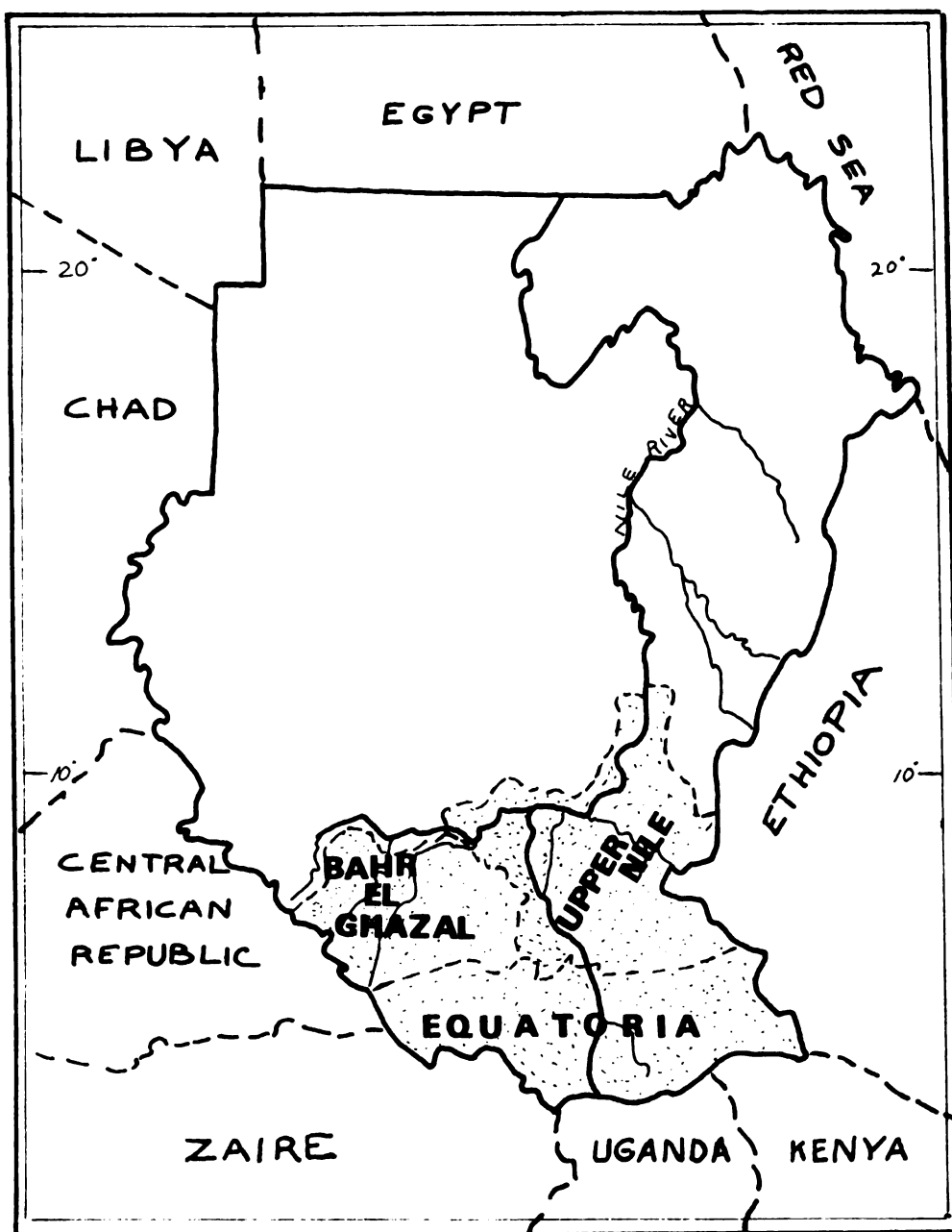
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PREFACE

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the question of national unity in the Republic of the Sudan, which has been in jeopardy since independence in 1956. The investigation is based on a review of the historical and geographical background of the Sudan in order to point out the nature of the problem, which rests on the division of the country into two parts: the Arab north and the African south. Each one of these parts is different from the other in languages, social customs and culture history. These differences underly efforts of the South to break up the unity of the Republic and become a separate independent State. The thesis of this paper is that the desire for separation arose as a result of British colonial policy and was not a function only of differences between the North and the South.

As a secondary theme in this study, the prospects for a semi-autonomous status of the southern districts as a possible solution are considered.



THE SOUTHERN SUDAN



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
PREFACE	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER	
I. THE SUDAN REPUBLIC	4
Historical Background	4
The Making of Modern Sudan	7
Environmental Contrasts between North and South	10
The Southern Sudan	11
The Northern Sudan	12
The Gezira Scheme	12
II. CULTURAL DIVERSITY BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH SUDAN	15
Livelihood Distinctions	15
Ethnic Groups and Social Structure	16
The Linguistic Groups	20
Religion and Belief	21
III. THE NATURE OF CONFLICT	24
The British Policy of Separation	24
Before World War I	24
After World War I	26
After World War II	27
The North: One Sudan	28
The South: "Azania"	31
Terms of Agreement for Unity	34
CONCLUSION	38
BIBLIOGRAPHY	40

INTRODUCTION

History indicates that a group of people that have developed a common language, social customs, and treasured a cultural background on a space on the earth, can show a unity that may be called, nationality.

(Buckholts, 1966, p. 16)

The problem of national unity faces many of the countries of the world. For example: Pakistan, recently has lost its Eastern part and its unity could not be maintained more than twenty-five years since it gained its independence in 1947. The reason for the instability of a state as a national unit lies in the complexity of elements which constitute the body of the state, whether they are physical or human. A problem such as the black minority in the U.S.A. still causes much trouble to the country. The U.S.S.R. with many ethnic peoples that make the union, has to tighten its hand and not to let the aspirations of those peoples go beyond celebrating their national festivals. Canada with a dilemma of two languages, English and French, suffers the same problem. The French speaking population is looking forward to having their own identity and own interests. Another example is Yugoslavia made up of several ethnic groups which has developed since World War II a federal system of government in order to satisfy the desire for autonomy by the various constituent territories. And although there are close linguistic relationships, strong religious, cultural and economic differences still existed after union in 1918, as a result of their widely differing

historical experiences during many centuries, and over-centralized administration between wars led to inter-regional tensions. Such differences still survive, although with diminishing force.¹

In Africa where most of the states have achieved independence only during the last two decades, national unity and identity remain major problems.

In the short space of a hundred years, roughly from 1800 to 1900, Africa was explored, partitioned, and conquered by the nations of Western Europe.² As a result, many ethnic groups have become divided by artificial boundaries drawn according to foreign interests. Most of the African countries therefore, lack economic integration and cultural homogeneity, because of the many differences each one has within its own boundaries. This situation has contributed to a lack of stability in some cases.

The Sudan Republic is one of these African countries that has not overcome the problem of national unity. Peoples of the South who are African Blacks and are different from the Northern Arabs, want to be independent and to form a new African state -- Azania. They claim that the North has always been hostile to the South, with intentions to dominate and rule.

It may be true that the Northerners are the ruling class because the North is more developed and more educated. The British policy during the colonial period was much directed to separate the North from the South. In this paper I present many decisions made by the British that contributed to the demand for separation by the Southerners. The British could

¹Osborne, 1967, p. 186.

²Singleton & Singler, 1967, p. 76.

have done a great deal, should they intend to keep the South united with the North, but their policy favored separation. Even the Northern Government after they had seized the administration of the whole Sudan, tried to enforce their policy to "Arabize" and "Islamize" the South rather than to understand the desire of the Africans to live their own way. I discuss in this paper, the British policy as well as the differences between North and South to see what could be done to settle the problem of national unity of the Republic of the Sudan.

CHAPTER I

THE SUDAN REPUBLIC

Historical Background

"Bilad Al-Sudan" or Land of the Blacks was the term used by medieval Arab travellers to describe the lands lying south of the Sahara in Africa. Modern geographers use the term "Sudan" to describe the belt of dry Savannah and semi-desert areas stretching across the continent from east to west. The present Republic of the Sudan occupies part of this region and consists of the territory administered under the Anglo-Egyptian condominium* regime from 1898 to 1956.¹

The ancient history of the Northern Sudan indicates that Egyptian influence and penetration were felt as far as the fourth Cataract. The Pharoahs raided their southern neighbors in order to protect themselves from attacks, to secure control of the rich gold mines, to capture slaves, and to establish trade.²

When Islam had become dominant in Egypt during the seventh century A.D., the Sudan was divided into two Christian kingdoms, the

¹Beshir, M. O., 1968, p. 1.

²Hassan, 1967, p. 3.

*An agreement by which Britain and Egypt jointly ruled the Sudan.

northern one, Mugarra, had its capital at old Dongola and the southern, Alwa at Soba near Khartoum.³

Contacts between the Sudan and Arabia were in existence long before Islam. Traffic followed two main routes: the first, from North Arabia ran across the Sinai desert, through Egypt and into the Sudan; the second, was either from South-Western Arabia across the Straits of Bab-Al-Mandab into Abyssinia and northward, or directly across the Red Sea.⁴ By the time of the advent of Islam, there were already contacts between the Arabs and the Sudan. The major part in the "Arabization" of the Northern Sudan was played by the nomadic tribal groups who were attracted by the rich pasture that lies beyond the desert. By the end of the fourteenth century, "Alwa" had proved quite powerless to check the Arab tribes, who had gradually overrun its outer provinces and then pressed against the central area of the Kingdom. The Arabs began to settle in the land adjacent to the Blue and White Niles, near Soba.⁵

In about 1500 A.D. an alliance was formed between the Guhavna, sub-tribe of Abdallab, near Sabaloka, and Amara Dunkas, the leader of the Fung. Together they attacked and overcame the declining Christian kingdom of Alwa at Soba, and put in its place a Muslim kingdom with its capital at Sinnar, which extended at the height of its power from Kasala

³Information Center, Sudan Republic, 1968, p. 11.

⁴Hassan, 1967, p. 12.

⁵Ibid., p. 132.

to the Nuba Mountains, and which lasted until the coming of the Egyptians under Ismail Pasha in the early nineteenth century.⁶

History indicates that Mohammed Ali, the great ruler of Egypt, was very ambitious to invade the Sudan. Slaves from the Sudan would be the best available material from which he could recruit his new modern army. Furthermore, there were stories of the rich gold deposits in certain parts of the Sudan in addition to other products. Under the leadership of his son, Ismail Pasha, the army captured Sennar and El-Obied, to begin a period of an Egyptian rule in the Sudan, with a new capital, Khartoum, which the Egyptian established in 1824. For the first time the Sudan became under the control of one government which administered both North and South, becoming part of the Egyptian Empire which extended as far south as Lake Victoria. An attempt was made to modernize methods of agriculture and irrigation, to introduce crafts and light industries, to increase production generally, and to market the Sudan products outside.⁷

In 1839 an Egyptian expedition, sent under the leadership of Salim Pasha, succeeded in opening the route through the Sudd,* and reached Gondokoro, a thousand miles south of Khartoum. Before this expedition, the South was completely isolated from the North, but after the route was opened, South Sudan became available for exploration and colonization. Government officials, ivory traders and missionaries started to penetrate the South. Most of the people who came from north to south were mainly

⁶Barbour, 1961, p. 82.

⁷Shebeika, 1959, p. 16.

*Sudd is an Arabic word which means a dyke; it describes the huge papyrus plants that blocked the river and caused the great swamps in the south of the Sudan.

interested in making profits. Ivory was ready for sale by the Bari, one of the Southern tribes who was friendly with the Arab traders. European traders entered the market in 1850 coming from Khartoum.⁸ As ivory grew scarcer, the traders pressed farther and farther beyond the bank of the Nile.

More than what is known now as the Sudan Republic was part of the Egyptian Empire under Khedive Ismail in 1863, but Egypt was no longer popular in the Sudan. Muhammed Ahmed, a native of Dongla declared himself to be the Mahdi (a divine guide to salvation) and became the leader of a great revolt against the Egyptian rule. Egypt, unable to put down the revolt, had to seek the help of Britain. In 1882 Britain was already in charge of Egypt's foreign policy. General Gordon* was sent back to the Sudan. The revolt expanded among the Sudanese, and those loyal to the Mahdi surrounded Gordon in his Khartoum palace and he was killed in 1885. The whole Sudan fell into the hands of the Mahdi, who established a new capital at Omdurman. The Sudan was completely under the Mahdi's control after the Egyptians were forced to leave temporarily to come back aided by British troops in 1898.

The Making of Modern Sudan

In later decades of the nineteenth century, some of the European countries took advantage of the situation that existed in the Sudan by

⁸Henderson, 1965, p. 153.

*Gordon was employed by Ismail Pasha in 1873 as governor of the Equatorial Provinces (the South) to take action against slave raiding, but resigned in 1880.

that time to gain influence in the area. They did not respect the Sudan as a sovereign state. By 1894 the French reached Bahr-El-Ghazal area from the West, and entered into negotiations with the Ethiopians that an expedition might cross the continent from West to East. By that time also Belgians crossed the Nile-Congo watershed which was regarded previously as a limit of Egypt's dominions, and reached the Nile. Italians tried to dominate Eritria. Therefore in 1894 the British decided to secure Egypt's southern frontier by reconquering the Sudan.⁹ Besides securing the borders and keeping European countries off the Sudan, the British who had established many irrigation schemes in Egypt, wanted to maintain the flow of the Nile's water all the way from the Sudan to the Nile delta in the North. Needless to say, Egypt was very important to the interests of the British who had to secure their maritime-route through the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

In 1898, a joint Anglo-Egyptian force was sent to the Sudan under the leadership of Sir Herbert Kitchner who succeeded in entering the country from the North. Since then and until 1955 the Sudan was known as the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. Both countries signed an agreement in 1899 to establish a form of government to rule the Sudan. It was described as a condominium, wherein the British and the Egyptian flags would be flown side by side. Officials to administer the country were to be recruited from both Britain and Egypt. In fact, ultimate power remained in British hands since Britain at that time was in virtual control of Egypt.

⁹Barbour, 1961, p. 14.

A Governor-General was appointed* to administer the country. He had a free hand with full legislative powers, wide financial direction, and in fact, was almost independent. Obviously, for the first time, the Sudan began to have its own administrative organization and since that time the British were fully responsible for all the ongoing changes that shaped the Sudan before the Independence in 1956. Kitchner remained Governor-General for almost one year (January, 1899 - December, 1899). Sir Francis Wingate succeeded him and served for about seventeen years (until December, 1916). It was during his service that the organization of the British administration was set out and British personnel came to dominate all the senior and major posts in the Sudan government. Egyptians held minor posts and had little to do in policy-making during this period.

The next major development was the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of Alliance in August, 1936. Egyptian troops were permitted to be stationed in the Sudan. They had been expelled after the assassination of Sir Lee Stack, then Governor-General of the Sudan (1917-1924) in Cairo in 1924. In 1943 the Governor-General Sir Hubert J. Huddleston announced an Advisory Councils Ordinance, and Advisory Council for the Northern Sudan Order, and local councils for the three provinces** in the South. At the opening meeting of the Advisory Council for the Northern Sudan on May 15, 1944, the Governor-General began his speech saying that for the

*A British national to be appointed by Egypt with the consent of Britain.

**The three provinces of the South: Equatoria, Bahr-el-Ghazal, and Upper Nile.

first time they saw the concrete expression of a Sudanese nation.¹⁰ So as recently as 1944, the Sudanese, especially the northerners, began to gain their political rights to handle their own affairs, but the southern provinces continued to be under direct rule of the British administrators.

In February 1953 the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement was signed, which established Sudanese self-government. The Governor-General remained the head of the government who endorsed all the laws. The Sudanese representatives who became Parliament members passed a resolution in August 1955, expressing their desire that arrangements for self-determination be considered. Both Britain and Egypt agreed to the resolution and in November 1955 their troops withdrew from the Sudan. In December 1955 both houses of Parliament held a joint meeting in which they asked the Governor-General to convey to the condominium powers their desire that the Sudan should become a fully independent, sovereign state. Egypt and Britain recognized independent Sudan in January 1, 1956, and Ismail El-Azhari was elected the first prime minister of a divided nation.

Environmental Contrasts between North and South

The Sudan Republic is mostly a level land of desert in the North, followed by steppe, then tropical vegetations towards the South. It has an area of nearly one million square miles (967,500 square miles), north-south from latitude 22°N to latitude 4°N and its greatest breadth over 1,000 miles, east-west from longitude 22°E to longitude 36°E.

The Sudan may be divided geographically into two parts: South and North.

¹⁰Duncan, 1957, p. 133.

The Southern Sudan

It is this part of the Nile Basin lying south of Latitude 12°N and extending southwards to the Uganda boundary at about 4°N. The South consists of three provinces of Bahr-el-Ghazal, Upper Nile, and Equatoria, which altogether cover an area of about 250,000 square miles, almost one-fourth of the total area of the Sudan. This part of the Sudan lies within the tropics with a mean annual rainfall which varies between 25 inches near Renk in Upper Nile and 65 inches on the Nile-Congo watershed. Rains fall usually between February and November with the maximum in August. The river Nile, which is known in this part of the Sudan as the White Nile, gets its water from these heavy rains but a large amount of it is usually lost by evaporation in the swamps of the Sudd, South of 10°N. The water is usually free of silt and for this reason, the river is known as White until it reaches Khartoum. Of the total volume of discharge, the White Nile contributes about 29 per cent (Blue Nile 57 per cent, Atbara 14 per cent).¹¹ Because the discharge of each one of these rivers is different every season, schemes of irrigation were very important to the Sudan and Egypt. Dams were constructed where it would be most useful. In the southern part of the Sudan, on the White Nile, there is the Jebel Aulia Dam. It was constructed mainly for storing water for use in Egypt.¹² Coming from Ethiopian Highland, the Sobat joins the White Nile to intensify its flow until it reaches Khartoum.

¹¹Beshir, M. Said, 1966, p. 11.

¹²Grove, 1970, p. 84.

Peoples of the South are mainly African. Generally they are fishermen, hunters, or gatherers. Some of them are cultivators. They are primitive, living a traditional life.

The Northern Sudan

The North is mostly desert with its Nubian and Arab population confined to the banks of the Nile. Here the Blue Nile and Atbara rivers provide the Nile with about 70 per cent of its discharge. Rises in the Ethiopian Highlands, the Blue Nile flows sweeping the rich silt to the North. As it is mentioned before, that schemes of irrigation are very important to the country, another dam was built at Roseires to irrigate a million acres in the tribal area of the Kenana Arabs, provides water to new extensions of the Gezira* scheme, and generates electricity. Sennar dam was also built (1919-1925) which became very important to the success of the Gezira scheme.

The Gezira Scheme

Soon after the British occupation of the Sudan, they thought of an irrigation scheme to plant the Gezira land. Experimental plots showed that long-staple cotton would grow well, and by 1913 an experimental pump scheme at Tayiba near Wad Medani had proved the suitability of the central Gezira for this crop. Later it was decided to build the dam at Sennar to raise the waters of the Blue Nile to a level at which they would flow through canals to irrigate the Bezira, and to store part of the summer flood for use in the Sudan in the later part of the dry season when Egypt

*Gezira is an Arabic word which means an island. It refers to the land between the White and the Blue Niles.

required all the natural flow.¹³ The Gezira tenants plant a little millet but cotton is the main product. The farmers are tenant cultivators, holding their land from the government which in turn rents it from the original owners. The cultivable area is now about two million acres, about a quarter under cotton.¹⁴

Cultivation north of Khartoum is confined to the long narrow alluvial strips alongside the river.

The Northeast part of the Sudan is dry. The main agricultural areas depend on two torrents from the Ethiopian hills, the Baraka and the Gash, both have carried down heavy loads of sediment to alluvial cones, usually referred to as deltas, where the water soaks away. Since 1929 six canals have been dug to lead the flood water onto the fields where cotton is sown.

To the west of the Nile a fairly populous area stretches across the lightly wooded plains of Kordofan. These plains are called the QOZ. Nomadic camel Arabs occupy the North where they always are looking for pastures. Nomadic cattle Baggara in the South graze their herds near Bahr-el-Ghazal in the winter dry season and move north to the QOZ in the summer rainy season.

Towards the South where the rainfall increases to more than about 15 inches, settlement and cultivation away from the river is possible. The Nuba mountains lying southeast of the QOZ are mainly populated by Negroes, among them live some Arabs.

¹³Grove, 1970, p. 84.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 84.

North of Khartoum the Sudan is part of the North African Sahara, through which the River Nile makes its way northwards to Egypt. After building the High Dam of Aswan in Egypt the country of Lower Nubia, disappeared under the water of Lake Nasser which covers about 70 miles into the Sudan. Some 50,000 Nubians living on the banks of the Nile were forced to leave their homes to be relocated in Egypt and the Sudan.

Population of the Sudan is about 15 million (U. N. est. 1969).¹⁵ Four million are claimed to be in the South.

¹⁵The World Almanac, 1971, p. 556.

CHAPTER II

CULTURAL DIVERSITY BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH SUDAN

The Sudan problem, according to Yangu (1966, p. 1) is a problem between two distinctly different nations, Africans in the South and Arabs in the North. They differ in race, culture, customs, language, and religion. The question is whether these differences were the main reason that the Southerners demanded a separate state, or there were other reasons that encouraged demand for separation. I believe that the British policy was the main factor that created the problem. The British were responsible for the lack of communication between North and South, even among the Southerners themselves. The diversity between North and South was just another reason that has delayed the integration of the two parts. In this part I point out the differences between North and South in livelihood, ethnic groups, languages, and religion to find out a solution that can be acceptable to both sides which is likely to grant the autonomous status to the South.

Livelihood Distinctions

The North is largely a desert with its Nubian and Arab population mainly confined to the banks of the Nile. Passing Khartoum (Latitude 16°N) to the South until Latitude 10°N, it rains during summer 8 - 25 inches per year. Steppe and savannah are the dominant types of vegetation. Within this region lies the famous cotton growing area of the

Gezira, where people use modern methods in agriculture. Transportation is much easier in this part of the country which holds more than 50 per cent of the urban population of the Sudan, in Khartoum and Omdorman.¹

At Kordofan, the Kabbabish and Baggara Arabs have helped by their seasonal movements the spread of Islam and Arabic. At Darfur, people have been sedentary cultivators, and never lost contact with the rest of the Northern Sudan. On the east where the Sudan has its gate to the Red Sea, people are nomadic or cotton cultivators in Baraka and el-Ghash deltas. There was no barrier to prevent the movement of the population and therefore the Arab culture has diffused throughout the whole North. The economic situation has progressed especially with all the British help during the condominium era.

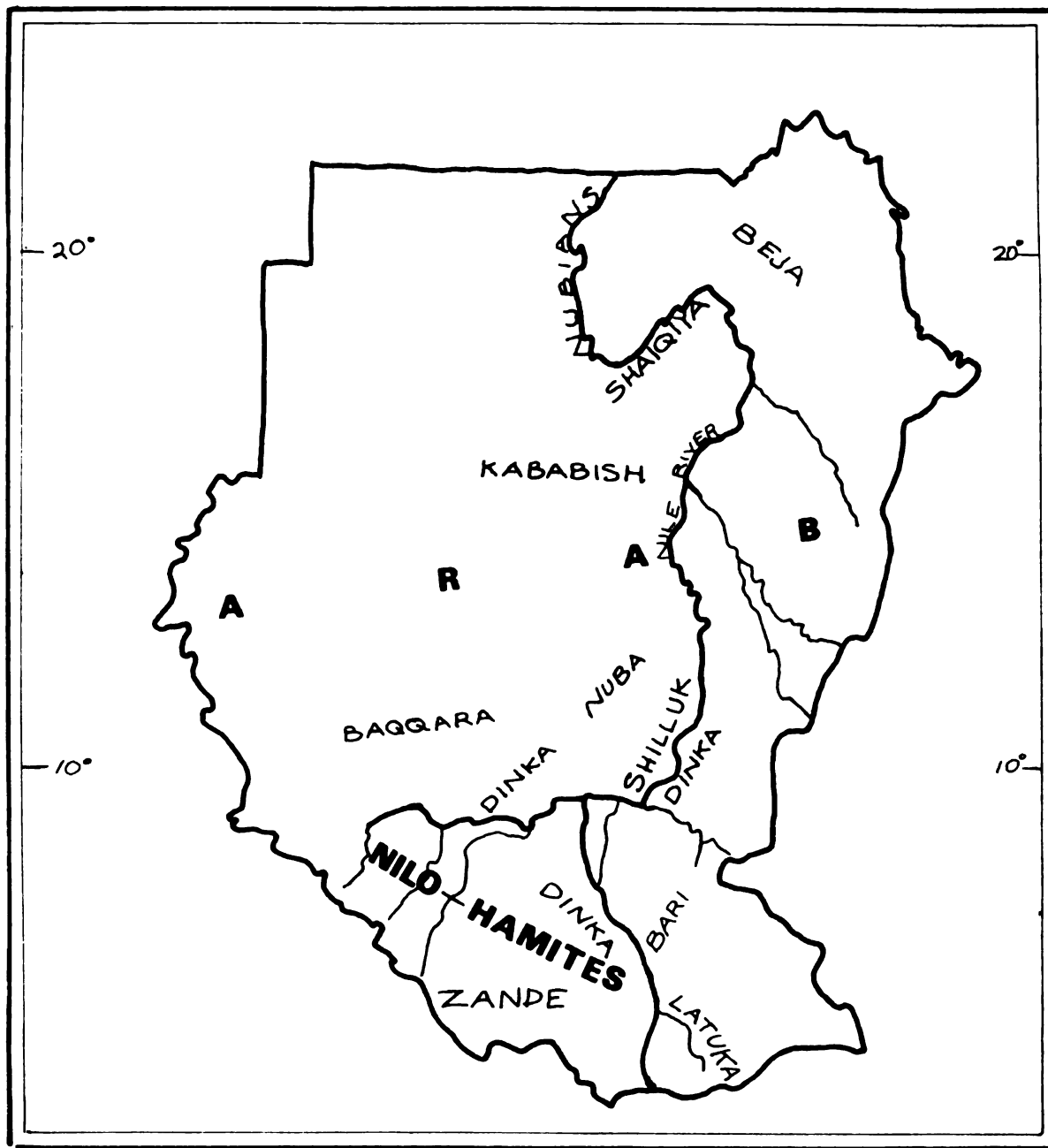
The South was isolated by papyrus swamps. Rain was available much of the year and the forests were abundant. The African people, being isolated and living in a relatively rich environment that satisfied their primitive needs, never changed. Their role of life has been mainly hunting, fishing, gathering, and if possible cultivating or raising cattle. The lack of communication deprived them of the chances to develop any language that could serve as lingua franca.

Therefore, British policy created a relatively advanced North vs. a backward and traditional South. The British could have done more for the South if they intended to unify the country.

Ethnic Groups and Social Structure

The Sudan is made up of several distinct ethnic groups. The North is held together by people who are proud of their Arab blood, and

¹Grove, 1970, p. 84.



ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE SUDAN



SCALE 1 in. = 197 mi



Arab heritage. The South is a museum where different groups, different languages, beliefs, and traditions are in display.

The Sudan was always in the reach of the Arabs even before Islam. They crossed the Red Sea for trade and settlement on the coast. In the seventh century after Islam had penetrated Egypt and North Africa, the Arabs continued to come into the Sudan by three routes: across the Red Sea from the east, up the Nile from the north, and across the desert from the west. North Sudan was suitable for the Arabs who have spread almost wherever the land was available for their nomadic life. They have absorbed the Negro African as a result of intermarriage. Arabic and Islam became dominant above all other languages and beliefs. It was Gahayna and Rubia who in 869 A.D. formed the main body of the Arab horde that invaded the Beja^{2*} country and settled there after they intermarried with them. In central Sudan, the Fung established a Muslim Kingdom and were in power for more than three centuries until they fell apart early in the nineteenth century. They set the pattern of Islamic life in the Sudan.³ In the west the Baggara Arabs pushed on eastward across Southern Kordofan towards the Nile. People who inhabited the area moved to the Nuba mountains. They were Africans who feared slave raiders. They had settled to grow cotton in the fertile plains between the Hills.⁴ Among them, immigrants from Northern Nigeria, the medieval Muslim emirates of Songhai

²MacMichael, 1967, p. 181.

³Henderson, 1965, p. 23.

⁴Ibid., p. 27.

*Beja people occupy the northeast part of the Sudan.

and Bornu-Kanem in Western Africa, who settled along the pilgrimage route to Mecca for centuries. The Shaigia was another Arab tribe which emerged at the eighteenth century near the fourth cataract. Further south, the Jaalin have settled on the Nile north of Khartoum. The Arabs however through language and religion brought an underlying unity to the Northern Sudan and linked it to a wider community. Racially they were mainly assimilated by the indigenous peoples, but their language, religion, and their social structure were superimposed throughout the area, distinguishing it sharply from those who live on the highlands of Abyssinia or the southern neighbors.⁵

In the South, the Black Africans have been isolated from the Arab North by the physical barrier of the Papurus Sudd and the vast swamps. The southerners have retained their characteristics and have lived in tribal organizations that kept them apart from the North, even till now. Anthropologists include most of the groups of people who live in the South Sudan under one common title: "Nilotes" and recognize the Nilotic people as a unique ethnic group.⁶ They are divided into three principal linguistic groups: the Niltos, the Nilo-Hamites, and the Sudanic speaking peoples.⁷ Another grouping is based on blood: Dinka, Nuer, and Luo.⁸

The term Nilotes is applied to the Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, Anuak, Burnu, Ban Balande, Jur, Shilluk Luo, Acholi, and Lango.⁹ The tradition

⁵Gray, 1961.

⁶Butt, 1952, p. 1.

⁷Barbour, 1961, p. 84.

⁸Gray, 1961, p. 10.

⁹Henderson, 1965, p. 25.

economy of the Nilotic peoples is centered around the cattle camp. The Nilo-Hamitic such as the Bari of Equatoria province consider the village as the focal point of their social organization. Along with the lack of communication among these groups, is the absence of paramount chiefs, the presence of which would create the sense of national unity.¹⁰

The population of the Sudan has been estimated just over 10 million according to 1956 census,* the results which were published on January 18, 1958. The figures are ethnically divided as follows:

		Percentage of Total Population
Arabs		39
Those of African Stock:	Southerners	30
	Westerners	13
	Nubians	3
	Beja	6
	Nuba	6
Others		3

The Linguistic Groups

The Sudan, like many other African countries, has the problem of linguistic difficulties. The 1956 census indicates that 51.4 per cent of the population speaks Arabic. Those who speak it as a second language are 20 per cent. In the South, only five per cent speak Arabic as a second language. Whatever the varieties of its regional distributions Arabic is clearly the Sudanese language with widest social and geographical distribution.¹¹

¹⁰Barbour, 1961, p. 85.

¹¹Spencer, 1963, p. 88.

*total population according to (U. N. est. 1969) :15,186,000

Among the minority languages, is Dinka, an important Southern Sudanese language spoken by about one and one-quarter million persons in 1956.¹² It is spoken with four different dialects and has been used in Romanized form since the early period of the British presence in the Sudan. Neville Denny has indicated,¹³ that there are about 30 languages indigenous to the Sudan. The majors are Arabic, Beja, Dinka, Nilo-Hamitic groups, the Sudanic group and Darfourian. Arabic is used as lingua franca in the North and English in the South. Arabic is being used also as an official and sponsored language. Arabic is spreading among the people of Darfour with the spread of Islam.¹⁴ But there are some people who adopted Islam centuries ago, and they still use their own local languages such as the Beja and the Nubians.

Religion and Belief

The Sudan, with its Muslims, Christians and animists, is a disturbed area of religious ferment. Christianity was in the Sudan since the sixth century. The Christian Kingdom of Dongola had the chance to survive until the fourteenth century when it was overthrown by Mamluk's* invasion from the North. The other Christian Kingdom of Soba was overthrown in the beginning of the sixteenth century when the Fung established

¹²Ibid., p. 88.

¹³Ibid., p. 45.

¹⁴Barbour, 1961, p. 81.

*Rulers of Egypt

their Muslim Kingdom at Sennar that lasted about 300 years.¹⁵ Even after Sennar had fallen to the army of Mohammed Ali Pasha, Islam had more chances to dominate the Northern Sudan. At the present, the assimilation of Arab customs and traditions and especially of Islam, throughout the northern part of the country is superficially complete.

The southerners are still sinking in their own traditional religious ceremonies. They are divided by languages, customs and beliefs. Christian missionary activities have begun early in the past century. In 1850 Father Angolo Vinco established the first Catholic Mission station at GondoKro, but the climate was too severe that the Sudan was abandoned by the missionaries.¹⁶ Later after the British had established themselves in the Sudan, they allowed the missionaries to operate free of any restrictions in the South. They were encouraged to open dispensaries and schools. The main object is to Christianize the peoples of the South. Until 1950's the southerners were educated in Christian mission schools. After Independence, the Government was trying to Arabize and Islamize the South. Most, if not all 'the missionaries' schools were closed. The new generation is being led into Islamic Society. Arabic is taught in the schools not English, and it is intended that the young people shall learn to conform with the Sudanese way of life as it is lived in the Arab North.¹⁷ The southerners rejected the Government and demanded separation. And when the Government started to crush down the

¹⁵Sudan information, 1968, p. 11.

¹⁶Yangu, 1966, p. 6.

¹⁷Grove, 1970, p. 91.

revolt, it was too late to stop what has become later the Sudanese Civil War which lasted more than 17 years.

CHAPTER III

THE NATURE OF CONFLICT

The British Policy of Separation

In the early years of this century Great Britain was the dominant empire in the world. The British were ruling different peoples. In Africa, it was clear that their colonial interests were to link the south of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan to their colony in East Africa. First of all, the south of the Sudan should be separated. Decisions were made to achieve such a goal. In this part I review the British role in the Sudan to point out how much it had contributed to the problem of the national unity of the Sudan.

Before World War I

The British ruled the South as a separate region under what was known then as "Southern Policy". They claimed that the South should not be opened until its inhabitants would have some sort of development, but the process of development was slow. Little was done to develop the South because the British wanted to maintain law and order. They encouraged local chiefs to retain their traditional authorities. And after the British had established themselves in the Sudan, they kept the South separated from the North. The union was not their object, otherwise they should have integrated the North and the South. In contrast, they allowed Christian missionary societies into the region.¹ The British thought

¹Muddathir, 1968, p. 6.

that the idea of developing a separate South would be more successful if they employed black armed forces. The Governor of Mongolia province, R. C. Owen made his suggestion in 1910 to form a local Southern Sudanese troop. He indicated that, ". . . an Equatorial Battalion be formed for service in the South, composed entirely of southerners and the command of which would be in English and observances of which would be Christian."² Sir Wingate, the Governor General approved the plan and over the next eight years Southern Sudanese were recruited. The establishment of the Equatorial Corps took place on December 1917, the date the last Northern Sudanese troops left Mongolia. It became the only permanent garrison in the South until the mutiny in August 1955.

The British took the following administrative steps to achieve their goal of separation:

1. All northern administrative staff were transferred out of the Southern Provinces.
2. Trading permits of Northern merchants were withdrawn.
3. No-man's land was created and evacuated between North and South.
4. Administrators who worked in the South were instructed to speak the language of the people of their districts or English, but not Arabic.³
5. Biblical names and tropical clothes such as shorts replaced Arabic names and forms of dress.
6. The use of Arabic words such as sheikh, sultan, etc. were discontinued and their native equivalents substituted.
7. Nudity, which was normal among the southerners was discouraged, however, every care was taken to see that European and not Arabic styles of clothing were used.

²Beshir, M. O., 1968, p. 38.

³Albino, 1970, p. 21.

8. Arab Sudanese were prevented from dealing with the southerners. Greek traders were encouraged to operate in the area.
9. The recognition of Sunday* throughout the South as the official day of rest was established.

After World War I

The attitude of the Colonial powers including Britain towards subject people had changed. Since then a new firm policy for the separation of the South was actively followed. One of the major steps was the implementation of the Closed Districts Order of 1922 which declared that the Provinces of Darfour, Equatoria, and Upper Nile (and parts of Northern Kordofan, Gezira, and Kasala Provinces) were closed districts.⁴ No native of the Sudan according to the order, was allowed to enter or remain within those districts without authorization by the administration. Also, the Passports and Permits Ordinance of 1922 was issued to prohibit any engagement of labor in any part of the Sudan except under permit.

In 1930 the British thought to build up a series of self-contained racial and tribal units with structure and organization based upon indigenous customs, traditional usage and beliefs.⁵ African traditions, already weakened by a century of chaos, prior to British rule could hardly hope to flourish in the face of the dynamic and expansive culture of the Northern Sudanese.⁶ Therefore all northerners were removed from the South.

⁴Beshir, M. O., 1968, p. 41.

⁵Henderson, 1953, p. 165.

⁶Albino, 1970, pp. 19-21.

*Friday is the Muslim's day of rest.

The impact of the British policy was felt in the field of education. In 1928 a conference was sponsored by the government at the town of Rejaf and was attended by missionary representatives from Uganda, the Congo, and the International Institute of African Languages and Culture. The foundation for the development of local vernaculars along with English was laid at the conference. Six local linguistic groups were to be used in the lower levels of education: the Dinka, Bari, Latuka, Shilluk, and Zande. Arabic was rejected on the grounds that it would open the door for the spread of Islam, result in the Arabization of the South and the introduction of Northern Sudanese Islamic culture.⁷

After World War II

National movements became very popular after World War II. In the Arab world, Egypt was the focus of such movements. The Northern Sudanese influenced by the ideas of nationality and independence, demanded to rule their own country. Under their pressure, the British made remarkable changes between 1948 and 1950. Arabic was to be introduced into all southern schools above elementary level. Boys who qualified for higher education were to be sent to the Gordon Memorial College instead of to Makerere College in Uganda. Britain declared its intention of integrating the two parts of the Sudan into one country in 1947 at the Juba conference.⁸ There were some arguments against the integration with the North: There might be a spread of Islam when barriers were moved.

⁷Beshir, M. O., 1968, p. 44.

⁸Duncan, 1957, p. 62.

Memories of slave raiding and bitterness among southerners were still bright and strong. But at the same time, there were arguments in favor of integration: The South is bound to the North by the Nile. Christianity is not necessarily the religion most suited to the South. The policy of protection was not realistic. The South could not be economically viable on its own. The real danger to the South would probably lie more in neglect than in domination. Christian mission school education was unsatisfactory because the missions did not have the resources to expand adequately.⁹

In conclusion, the British were too late in realizing that the South and the North should be one united country. Their policy was always for separation.

The North: One Sudan

Since the Sudan gained its independence in 1956, the South has been trying to gain an autonomous form of government, recognizing that full separation from the North seems for the time being impossible. In March 1965 a Round Table Conference took place in Khartoum to discuss the demands of the southerners. The northerners produced a joint plan which rejected the demand for federation. They believed that the South lacks the human resources necessary for successful management of a federal administration. The Sudan with its limited resources cannot afford the adoption of such an expensive system of government. The northerners saw federation as a step towards separation because it would seriously weaken the national

⁹Ibid., p. 103.

government. They proposed instead, a form of regional government with executive and legislative councils with the South represented in the national government. There were to be constitutional guaranties against discrimination on grounds of religion, language or race. The South was also to receive certain privileges: the right to the vice-Presidency of the Republic, three ministers in the cabinet, a Southern University and a special agency for economic development in the South.¹⁰

The Government in the North was convinced that the best way to deal with the Southern problem was to cut away its feeder system, the mission schools. Northerners believed that missionaries who were encouraged by British administrators were behind the cause of the desire for autonomy. It was thought that a system of Islamic education, uniform with that of the North should be adopted and within a decade a new pro-North Arabized student body would replace the discredited leaders of the 1950's, and would lessen the gap between North and South. The Government's case against the missionaries themselves was set out in a "Black Book" published by the Ministry of the Interior in 1964.¹¹

The development of education in the North had created a new class who became leaders for a new nationalist movement. Easy communications in the North helped the movement to spread to even remote areas. Meanwhile, the South was relative isolated. The whole South was ill-prepared for the new political developments. There were no organized political parties, nor a national consciousness uniting its different tribes and

¹⁰Kyle, 1966, p. 516.

¹¹Henderson, 1965, p. 184.

providing its people with a sense of nationhood. The loyalties were to the tribes and not to the whole of the Sudan nor even to the whole of the South.¹² For those reasons, no Southerners, for example, was invited to attend historic discussions which took place in Cairo between the Sudanese political parties and the Egyptian government shortly before the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement on February 12, 1953. The absence of the Southerners from these discussions was seen as a proof of a desire to belittle the South and ignore its demands. But the Northern political parties agreed to consider a federal solution for the Sudan, and on the strength of this promise, the Southern representatives in Parliament agreed to the Declaration of Independence on January 1, 1956. Since that time the government of the Sudan has worked out plans to make the federation possible. Some particular measures were taken to achieve that goal. Southerners had to be recruited into the Sudan army, and police had to be stationed in different parts of the whole Sudan. Visits between Northerners and Southerners should be exchanged. An increasing share of responsibility should be delegated to Southerners to handle their local affairs. Well-trained administrators were appointed to help the South in the educational and the economical development. Many Southerners were promoted to positions of responsibility.

During the period, 1956-1958, neither the North nor the South were cooperating and as a result of the deteriorating conditions and political instability, the army took over on November 17, 1958. With the army take-over, the Southern problem entered a new phase.¹³ The

¹²Beshir, 1968, p. 69.

¹³Ibid., p. 79.

military regime set out to suppress opposition in the same way as it did in the North. In addition, it stepped up the spread of Arabic and Islamization, in the belief that this was the only way to achieve unity in the future.

A number of missionaries on home leave were not allowed to re-enter the Sudan. They were accused of activities which threatened the unity of the Sudan. The army's repressive measures in the South drove thousands of Southerners outside the Sudan into Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and the Central African Republic, a problem which worsened the whole situation. Northern public opinion was becoming restless over the situation in the South. The problem of the Southern Sudan was being openly discussed but the solution was yet to come.

The South: "Azania"*

Completely isolated from the North until little more than a century ago, the Southerner feels himself to be an African. While the ruling Northerner is proud of his Arab heritage, the Southerner sees the problem as a fight for racial equality.

When the Legislative Assembly was opened on December 15, 1948, the thirteen nominated members from the South pressed for speedy development of their region and they dismissed any idea of self-government for the Sudan unless their proposals for such a speedy development were carried out. By 1950, the Southerners in the Legislative Assembly were

*The Sudan African Liberation Front and SANU (see footnote at the end of this part) outside the Sudan were united in the Azania Liberation Front with the declared intention of establishing a free and independent African nation in the Southern Sudan to be called Azania after the old African Kingdom of Eastern Africa of which the Southern Sudan might have been a part. (Beshir, 1968, p. 100.)

definite on their demand for a federal status within one Sudan.¹⁴ In October 1954, they held a conference in Juba in which it was decided that the South remain united to the North only under a federal government.¹⁵ In September 1956, a National Committee was called by the Government to draft a constitution to be presented to the Constituent Assembly for final approval. Three Southern members out of 46 demanded that a federal form of government be first accepted as the basis of the new constitution, but their demand was rejected.

The Southerners claimed that the North wanted to destroy the African identity in the Sudan, to replace it with Islamic culture, and to expand the wedge of the Arab World Deep into the continent.¹⁶ They felt that they had no voice in the Sudan politics. Administration was in Arab hands. In addition the Southerners were not represented in the Sudan Foreign Service.

Since independence, the introduction and compulsory use of the Arabic language in the South as a medium of education has upset the Southerners. They were having difficulties in finding jobs because they were unable to read and write Arabic.

In the sphere of economical development nothing was introduced to the South in comparison to the North. Industries and factories were installed in the North leaving the South to poverty and neglect. The Southerners complained that the government was seizing valuable land

¹⁴Albino, 1970, p. 30.

¹⁵Oduho and Deng, 1963, p. 27.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 38.

from them and was exploiting the area for the benefit of the Arabs. Southerners were also excluded from trading opportunities. Trade licences were so restricted as to make it almost impossible for Southerners to start businesses.¹⁷

The Southerners claimed that Christianity was being limited to encourage the spread of Islam. And that was the reason for the demand that mission schools should be operated under the government's supervision.

The trouble which started in the schools in 1962, following the Missionaries Act, spread to the countryside. Those who escaped to the bush after the 1955 mutiny because they were wanted by authorities, provided the core to the Anyanya* rebel movement. The emergence of Anyanya represented a new step in the Southern problem. They carried out a successful Civil War, and they became a real threat to the Sudanese Army. The increased activities of both the Anyanya and the Army led to the killings of innocent people and the burning of villages. The army operations in the South were costly and the economic situation in the whole country was going from bad to worse.

After the overthrow of the military regime, the new Prime Minister said on his first statement on November 10, 1964, that the Southern problem was receiving urgent attention and that his government was convinced that violence and armed measures would not solve the problem. He appealed for

¹⁷Ibid., 1963, p. 51.

*Refers to a snake poison.

peace and negotiations.¹⁸ The Round Table Conference at Juba on February 1965 was suggested to discuss the demands of the South. The idea of the Conference originated from SANU.* But the conference failed to achieve the objective for which it was specifically called and which it hoped to achieve. The Southern political groups were divided and did not agree among themselves what type of constitutional relations were appropriate and practical. The extremist group and the Anyanya did not believe in a peaceful solution and were against the idea of the Conference. They believed that force would be the only solution of the problem. Anyanya collected new arms and resumed its attacks on army and police stations in the South. Only recently in 1972, did both sides, North and South, reach an agreement to cease fire and to negotiate.

Terms of Agreement for Unity

The tension between the North and the South was demonstrated by mutiny and rebellion of August 1955. In July 300 Southern workers on the Zande Scheme demonstrated against their sudden dismissal and were shot down by the army and police.¹⁹ Northern troops were flown to Juba. The entire Southern Corps, starting with No. 2 Company** in Torit, was to be sent to the North and be broken up. But it was clear that they would

¹⁸Beshir, 1968, p. 89.

¹⁹Albino, 1970, p. 37.

*The Sudan Christian Association and the Sudan African Districts National Union (SACDNU) changed its name in 1963 to SANU. It was a Southern political organization formed by Oduho and Deng, both were leaders from the South.

**A regiment of the Southern troops

very likely refuse to obey orders. And when they refused to obey orders to go to Khartoum, the mutiny of the entire Southern Corps was the first spark to ignite the whole war, Arab North against the African South. Many Northerners as well as Southerners lost their lives during the uprising. The mutiny shocked the North and directed attention to the South to the fears and hostilities of the Southerners and the need to come to terms with the South through political compromise and constructive measures.

On January 1956, the Sudan gained its independence and the Northerners were in complete control of their own as well as of African destiny in the South.

It probably would be beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the political maneuvers which took place between North and South and also the massacre that continued until agreement was reached. After more than 17 years of Civil War, the war came to an end when the President of the Sudan Republic announced an agreement with the South. The core of this agreement is to establish autonomy in the Southern Sudan. The regional autonomy law for Southern Sudan consisted of nine chapters which stressed the unity of the homeland in a simple state. A state which the central government in the North would be responsible for supervising legislation and organization in all matters of national defense, foreign policy, citizenship, passports and immigration, economic and social planning, foreign trade, currency and finance, telecommunications, air and river transport across the country, public audit and educational planning, including the preparation of curricula and higher education.²⁰

²⁰African Research Bulletin, March 1-31, p. 2411.

The basic law for the Southern Region (the three Southern provinces, Equatoria, Upper Nile, and Bahr El-Ghazal), provided for a legislative body to be called the Regional People's Assembly, responsible for legislation in all these areas and an Executive Body to be called the Higher Executive Council, responsible for executing the policies of the Region as adopted by its Legislative Body, in addition to central duties and authorities transferred or granted to it. The Chairman of this Council would swear an oath of Allegiance to the President of the Republic and would rule the Region in his name.²¹ As for the languages, the President had declared that Arabic was clearly the country's official language and the Southerners had agreed to the provision on this principle in the basic law. However, it had been agreed that the English language should be the working language in the region in addition to the local basic languages, the use of which might be required for a proper and wise administration.

The Peace Agreement between the Sudanese government and the Anyanya representatives was ratified at a ceremony in Addis Ababa on March 27, 1972. Six thousand Anyanya fighters would be incorporated into the Sudanese Army under the law and, during a transition period of five years, would represent half of the army stationed in the South. The South would have control of police in the region.

Finally, the South would maintain its representation in the National Assembly in Khartoum under the Present System of Universal Suffrage and proportional representation.

²¹Ibid., p. 2411.

The Southern leaders seem to have made the greater sacrifice. They have abandoned their objective, an independent black African state, but they have won a much greater degree of regional autonomy.²² Economically the Southern part is relatively underdeveloped. Many projects in the educational and social welfare fields will have to be initiated to enable the Southerners to have better life.

²²Ibid., February 1-29, p. 2383.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that the Sudan Republic has made a significant gain in stability by signing an agreement with the South. The fact that the South wanted to be a separate country was not based on any historical precedent. The South with its present boundaries never existed as an independent state in the past, nor has it ever been thought of as a separate state. It has always been conceived of as part of another larger unit. It lacks today the necessary basic factors which make a nation or a state. The Southern Sudan remained isolated from the rest of the world, even from the North of the Sudan. It was not opened up until the second quarter of the nineteenth century, and contact with other people resulted in tragedy. Southerners still remember with bitterness the years of slave raiding. Memories were so strong that they became suspicious even among themselves, because nobody has ever cared for the South. It is true that the North is different from the South. The North is generally Arab Islamic and the South is Negro African. Both differ in terms of environment and history of their people. Islamic culture dominates the North and traditional African culture colors the South. But in spite of these differences there need not have been any problem in maintaining the unity of the two parts of the Sudan if the British had wanted to do so. Their policy from the beginning was directed towards the goal of separation. They could have initiated better plans to integrate the South and the North in one United Sudan. Their Closed District Order of 1922 was one of the main

instruments to block the South, the effect of which lasted nearly 50 years. During the period when the North was being developed, the South was kept in its primitive condition except for the limited number of people who were raised to be Christians and claimed the right of speaking on behalf of the population. The fear of the spread of Islam in black Africa had driven the missionary societies to wage war against the Arabs, their language and their culture. English became the official language and Christianity was the approved religion for the Southerners. Indigenous customs, traditional usage and beliefs were encouraged.

For about half a century the British, the real administrators of the occupied Sudan, developed the two parts of the Sudan in two different ways. This division was inherited by the newly independent Sudan, the creation of a viable nation state rests upon successfully integrating diverse peoples whose differences have been amplified by British colonial policy.

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