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**THE SOUTHERN SUDAN UNDER BRITISH RULE 1898-1924: THE
CONSTRAINTS REASSESSED**

by

Lazarus Leek Mawut

Existing interpretations of modern Sudanese history have been much concerned with the disparity between North and South in the three key areas of civil administration, education, and economic development. The relatively slower development of the South has been seen as primarily a legacy of the early Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, and the result of several powerful constraints - physical, climatic, linguistic, financial; limited British interest in the region; local disorder and resistance; and the character of native tribal organisation. This thesis argues that although these constraints were important, in themselves and collectively they do not provide a sufficient explanation. Each is extensively re-assessed using evidence from the Sudan Archive in Durham, and it is shown that their impact upon the South's prospects for development needs careful qualification. Some did not prove to be obstacles when the government found reasons to be sufficiently determined; some were not as serious as they may appear; some were deliberately exaggerated for administrative or military purposes; resistance was often provoked by insensitive officials. There had in fact been a long history of British interest in the region, shaped by humanitarian, religious, and economic concerns, sustained from the 1890s by fear of revived Islamic militancy and intensified by the presence of French, Belgian and Ethiopian competitors in central Africa. It is argued that British policy in the Southern Sudan is best understood in terms of these factors, and especially of cultural preconceptions towards what were considered to be the primitive peoples of the area. Contrasts with policy in the North are especially instructive. The South suffered not so much from neglect by British officials as from their over-protectiveness.

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1924:
The Constraints Reassessed

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Lazarus Leek Mawut

**A thesis submitted for the Degree of Ph.D. in History to the Faculty of Social
Sciences, University of Durham**

1995



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Preface

A correct reading of history enhances a people's appreciation of their present conditions and reinforces their determination to either continue to build upon past glories, or to correct past mistakes in order to ensure a better future. For these very reasons history can sometimes be falsified and manipulated by individuals or groups with vested interest to inspire or demoralise one group or the other. This is true of the Sudanese situation.

Today, contending Sudanese parties peruse colonial documents and literature in order to find supporting evidence for their respective claims and allegations, as they struggle for political power and access to limited educational and economic opportunities. Northerners and Southerners alike try to wrap up these very clear objectives in often distorted but effective religious and cultural propaganda which whips up external sentiments of kin and co-religionists. One of the areas of concentrated research by Sudanese, former British colonial officials, and non-Sudanese academics (whose objective reconstruction of the modern history of the Sudan stands out in sharp contrast), is the British policy in the Southern Sudan. Attention is specifically directed to discovering causes of the imbalance between the North and South in certain aspects of development, and by extension, the interregional conflict in the country.

Although there has been much work upon this subject, important aspects still require exploration if a comprehensive appreciation of the Sudanese colonial experience is to be achieved. It is intended here to continue the search.

Preliminary work on this project was undertaken in the Sudan while I was a postgraduate at the University of Khartoum. However, a brief visit in 1989 to Durham's Sudan Archive was enough to convince me that the chief documentary sources for the study I wished to undertake were located there. The University of Durham agreed that in view of my previous postgraduate work, I could be enrolled for research towards my Ph.D. on the basis of six terms of study. It took three years after that to find sufficient funds to commence my studies. This was eventually achieved in 1992, and this project was completed in Durham during the following two years.

Acknowledgements

The work was accomplished with the invaluable assistance and co-operation of a number of institutions and individuals. Sincere thanks are due to the Ford Foundation and Hugh Pilkington Charitable Trust, whose joint sponsorship enabled me to undertake this research. I owe thanks to the University of Juba for granting me a leave of absence to pursue studies abroad, and to the Gordon Memorial Trust for their financial assistance at the final stages of the preparation of this work.

I am indebted to my first supervisor, Ms D. Lavin, who made extensive contacts on my behalf with prospective sponsors, and introduced me to academics on the Sudan. Professor G.N. Sanderson acted as external advisor, and made many useful comments on my first draft.

Special thanks are due to my supervisor, Dr Philip Williamson, who readily gave a great deal of his time to reading every bit of what I had written. His critical but indispensable comments helped me to shape some of my ideas about the subject. However, for any defects in the thesis, I, alone, am responsible.

The assistance offered by the staff of the National Records Office in the Sudan, the Public Record Office in London, and the Library of the University of Durham is highly appreciated. I am particularly grateful to Ms L. Forbes, Head of the Oriental Section in the Library, and the staff of Palace Green Library, especially Ms J. Hogan of the Sudan Archive.

I am thankful to Mrs Isabella Winder for granting me permission to quote from a restricted document from the papers of her late husband, John Winder of the Sudan Political Service.

The assistance rendered by M. Johnson in the production of maps for the thesis is sincerely acknowledged.

Thanks and appreciation are also due to Miss Thelma Ellison, who patiently typed the thesis from drafts which were sometimes difficult to decipher.

Finally, I am grateful to my friends with whom I stayed in London whenever I visited the PRO and my external advisor in Surrey. Their hospitality is treasured.

Lazarus Leek Mawut

Abbreviations

BGP	Bahr al-Ghazal provincial files, in the Natural Records Office, Khartoum
CivSec	Civil Secretary's files, <u>Ibid.</u>
Equatoria	Files of Equatoria and Mongalla Provinces, <u>Ibid.</u>
Intel	Intelligence Departments files of the Anglo-Egyptian Government, <u>Ibid.</u>
JAH	<u>Journal of African History</u>
NRO	National Records Office, Khartoum, Sudan.
Palace	Category of files in NRO, originally papers of the Governor-General's office.
PRO	Public Record Office, London.
SAD	Sudan Archive, Durham
SIR	Sudan Intelligence Reports, Khartoum and Durham.
SNR	Sudan Notes and Records.
South	Some documents on the Southern Sudan in NRO.
UNP	Upper Nile provincial files, Khartoum.

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Introduction

Existing interpretations of the modern history of the Sudan have been much concerned with the disparity between Southern and Northern Sudan in three key areas: civil administration, education and economic development. Many have argued that the relatively slower development of the South is primarily a legacy of the early years of British rule. The principal explanations for the shortcomings have been: the disorderly state of the region on the eve of the Anglo-Egyptian reconquest; the hostile climate for Europeans; the inaccessibility of many areas; local resistance; the language barrier; acute shortage of funds and manpower; an absence of recognised indigenous authority among many important tribes through whom the government could govern the people; and a relative lack of interest in the region, because it appeared to offer few economic prospects.

However, re-assessment of these explanations in the light of fuller examination of the evidence suggests that although the proposed constraints did indeed impede and discourage efforts to develop the region, they are not in themselves adequate. Almost all the existing explanations need qualification if their specific impact on the overall situation in the South is to be properly understood. Moreover, two other equally, and perhaps more, important considerations have not been sufficiently considered: cultural attitudes and local security. This thesis contends that these last two factors, to a large extent determined what British officials thought they had to do in the Southern Sudan, and when and how to do it. The inherited and acquired attitudes of British officials are shown to have been especially important in influencing the evolution of a separate policy for the South from the very inception of the Condominium rule. The relationship between these further constraints and those conventionally proposed will be examined in the succeeding chapters. At this stage,



however, a summary of the earlier explanations will be given as an introduction to their comprehensive assessment.

Some scholars and writers believe that British efforts in the Southern Sudan were slowed down by problems caused by its turbulent history in the 19th century. According to G.N. Sanderson, the reconquest took place when the region was 'passing through one of the more violent periods of its violent history', caused by absence of 'any effective over-rule'.¹ A British missionary, observing from neighbouring Uganda in 1886 described this interregnum in the colonial history of the Southern Sudan as a state of anarchy worse than the previous devastation under the slave-raiding Turco-Egyptian regime. Natural calamities like the catastrophic rinderpest of the 1895 are said to have compounded the disaster.² The Azande and Nuer expansion during this period, the former into the Fertit land in Western Bahr al-Ghazal, and the latter into the Dinka country on the east bank of the Bahr al-Jebel, are cited as further evidence of the chaotic conditions.³ Other leading experts on modern Sudan share Sanderson's conviction. As M.W. Daly saw it, the Condominium administration had to find a solution first to the 'devastating ... local warfare and general insecurity' which foreign interventions in the South had created.⁴ This need becomes still more urgent for G. Warburg, who considered the South to have been 'on the verge of a complete breakdown'.⁵ In fact, a former Civil Secretary of the Sudan Government, Harold MacMichael, whose name is closely associated with the Southern Sudan through his issuing of the Southern Policy in 1930, used the disturbed condition of the region in the 19th century to defend his government performance. Attempting to pre-empt a charge of relative government neglect of the South, MacMichael could not see how the British could have applied themselves immediately to the region's development needs when 'the great Nilotic tribes ... had been harried and decimated by the Dervishes, as by the 'Turks' before them'.⁶ Presented thus, the region's immediate requirements would be the restoration of law

and order. Other needs could wait to be addressed later, under more settled conditions.

Once the Sudan had been reconquered, and penetration of the South embarked upon, a multitude of inhibiting conditions are said to have cropped up, compounding an already difficult situation. Warburg has cited a number of constraints: the vastness of the region, combined with lack of funds and manpower, poor communications and a hostile climate, made service there a difficult task, only suited for hardened soldiers who maintained government presence by means of armed patrols.⁷ Before roads could be built overland to connect government stations with one another, animal transport was used but this proved a failure; many of them like camels and donkeys died, as the conditions in the South were different from their desert environment in Northern Sudan. The alternative human portage was equally unsuccessful, as some of the tribes, like the Dinka, considered it too degrading a job for men.⁸ That left river transport as the main means of communications, but this meant that administration was only effectively felt along the rivers rather than deep in the interior. Moreover, these rivers were not navigable throughout the year, as the floating vegetation known as the sudd blocked the river passage from time to time on the Bahr al-Jebel and Bahr al-Ghazal. This could be kept open only by periodic engineering work. The climate was certainly debilitating for British officers, as was proved by the death through natural causes of three high ranking officers in Bahr al-Ghazal between 1902 and 1905: Hunter, Fell and Boulnois.⁹

When C.E. Sevier adds the language barrier and absence of discernible indigenous authority to the problems enumerated above, such difficulties are believed to preclude 'the early and smooth establishment of an administrative system which could be operated by civilians'. These hardships, Sevier continued, could not allow the officials charged with the responsibility of running the affairs of the region to do more 'than to impose light taxes on each of the Southern societies which were

brought 'under control'. Extending control over the whole area 'was a very slow procedure and at the time of the first World War a large number of those societies still remained "unpacified" and unadministered'. Sevier concluded that while this process was going on 'no attempts at introducing economic or educational reforms were made during the first two decades of this century'.¹⁰

Absence of a lingua franca in Southern Sudan has always been cited as one of the formidable obstacles to British administration. Sanderson and L.M. Sanderson have described the region with respect to the language situation as 'afflicted with the curse of Babel in an acute form'.¹¹ The language diversity is paralleled by the indigenous political systems which appear to have defied the political classifications of foreign observers and scholars. As the systems existing among the Dinka, Nuer, Bari, Acholi, and other tribes did not fit into the very limited Western categories of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy - with their well-defined legislative, judicial and executive branches - scholars have found it easier to lump these systems into stateless, acephalous, and even ordered anarchy.¹² It was certainly difficult for the British during the first two decades to find acceptable traditional leaders with whom to work, with the exception of, say, the Shilluk and Azande whose rudimentary kingship systems were the nearest to those they had known in Europe.

Added to those constraints is the assertion some scholars have made about the limited importance of the Southern Sudan to the British in the reconquest. R. Robinson and J. Gallagher have argued that 'Britain's over-riding purpose in Africa was security in Egypt, the Mediterranean and the Orient'. The extension of British rule to the Upper Nile region was imposed on the British Government only by extremely important imperial considerations elsewhere. By merely holding the Southern Sudan, Britain would effectively control Egypt against both external competitors and Egyptian nationalists, and therefore ensure the security of the all-important Suez Canal route to British possessions in India. Thus, 'England's rulers

pessimistically extended the search for security up the Nile to Fashoda ... and Bahr al-Ghazal'.¹³

Robinson and Gallagher have adherents in Collins, Abiem and Sanderson. For Collins, 'the British did not appear at Mashira ar-Raqq to conquer the Bahr al-Ghazal for Christianity, commerce, or civilisation' but 'to secure the land from the designs of King Leopold II'.¹⁴ The reluctance of the Sudan Government in the early years to permit Christian missionary activities in the Southern Sudan, the prolonged restriction of the British presence in the region 'to holding rather than administering the country', and the delayed involvement in education and economic development until the 1940s have been cited by M.M. Abiem in support of the interpretation of British disinterest in the region for any objectives other than the declared strategic consideration.¹⁵ Seen by Sanderson as originally 'very reluctant imperialists in the Southern Sudan', the British are said to have been spurred into action by French, Belgian and Ethiopian colonial ambitions in the region. What determined 'the tempo and strategy', he argued, was not 'administrative needs in Africa', but 'the need to define frontiers delineated on paper in Europe'.¹⁶ Such 'a low-priority area' could not compete effectively with Northern Sudan in the allocation of funds for development, from the government's meagre finances (most of which was supplied by the Egyptian Government till 1913): 'Indeed, money for any purpose other than frontier security was begrudged in the South, which was written off as incapable of development'.¹⁷ The central government would not waste hard-to-come-by funds when it could be profitably 'spent in the North, where it was possible to foresee some possibilities of a useful return for the money'.¹⁸

A combination of the factors so far considered could not augur well for the development of the Southern Sudan. Daly has painted a very gloomy picture of the region in a passage deserving extensive quotation as much of it is a useful summary of the existing interpretations:

The sad results of the Turco-Egyptian and Mahdist incursions were not the only, nor even the most fundamental problems that in 1898 faced the new regime in the south. The region was virtually unknown to those who were called upon to rule it: British officers of the Egyptian Army whose expertise ... in administration was usually with the Muslim, Arabic-speaking, culturally homogeneous people of Egypt or the Northern Sudan. That experience could not have prepared them for the congeries of the southern peoples, varying from the large, pastoralist Nilotic groups ... to very small peoples in Western Bahr al-Ghazal, Equatoria, and the extreme north-east of the region ...

Diversity of indigenous political systems is also emphasised as a formidable obstacle:

Ethnic and linguistic diversity was paralleled by political variation ... At the extreme were the 'acephalous' peoples such as the Nuer, to whom a political structure was unknown ... The Dinka presented a less extreme example ... but the authority wielded by hereditary warriors or cult figures depended on personal prestige, and the separate Dinka sections united in a common cause only on rare occasions. Such social systems were encountered by early British administrators with utter incomprehension. There must be chiefs: tribal customs and rules might be mystifying or repugnant; tribes might be recalcitrant, reactionary, or resistant to change; but that a society could have no recognised leader was unthinkable...

In the light of these problems, Daly concludes:

It is valid to generalise ... that in 1898 the British in the Southern Sudan encountered scores of peoples of whose history, traditions, cultures, societies and languages they knew nothing at all. They would later be confronted by a central government that ... was unwilling and ... unable to provide even the basic ingredients of men and money that might make the region intelligible and, eventually, susceptible to administration. For these reasons, and because of the unhealthy and often uncongenial surroundings, it is not surprising that there was such a rapid succession of British personnel in the south during the first generation of Anglo-Egyptian rule: the early southern official was as much an explorer as an administrator, an explorer under a starless sky, adrift without a compass.¹⁹

A further constraint on British administration is often suggested. Local cultural and armed resistance have drawn considerable criticism from scholars and former officials of the Condominium administration. Both groups agree that the British record of

development in the South leaves much to be desired. But they argue that the government efforts to improve the condition of the indigenous people in the various fields of development were, to a large extent, frustrated by those peoples themselves. For example, MacMichael considered the Nilotic way of life - in which cattle play a prominent role in shaping attitudes and determining status in society - as obstructive to their social and economic betterment. The government could not be expected to do much in a region where the population effectively resisted change by continuing to 'think and move and have their being in an atmosphere of cattle - and again cattle'.²⁰

A former District Commissioner J.S.R. Duncan has attempted to defend his fellow commissioners against the allegation that the relative backwardness of the region was due to the D.C.'s 'lack of imagination' by arguing that the task of administrators was simpler in the North than in the South. He contends that 'the Northern Sudanese at least knew what administration was' as 'they were civilised in some degree', while 'the primitive Southerner, particularly in Upper Nile Province, was quite untamed'. A 'handful of British officers, each with a few soldiers' had to deal with people who 'resisted any attempt to bring in more advanced form of government, preferring war among themselves rather than the more sober state of civilised living'.²¹ Duncan therefore sees no convincing reason why critics should castigate the British officials, when they should instead be praised for a spectacular achievement:

The fact is that these men [Southern D.C.'s] achieved something which Northern Sudanese and some British theorists of today could never have done: they came out, alone, on top of people who were themselves of dominating personality and damped their love of war.²²

Duncan's line of argument was followed by K.D.D. Henderson, another former British official. He maintains that the Southern Sudanese 'original opposition to the Condominium government ... left them 20 years behind the North', the consequence of which was the subsequent inter-regional conflict, seen in terms of 'a politically

backward South trying to apply the brakes to a progressive educated Muslim North'.²³

Collins' and R. Herzog's condemnation of Southern Sudanese resistance could not be stronger:

Indeed it was during these years that the British administrators sought to control the multitude of diverse, warlike tribes who, proud of their independence, were reluctant to give up their anarchical freedom in return for good government. In bringing order to the Southern Sudan the British administrator faced a host of complex problems which defied solution and taxed the common sense and patience of even the most optimistic and enthusiastic of the government officials. The territory over which the Sudan Government exercised legal jurisdiction was in fact far from any kind of control. It was a wild and turbulent land where warfare and violence, springing from the way of life of tribal people, were deep-rooted and traditional.²⁴

These historians single out as a leading factor in the local resistance the 'manipulative' tribal chiefs who would exploit the 'superstitious and sorcery-minded peoples of Southern Sudan', to wield great power which their followers would not question. Such persons were dangerous to the government. Their assumed supernatural powers could put them in a powerful position to determine the type of relations their people would maintain with the government. That 'a single, primitive personality' could be the final authority on very important matters such as acceptance or rejection of government authority was a situation no foreign conquerors would tolerate. This was actually demonstrated in 1902, 1907 and 1910 when pre-emptive strikes were carried out against the Lau Nuer prophet DengKur and the two Atwot chiefs, Awo Kon and Ashwol Kut.²⁵

A few leading Sudanese academics have mixed reactions to British rule in the Southern Sudan. While agreeing with most of the other problems that are said to have hindered the British in the development of the region, A.L. Loiria has added a new factor: the great diversity of the country's political, economic, sociocultural and ethnic

aspects.²⁶ This problem is said to have made the British divide up the country territorially into Northern and Southern Sudan, each with 'prescribed sectional differences of collective access' to vital economic, educational and administrative training. The dichotomy was then perpetuated by the practice of unequal treatment of the two parts of the Sudan in respect of those facilities.²⁷ According to Loiria, this differential treatment seemed to have been based on what Governor Stigand of Mongalla Province criticised using a 'clever - stupid boys' analogy. In introducing development programmes, the British operated at the higher level of the 'clever boys' (Northern Sudanese) leaving the 'stupid boys' (Southern Sudanese) in the lurch. This glaring inequality made sympathetic Stigand suggest the separation of the two regions so that special attention could be paid to the 'stupid boys':

If one has clever boys and stupid boys in the same class, no one can blame the masters if they expend their time and trouble on the former who will best repay their efforts, to the detriment of the latter. So if one has a country which is supposed to be progressive and another which is backward bracketed together, all energy and regulations will be made for the benefit of the former, with the result that the latter goes to the wall

Stigand argued that for the 'stupid boys' to improve they should be taught in a separate class where the teachers would pay 'undivided attention' to their special needs. So the 'backward' Southern provinces were to be put in 'a class by themselves ... given what can be spared in the way of revenue, and allowed to work out their salvation'.²⁸ Although the Central Government did not adopt Stigand's suggestions, Loiria considers them to have been the basis of the Southern policy declared in 1930. He contends that the policy 'aimed at making control and management of the South as inexpensive as possible: no development programs were contemplated and no money could be made available for them'.²⁹

Even though as Loiria has argued there were no economic and educational development programmes, according to A. Alier British policy in the region had at

least one positive aspect.³⁰ This was the combating of the slave trade which is said to have been successfully carried out through the policy of isolation of the South.³¹ For M. Wai, even when the British policy in Southern Sudan almost amounted to keeping the region 'as a human zoo and to concentrate economic and educational development in the North',³² people should not fail to recognise 'the essential merits of the policy which were the attempt to preserve the cultures of the people of the Southern Sudan; the need to give time to the people ... to gain their self-assurance'.³³

In contrast, among Northern Sudanese scholars British policy in the Southern Sudan is generally viewed with apprehension as essentially aimed against Northern Sudanese interests. The administration is presented as having had an overwhelming bias towards the Southern Sudan. According to A.I.M. Ali, this bias goes back to the 1870s when General Gordon was in charge of the Sudan as a Turco-Egyptian official. Gordon is charged with being "the first initiator" of what is now called the 'Southern Problem' by deporting Northern Sudanese (in fact slave traders) from the South.³⁴ The later isolation of the region by the Anglo-Egyptian Government is seen as a continuation of that policy. The objective of this policy, K. Awad, H.M.A. Sharfi and A.E. El Bashir contend, was the separation of the South from the North during which a war was waged against Arabic and Islam.³⁵ According to M. Abdal-Rahim the British policy in the South 'has saddled the independent Sudan with its most intractable problem in creating a form of local patriotism in the South'.³⁶

The existence of such divergent views on the role of the British in the Southern Sudan is a clear indication that there remains something amorphous about the subject that calls for further investigation. The period to be examined is that between the two great landmarks of early British rule in the Southern Sudan. The first Governor-General of the Sudan under Anglo-Egyptian rule, Lord Kitchener, issued directives in 1899 to his provincial officials all over the Sudan, the gist of which was to encourage the development of the resources of the Sudanese people to 'raise them to a higher

level'.³⁷ Twenty-five years later, the third Governor-General, Sir Lee Stack, had just 'come to the conclusion that the time has come to fix on a definitive policy of development, economic and administrative, for the Southern Provinces'.³⁸ The intervening period formed the crucial founding years of the condominium rule which have had a significant bearing on the later history of the region and should therefore be studied in depth.

Notes

1. G.N. Sanderson, 'Aspects of Resistance to British Rule in the Southern Sudan, 1900-1928', Etudes Africaines Offertes à Henri Brunschwig, (Paris, 1983), p.351.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid, pp.351-352.
4. M.W. Daly, Empire on the Nile (Cambridge, 1986), p.134.
5. G. Warburg, The Sudan Under Wingate (London, 1970), p.137.
6. H. MacMichael, The Sudan (London, 1954), p.83.
7. Warburg, op. cit., pp.73-74.
8. H.C. Jackson, Behind the Modern Sudan (London, 1955) p.143; Pastor on the Nile (London, 1960), pp.93, 95.
9. Hunter who died in 1902 was second-in-command of the Bahr al-Ghazal Occupation Forces; Boulnois and Fell who both died in 1905 were the Provincial Governor and Chief Political Officer respectively.
10. C.E. Sevier, 'The Anglo-Egyptian Condominium in Southern Sudan 1918-1939', (Princeton University Ph.D., 1975), pp.34-35.
11. L.M. Sanderson and G.N. Sanderson, Education, Religion and Politics in Southern Sudan 1899-1964 (London, 1981), p.18.
12. See R. Hallett, Africa to 1875 (Michigan, 1970), p.285 for the 'ordered anarchy'. As for the other terminologies, they have been so commonly used that they do not deserve a note.
13. P.J.M. McEwan, (ed), Nineteenth Century Africa (Oxford, 1968), pp.259, 261.
14. R.O. Collins, Land Beyond the Rivers: the Southern Sudan 1898-1918 (Yale, 1971), pp.2, 95.
15. M.M. Abiem, 'Dinka Responses to Early British Colonial Rule, 1900-1922', (London University M.A., 1976), pp.3-5.
16. Sanderson, 'Aspects of Resistance', p.350.
17. Sanderson and Sanderson, Education, Religion and Politics p.17.

18. Ibid., p.16.
19. Daly, op. cit., pp.134-135.
20. H. MacMichael, The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (London, 1935), p.18.
21. J.S.R Duncan, The Sudan: A Record of Achievement (London, 1952), pp.100, 161-162.
22. Ibid., pp.161-162.
23. K.D.D. Henderson, a lecture delivered at Oxford entitled 'Nationalism in the Sudan', April 1954, SAD106/4/1-33.
24. R.O. Collins and R. Herzog, 'Early British Administration in the Southern Sudan', JAH, 2 (1961), p.120.
25. Ibid., p.122;
26. See Chapter I for details of these aspects.
27. A.L. Loiria, 'Political Awakening in Southern Sudan, 1946-1955: Decolonisation and the Problem of National Integration', (University of California, Los Angeles Ph.D., 1969), pp.128-132.
28. Ibid., quoted on p.163.
29. Ibid., p.155.
30. Abel Alier is a leading Sudanese politician-lawyer who once served as Vice-President of the Republic for eleven years. He is currently a member of the International Court of Justice.
31. A. Alier, Southern Sudan: Too Many Agreements Dishonoured (Exeter, 1990), p.17.
32. D.M. Wai, The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan (London, 1981), p.1.
33. D.M. Wai, The Southern Sudan: The Problem of National Integration (ed), (London, 1973), p.15.
34. A.I.M. Ali, The British, the Slave Trade and Slavery in the Sudan (Khartoum, 1972), p.130.
35. K. Awad, 'The Administration of the Sudan Since 1898', 1957; H.M.A. Sharfi, 'The Question of the South of the Sudan', 1964; NRO, South 1/16/158;

1/17/161; A.E. El Bashir, 'Confrontation Across the Sudd: Southern Sudan's Struggle for Freedom 1839-1955', (Howard University Ph.D., 1974), p.278.

36. M. Abdal-Rahim, Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan (Oxford, 1969), p.8.
37. Kitchener, 'Memorandum to Mudirs' 1899, printed in Annual Report for 1899, pp.55-56. An extract is the Appendix I.
38. Stack to Wheatley, 14 May 1924, SAD702/12/1-46.

Chapter I: The Pre-Condominium Southern Sudan

The Pre-Turco-Egyptian Period

As it has been so strongly argued that the experiences of the previous century are crucial for understanding the South under the early Condominium rule, it is necessary to begin with a brief analysis of the condition of the region during that period. Before 1821, there were neither Southern nor Northern Sudanese because the political entity currently known as the Sudan did not exist. The territory now occupied by the Republic of the Sudan consisted of a large number of independent kingdoms, sultanates, chieftaiships and related systems, varying considerably in size and strength. In what is now known as the Northern Sudan there were the independent sultanates of Sennar and Darfur under which fell the autonomous petty states in Kordofan, the Abdullab state in the region of Khartoum, and the Shaiggia confederation farther north. Many of these diverse peoples shared the Islamic faith and the Arabic language (though both these factors were minimally experienced in the Nuba country, southern Kordofan and southern Blue Nile region). But due to the existence of strong ethnic, racial and regional differences, no overall political union emerged in the geographical Northern Sudan. This was only achieved later by colonial powers to realise their own objectives. In the region now known as Southern Sudan, there were the Shilluk Kingdom of Fashoda, the Azande Kingdoms on the Nile-Congo divide and the Anuak principality in eastern Upper Nile. But there also existed a greater number of peoples whose political systems have been described in the Introduction.

As far back as historical records exist, the Africans inhabiting the different parts of modern Sudan formed independent political entities. Tribes raided one another either to extend territory or forestall invasion by launching pre-emptive strikes, and

sometimes to secure additional food supplies. However the period was not as disorderly and negative as this description would make it appear. Under such conditions, a process of integration and nation formation was slowly evolving. This was particularly evident among peoples with close cultural similarity in the geographical south. The Shilluk, for example, grew into a powerful kingdom by integrating captives and settlers from such neighbours as the Dinka, and to this day, the Kwa-Jang or Dinka lineages are still identifiable among the Shilluk.¹ The Azande expanded into a great nation by absorbing the Avokaya, Mundu, Makaraka, Baka and Fertit, some of whom rose to high leadership positions in the provinces.² A similar process occurred between the Dinka and Nuer. Two of the great Nuer leaders of the 19th and early 20th centuries, Nuer Mer (who enslaved both Nuer and Dinka) and prophet Diu (Deng Laka) of the Gaweir Nuer, were Thoi and Ngok Dinka respectively.³

On the other hand the African cultures of the South and Arab/Islamic cultures of the North effectively repelled each other, characterised by warfare along their frontier. Although Richard Gray and Collins have asserted that the Southern Sudanese suffered from 'powerful neighbours in Northern Sudan' who forced the Shilluk to retreat farther south,⁴ other sources give the opposite picture. The Dinka, Shilluk and Nuba in fact kept their Arab neighbours on the defensive on three fronts: - southern Blue Nile, southern Kordofan and along the White Nile above Khartoum - until after 1821.⁵ The Shilluk in particular dominated over the Arabs in this confrontation. They held sway over the region along the banks up to Kawwa, taxing the Baggara Arabs for grazing, and compelling traders from Darfar and Sennar to abide by Shilluk rules of river navigation, which restricted ferrying of goods and passengers to Shilluk canoes.⁶

The Arabs' inferior military standing before their Southern opponents until the 1820s is corroborated by contemporary sources. In the words of an Arab chief in

Kordofan: 'In the neighbourhood of the negroes we cannot remain, as they would rise in mass against us, and destroy us all, in revenge for their kidnapped children'.⁷ In fact their fear of the 'negroes' dictated the Arabs' early submission to the Turco-Egyptian regime. Quoting from the same Arab chief: 'We are forced to choose the least of these many evils, and to deliver ourselves into the hand of the Turks'.⁸ The Turco-Egyptians duly reciprocated by opening a military station on the White Nile 'for their protection' against the Shilluk.⁹ From such evidence it is clear that when 'Northern' and 'Southern' peoples were alone in their country, the military balance favoured the latter. It is important to note this fact because it will be relevant to the assessment of later British pre-occupation with devising ways and means of protecting their 'vulnerable' Southern subjects against detrimental external influences.

The Turco-Egyptian Period

Mohammed Ali's motive in undertaking the conquest of the Sudan in 1821 was to secure slaves for service in the personal army he was establishing in Egypt, aimed at giving him autonomy from his overlord, the Sultan of Turkey. Writing in 1823, Mohammed Ali reminded his son-in-law, the Daftarder in the Sudan, of what he was there to achieve: 'You are aware that the end of all our efforts ... is to procure negroes. Please show zeal in carrying out our wishes in this capital matter.'¹⁰ Shortly after the effective occupation of the predominantly Muslim Northern Sudan, in 1822 the army was accordingly unleashed on the 'pagans' in southern Blue Nile, southern Kordofan and Southern Sudan. Their auxiliaries were the local Arabs who had old scores to settle with the 'negroes'. With only spears and arrows to oppose a disciplined army armed with firearms, the hunted fell easy prey. The opening of the White Nile to navigation between 1839 and 1841 compounded the situation, as this

breakthrough opened up the region to large-scale and deeper penetration of the interior by ivory and slave traders.

By the 1850s, the plight of the Southern Sudanese could no longer be ignored by the Western powers, by now mostly committed to suppressing slavery. Thereafter pressure was exerted on the Egyptian government, after which steps were taken to curb the activities of slave traders. Partly to improve its image abroad by submitting to European pressure to abolish this trade so that legitimate commerce could be introduced, and partly to extend its colonial gains, the Egyptian government began to push its administrative control southwards between 1855 and 1865. In 1855, a military station was opened on the Sobat for interception and release of captured slaves on boats, but it was a dismal failure. The traders simply avoided check points by driving slaves overland and rejoining the boats at safer points down stream. Two years later, the troops were withdrawn while new steps were planned. In 1862 armed patrols were introduced on the White Nile to inspect the whole route. The government also imposed an inhibiting tax on all traders and employees engaged in the White Nile trade. Furthermore, military operations were conducted against land-based slavers, of whom a Northern Sudanese, Mohammed Kheir, who had devastated the Shilluk and Dinka country, was killed in 1863. These steps were followed in 1865 by the formal annexation of the White Nile region to Turco-Egyptian Government, becoming a province with Fashoda as its capital.¹¹

The annexation of their country did not however improve things for the local people. They continued to be raided clandestinely by government officials who wanted them for military and domestic service.¹² Western humanitarian pressure on Cairo meant very little to corrupt local officials in the South. The result was the escalation of violence in the region, during which three Shilluk kings and a governor of Fashoda were killed, together with a large number of their followers.¹³ An old

Shilluk survivor of this violent period related his experience to an American missionary in 1902:

We had here the Turks and they said 'Be submissive to us; we will protect you, we will fight your battles for you, we will teach you of God'. But they took our cattle, they destroyed our villages, and carried away our women and children into slavery ...¹⁴

Farther South beyond the sudd, the situation was similarly affected and the government found itself obliged to intervene. But this time more reliable officials were needed for the task. Khedive Ismail accordingly chose two Britons; the explorer Sir Samuel White Baker, and General Charles Gordon, to stop the slave trade and establish Turco-Egyptian administration in the equatorial region. After his employment in 1869, Baker went to the South in 1870 only to be delayed by the sudd in the Shilluk country until early 1871. Reaching Gondokoro in the Bari country in April 1871, he commenced his work from this centre, which became his administrative headquarters. Equatoria was formally annexed in a ceremony on 26 May 1871,¹⁵ followed by attempts to occupy the province effectively. But he encountered formidable opposition from powerful traders and some Southern peoples like the Bari who simply wanted to be left alone in their native land. The threat presented by the Bari was particularly serious and took much of Baker's attention. He was visited soon after his arrival at Gondokoro by the Bari leader Loro, alias Alloron, who asked the newcomer: 'How long are you going to remain here?' Baker told him that the government had come to stay, to which Alloron responded: 'Then who does this land belong to? to you or to me?' When Baker replied that the land belonged to the Khedive, the Bari leader was provoked: 'Then you had better be off to Khartoum for we don't want any government here'.¹⁶

That was 'nationalism' - Bari country for the Bari - put simple and straight, though Baker looked at Alloron's opposition to have been instigated by slavers with whom the Bari were alleged to be in league. However, the fact that Baker found

Alloron's people driven away from their main land onto the islands by their Lokoyia neighbours¹⁷ casts doubts on the alleged unholy alliance. If such relations existed, the Bari could have used the slavers' superior military power to keep their dreaded domestic rivals off their land. The truth is this was a natural reaction from a landlord to question a stranger who just walked into his domain. Intrusion alone was a sufficient justification for an initial deadlock between Baker and Alloron. What should really be questioned is why some Southern peoples (and they were many as will be shown later) chose the abnormal way of embracing strangers without first finding out who they were and why they were there in the first place.

In response to local opposition, expressed in trade and labour boycott, Baker resorted to force to compel recognition of government authority and obtain food and labour supplies. It started with raids on the Bari, after which force continued to be used frequently as he pushed government control further afield. But by the time his tour of duty ended in May 1873, Baker's administration by raids had achieved little. Romolo Gessi, an Italian who accompanied Gordon to Equatoria in 1874, found through information from natives and officers who had witnessed such raids, that Gordon's predecessor had done more harm than good:

A few tribes were defeated, but never subjugated; many at the approach of the troops abandoned their villages, taking their cattle with them and seeking refuge among the mountains or in the interior of the country. Nothing remained for Sir Samuel but to set fire to the huts, which were rebuilt twenty-four hours afterwards by the natives, as soon as the soldiers had disappeared.¹⁸

Basing his assessment of Baker's administration on the wealth of evidence his research on the Turkia in the Southern Sudan afforded him, Gray has concluded that:

Virtually all that Baker had accomplished was to effect the transfer of nominal sovereignty ... to the Government. Control over the scattered stations remained extremely slight, ... few neighbouring village

communities ... accepted the new alliance, but beyond them hostile and violent relationships continued unchanged.¹⁹

Baker himself did not deny his excessive use of force on his subjects, but he had no qualms about it:

The first steps in establishing the authority of a new government in a tribe hitherto savage and intractable were of necessity accompanied by military operations. War is inseparable from annexation, and the law of force, resorted to in self-defence, was absolutely indispensable to prove the superiority of the power that was eventually to govern. The end justified the means.²⁰

Baker's frankness about his exploits in Equatoria is very significant for the study of Southern Sudanese relations with later invaders. He emphasised two important aspects of such contacts: power and rights. Later, colonial officials were to spend valuable time theorising about why certain peoples in the region did not welcome invasions with open arms, preferring passive or armed resistance instead. While the causes of conflict could be many and varied, the investigation should start from the core of the conflict which even Baker in his ferocious attacks on the tribes recognised: 'There can be no doubt that in the abstract of the people's rights, any annexation of the territory of another is an infringement.'²¹ What really deserves investigation about resistance should be the contributing factors which accelerated it or otherwise.

Gordon was appointed Governor-General of Equatoria in September 1873. Shortly after his arrival at Khartoum in March 1874, he declared the policy of his administration:

... I have issued a stinging decree, declaring the Government monopoly of the ivory trade, and prohibiting the import of arms and powder, the levying of armed bands by private people, and the entry of any one without passports - in fact, I have put the district under martial law.²²

On assuming power in the province later in the year, Gordon began to extend government authority over a wider area by opening new administrative stations. These included Sobat in the Shilluk country to intercept slavers' human cargo, and his new capital of Lado, situated in a healthier site north of Gondokaro and on the west bank of the river. For food supplies and labour, these stations looked to the surrounding tribes. Unfortunately, such a hope was based on the assumption that since the government was there to protect them from the slavers depredations, the people would readily meet its needs. In fact, things did not work out that way and Gordon had to resort to the old razzia system which Baker and slave traders had practised:

... when we got here, the natives who were friendly could not sell or would not sell us Dhorra. There was a Sheikh near us and ... I sent and took the Dhorra from him. This is fearful work for me, but what can I do. I must either throw up the whole matter and come down or else do this.²³

Similar incidents abound throughout his three-year stay in Equatoria, contributing to, rather than mitigating, the suffering of the people. He continued to replenish his food supplies by raids: 'Yesterday forced by the want of cows, I had to make a razzia on a tribe near here and took 140 cows'.²⁴ By pursuing this line of action, Gordon 'failed to solve the ... fundamental problem of creating fresh relationships between the invaders and the indigenous people'.²⁵

On the question of slave trade and slavery, Gordon was not altogether consistent. Sometimes he took effective measures to enforce the ban, as in the capture and release of 126 slaves on 20-21 August 1874 on the Sobat.²⁶ At other times he approved some benign forms of slavery:

I think that the slavers' wars, made for the purpose of taking slaves, are detestable; but if a father or mother, of their own free will, and with the will of the child, sells that child, I do not see the objection to it. It was and is the wholesale depopulation of districts which makes slavery a curse, and the numbers killed or who perish in the collection of slaves.²⁷

Sometimes, Gordon did not even know what to do about it. As late as 1877 he had not come to a specific decision: 'I have not yet made up my mind what to do about the slaves and the slave question'.²⁸ This lack of clear-cut policy was demonstrated by two incidents in 1877. A black female slave ran away from her Arab master and went to the Governor-General to complain about mistreatment, suggesting in addition that she be allowed to be possessed by a kinder person. Gordon consented and facilitated the transfer by compensating the old master with 30 dollars, being the cost of the slave. A short while later a slave caravan passed within sight of the Governor-General and he acted swiftly: 'I noticed a bronze-coloured boy among the slaves, and saw he was an Arab Bedouin. I had him and two others freed'.²⁹

Gordon's vacillation over the slave issue was clearly influenced by his cultural attitude towards the people he went to liberate. The destitute condition he found the people in, following the massive loss of property and manpower through slave raidings, left in his mind the impression of a people living in an abject natural state which was worse than their condition in bondage. His too sympathetic attitude towards the blacks whom 'I look on ... as I would on children of three or four years of age',³⁰ a people who had 'nothing to exchange for goods',³¹ hindered progress in Gordon's campaign against slave trade. He saw his subjects as a people who could not yet stand on their own. His administration which could have stood in for a protector was too deficient in resources effectively to neutralise the slave traders, who, it is implied from the above and succeeding statements and action, were after all of a lesser evil than leaving the people alone. For this reason, Gordon was not opposed to the practice of slavery in its entirety. If people could be enslaved with no loss of lives, he would tolerate it, demonstrating this by himself buying three Shilluk boys, two from their father and one from his brother,³² and suggesting that the indigenous peoples should give up their independence for a better life in captivity: 'If I were a black up here I wish I were taken by the Arabs'.³³

The longer Gordon stayed in the Sudan the more pessimistic he became about the future prospects for the blacks. He even went to the point of suggesting government withdrawal from the Southern Sudan rather than continue to preside over a hopeless situation. When it came to a choice between further pursuing the war against the slave trade, and appeasing hostile slavers and their supporters in the Northern Sudan (who had been dispossessed of their loot by the operations carried out in 1879 by his able Governor of Bahr al-Ghazal, the Italian Romolo Gessi), Gordon went for the latter. Writing to Gessi in March 1879, he expressed his disapproval of the Governor's attempt to effectively administer the province and control traders: 'I am dead against any occupation of these countries. I want no ivory, I only want the people to be quiet'.³⁴ Thus disillusioned, Gordon was ready to abandon his original Southern policy of protective isolation.

In contrast to Gordon, Gessi was optimistic about the economic regeneration of the province. He believed that even with the inadequate means at his disposal, he could, to a large extent, restore law and order and initiate economic development. Accordingly, he appealed against Gordon's proposed withdrawal and when the two met in Darfur in June 1879³⁵ succeeded in convincing the Governor-General to allow him to proceed with the permanent occupation of Bahr al-Ghazal. Having been granted his request, Gessi applied himself to his difficult task of administering an extensive territory ravaged by slave trade. Then, in the short period between the defeat of organised slavers' resistance under Sulaiman Zubair in July 1879 and his departure from the province in September 1880, Gessi demonstrated that with conviction and determination, the seemingly uneconomic and undevelopable region could be controlled and turned into a profitable colonial possession.

Gessi issued stern orders after the defeat of Sulaiman to restore order in the province. These orders were primarily to protect the natives against further exploitation by slavers still at large and clandestinely carrying on with their cargo.

Two types of crime were identified and appropriate punishment prescribed. The death penalty was to be imposed, were persons to be caught slave trafficking, abducting children and women, and burning native villages. Those found robbing native property or using forced native labour in building projects, cultivation and portage, were to be despatched to Khartoum.³⁶ These orders were enforced to the best of Gessi's ability. Some slavers who were accused of killing their slaves were tried, found guilty and shot while a number of traders guilty of the other crimes were deported to the Northern Sudan.³⁷

With the province enjoying this relative peace, the governor could then turn his attention to generating revenue and to small development projects. During that short period of less than two years, Gessi raised £90,000 in ivory sales, which covered all his expenses.³⁸ In addition, large quantities of rubber were sent to Khartoum. The copper mines within the province at Hofra en Nahas supplied domestic needs, augmented by good quality iron ore worked by traditional blacksmiths among the Jur and Bongo tribes. For proper exploitation of the latter metal, Gessi planned to send for equipment to establish forges from Khartoum. Experiments in cotton, rice, sugar and timber production were encouraging and the government subsequently established eight looms worked by local apprentices who produced quality cloth.³⁹ Gessi's innovations were crowned by the opening of a primary school in 1880 at Dem Zubair, former headquarters of Sulaiman, attended by sons of chiefs and soldiers. He expected 'in a few years to be able to draw the clerks from the indigenous populations'.⁴⁰

The importance of Gessi's innovations lies less in tangible results than in advertising the commercial possibilities to any outsider who might be interested in investment in the region. He actually made a formal request in 1880 to a representative of commercial interests in Italy.⁴¹ Unfortunately, Gessi did not live long enough to see the results of his endeavours. Bahr al-Ghazal was suddenly

deprived of reaping the fruits of such foresight by the sudden death of its visionary governor in 1881 and the rise of the Mahdi, which retarded development as the province relapsed into the disorder of the active slave trade days.

Gordon was equally disappointed with the situation in Equatoria. When in 1878 the review of his annual budget put the deficit at about £100,000, he decided to reduce expenses by ordering the evacuation of the southernmost stations in Uganda. Not only did Gordon abandon parts of this province but he even contemplated complete withdrawal from it since he could not see 'the ultimate use of the Equator province'.⁴² However, no further steps were taken along those lines as the final decision on such an important matter could only come from Egypt. The next task for Gordon's successors was to administer the province. This responsibility fell on a German Jew, Edward Schmitzer, best known by his Muslim name of Emin. Appointed governor of Equatoria in 1878 after having served under Gordon as envoy to Uganda in addition to being the provincial Chief Medical Officer, Emin's role was to supervise his scattered stations, take action against the slave trade whenever he had the chance of success and to maintain good relations between his urban settlers and the nominally-administered rural population. His diplomacy worked for there was relative peace between the two communities as the urban population scaled down robbery in the countryside.⁴³

Emin shared Gessi's conviction that the Southern Sudan could pay for the cost of its own administration, if only the means to develop its resources could be obtained. His immediate plans were to start with what he could manage locally, such as the cultivation of cash crops: coffee, cotton and sugar, and the collection of india rubber. Like Gessi, he established looms for the production of cotton cloth.⁴⁴ He also opened a school at Lado in 1881.⁴⁵ The small development projects embarked upon had by 1882 shown a net profit of £8,000, a great improvement when compared with the annual deficit of £32,000 when he became governor of the province in

1878.⁴⁶ But when the province was on the way to recovery, the Turco-Egyptian administration was challenged by the Mahdists and development stalled.

The Southern Sudanese colonial experiences under the Turco-Egyptian rule suggest several instructive comparisons with the period of the Anglo-Egyptian administration. Baker's and Gordon's attitudes towards the native were shared by British officials of the Anglo-Egyptian Government. Those experiences of the 19th century are therefore of special significance to the proposed comprehensive analysis of constraints on British development initiatives in the South. On the other hand Gessi had demonstrated that a difficult situation like that in Bahr al-Ghazal could be brought under control within a short period by a government with humble means. With a force estimated at only 2,765 men,⁴⁷ Gessi reclaimed Bahr al-Ghazal from Sulaiman whose fighting strength was put at 6,400 with additional 9,000 men in reserve.⁴⁸ Moreover, his force was less well equipped than the Anglo-Egyptian forces with superior firearms for its regional adversaries: tribal warriors mostly armed with spears and arrows. Furthermore, Gessi and Emin operated and achieved successes in the same climatic conditions which, it is maintained, impeded the later British officials - and without the advances in the treatment and prevention of tropical diseases which occurred between the 1870s and 1900s. So although the constraints of harsh climate, lack of funds, manpower shortages, and tribal resistance certainly must not be discounted, some scepticism is justified towards the argument that these alone imposed a very slow pace upon the extension and work of the Anglo-Egyptian administration in the region.⁴⁹

The criticism that many Southern Sudanese peoples had no recognised leaders capable of making decisions on behalf of their respective societies did not appear to have been so acute a problem during the Turkia. Indeed colonial officials complained that the tribes had chiefs who were too powerful. Some chiefs who resisted being moulded into characters acceptable to the colonial masters were either replaced with

docile ones or physically eliminated. Baker replaced Alloron with Morbe in 1871 for opposing him.⁵⁰ A government official in Equatoria hanged a chief in 1875 for objecting to his followers being engaged for forced labour.⁵¹ Chief Alloron was eventually killed in 1884 by the Emin's administration for his resistance against foreign presence in the Bar land.⁵² The death of Shilluk kings has already been cited.

Such treatment of chiefs during the Turkia had important consequences for the Condominium period. Chieftainship in times of crisis had clearly become a very dangerous position, and its risks came to outweigh its original merits of prestige and authority in local society. In the course of time some tribes developed a defensive response: they concealed their true leaders, and sometimes when selecting new ones deliberately did not appoint the best men. For example after losing so many kings, the Shilluk in 1891 presented prince Kur Nyidhok, known as Kur Rac (Kur the Bad) to the Mahdists as candidate for their next king, while declining to nominate the better candidate, his half brother, known as Kur Doc (Kur the Good). Their calculations were that Kur Rac would be taken away 'sooner than later' by the Mahdists, who were expected to withdraw back to Omdurman after their looting spree, after which Kur Doc 'under whose reign people will sleep, would be installed'.⁵³

Whenever researchers assess the indigenous power bases in the Southern Sudan in the early 20th century, it would be advisable to consider what the institution of chieftainship had experienced in the hands of previous foreign invaders. What the British administrators observed were not always the 'natural' power structures: these had often been disrupted and weakened, or else tribes had acquired the habit of disguising them. Consequently, it was all too easy for officials to misunderstand the character of local societies, and to underestimate the potential strength of indigenous patterns of authority.

Although warfare among Southern Sudanese and slave raids disrupted life in the region, the condition of the people was not as helpless as some scholars have made it

appear. There was certainly devastation in many areas. Yet it was during this time that courageous incidents of regional solidarity against foreigners occurred. The Bari - Lokoyia traditional feuds which Baker tried to exploit to secure the former's collaboration dramatically turned into an alliance against the government.⁵⁴ These traditional enemies, the Dinka and Nuer, co-operated to jointly almost exterminate the government garrison of Bor in 1884,⁵⁵ while the Dinka reinforced the Bari in 1885 to attack the towns of Lado and Rejaf.⁵⁶

On the whole, however, the Turco-Egyptian rule left deep and permanent scars on the Southern Sudan through enslavement and by imposing the stigma of social inferiority upon its peoples. Moreover, the foreigners' policy of playing one people against the other to realise their own objectives left Southern Sudanese more divided than ever before. Thus from within the South and in relation to the peoples of Northern Sudan, the peoples of this vast country remained independent of one another throughout this colonial period. The peoples of the Sudan were the Azande, Bari, Beja, Dinka, Fur, Nuer, Nuba, etc; they were Arabs and blacks, 'pagans' and Muslims, with no common identity. The only thing which these peoples who had 'no ties of race, language, culture, religion - or sympathy' shared was a colonial master whose rule helped create hunters and a game reserve for slave hunts⁵⁷ out of the colonialisised peoples of the modern Sudan.

The Mahdia

In a country where the visible absence of a nation builder in both its recent and early history is embarrassing to Sudanese leaders desperate for sources of inspiration, even an event of such doubtful objectives as the Mahdist movement is seen as a great national achievement. In reality, this misunderstands the character and extent of the Mahdist rule. It is true that the descendants of the Mahdi and his followers are now

Sudanese within recognised geographical boundaries, but this was a later development. 'The frontiers of the Mahdist state were never permanently fixed'.⁵⁸ In fact, virtually the whole of the Southern Sudan was never occupied by the Mahdists. With the exception of the two stations of Bor and Rejaf on the Bahr al-Jebel, there were only infrequent armed incursions which were never sustained. One mission to the South under commander Karamalla withdrew from both Equatoria and Bahr al-Ghazal in 1886 following the death of the Mahdi, after which the region 'became much as it had been prior to the Egyptian occupation, the tribes became independent of each other and were ruled by their own chiefs'.⁵⁹ Another military expedition under Zaki Tamal was sent into the Shilluk country in 1891 to raid for food and slaves. After devastating the land during which many people were killed including the king, Yor Akoc, the Ansar withdrew in 1892 taking along a thousand cattle and three hundred slaves.⁶⁰ A third expedition was despatched against the Dinka in 1894 but it was heavily defeated, its commander Abu Mariam, being among the dead, and the few survivors fled to Darfur.⁶¹

The towns of Bor and Rejaf served as bases for raids into the countryside for booty when the soldiers were not engaged in fighting against the Belgians who had appeared in Equatoria at this time. Disorder increased around these centres for the Khalifa began to exile convicts to Rejaf.⁶² Typical of this chaos was the massacre of Bor Dinka chiefs the Ansar following the heavy defeat of the latter by Dinka warriors as they tried to rob cattle and grain in the villages.⁶³ It is evident from these examples that Southern Sudan was not an integral part of the Mahdist state. It was dar harb or non-Muslim territory where looting, capture and enslavement of the kuffar or pagans was sanctioned by Islam.

That aside, the Mahdi and his successor the Khalifa Abdullahi did not intend to confine their movement to a definite geographical area. Theirs was a world-wide religious revolution bent on destroying the old order and replacing it with their brand

of Islam. In accordance with the tradition of the Prophet of four Caliphs, the Mahdi appointed one of them from North Africa, a certain Mohammed al-Mahdi Sanusi (who nevertheless declined the offer).⁶⁴ If the Mahdi thought his mission was limited by political geography, he would have looked for a suitable candidate from within the areas he controlled. Only the belief in the universality of what he stood for would make the Mahdi choose an Arab on the Mediterranean coast for a job in Omdurman. Secondly, there is evidence to show that the Mahdists intended to operate above territorial considerations and without a specific identity, save for a 'state' which had no land attachment. Ultimatums were sent by the Khalifa to a number of world leaders in 1887, among whom were the Emperor of Ethiopia, the Ottoman Sultan and Queen Victoria, to embrace Mahdism or face invasion.⁶⁵ The Khalifa actually followed up these threats with the 1889 abortive invasion of both Ethiopia and Egypt. The situation would have been different if the will to subdue those targeted countries had been backed up with sufficient military might. But since the would-be converts proved too strong for the Mahdists, the Mahdia became a Sudanese situation by default.

Being preoccupied with their divine mission to the external world, and threatened by internal opposition and economic hardships, the Mahdists had no plans to create a political entity with a specific name from the welter of tribes and races found in this open-border country. In consequence, the Anglo-Egyptian reconquest found the peoples known later as Sudanese, as still 'heterogeneous collection of tribes in an ill-defined area of Africa'.⁶⁶

When some Sudanese scholars like Abdal-Rahim accuse the British of saddling 'the independent Sudan with its most intractable problem by creating a form of local patriotism in the South',⁶⁷ they should pause to reflect on how the 'cherished' Sudanese national identity came into being. This did not exist in 1898, but was

created by British rule. If there is anything to blame the colonial masters for, it should be their unilateral decision to bring together peoples who had little in common.

Notes

1. C.G. Seligman and B.Z. Seligman, Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan (London, 1932), p.42.
2. E.E. Evans-Pritchard, The Azande: History and Political Institutions (Oxford, 1971), pp.126-27.
3. D.H. Johnson, Nuer Prophets (Oxford, 1994), pp.128, 132.
4. R. Gray, A History of the Southern Sudan, 1839-1889 (Oxford, 1961), p.9;
R.O. Collins, The Southern Sudan 1883-1898 A Struggle for Control (Yale, 1962), p.4.
5. J. Pallme, Travels in Kordofan (London, 1844), p.126; R.S. O'Fahey, J.L. Spaulding, Kingdoms of the Sudan (London, 1974), p.62.
6. W.G. Browne, Travels in Africa, Egypt and Syria (London, 1799), app.II; Mercer, 'Shilluk Trade and politics from the Mid-Seventeenth Century to 1861', JAH, 12 (1971), p.415; J. Petherick, Egypt, the Soudan and Central Africa (London, 1861), pp.342-43.
7. Quoted in Pallme, Travels in Kordofan, p.126.
8. Ibid.
9. Petherick, Egypt, The Soudan and Central Africa, p.343.
10. Quoted in R. Hill, Egypt in the Sudan, (Oxford, 1959), p.13.
11. Ibid, pp.102, 108-109.
12. Samuel Baker actually caught the Governor of Fashoda carrying 155 slaves on the White Nile on 20 May 1870, S.W. Baker, Ismailia, I, (London, 1874), pp.87-92.
13. Reth Kwathker was arrested in 1870 by Ali bey Kurdi, Governor of Fashoda, and died in prison at Fashoda a few days later under mysterious circumstances. His successor, Ajang Nyidhok was executed in 1874 after being defeated in war against Yusuf bey, Ali's successor. Yusuf himself was killed a year later by the Shilluk in the battle of Kaka. Reth Kweikon was killed by the Ansar fighting for the Turco-Egyptian government, R. Gessi, Seven years in the Soudan (London, 1892), pp.23, 96-97; E.C. Pumphrey, 'The Shilluk Tribe', SNR, 24, (1941), p.4.
14. Quoted in J.K. Griffen, The Egyptian Sudan (New York 1911), p.120.

15. Baker, Ismailia, I, pp.248-50.
16. Ibid, quoted on pp.236-37.
17. Ibid, pp.221, 235-36.
18. Gessi, Seven Years in the Soudan, p.82.
19. Gray, A History of the Southern Sudan, p.103.
20. S.W. Baker, Ismailia, II, (London, 1874), p.513.
21. Baker, Ismailia, I, p.237.
22. Quoted in G.B. Hill, Gordon in Central Africa, 1874-1879 (London, 1899), p.6.
23. Gordon to Augusta, 24 September 1875, quoted in Gray, A History of the Southern Sudan, p.111.
24. Gordon to Augusta, 2 February 1876, quoted in Gray, A History of the Southern Sudan, p.112.
25. Gray, A History of the Southern Sudan, p.112.
26. P. Carbites, Gordon, The Sudan and Slavery (London, 1933), p.48.
27. Ibid., quoted on p.47.
28. Hill, Gordon in Central Africa, p.289.
29. Ibid., pp.287, 289.
30. M.A. Gordon, Letters of General Gordon to his Sister (London, 1897), p.134.
31. Hill, Gordon in Central Africa, p.25.
32. Ibid., pp.17, 20.
33. Gordon to Augusta, 10 August 1874, quoted in A.I.H. Ali, The British, the Slave Trade and Slavery in the Sudan (Khartoum, 1972), p.81.
34. Quoted in Gray A History of the Southern Sudan, p.127.
35. Ibid., p.128.
36. Gessi, Seven Years in the Soudan, p.359.

37. Ibid., p.360.
38. Gray A History of the Southern Sudan, p.128.
39. Ibid., pp.129-30.
40. Ibid., quoted on p.130.
41. Ibid., p.130
42. Ibid., quoted on p.137.
43. Ibid., p.141.
44. R.W. Felkin, G. Schweinfurth, F. Ratzel and G. Hartlaub, (ed), Emin Pasha in Central Africa (London, 1888), p.xvi; Gray A History of the Southern Sudan, pp.138-141.
45. Gray, A History of the Southern Sudan, pp.140-141.
46. Felkin, Schweinfurth, Emin Pasha in Central Africa, p.xvi.
47. Gessi, Seven Years in the Soudan, p.185.
48. Gray, op. cit. p.124.
49. The Western Nuer were only brought under the Anglo-Egyptian rule in 1922 by Captain V.H. Ferguson.
50. Baker, Ismailia, I, p.257.
51. Gray, op.cit., pp.114-115.
52. G. Casati, Ten Years in Equatoria and the Return with Emin Pasha (London, 1891), p.285.
53. G.A. Kwanai, 'First Advisory Notes', 12 February 1981, being comments on L.L. Mawut, 'The Fashoda Kingdom and Its Invaders' (unpublished).
54. Baker, Ismailia, I, pp.308-312.
55. Gray op.cit., p.161.
56. Ibid.
57. G.W. Bell, 'Speeches', Part I, SAD 700/6/1-59.

58. P.M. Holt, The Mahdist State in the Sudan: A Study of its Origins, Development and Overthrow (Oxford, 1958), p.244.
59. F.R. Wingate, 'Memorandum on the Bahr al-Ghazal', 7 April 1895, SAD 261/1/1-53.
60. Collins, The Southern Sudan, p.78; Hofmayr, Die Schilluk (free translation), p.25.
61. Wingate, 'Memorandum on the Bahr al-Ghazal', p.18.
62. Collins, The Southern Sudan, p.78.
63. L.L. Mawut, Dinka Resistance to Condominium Rule 1902-1932 (Khartoum, 1983), p.7.
64. Holt, The Mahdist State in the Sudan, p.113.
65. Ibid, 150-151.
66. J.S.P. Duncan, The Sudan Path to Independence (London, 1957), p.214.
67. Abd al-Rahim, op.cit, p.8.

Chapter II: British Motives and Objectives in the Southern Sudan

The over-riding strategic importance of Egypt to Britain cannot be contested. Even long before the opening of the Suez Canal enhanced its importance by shortening the sea route to India, Egypt had attracted the attention of many keen observers. In 1852 it was predicted that 'the Englishman, straining far over to hold his loved India, will plant a firm foot on the banks of the Nile'.¹ But according to two British co-authors, H.S.L. Alford and W.D. Sword, the British never desired 'to undertake the immense responsibility of the government of Egypt, as long as that country' was 'secure from foreign invasion'.² When, however, that threat was considered to be imminent in 1881, Britain could no longer 'stand aside and allow Egypt to be controlled by any of the continental powers, unless compelled thereto at the point of sword'.³

Such statements provide further support of Robinson and Gallagher's position in Egypt proper, and as long as such arguments are restricted to Egypt, one has no objection. It is when this paramount strategic consideration of the occupation of Egypt is extended to explain the occupation of the Sudan that doubts arise. Robinson and Gallagher's argument that the occupation of the Sudan was dictated by the same British quest for security as in Egypt, is only partly valid. The relevance of the Sudan in general and the South in particular to British security guarantee in North Africa could easily be established. It was a popular Victorian belief concerning the Nile: that Egypt could be threatened by an enemy power sitting on the upper reaches of the river, and diverting its course. This fear was promoted by the likes of the eminent Victorian explorer, Samuel Baker who in a series of *The Times* articles in 1888, argued that the Nile could be dammed and the obstruction of the flow could cause 'the utter ruin and complete destruction of Egypt proper'.⁴ The strategic importance of the Upper Nile region was therefore not lost on Cromer, who declared that 'whatever

Power holds the Upper Nile Valley must, by the mere force of its geographical situation dominate Egypt'.⁵

The Mahdist state was a security menace to Egypt and had to be toppled in order to realise peace on Egypt's southern border. Indeed the advance on Khartoum was accelerated by the suspicion that the Mahdists were about to launch an offensive. The defeat of the Italians by the Ethiopians at the battle of Adowa in March 1896 encouraged the Mahdists to besiege other Italian forces at Kassala in eastern Sudan. This development was viewed with disquiet by the British, as the success of the Mahdists would react unfavourably on Egypt. Alford and Sword expressed the British disquiet at this development:

If Kassala fell into the hands of Dervishes, the latter would be let loose to overrun the Nile valley on the frontier of Egypt, and threaten that country itself ... the Dervishes suddenly assumed an offensive attitude, and it was rumoured that a large body of Dervishes were contemplating an immediate advance on Egypt.⁶

The security demands to push defensive lines farther up the river, and to create a diversion in favour of the demoralised Italians, were catered for by the Foreign Office March 1896 announcement of the start of the contemplated invasion of the Sudan. Further rumours of a Mahdist offensive then accelerated the advance to Khartoum.⁷ There was a second threat to that of the Mahdists. The scramble for Africa was in progress, and the southern parts of this former Egyptian colony were coveted by three other colonial powers besides Britain. The French, Belgians and Ethiopians each wanted to carve out parts of the Southern Sudan which appealed to them. Since the Sudan was so strategic, the British had to re-double their efforts either to forestall competitors, or to wrest the region from any weaker rivals who might have preceded them into the region. The outcome was the Fashoda incident of 1898 and subsequent discussions with the Belgians.

However, security considerations were not the only factor in the British occupation of the Southern Sudan. The reconquest was also undertaken for motives which though of lesser importance to the strategic one, were nevertheless instrumental in quickening the pace of the invasion. Gordon's death at Khartoum in 1885 at the hands of the Mahdists was one of the most sensational and resented incidents of the Victorian period. Since then there had been persistent calls to avenge his 'murder' and when the move against the Khalifa was under way, it was widely regarded as a mission to punish the Mahdists. Moreover, reports reaching Britain about the condition of the Sudan during the thirteen years of the Mahdia, most notably the testimony of two escaped Mahdist prisoners, Ohrwalder and Slatin, aroused much sympathy for the Sudanese victims. Wingate amplified such evidence of the Khalifa's misrule so effectively in reports to the War Office and Foreign Office that the liberation of the Sudanese from the Khalifa's tyranny became one of the objectives of the reconquest.⁸

While Egypt's security needs and distaste for the Khalifa's misrule are generally considered to be the chief motives for the British occupation of the Sudan, there were further important motives which require greater emphasis than they receive in the existing interpretations. The Southern Sudan in fact had been of special interest to the British since the 1850s for economic, political, religious and humanitarian reasons. The British Vice-Consul in Khartoum and ivory trader in the Southern Sudan, John Petherick, drew the Foreign Office's attention to the potential for commercial development in the region. In a memorandum he submitted to the Foreign Office in 1859 seeking promotion to Consul, Petherick cited the promotion of commerce as the top of his next agenda. His submission won him the promotion. The Foreign Office further showed their support for the Consul's trading activity in 1861 when the Foreign Secretary, John Russell recommended that the Government should accept

part Petherick's requirements for his commercial operations 'amongst turbulent and warlike tribes'.⁹

The slave trade also brought the Southern Sudan into British public notice. British determination to suppress the slave trade in the lacustrine kingdoms of Buganda, Bunyoro and Karagwe, made Murchison, President of the Royal Geographical Society, and the explorer, Speke, suggest to the Foreign Office in 1863 that Egypt should be encouraged to extend its occupation farther south to Gondokoro and beyond. At the time, however, the British Government could not adopt the proposal for the simple reason that it knew from reports from Jeddah and Khartoum that the Egyptian Government secretly condoned the slave trade.¹⁰

Christian missionaries were particularly worried about the effects of the slave trade upon their attempts to introduce Christianity into the region. The Protestant millionaire missionary Robert Arthington, believed the Southern Sudan would be the best starting point for spreading the Gospel in central Africa. But in a report on the White Nile slave trade to the Foreign Secretary, Clarendon, in 1866, Arthington complained that:

this abominable system of most wicked cruelties hinders us from planting mission stations promptly along the Upper Nile and sweeping with the Gospel ... around Victoria Nyanza, through the interesting kingdom of Rumaniki ... even forward to the East Coast.¹¹

Clarendon passed the report to the Consul-General in Cairo, Stanton, to recommend how best the situation could be handled. This recommendation came in the form of a suggestion that a new Consul be appointed at Khartoum who, to use Gray's words, 'might be able to organise, beyond the boundary of Egyptian authority, a coalition of tribes who would be strong enough to resist the slave traders and with whom legitimate commerce might be promoted'.¹² Stanton further suggested the name of a Foreign Office official, G. Palgrave, as the most suitable candidate for the job. Palgrave, however, put forward his own, more extensive plans. He supported the

* Khartoum mission 'in view of the Abolition of Slave Trade' which he described as 'a popular move, and creditable to ourselves'. But as he saw his would-be mission, the humanitarian motive would serve as a screen behind which other interests could be achieved.

... the real and ulterior Political importance of such a Post, both as regard the Sudan, a district always ready, troops and all to separate from Egypt ... is self-evident. Also much furtherance to English trade, direct and indirect. When the crisis comes, which must come in some form sooner or later, this Post will be hardly less useful to us, than those which regard Cairo and the Isthmus.¹³

The Foreign Office realised that this project would be costly in terms of funds and decided therefore to put it quietly aside.¹⁴ But although active British involvement in the Southern Sudan was held back by parsimony, the region continued to feature high in the thoughts of important figures. For the Foreign Secretary, Lord Derby, Baker's annexation of Equatoria was significant because it 'extended British influence in Egypt', and looked forward to a British opening-up of the interior of Africa which would pass 'mainly through Egyptian territory'.¹⁵ The explorer, Stanley, in 1885 urged 'all who lament the death of Gordon' to raise sufficient funds for a mission to the Southern Sudan through the Congo so that the tribes in the area could be organised into 'a confederacy for their own self-preservation'. A Cardinal who supported the idea looked to the merchants of Britain 'to provide the tribes ... with the first elements of civilisation and also of self-defence'.¹⁶

The British interest in the Southern Sudan was a component in the thinking which produced the Anglo-Egyptian occupation of the Sudan. The reign of the Khalifa intensified the surging humanitarian, religious and economic interests of the earlier period, as shown most clearly in the outcry from the British public to rescue the Sudanese from the Mahdist misrule. In fact the Southern Sudan had additional interest for the British immediately prior to the reconquest. While concerned

Christians had in the past thought they had the time to debate how and when to send missionaries into the region, by the 1890s the situation had turned into what some saw as a desperate struggle against Christian exclusion from the region. Islamic penetration of central Africa both from the east coast and down the Nile from the north was considered by Kitchener in 1892 to be a big enough threat in adjacent Uganda to sound the alarm to the Christian world:

Unless the Christian powers hold their own in Africa, the Mohammedan Arabs will I believe step in, and in the centre of the continent will form a base from which they will be able to drive back all civilising influences to the coast, and the country will then be given up to slavery and misrule as is the case in the Sudan at present.¹⁷

The evident strength of this sentiment suggests that when Kitchener planned and executed the Anglo-Egyptian reconquest of the Sudan, he carried with him a significant religious motivation. Subsequent policies of the Condominium Government indicate that such concerns were shared by other British officers and officials.

Information compiled by Wingate in the Egyptian military intelligence since 1883 on the situation in the Sudan revealed new facts about the Southern Sudan. Of special significance was the information supplied by Slatin Pasha¹⁸ on which Wingate based his confidential 'Memorandum on the Bahr al-Ghazal' of 7 April 1895. Three central points of the memorandum are noteworthy for what they reveal of British interest in the area: manpower supply, the strategic significance of Bahr al-Ghazal, and commercial prospects. The population was estimated at between five and six million¹⁹ of 'the most warlike' peoples in the Sudan 'capable of making excellent soldiers'. Although the notes question the reliability of such population estimates, the figures quoted appeared to have influenced official policies in certain areas.²⁰ But faulty though they were, the figures and description gave Wingate an additional incentive for the reconquest. Bahr al-Ghazal would be a source of recruitment of

local forces for furthering colonial objectives. Moreover, feuds among the various tribes were believed to prevent their combination against external aggression, making it easier for 'an European power' to 'obtain an ascendancy in the province and create an efficient local army'.²¹ Wingate's intelligence sources had confirmed the presence of the French and Belgian forces on the fringes of Bahr al-Ghazal, and he feared that if these European powers preceded the British in occupying the region, that local manpower would be lost. Thus in what appears to have been an attempt to accelerate the invasion of the Sudan, Wingate further advertised what might be called his proposed war machine in the Southern Sudan.

... the European nation which sooner or later extends its sphere of influence over these distant lands will find a recruiting ground for troops who for reckless bravery and endurance it would be hard to find an equal. This is a point worth bearing in mind by extensively colonising European nations desirous of obtaining auxiliaries who are less tied down by feelings of patriotism than perhaps any other class and who have been truthfully described as creatures who 'eat, drink and fight but never pray'.²²

Wingate's rather exaggerated praise of Southern Sudanese military prowess would certainly appeal to an extensively conquering world power like Britain which relied heavily on local auxiliaries to maintain law and order in the colonies.²³ In fact, Wingate was later to be embarrassed when he could not meet requests from London and British authorities elsewhere in Africa to recruit Sudanese for military service outside the Sudan.²⁴ But although those later failures tend to portray Wingate as having a false image of the situation, in the 1890s he was fully convinced of the area's military potential. Slatin's reports agreed comfortably with Wingate's own practical knowledge of the Southern Sudanese. As a senior officer in the Egyptian army which had substantial numbers of blacks of Southern Sudanese origin in its different units, Wingate could not have failed to recognise their valour. The 9th Sudanese Battalion, founded in 1884 out of Dinka and Shilluk youths, performed military feats which

earned them the highest esteem in the army. The first commander of this battalion, Hunter Pasha, described his soldiers as 'always worth two of any other, in fighting' and to have actually 'taught the Egyptian Army to fight'. These were soldiers who 'gave of their best to the others, and grudged nothing - neither life'.²⁵ Would a colonial power who knew where to get such soldiers, and was capable of getting them, hesitate to secure that source of supply and deny it to other colonial competitors? The acquisition of cheap military manpower must be included among the factors in the occupation of the Sudan by the Anglo-Egyptian governments.

Wingate's memorandum also drew attention to the riches of Bahr al-Ghazal which any occupying foreign power would reap, a confirmation of what Gessi had earlier maintained. The region was described as the 'most fertile province', endowed with many streams, extensive forests and plains where elephants and cattle abound, and an 'exceptionally good' soil producing the important commercial crops of cotton and rubber among other agricultural products. Here a new dimension to the strategic importance of the Southern Sudan was revealed. Whereas diversion of the course of the Nile had been the primary anxiety of Egypt's over-lords in relation to the Sudan as a whole, Wingate knew this concern had little real bearing upon the South. All the major streams which pass through the region from sources in the highlands of central Africa and Congo (Zaire) drain into the great swampy depression of central Upper Nile, known as the sudd region. It would take exceptional engineering ingenuity, certainly at that time, to hold back the discharges of such rivers effectively. He concluded therefore that the would-be possessors of Bahr al-Ghazal 'would not be in a position to deflect the Nile to any extent which would materially affect Egypt'.²⁶ But that did not mean that Bahr al-Ghazal had ceased to be of importance to Egypt. Rather Wingate's memorandum made the region seem much more important, not only to Egypt and by extension to Britain, but as will shortly be seen also to Britain independently from the Egyptian connections.

Bahr al-Ghazal continued to be considered a valuable possession to Egypt, largely because of its economic potential. The memorandum maintained that Bahr al-Ghazal was the most profitable part of the Sudan; without it the acquisition of the rest of the country would be a waste of effort. Its possession was therefore 'absolutely essential'. If a foreign power unconcerned with Egyptian interests were to take charge of 'the vast resources of this great province' which were estimated 'at a much higher value in both men and material than those of any portion of the Nile valley', this would 'render in a large measure valueless the occupation by Egypt of the remainder of the Egyptian Sudan'.²⁷

Behind Wingate's invasion-oriented document, he appeared to have entertained a hope of the Sudan ultimately becoming an exclusively British possession. He was not alone in this regard. The idea was current in the British army, where it was known beforehand that the fall of Khartoum would be followed immediately by the occupation of the Southern Sudan. The objective of this drive southwards was to create 'a colony under the British flag'.²⁸ This was not immediately apparent during the reconquest and while Wingate remained subordinate to Kitchener. But when he became Governor-General his political leanings towards an independent British administration of the Sudan could easily be discerned.

Two instances provide sufficient demonstration. The debate which the Belgian occupation of the Lado Enclave and a portion of Bahr al-Ghazal provoked in 1905 between Khartoum and Cairo forced Wingate to address the issue directly. He subsequently articulated his views about Bahr al-Ghazal during a debate with Cromer, in a language only just short of open confrontation. The two men had diametrically opposed views on the Southern Sudan. Cromer had originally opposed extending the reconquest to the Southern Sudan which he considered as 'large tracts of useless territory which it would be difficult and costly to administer properly'.²⁹ Only the French threat in the Upper Nile changed his mind. Adverse developments in Bahr al-

Ghazal between 1902 and 1905, which included the death of senior British officers by war, accident and natural causes, only revived his original pessimism. After the death of the governor of the Province, W.A. Boulnois and another officer, H.H. Fell, Cromer would have nothing to do with Bahr al-Ghazal again: 'The beastly country is not worth occupying at the cost of more Fells and Boulnois'.³⁰ Thus when the Belgian troops who had preceded the British in occupying the western bank of the Bahr al-Jebel could not easily be persuaded to withdraw from the river stations of Lado and Rejaf by 1905, Cromer considered Bahr al-Ghazal was up for barter. He readily suggested trading it for the Belgian withdrawal from the Lado Enclave through which runs the main source of the Nile, which Britain wished to control in line with their overall regional strategy. Like Wingate and Slatin, Cromer did not believe that Bahr al-Ghazal was of great significance to the Anglo-Egyptian government as far as Egypt's water security was concerned. Clearly disappointed with the Sudan Government's reluctance to support his suggestion on Bahr al-Ghazal, Cromer told Wingate:

I can't help thinking that all your people miss the real point - they argue that the Bahr al-Ghazal is not a mere marsh - that it is a valuable possession etc. I daresay but the real point to my mind is - how far is its possession necessary in order to secure Egyptian water supply?³¹

The Consul-General was only being diplomatic, it was actually in Wingate that he had the principal opponent of the policy of abandonment of the region. Wingate's original stand on Bahr al-Ghazal had not changed. The region continued to be seen as 'a country capable of much commercial development'³² and its loss could only be accepted under duress, should things go that far. Furthermore, he could not imagine how the Sudan could lose the numerous and warlike people of Bahr al-Ghazal without jeopardising internal security. So, while the fate of the Lado Enclave and Bahr al-Ghazal was being determined in the Anglo-Belgian negotiations, Cairo and

Khartoum stated their respective positions in the hope of influencing the outcome.

Accordingly, Wingate countered Cromer's argument with this plea:

My earnest appeal is that no decision be taken which involves the loss of the country N of the Congo - Nile watershed without the most careful consideration - otherwise I think a step will be taken which will be regretted later. I fully appreciate all the strong points you bring forward and no one feels more strongly than I do the loss of valuable lives - but on the other hand everyone of these men who have been there and who understand the situation will tell you the same thing, viz that for the peace and security of the Sudan the retention of the Bahr al-Ghazal is essential.³³

The Governor-General even assumed a militant attitude by suggesting that instead of negotiating with the Belgians, the British should 'sit tight', refuse arbitration, and see whether anyone would 'force us to accept it'.³⁴ Bent on resistance, Wingate went further to initiate moves towards confrontation with the forces of the Congo Free State. Writing on leave from Scotland in 1905 to the Acting Governor-General, Henry, Wingate instructed the former to alert the governor of Bahr al-Ghazal Province, A. Sutherland to be prepared 'under all the circumstances'.³⁵ Henry himself was told to prepare at his level for a fight over the Bahr al-Ghazal by preparing a detailed defence scheme.³⁶

By taking such an uncompromising attitude on the question of Bahr al-Ghazal, Wingate ably demonstrated that he was not a mere protector of the Egyptian water supply, but an ambitious Briton inspired by the desire to extend the British Empire. He would not have taken that tough stand on the future of the region when the custodian of Egyptian interests, Cromer, was willing to throw it away, unless he believed it had considerable potential. For him, the reconquest was not undertaken only for the single motive of ensuring the Egyptian water supply. There were political, commercial and religious motives to be considered alongside the strategic one.

Besides what he had already said about the special significance of the Sudan to Britain, Wingate later explicitly expressed his political dream regarding the Sudan. He considered the sacrifice of the lives of British officers during the Mahdia and the reconquest, of whom Gordon, Hicks, Stewart and Earle were mentioned in name, to have not been in vain. The defeat of the Khalifa:

... gave us a vast territory in the heart of Africa to administer, and made us responsible for the good government of millions of Sudanese, who ... can in no circumstances be abandoned by us. In spite of Cairo's claims to the contrary, the Sudan is an Empire heritage for our sons - a land which owes us order, security and prosperity.³⁷

Wingate's long-conceived objective of making the Sudan an exclusive British possession was further advanced in 1908 when he made a formal request to the British Government for the separation of the country from Egypt. The Government rejected the proposal, probably because it was opposed by Wingate's immediate superior in Cairo in the person of Gorst, the Consul-General. Gorst may have resisted the proposal on the purely practical ground of the difficulty of altering the Condominium agreement.³⁸ But the Governor-General in his disappointment attributed his failure to Gorst's parochial interests. He claimed to 'fully understand' the Consul-General's mental attitude on the issue, which was that Gorst 'would naturally foresee, in such a separation a possible diminution of his own control'.³⁹ Whatever the reasons the Foreign Office had for rejecting his suggestion, Wingate clearly demonstrated that he had pre-conceived colonial ambitions for the Sudan which he wanted to realise.

The foregoing investigation has established that the *leitmotiv* of the British concern in the Sudan was the desire to get involved in determining its future for the mutual benefit of both the colonising power and the subject peoples. The reconquest was the fulfilment of that ambition. In previous interpretations, the supposed absence of pre-conceived British motives and objectives are held to be part of the explanation

for the late start of development programmes in the Southern Sudan. But in reality such determinants were there in force in the reconquest of the Sudan. It follows that alternative factors must be sought in explaining what confined the Condominium government for so long to holding rather than developing the region's economic resources.

It should be pointed out at this juncture that whatever adverse effects the supposed British lack of interest in the Sudan had on development in the Southern Sudan, the same should apply to the Northern Sudan. In reality the two regions experienced different treatment, hence the present search for causes of economic, educational and administrative disparity between them in the following chapters. An attempt will also be made to find out what happened to those earlier objectives which have been identified here. Meanwhile, the rest of this chapter will draw attention to certain significant parallels in the British occupation of the two Nile Valley countries, Egypt and the Sudan. This analogy will be useful in the analysis of the situation in the Sudan in general, and in the Southern Sudan in particular.

If we were to accept Robinson and Gallagher's argument that the British occupied the Nile Valley countries for the ultimate purpose of safeguarding interests in India, this alone would still not explain satisfactorily the lack of tangible development in the Southern Sudan. Original strategic and security motivations were not incompatible with subsequent policies of social reforms and economic development. Here common characteristics of the British presence in Egypt and the Sudan can be identified. The decision to occupy them was taken unwillingly. Once the occupation had been completed, prompt action was taken by the governments in both countries to improve the condition of the local people as part of the overall strategy to ensure stability. Local power centres were identified early and attempts made to bind them by economic tethers to the colonial power.

Britain occupied Egypt because the Arabi revolution was a potential danger to the sea link with India through the Suez Canal. The Government went in 'protesting' and even after they had suppressed the revolt and installed a reliable Egyptian administration, they were still 'utterly against it'. Furthermore, the government had 'not the smallest intention' of remaining in the country for 'one moment longer than they could help'.⁴⁰ Yet the British stayed on well into almost the second half of the 20th century. The French had ambitions in the area and it would have been unwise for the occupying power to leave the door open. More significantly, it was realised that lasting peace and ability in that strategic location could not be achieved only by superior military power, but by realistically addressing problems of reform and development which triggered disorder. Accordingly the British embarked immediately on reforms. The Egyptian army was reorganised in 1883 with a British General, Sir Evelyn Wood, as its first Sirdar.⁴¹ More important were Cromer's economic reforms. His ambition was 'of leading the Egyptian people from bankruptcy to solvency and then onwards to affluence, from ... Oriental methods ... towards the true civilisation of the West based on the principles of the Christian moral code'.⁴² By 1898 the improved economic condition enabled the Egyptian government to undertake the reconquest of the Sudan in conjunction with the British. Cromer had realised his dream of leading Egypt to solvency. Clearly even though the British went to Egypt for strategic reasons, this preoccupation did not preclude but even stimulated engagement in development programmes.

The British also went to the Sudan unwillingly as is evident from Cromer's opposition and from Salisbury describing the Bahr al-Ghazal in 1898 as 'wretched stuff'.⁴³ After the fall of the Mahdist state, security conditions made withdrawal inappropriate (if it had ever been contemplated). The Mahdists continued resistance through sporadic revolts till 1921. In the Southern Sudan the Belgians had to be watched lest they encroached on the Anglo-Egyptian territory. A state of insecurity

existed in the Sudan-Ethiopian frontier caused principally by the slave trade and inter-tribal raids. To these were added the resistance of some Southern peoples.

As in Egypt, the British began with the intention of implementing a policy of reform and innovations. Improving the social and economic condition of the Sudanese was high on Kitchener's list of priorities.⁴⁴ It is what the Anglo-Egyptian administration did in this regard that is the focus of the current investigation. Kitchener's appeal did interest his subordinates and successors and that is why the existing literature tries to justify the causes of disparity in the dispensation of the limited hand-outs to needy Sudanese.

Notes

1. Kinglake's statement in *Eothen* quoted in Marquess of Zetland, Lord Cromer (London, 1932), p.87.
2. H.S.L. Alford and W.D. Sword, The Egyptian Soudan: Its Loss and Recovery, (London, 1898), p.36.
3. Ibid, p.37.
4. Baker's letters to The Times, October 1888, quoted in Collins, King Leopold, England and the Upper Nile, p.12.
5. Baring to Salisbury, 5 December 1889, quoted in ibid, p.12.
6. Alford and Sword, pp.41-42.
7. Zetland, Cromer, p.232.
8. R. Wingate, Wingate of the Sudan (London, 1955), pp.103-107; G. Warburg, The Sudan Under Wingate (London, 1970), p.1. For detailed information about the internal condition of the Mahdist state the following books were relied on by interested public: J. Ohrwalder, Ten Years Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp, (London, 1892); and R.C. Slatin, Fire and Sword in the Sudan (London, 1896).
9. Gray, A History of the Southern Sudan, p.30.
10. Ibid., pp.167-168.
11. Clarendon to Stanton, 28 February 1866, enclosing Arthington to Russell, 31 January 1866, quoted in ibid., p.169.
12. Ibid.
13. Palgrave to Egerton, 5 June 1868, quoted in ibid., p.170.
14. Ibid.
15. Derby to Baker, 1 November 1874, quoted in ibid., p.174.
16. Anti-Slavery Reporter, August 1885, quoted in ibid., p.194.

17. Kitchener's memorandum on Uganda, September 1892, quoted in Collins, Land Beyond the Rivers, p.174.
18. Slatin was an Austrian who served under Gordon and his successor in the Sudan between 1878 and 1884. He was governor of Dara, Southern Darfur during the years 1879-81, becoming general governor of Darfur between 1881-84. He surrendered to the Mahdists in 1884 and remained with them for eleven years until he escaped in 1895, becoming an intelligence officer under Wingate in Egypt and during the campaign to recapture Khartoum (R. Hill, A Biographical Dictionary of the Sudan London, 1967, pp.339-340).
19. Population estimates for Bahr al-Ghazal fluctuated so much during the period that they cannot be relied on. Marchand, the Commander of the French expedition to Fashoda put the Dinka population alone at five million; the first British administrator of the province, Sparkes in 1902 put it at five hundred thousand (Annual Report for 1902, p.88). In 1923 the population of the entire Sudan was estimated at six million, with Bahr al-Ghazal Province alone estimated at two and half million (H. MacMichael, 'The Sudan: Historical Survey', SAD 403/7/1-66).
20. See Chapter VI for military recruitment policy in Bahr al-Ghazal.
21. Wingate, 'Memorandum on the Bahr al-Ghazal, pp.15-16.
22. Wingate, 'The Sudan Past and Present', undated, but certainly written shortly before the reconquest, as the following part of the paper reveals: '... these again are the men who will have to decide the struggle which will ensue when the advance is made on the Sudan', SAD 225/4/1-95.
23. A good example is the populous India which was controlled, according to Cromer, by a force of which on the average only a fifth were English (Lord Cromer, Ancient and Modern Imperialism, London, 1910, p.36).
24. It appears the publicity which Wingate and other British officers made about Sudan military prowess was taken seriously outside the Sudan. For example, shortly before and during the First World War, the Somali and Uganda colonial authorities requested Sudanese recruits, and the British Government asked Wingate to recruit them to fight in Arabia (Wingate to Wylie, 25 March 1914, SAD189/3/1-130a; Stack to Wingate, 29 September 1915, SAD196/3/281-412; Wingate to Hebert, 6 November 1916, SAD202/2/1-69).
25. Quoted in 1913 by L.K. Smith, Commanding Officer, Egyptian Army, 'Historical Records, 9th Sudanese', SAD 110/11/1-89.
26. Wingate, 'Memorandum on the Bahr al-Ghazal'.

27. Ibid., p.17.
28. Alford and Sword, op. cit. pp.291-292.
29. Cromer to Salisbury, 5 November 1897, quoted in G.N. Sanderson, England, Europe and the Upper Nile 1882-1889, (Edinburgh, 1965), p.1.
30. Cromer to Wingate, 12 July 1905, quoted in Collins, Land Beyond the Rivers, p.124.
31. Quoted in Wingate to Cecil, 6 August 1905 SAD 272/2/1-82.
32. Wingate to Cecil, 25 November 1904, SAD 275/8/1-59.
33. Wingate to Cromer, 22 July 1905, SAD 277/1/1-86. The question of security from the local people also concerned Cromer immediately after the reconquest when the extent of the territory to be included in the reconquered Sudan was being determined. According to Zetland: "Even in the case of territory which we did not wish to occupy ourselves, we had to be careful who were our neighbours. If the French obtained control over the warlike Dinka tribe, Cromer pointed out, they would organise a formidable force which might give infinite trouble' (Zetland, Cromer), p.247.
34. Wingate to Cromer, 22 July 1905, SAD 277/1/1-86.
35. Wingate to Henry, 23 July 1905 Ibid.
36. Wingate to Henry, 30 July 1905, Ibid.
37. Wingate, 'The Romance of the Sudan', undated, but apparently written during the debate over the Bahr al-Ghazal. SAD 219/8/1-5.
38. Gorst might have thought along the lines of a later condominium government official who defended the unity of the Sudan by arguing that the 1899 agreement made the separation of the Northern and Southern Sudan difficult. As Keymer put it: "Britain was not free to take unilateral action and carve up the Sudan even if she had thought it desirable to do so", (R.C. Keymer, 'Britain and Southern Sudan', unpublished, but written in 1965, SAD 722/1/1-39. Yet the British were not bound by the 1899 agreement in their decision to award parts of the Southern Sudan to King Leopold in 1906.
39. Wingate to Clayton, 1 August 1908, SAD 469/1/1-10.
40. Zetland, op. cit. p.87.

41. Alford and Sword, op. cit p.37.
42. Zetland, op.cit. p.89.
43. Sanderson, England, Europe and the Uper Nile, p.1, quoting minute on a report by Gleichen on Bahr al-Ghazal, 20 October 1898.
44. See Appendix I.

Chapter III: Some Inhibiting Factors

The natural and human obstacles enumerated in the Introduction did indeed present considerable challenges to the British in their penetration and administration of the Southern Sudan. However, such difficulties varied from one locality to another, depending largely on the terrain, distance from the base of operation, and knowledge of the different areas and peoples. It was easier, for example, to reach the Shilluk and Dinka of the White Nile and Sobat region than the Lau Nuer farther inland in eastern Upper Nile. Similarly, it needed less effort to befriend the smaller agricultural Fertit tribes in southern-western Bahr al-Ghazal than the cattle-owning Dinka in the swamps of central and northern parts of the region. The resulting different levels of response continued in one form or the other well beyond our period, but government officials of the time were careful not to generalise. A report on Bahr al-Ghazal Province for 1925 declared that:

the state and mentality of the tribes in this province vary between wide extremes. While the cattle-owning tribes are extremely conservative and apt to resent control of any kind, the cultivators living in the forest country are much more amenable. To write in general terms therefore is difficult ...¹

Some of the difficulties presented by the terrain had not been overcome in places like Upper Nile Province even by the late 1920s. In the hand-over notes to his successor, C.A. Willis, the out-going Governor, K.C.P. Struve, warned of transport problems:

There is a tendency in Khartoum, of which you may be aware, to consider that conditions in the Southern provinces are uniform. People joy-ride through ... Mongalla and the more accessible parts of the BOG, and then, without visiting our inland parts, ask why we don't have roads like those provinces, or ... why D.C.s don't travel in cars or why we can only work from December to May ...²

Struve's complaint confirms that the conditions which obtained in one part of the South differed from those existing in other areas of the same region. Our investigation will therefore focus upon how British officials fared under what have generally been seen as the inhibiting factors of ignorance; poor transport and communications; language barriers and shortage of manpower.

(a) *Knowledge of the Area*

Although it has been maintained that Southern Sudan was an unknown region to 'those who were called upon to rule it', this can be contested. Other authorities suggest that opportunities for prior knowledge about the land, its peoples, and problems, were available to British officials through sources they could not have missed. There was a huge 19th century literature on the area, of which some has been cited in the Introduction. As Wingate wrote, 'various geographical expeditions ... greatly extended the knowledge of this dark country'. These included Baker's 'wonderful exploits, adventure and discoveries in the regions of the White Nile' which 'have been over and over again referred to in the numerous works which the strange circumstances connected with Emin Pasha and his deliverance, have given to the world'.³

Moreover the British personnel who occupied the South during the early years were soldiers of the Egyptian army, which had ample information. A map of Africa prepared as early as 1877 for the Egyptian army 'shows a wealth of details in the Upper Nile basin which contrasts sharply with the surrounding blank spaces' of the interior of the continent.⁴ In reality, the region was 'by far the best-explored and best-known region of the African interior', next only to Southern Africa.⁵

Besides, there were other possible sources of information open to officials. One was contact with soldiers of Southern Sudanese origin in the different units of the

Egyptian army. The Handbook for Egypt and the Sudan, published periodically since 1873 was another handy source of information for field officers. The book describes in considerable detail some of the peoples of the region like the Shilluk, Dinka, Nuer, as well as describing many rivers and villages.⁶

What could be doubted, perhaps, would be the quality of knowledge obtained from such sources, and the individual's ability to absorb it. But such a deficiency could be made good by practical knowledge subsequently acquired in the field. The argument that British officials' ignorance about the Southern Sudan militated against the introduction of more constructive methods of administration needs careful qualification, if it can be maintained at all.

(b) *Transport and Communications*

Once the Sudan had been partly occupied, securing the Upper Nile region against other foreign powers put transport and communications on top of the Anglo-Egyptian priorities. It should be reiterated that it was partly, and very significantly, the fear of possible French advance through the Bahr al-Ghazal to establish a foothold on the Nile above Khartoum that had forced the march on Omdurman. The contest for the Upper Nile had by 1898 turned into a race between the British and three other powers: the French, Ethiopians and Belgians. The Anglo-Egyptian army of the reconquest had not completed its task before a new one was imposed. Only a week after Kitchener's victorious entry into Omdurman, disquieting news was received from the Upper Nile region. What the British had feared - the occupation of that part of the Nile valley by another European colonial power - had become a reality.

A Mahdist steamer, the 'Taufikia', returning from the South to report to the Khalifa was captured on 9 September 1898 by the new masters of the Sudan. It was actually the captured crew of the 'Taufikia' who broke the news of the presence of

other Europeans at Fashoda. Kitchener sailed for the South the next day with a large force.⁷ On arrival at Fashoda on 19 September a tense situation developed between the two forces, with Kitchener ostensibly upholding the Egyptian territorial rights, and Major Marchand, the Commander of the French mission refusing to evacuate the area, having fulfilled one of the 1884 Berlin Conference's conditions for the partition of Africa - effective occupation of territory. While the issue was being discussed in Europe by their respective governments, the two forces shared the town of Fashoda. But while the smaller French mission was confined to their camp and the immediate neighbourhood, the stronger Anglo-Egyptian force operated far and wide in the region.

The Fashoda incident was a warning to the British to occupy the Southern Sudan effectively before the French example could be followed by others. Accordingly, Kitchener created on 19 September a new military district of Fashoda with H.W. Jackson as its first military administrator. On 20 September, Kitchener also established Sobat station above Fashoda as a sub-district under the latter.⁸

The occupation of the Shilluk kingdom of Fashoda was preliminary to the ambitious feat of bringing the whole of the Nile Valley under direct control. It was especially ambitious because the geographical limits of the Nile Valley were as yet not precisely determined. The most pressing question facing the Anglo-Egyptian authorities now became: 'What precisely was meant by the geographical term 'the Nile Valley' and where were the boundaries to be drawn?'⁹

The erection of adequate transport and communications were a pre-requisite for control of the Upper Nile region. These had to be attended to first, because only with easy movement of troops and efficient communications with the headquarters could the situation be controlled effectively. The process was initiated in 1899 when the Egyptian Ministry of Public Works, through its British Under-Secretary, Sir William Garstin, released a sum of £10,000 to the Sudan Government for Sudd clearing on the

rivers. Garstin was not interested in the navigation of the rivers *per se*. The Egyptian Government was more concerned with increasing the water supply for Egypt. Many streams branch off from the main river, conveying large volumes of water into the sudd swamps, where some is lost through seepage and evaporation. The Ministry hoped that the Sudd-cutting operations would succeed in sealing off some of the main spill-channels with the ultimate aim of confining the Bahr al-Jebel to one single stream, which would increase the discharge downstream for Egyptian irrigation.¹⁰

Sudd-cutting was entrusted to military teams, assisted by hundreds of Mahdist prisoners. Operations started in December 1899 under Major Peake. By April 1900, a navigable channel had been opened to Gondokoro on the Uganda border.¹¹ Further Sudd-cutting was conducted by Major Matthews between 1901 and early 1902, and by Lieutenant Drury in 1903, to widen the passage.¹² Meanwhile, Lieutenant Fell in charge of sudd-cutting on the Jur river in Bahr al-Ghazal region, made rapid progress and by 1902 the river was navigable to Wau, the main government centre.

The Sudd was indeed a formidable obstacle, but it proved a hurdle that could be overcome easily. With the principal waterways open to navigation, facilitating the rapid penetration of the interior, the Sudan Government was now braced for the race to the borders. But different border areas received different degrees of attention from the administration, with the magnitude of the external threat to the Anglo-Egyptian interests being the determining factor.

1. Sudan-Ethiopian Frontier

Kitchener's two-day visit to Fashoda in 1898 saw the beginning of the British permanent presence in the Sobat valley. The opening of the two government stations of Fashoda and Sobat was followed soon after by reconnaissance of the

area. Two army majors, Maxse and Smith, led boat patrols up the Sobat, Pibor, and Baro rivers between September and December, during which a third government station was established at the old General Gordon's station of Nasser near the Ethiopian border.¹³ Eastern Upper Nile was vital to the Anglo-Egyptian Government in many ways. Ethiopia had of late displayed a strong tendency to expand westwards at the expense of the Sudan. This had to be monitored at close range by regular patrols of the frontier, and by negotiations to arrive at a mutually acceptable settlement of the border. Moreover, it was not lost on the British that Ethiopia had facilitated the abortive French invasion of eastern Upper Nile in 1898, on the incentive that a large portion of the Sobat region was to be her share of the booty should the venture succeed.

In addition, Ethiopian slave traders from the highlands used to descend on border tribes, raiding deep into Sudan territory to prey on the Nuer, Anuak and Bier tribes. Again the problem could only be contained if the borders were clearly defined and agreed. It was 'hoped that when the line has been demarcated there will be a cessation of constant raids across the frontier for slaves'.¹⁴ If those difficulties could be removed, this would enable the realisation of one of the prime movers of British imperial expansion - commercial exploitation.¹⁵

Negotiations to delimit frontiers between the two countries started in 1900. While those negotiations were proceeding, the Sudan Government began preliminary survey work in the border area, in order to obtain the necessary information for the final resolution of the issue. Two survey teams set out. One team under Major Gwynn covered the region from the Blue Nile to Nasser on the Sobat. He went to work on the same project on the Ethiopian side of the border in 1901 with the consent of the Government of Ethiopia.¹⁶ The other

team led by Major Austin commenced its work from Fashoda up the Sobat and Baro rivers to Gore in Ethiopia.¹⁷ The work of demarcation continued after the 1902 boundary agreement between the Sudan and Ethiopia. But due to shortage of manpower to cover the long border of about 800 miles, it was only in 1909 that this task was finally accomplished by Major Gwynn.¹⁸ Nevertheless, a small number of committed army officers had registered another triumph over hostile environment during the first decade of the occupation of the Sudan. They explored, mapped and surveyed swamps and mountainous terrain under tropical humidity, disease and other discomforts caused, for example, by untreated water and insects. Where the Anglo-Egyptian Government had a definite programme to be executed and a sense of urgency, the officials were not deterred by the hostile condition of the land.

2. *The Nile-Congo Divide*

The political situation in the Bahr al-Ghazal region was, perhaps, more serious because of the presence of the French and the Belgians in the neighbourhood. The delay in invading the region until two years later suggests that apart from the problem of the sudd, it was a difficult situation that demanded careful mobilisation of resources. It also appears that the British were not prepared to inflame Anglo-French relations further by moving against French positions in the region 'which they had occupied in some force'¹⁹ while negotiations were in progress. But the Anglo-French treaty of March 1899 minimised the possibility of clashes between the two powers, and it was decided in 1900 to send an army of occupation to Bahr al-Ghazal. The force was commanded by Colonel Sparkes and its mission was: 'to explore and occupy some of the districts lying between the river and the Nile-Congo watershed, included within the Soudan

territories as defined by the Anglo-French Treaty'²⁰ Marchand had reached Fashoda through that region and had therefore 'to be seen off the premises in the Bahr al-Ghazal'.²¹ The occupation was also undertaken 'to frustrate Belgian designs in the region'.²²

Despite transport problems and lack of co-operation from some of the peoples of Bahr al-Ghazal to provide porters, after the troops had embarked from the navigable part of the Bahr al-Ghazal river at Mashra ar-Raqq, Sparkes made rapid progress. Once he reached Wau in January 1901, portage was no longer an acute problem. He was soon welcomed and accorded unreserved support by the Fertit tribes: the Golo, Bongo, Belanda and Kresh. These were the remnants of peoples who survived the slave trade by taking shelter with one or the other of their two powerful neighbours, Dinka and Azande, and who now regarded the Anglo-Egyptian Government as bringing them salvation. They became faithful subjects, serving the government in different capacities. It was from them that regular food supplies were purchased, and carriers and labourers obtained.²³

Within the year the old slave trade centres were occupied: Rumbek, Dem Zubair and Shambe. In June Sparkes was at Tembura, in the Azande country on the Congo-Nile watershed.²⁴ Much of the region had been annexed to the Sudan Government by 1902, with only the loss of two British officers, Scott-Barbour killed by the Agar Dinka and Hunter dying from natural causes. But on the whole, conditions in the region were considered stable enough for the government to transfer Bahr al-Ghazal military district to the civil administration.²⁵

3. Sudan-Uganda Border

The drive to ensure the security of the Nile waters went at a slower pace in the area of the Bahr al-Jebel source. Major Peake's 1900 successful opening of a navigable channel to Gondokoro and Rejaf enabled the government to extend its territorial limits southwards to just a few miles north of the Uganda stations of Gonokoro. Here the station of Mongalla was established 'to observe Congolese activities in the Lado Enclave'.²⁶ Since dislodging the Mahdists from Rejaf in 1897, the Belgians had entrenched themselves on the west bank of the Bahr al-Jebel with their other centre at Lado.

The Belgian occupation of the area was in accordance with the 1894 Anglo-Congolese agreement, under which Britain leased the Lado Enclave and parts of Bahr al-Ghazal region to the Congo Free State for the duration of the reign of King Leopold. But conditions had changed. Britain had accepted the 1894 arrangement mainly to deny the French access to the Nile, but with the total exclusion of the latter from the region following the 1899 agreement, Britain considered this arrangement to be redundant and tried to ignore it. But it became a contentious issue involving protracted negotiations. While diplomacy took its course between London and Brussels, Cairo and Khartoum were not passive onlookers. When in 1905 diplomacy was seen to make little impact on Leopold, Cromer and Wingate initiated economic war on the Nile. They suggested to the British Government the blockading of the Belgian use of the Nile trade route to the Mediterranean which was cheaper than the Congo route to the Atlantic.²⁷ London consented and a ban was accordingly issued on 7 December 1905, authorising the officer commanding at Bor station in the sudd region to stop Belgian steamers and those which traded with them from passing

either northwards or southwards of that point.²⁸ The restriction was lifted in April 1906 when the Belgians became amenable.²⁹

With the Belgian threat provided for in the surveillance stations along the Bahr al-Jebel, no other immediate plans existed for the region south of Mongalla. This was not in the main due to the lack of transport, but arose for the obvious reason that there was extra British security in the Uganda direction, which precluded any immediate danger to the main source of the Nile. A government report for 1901 noted a further reason:

... the boundary between the Southern Sudan provinces and Uganda still remains undefined, but relations with the Nile provinces of that Protectorate are still so comparatively underdeveloped that the settlement of this question does not press.³⁰

4. Connecting the Provinces

By 1906, the Sudan Government had occupied extensive areas of the Southern Sudan. This now necessitated the creation of larger administrative units for the more efficient discharge of duties. The military district of Fashoda to which were added in 1900 the districts of Bor and Mongalla, was upgraded in 1903 to provincial level, becoming Upper Nile Province with Kodok (Fashoda until December 1903) as its headquarters. Under this province were the Shilluk, the White Nile and Sobat Dinka, the Lau, Sobat and Zeraf Nuer, the Bor and Aliab Dinka, a portion of the Bari and Lokoro of Lafon Hills.

The upgrading of Bahr al-Ghazal military district has already been mentioned. Under the province were the Azande, Dinka, Jur and Fertit tribes. Bahr al-Ghazal Province was by far the larger of the two Southern Provinces. It bordered the Congo Free State in the South, French Central Africa in the South-West, Darfur and Kordofan Provinces in the North, and Upper Nile in the East. Transport difficulties partly resulted in some of the inland districts

remaining unattended for a long time: this was true of North-Western districts, and the lands of the Nuer of Eastern district.

A further step was taken in 1906 when a new Province of Mongalla was created out of the two Upper Nile districts of Bor and Mongalla, with the latter as its capital. Only four tribes constituted the new province: the Bari, Aliab, Bor and Lokoro. It appears the separation of these two southernmost stations from Upper Nile Province was dictated by transport difficulty from a headquarters hundreds of miles farther north across the sudd. The river route was not always reliable, given the rapid appearance of new floating vegetation on the middle passage in the sudd swamps. Also, those two stations had the responsibility of representing the Sudan Government in their frequent contacts with the Belgian and Uganda authorities. Raising the status of the posts to that of a province would give local authorities additional powers which reduced delays in government business.

The three Southern Provinces of Upper Nile, Mongalla and Bahr al-Ghazal were connected with one another and with Khartoum by telegraph lines. By 1903 a line had reached Taufikia near the junction of the Sobat and White Nile.³¹ Another line from Wau reached Tonj and Mashra ar-Raqq in 1905,³² and by April 1906, it had reached Rumbek.³³ It was extended to Mvolo in 1907 and crossed the Bahr al-Jebel to Bor where a river cable was laid to Mongalla.³⁴ Bor was connected with Taufikia in 1908.³⁵ With the completion of this system, the Southern Sudan had been brought into direct link with Khartoum. Wingate who was on tour in Mongalla Province in May 1908, when the Wad Habouba uprising occurred in the Gezira, was able 'to keep in touch with the ... uprising throughout'.³⁶

This is not to say that the government was satisfactorily served in the area of transport and communications. Far from it. The telegraph lines were

vulnerable: forest fires consumed poles, others were pulled down by wild animals or the wires were cut by natives for ornaments.³⁷ In those early years the roads were only 'dirt tracks' which were passable during the dry season only.³⁸ Nevertheless in this early phase the progress in transport and communications was remarkable. Steamer transport made at least those tribes along the rivers easily accessible, so if there were benefits denied by poor transport to peoples in the hinterland, they could have been reaped by the Shilluk, some Dinka and Nuer, and the Bari. The government was certainly not so helpless in terms of transport as is sometimes claimed. What could have caused problems were the choice of priorities like those which Matthews, Governor of Upper Nile Province, complained of:

... this tourist service up here is blocking our path of progress. Our moves of people, building material, and supplies are decidedly crippled by the tourist boats being so "exclusive" ... though I try to do all I can for passing voyagers, my conviction that they should not be here only deepens with time.³⁹

To a large extent, lack of proper roads and mechanical transport for government officials and troops was offset by the availability of porters from the local people. To almost every military or police patrol, 'friendlies' were usually attached as porters and drivers of captured cattle. The military patrols were mostly punitive expeditions against recalcitrant or hitherto unpacified peoples. Hence their great attraction to 'friendlies', as the possibility of acquiring a few cattle or grain in reward, or restitution for past grievances against domestic enemies, were too good a temptation to resist. Government-sponsored raids were not incompatible with their then existing practices in inter-tribal conflicts. Examples abound. The Sobat Dinka in 1902 accompanied troops in a raid against the Lau Nuer of prophet Dengkur (Ngundeng).⁴⁰ In the area of Rumbek, government soldiers were attended by so many 'friendlies' in the 1902

patrol against the Agar Dinka that the patrol commander had to send some of them away.⁴¹ The assistance which the Azande chief, Tembura, rendered to the Sudan Government in the Yambio Patrol of 1904-1905, helped determine when to launch the offensive. Boulnois who commanded the force informed Wingate in December 1904 that 'with Tambura's carriers at our disposal, the opportunity was not to be lost in pushing up some of the troops'.⁴²

Even those natives who were not willing to carry loads for government agents were not left alone. The docile ones who had from the outset readily offered their services became over-worked. Some therefore began to complain that if the government did not extend portage to their other compatriots, they would strike.⁴³ Given also a rising demand for more labour which the continuing territorial and administrative expansion necessitated, the government resorted to force. An eye witness reported in 1905 that people were secured by surrounding villages by night and seizing and driving men away.⁴⁴ While the troops hurried from place to place to secure the country, they 'could not afford to wait upon the time-consuming processes of diplomacy and persuasion in dealing with Southern groups inclined to oppose its advance'. Force, or the threat of force, 'was therefore freely used'.⁴⁵

The above examples have shown that although the Sudan Government faced transport difficulties, it was an effective government that did not hesitate to resolve problems, if a remedy was within reach. It became even easier if the solution could be provided by pressure upon the natives. After all, in the words of Collins, the British 'had come to the Upper Nile to conquer, to secure, and to control'.⁴⁶

(c) *The Language Problem*

The assertion that language difficulty hampered British plans for Southern Sudan also requires qualification. Some of the British officers who served in the region during the early years, did have difficulties adjusting from the Arab-Islamic background of Egypt to the new Equatorial African setting. But even if Arabic was their preferred means of communication with the Sudanese, the South was not badly off in this respect. Arabic was spoken in many parts of the Bahr al-Ghazal, Northern Upper Nile and Mongalla, as a legacy of the days of slave trade and the Mahdist raids. The language had spread in Equatoria so rapidly that General Gordon thought Arabic would become 'the language of these countries'.⁴⁷ This process of Arabicisation would increase with subsequent contact with the Anglo-Egyptian soldiers of the Sudanese Battalions.

The British could use Arabic-speaking Southern Sudanese as interpreters. A few examples prove the point. Kitchener's mission to Fashoda in 1898, included Major Ali Jaifun, a Shilluk veteran of the Sudanese Battalion to Mexico in the 1860s.⁴⁸ The many Dinka and Nuer in the army translated for the British when in the Dinka and Nuer areas.⁴⁹ The Fertit population of Western Bahr al-Ghazal was predominantly Muslim. The chiefs with whom the government worked spoke Arabic, and so were many of the local dignitaries, some of whom were ex-Mahdist soldiers who returned to their respective tribes after the fall of the Khalifa.⁵⁰

Some areas had competent local Sudanese or Egyptian officials, the *mamurs*, who resided with the local people, where they were visited occasionally by their direct heads, the British Inspectors from provincial headquarters. With the exception of a few problems like petty corruption,⁵¹ the *mamurs* played a significant role as the point of contact between the British and the tribes. Some *mamurs* learnt the local languages fast, making it easier for the government message to reach the people. A

government report for 1906 described an Egyptian, Ahmed Ragab, who had mastered the Dinka language as 'one of the most useful assets of our Southern administrative machinery',⁵² and so was another non-commissioned officer, Fadl Mullah, whom the Governor of Mongalla, Owen recommended in 1908 to take charge of a district.⁵³

Among the British officers, there were a few quick learners in the local languages. Owen was working on the final version of the Bari grammar in 1905, which was ready by 1908.⁵⁴ Captain Wilson had by 1906 published an English-Dinka vocabulary for official use.⁵⁵ Another officer, O'Sullivan compiled in 1906 Dinka laws and customs, an important contribution to knowledge which attracted scholarly interest in Britain.⁵⁶

Moreover, the Christian missionaries who helped the government in the work of 'civilisation' in the region by teaching Southern Sudanese 'the elements of common sense, good behaviour, and obedience to Government authority'⁵⁷ had little difficulty coping with the 'curse of Babel'. It did not take them long to acquire a working knowledge in one local language or the other. For example, American missionaries had by 1908 started on the Shilluk translation of the Bible with the help of a fluent Arabic-speaking Shilluk woman.⁵⁸ Archdeacon Shaw of the C.M.S. had completed the translation of St. Luke's Gospel into Dinka by 1910.⁵⁹ With the help of the missionaries and government officials, the anthropologist, Dr. Seligman, whom the Sudan Government engaged in 1909 to study some tribes of the Southern Sudan, conducted a successful two-year preliminary survey of the Nilotic tribes.⁶⁰

Although previous interpretations have presented language as a serious hindrance to British administration in the South, the foregoing examples show that it has been accorded too prominent a role. It cannot be accepted that the British soldiers in the region 'were totally ignorant of any local language'.⁶¹ In any case, there was no real demand for a lingua franca in the Southern Sudan during the early period of British rule, for this was a time when the use of force was the mainstay of

the administration. The indigenous peoples 'could detect but little difference between the old Turkish Government, the Dervishes, and the Sudan Government' because 'they all raided'.⁶² It was a time of minimum dialogue.

(d) *British Manpower*

It has also been argued that the limited number and inexperience of British personnel impeded progress in the South, making development in such fields as education seem remote prospects. Sanderson and Sanderson have stated concisely the general academic verdict.

Until the First World War few British officers and officials were available for administrative work; a region the size of a large European country might have perhaps half a dozen. In the early days these administrators were in no way a professional elite; they were simply British officers serving in the Egyptian army and seconded for special duty ... Not all of them were competent, or ... willing administrators ...⁶³

Some of this seems to indicate an unwarranted prejudice against the soldiers. Their administrative incompetence and lack of the qualities of a professional elite are a matter of opinion, and would not be accepted by all. Suffice it to cite a contrary view from a long-serving British soldier whom a countryman described in 1925 as a man 'who knows more about the Soudan and its people than any other living Englishman'.⁶⁴ According to H.W. Jackson

One thing the British Public will never understand: that the East can only be governed by the *personality* of its rulers ... That is why, when at first we rule by young soldiers ... we are so successful. They only try to govern in a patriarchal [*sic*] way, and institute rough and ready justice. The people understand this, and are contented. then [*sic*] comes the inevitable sequence. The civilian succeeds the soldier, and immediately calls for more of what he calls "efficiency", and to obtain this he increases his European staff, and introduces laws and regulations they don't understand, and loathe. At the same time he tells them he is going to

educate them so that they may govern themselves. He tries to educate them, but he never really means to let them govern themselves.⁶⁵

In the light of such differences of opinion on the relative abilities of soldiers and civilians, we should try to avoid making assessment of British successes and failures along lines of professional demarcation. Such judgements should rather be based on policy and individual records. But even if we accept the Sanderson and Sanderson's criticisms they would still not adequately account for the differences in the level and quality of British administration as between Southern and Northern Sudan. Those types of administrator-soldiers were not found in the Southern Sudan alone. An analysis of the list of provincial governors (Appendix II) shows that in terms of quality, place, and duration of assignment, all the Sudanese provinces put up with the problems of 'inexperienced' soldiers at one time or the other. There were only fifteen civilian governors. Moreover, the 'rapid succession of British personnel' was not confined to the Southern Sudan, as the list again shows. If we compare the rate of transfers in and out of the region during the period 1898-1924, with that of three northern provinces, chosen at random but of the same period of establishment, the difference is negligible. Upper Nile and Berber had ten and twelve governors respectively. Bahr al-Ghazal had nine while Kassala had seven. Mongalla had seven and White Nile five. Since the personnel rotated within the provinces, any negative impact due to incompetence of soldiers and lack of continuity in the administration caused by rapid transfers would therefore be condominium-wide rather than regional.

As for the shortage of staff, this was indeed a problem the British had to put up with in their vast possession. But again this was not unique to the Southern Sudan: it was also a problem in the more extensive Northern Sudan. However, the government circumvented this problem by the practice of shifting personnel. The number of men available would fluctuate from region to region according to the needs of the moment. A local situation could result in a sudden increase of manpower, temporarily

intensifying shortages in other areas. This would only last until, say, an emergency had been contained or project accomplished. In the 1904-1905 contest for Bahr al-Ghazal with the Belgians, for example, the government deployed the largest force ever assembled in the South.⁶⁶ Five years later the government mounted the largest military operation since the reconquest against local resistance in Kordofan Province.⁶⁷

Moreover, the British always formed a tiny minority in the rest of British possessions in Africa and the rest of the world, but nevertheless maintained their administrative power and got things done as they wished. The Indian experience cited in Chapter II is a case in point. Their tactics of control over their numerous subjects are best expressed by the following observation by an Azande: '... you put the Egyptians in the front when you conquered the dervishes and you put the ex-dervishes in the front rank when you conquered us and now one or two British rule many hundreds all over the Sudan'.⁶⁸ Besides using collaborators, the British had another powerful ally at all times. They 'were governing the Sudan by 'bluff' ...'⁶⁹

By advancing those arguments, one does not suggest that manpower shortage and the other factors discussed did not have a negative impact on British administration in the Southern Sudan. The intention is to point out that those problems were not unique to the South nor did they effectively arrest government progress in the region. Lack of personnel, due to financial limitation on an administration that relied heavily on Egyptian subvention till 1913, was for example, a factor affecting the acquisition of new territories and their effective occupation. Wingate's ready response to any suggestion of expansion in the region was to delay it till there was enough money. When Owen in 1910 pressed the Central Government to authorise the occupation of the Beir (Murle) country to curb their raids on the tax-paying Bor Dinka, the Governor General firmly objected:

Our policy in the Sudan, which I must insist on being understood by all Governors who, like yourself, have in their Provinces a great deal of non-effectively occupied country, must be never to advance into such unoccupied districts unless you intend to stay there, and in the present case I repeat I am not in a position to effectively occupy the BEIR country. I fully agree with you that sooner or later this must be done, but the time is not yet.⁷⁰

Inadequate finances and manpower similarly restrained Wingate from expanding along the Sudan-Ethiopia frontier, even after the demarcation of the boundary had been completed. Effectively to protect such a long frontier with a small force of only about 1,000 men, was in his opinion 'preposterous'. What he saw as feasible was to leave 'the greater part of the frontier ... to take care of itself', while the government 'trust to its subjects to do the best for themselves'.⁷¹ Yet Wingate found himself moving into the area sooner rather than later.

I was hoping against hope that this extension of our responsibilities in an Easterly direction would have been postponed for some time, but I greatly regret that these Anuak raids have forced our hands and unless we take immediate action we shall be involved in far more difficult and costly operations which would tax our resources severely.⁷²

The Anuak problem was only one of several factors which spurred the government on to a forced march in the Southern Sudan. Wingate had earlier told Gorst on another occasion that 'whether we like it or not we are forced to go on extending the sphere of our effective occupation'.⁷³ What these compelling influences were will be fully identified, and their interaction analysed, in the next two chapters.

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11. Annual Report for 1900, pp.25-26.
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14. Annual Report for 1902, p.91.
15. See Chapter IV.
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31. Annual Report for 1903, p.91.
32. Annual Report for 1905, p.139.
33. Annual Report for 1906, p.127.
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35. Annual Report for 1908, p.65.
36. Wingate to Asser, 14 May 1908, SAD282/5/1-108.
37. Repeated cutting and stealing of telegraph line by the Ayual section of the Twic Dinka partly accounted for the patrol of 1919 against them, SIR no. 297, April 1919.
38. Warburg, The Sudan Under Wingate, p.67.
39. Matthews to Wingate, 3 February, 1904, SAD275/2/1-49.
40. Johnson, Nuer Prophets, p.117.
41. Collins, Land Beyond the Rivers, p.90.
42. Boulnois to Wingate, 23 December 1904, SAD275/9/1-64.
43. Slatin to Wingate, undated, SAD278/3/1-73.
44. Cecil to Wingate, 14 August 1905, SAD277/2/1-82.

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51. In the Aliab uprising of 1919, the *mamur* of the district, through whom the Dinka tried to communicate their grievances to the British Inspector, distorted their version to protect himself because it was him they were accusing. Intel 2/30/250, 'Patrol Against Aliab Dinka'.
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69. Wingate to Asser, 14 May 1908, SAD282/5/1-108.
70. Wingate to Owen, 14 January 1910, SAD290/1/1-163.
71. Wingate, 'Note on the Policy to be Adopted in the Event of the Break up of Abyssinia on the Death of King Menelik', 26 January 1911, SAD300/1/1-133.
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**Chapter IV: Resistance, Domestic Objectives and External Constraints in Eastern
Upper Nile and Western Nuer Land, 1898-1924**

According to Warburg, the Sudan Government during Wingate's era 'had neither the power nor the means to establish its authority in the south'.¹ Until 1912 Wingate would not authorise more expenditure in order to occupy new territory which he believed would yield 'little or no corresponding revenue'.² These statements indicate three further constraints which are supposed to have 'inhibited British Government of the Southern Sudan. These are: tribal resistance, lack of funds and absence of local incentive for the British in the region.

These three subjects are so interwoven that in discussing one it is impossible not to consider matters relating to the others. This is because they together determined the British decision on whether to concentrate or to expand government authority. On the one hand, concentration meant less expenditure, as conquest of new areas would be costly to undertake. On the other hand, additional territory might bring more revenue, more labour for agricultural, transport and military service and more commercial opportunities. The issue of tribal resistance was the key element on which the two other factors hinged. It will therefore be important to clarify the circumstances under which armed resistance occurred, while the magnitude of the problem posed to the Sudan Government needs clarification. To highlight those 'blurred' parts, the subject will be re-examined under the following three broad categories:

(a) **Governors Matthews and Owen on Tribal Policy**

In considering the problem of tribal resistance, the approaches of two governors are especially significant and suggestive. The armed resistance of the Eastern Nuer,

Murle, and Anuak peoples has been much discussed as an element in the relative backwardness of the Southern Sudan. It is maintained that the Nuer were so predetermined against the Anglo-Egyptian Government that they would not listen to its overtures of peace. When a 'peaceful mission', the 'first of a series of unsuccessful attempts to open negotiations', went to contact the Lau Nuer leader, 'prophet' Dengkur in 1902, it was attacked.³ If persistent Nuer resistance from 1913 culminated twenty-two years after the reconquest in 'a full-scale war' which required intervention by the RAF,⁴ the British predicament can easily be appreciated. Yet the situation was not so difficult as has often been supposed.

When the Nuer were first met in 1898 by a government expedition to Nasser, the impression which the British officers carried away was that the people were 'exceedingly shy and primitive ... and by no means friendly to us'. They were said not to have 'shown any other feeling than one of fear and anger at our advent'.⁵ But why would the Nuer be expected to react otherwise to the sudden appearance of foreigners whose intentions were unknown? In any case, the visit was too short and did not cover a wide enough area to have enabled the observers to gauge Nuer feelings correctly. When Nasser was visited by another government mission in 1901 the response was different. On his way to the village of Chief Yowe, H.A. Markham, the leader of the mission, was supplied with guides by the chief of Nasser. On arrival at his destination, Markham found his host had died a few days earlier and it was his brother and successor who met the government envoy. He described the meeting thus: 'I stayed outside his village and sent for him, and he turned up with the whole of his following' after which talks 'touching a great deal on friendly relations' were conducted. After the talks, the new chief was entrusted with government letters, possibly on border problems, to be delivered to the Ethiopian side.⁶

The Nuer had shown that they could co-operate if a channel for peaceful contacts could be established. This did not occur to Major A. Blewitt, the

Commandant of Fashoda District, whose inclination was more to the use of force than to diplomacy to get things done. After his summons to prophet Dengkur, issued in early 1902, had neither brought the Nuer leader to Fashoda nor produced any other reply, Blewitt ordered an attack on the tribe in April. The invaders were not opposed. Prophet Dengkur and his people went into hiding and kept their distance throughout the devastation of his country. The troops meanwhile occupied themselves in burning villages and confiscating cattle, sheep, goats and ivory - all valued at £600 - 'which should more than pay all expenses'.⁷ This was very typical of the system of administration by patrols which, in Sanderson's 'plain language' meant 'punitive expeditions which burned villages, carried off cattle and destroyed crops'.⁸ When the expedition returned to base at the end of April it had not confirmed the security reports - partly supplied by Dinka 'friendlies' and victims of Dengkur's raids in traditional feuds - that a fierce armed confrontation awaited the government.⁹ The troops brought back only an unimpressive picture of the Lau people they had had no chance to talk to.

Yet subsequent reports on the mission to Dengkur included impressions of the Nuer which seem to have been added as a retrospective justification for the invasion. 'They are sunk in barbarism', claimed the report, 'and retain to the full all the inherited customs of their savage ancestors'.¹⁰ It appears there was another consideration in Blewitt's attack on prophet Dengkur. Here was an influential local leader who owed his political authority to his spiritual powers as a prophet. Given that the Sudan Government had not yet completely defeated religious fanaticism in the country, preemptive strikes against signs of religious militancy could justifiably be undertaken any time. *The Times*, *The Daily Mail* and *The Manchester Guardian* of 7 June 1902 carried stories about the military operations in Upper Nile, and all justified the military option on the ground that Dengkur had been posing as a small Khalifa.¹¹ This opinion suggests the existence of a Khalifaphobia in British minds. British officials in

the Southern Sudan had come to equate Nilotic religious leaders known as 'prophets' or 'Kujurs' with the local Islamic religious leaders in Northern Sudan known as 'fikis', whom Wingate described as 'a most shameless set of ... religious teachers who are supposed to be invulnerable, supernaturally endowed and able to work miracles'.¹² In reality the Lau Nuer threat to the Sudan Government at this stage was more an attitude of mind than a practical situation on the ground. This was to be shown by subsequent events.

Blewitt's successor, Major G.E. Matthews, was of a different temperament. Governor Matthews favoured a policy of persuasion and co-operation with tribal leaders to control his subjects, an approach which agreed with Kitchener's policy outlines to provincial authorities. Once in the province, Matthews was able to defuse the tension that had been built up following Blewitt's high-handed tribal policy. To mark his departure from that past, the governor rounded up in 1904 and imprisoned some of the Dinka 'friendlies' whom he discovered to have blown out of proportion the Dengkur's situation.¹³ In fact by the end of 1903, seeing a change in the government policy, the Lau and Zeraf Nuer were willing to submit.¹⁴ Matthews' diplomacy soon produced good results. A delegation of Nuer chiefs went to Khartoum in May 1904 to pledge their support for the Sudan Government. Among the delegation was 'an important Nuer Chief', to use Wingate's language. They met the Governor General who gave them presents before they returned to Upper Nile.¹⁵ Two patrols marching peacefully in the Nuer country in 1905 and 1906 under the respective officers, Wilson and O'Sullivan, were all that Matthews needed to assure himself that his Nuer policy was gaining ground.¹⁶ He followed up these visits in 1907 by himself visiting the Zeraf Nuer leader, 'prophet' Deng Laka (Diu) who, as a token of friendly relations with the government, promised to give the government one ivory of every elephant his people would kill.¹⁷ Relations between Matthews and the Lau Nuer became so close that some circles in far-away Khartoum even misread the

signs to mean that the governor had become a candidate for the seat of 'prophet' Dengkur after the latter had died in 1906.¹⁸

Even the Nuer on the Baro river who paid tribute to Ethiopia were so impressed by what they saw on the Sudan side of the border that they requested to be taken under the control of the Sudan Government. They complained to A.J. Asser, the Adjutant General who was on a visit to the border area in 1909, that they were Sudanese yearning to go home if that could be arranged. One chief was actually ready to move immediately to the Nasser area.¹⁹

Governor Matthews had therefore succeeded in extending the authority of the Anglo-Egyptian Government in Upper Nile without recourse to the use of force. Wingate was a witness to that achievement: as he wrote, 'Matthews has been able to get into touch ... with his Nuers and has been able to argue the question out with them, and got them to suspend ... their raiding'.²⁰ It is worth stressing at this stage that Matthews' eight-year tenure of office in Upper Nile Province was a period of relative peace. And this peace was achieved because the governor refused to use force. He chose to address the minds of the subjects, and those Sudanese he had discussions with were capable of reciprocating. The Sudan Government gained in two respects from Matthews' policies in the province: a Southern province registered for the first time surplus over expenditure,²¹ and security was established. But the peace did not last.

The governor of Mongalla Province which shared a border with Upper Nile Province, took the very opposite view to that of Matthews with regard to maintaining peace among warring tribes. He prescribed a military solution. In defence of his policy of peaceful penetration, Matthews had once told Wingate:

You know my views about these so-called raids. We cannot stop them yet, they must occur over and over again without our knowledge in the wide expanses of unexplored Southern Sudan. But we shall stop them some day if people locally will exercise patience. It may not be in my time or that of my successor, but it will come some day.²²

But Owen did not agree with this approach:

Matthews does not believe in the possibility of Government preventing blood feuds and intertribal fighting. I cannot understand why he takes this view, and cannot and never have found any difficulty in stopping it if taken in time. I am perfectly sure we can stop it as far as the Nuers and Dinkas are concerned without any difficulty, and make both peoples happy and contented.²³

Owen went to Mongalla with a policy of aggressive territorial expansion. It has already been seen that the Governor General had to issue harsh instructions to curb Owen's expansionist tendencies. Owen's policy was to be achieved through extending government protection against local adversaries to loyal government tribes which paid taxes. To be protected were the Bor, Twic, Nyarweng and Ghol Dinka against Beir (Murle) and Nuer raids. Until 1912 the Beir were still outside government control, while the Nuer were in Matthews' province. Owen had already in June 1908 persuaded the Central Government to despatch a military force against the Beir in retribution for their raid on the Bor Dinka. His orders to the officer commanding the Beir Patrol were specific: the tribe 'must be punished and made to feel it; and to realise once for all that they cannot raid another tribe with impunity'.²⁴

For immediate occupation was the Twic, Nyarweng and Ghol country north of the Bor Dinka. These tribes shared borders with the Zeraf and Lau Nuer. Owen wanted to open stations in the area to offer the Dinka protection against Nuer raids. He accordingly pressed the Central Government to allow him to establish a station at Kongor, giving as justification what he saw as a desperate security situation in the area. But the way Owen presented his case did not go down well with the Central Government, for the Civil Secretary, P.R. Phipps, in a letter to Wingate expressed his disapproval:

... Sending an isolated post into a district where he himself was threatened by 800 men and the village he was in was raided the moment he left seems

to show Owen is prepared to take risks I do not think we as a Government can afford.²⁵

Phipps' argument was derived from Owen's June report on his visit to the Twic country, a report which he had evidently inflated in order to force the government to take the line of action he himself had proposed - for the governor's own statements had so 'frightened them at Khartoum' that he had to tell the truth. 'There was nothing in them', [those statements], he assured Wingate, 'except to emphasise the importance of placing a post there at once'.²⁶ If the Central Government had not demanded clarification, Owen's report would have gone into the records as a true situation and influenced decisions accordingly. Some records on which some of the historical judgements being reviewed are based, might have similar origins to Owen's original statements.

Owen was not deflected; rather, he continued to push ahead with his plans. The Kongor post was opened in December 1908 to protect the Dinka from Nuer and Beir raids.²⁷ In April 1909 a second station was opened farther north at Duk Fadiet where provincial boundaries between Mongalla and Upper Nile Provinces had been agreed to follow the frontier between the Dinka and Nuer tribal territories. But in enforcing this segregation, the government entered into conflict with the Nuer who were expected to move out of occupied Dinka land. Some resisted expulsion, culminating in the Lau attack on Duk Fadiet in June 1910 before they were finally moved out of Mongalla Province in 1911 and their leader arrested.²⁸

Owen's active intervention in traditional tribal conflicts escalated the violence. Warfare continued between the Dinka and Nuer; Beir raids on the Bor Dinka became more frequent, striking four times in two years between 1909 and 1910.²⁹ The Gawar and Ghol continued to raid each other, with the warrior sons of Deng Laka, Macar and Wol, being killed in 1914 by Ghol.³⁰ In 1916 the Lau raided deep into the Bor Dinka country to within a few miles of the district headquarters of Bor,³¹ and the

government, unable to control the raids, had to distribute rifles to the Dinka at Kongor and Duk Fadiet to enable them to withstand the Nuer.³²

Owen's methods of administration had far-reaching consequences for the Sudan Government in eastern Upper Nile. His efforts to stabilize tribal relations were doomed to failure from the start. He plunged into quarrels which had roots in the past, taking sides with 'government tribes' against 'other tribes' without prior investigation to ascertain the causes of the conflict. Sanderson and Sanderson's graphic description of the behaviour of British officials in the Southern Sudan in the early years when 'these new 'Turks' made their blundering way through the complex geography of Southern local politics'³³ is not true of Matthews; but it is well-suited to Owen's handling of tribal conflicts. The Government came to be seen as an active third party in the raids and counter raids, sometimes even appearing as the chief protagonist. Those people who thought that the government sided with their enemies did not give up but tried other means to maintain their position. It is this attempt to adjust to the new situation, threats from across the border, and the Sudan Government's special concerns in the region, which combined into a complex situation discussed below.

(b) *Revenue, Security and the Empire*

Eastern Upper Nile had its own special conditions which shaped Sudan Government administration. The region had considerable economic potential. Trade in ivory, coffee and rubber within the area and from across the Ethiopian border could be conducted profitably. Fully aware that uncontrolled commercial activity in such commodities as ivory had in the 19th century developed into the abominable slave trade, the new administration was determined to prevent a relapse into that state. The British were also aware that the same commodities were being coveted by other

European competitors from the Ethiopian side, so they had to devise ways and means of controlling them.

The first significant step was taken in 1902 when the boundary agreement between the Sudan and Ethiopia resulted in the lease of a block of Ethiopian territory rich in such articles of trade, to be used for commercial purposes.³⁴ This was followed in 1903 when ivory and rubber were declared government monopolies in Fashoda and Bahr al-Ghazal Provinces.³⁵ To stop illicit trade, the region was declared a closed area to foreigners except by permission of the Governor General.³⁶ These measures were meant both to ensure stability, and to enable the government to exclude others from exploitation of the resources. However, declaring a monopoly was one thing; enforcing it was another matter. In trying to realise these objectives, the Sudan Government officials found themselves fighting an uphill battle, for other interest groups had preceded them.

It was the Upper Nile Governor, Matthews, who first realised that the Sudan Government was at a great disadvantage. The tribes sold their ivory for cows but the government had no cows: and the tribes would not sell them their cows for money, being Nilotics known for their love of cattle. On the other hand, traders in Ethiopia were able to buy their ivory with cattle, so the Sudanese ivory found its way across the border into Ethiopia, with consequent loss of revenue in taxes. To check this movement, Matthews petitioned the Central Government to authorise importation of cattle for use in the ivory trade.³⁷ He did not have to campaign hard, for the Central Government was equally keen to exploit the economic potential of the region. Their expectations had been raised by early shipment of goods from the commercial enclave of Itang and Gambella, of which one single consignment of coffee caused a sharp drop in coffee sales in Khartoum.³⁸

Wingate had by 1906 made up his mind how best the government could develop trade on the Ethiopian western frontier. A solution was found in the

appointment of commercial agents, some of whom encouraged the opening of markets along the Ethiopian frontier. By 1908 four markets were operational. One official became a travelling inspector in the area, visiting Ethiopian officials through whom he identified areas of better trading opportunities; he also encouraged peaceful interaction among the diverse communities.³⁹ However, those measures did not impress Governor Matthews. As the man on the spot, he knew that Wingate's prescription was not effective enough. Valuable ivory was still being smuggled into Ethiopia by traders in the Nuer and Anuak country and more effective steps were deemed necessary. Again Matthews submitted a proposal to the effect that the Sudanese side of the frontier should be controlled, in order to prevent this exodus of ivory.⁴⁰

It is remarkable how the reluctant imperialist changed into an expansionist, giving one a glimpse of Matthews's priorities in the province. While 'several large districts inhabited by the [Nuer], and hitherto unknown' had just been explored near Matthews' base at Malakal,⁴¹ no steps were at first taken to administer them. In contrast he concerned himself with extending control into the Anuak and Garjak Nuer country hundreds of miles away. Matthews knew what he was there to achieve - not administration *per se*, but administration which should aim to be as far as possible financially self-supporting. So areas and peoples which seemed to offer little material return were left largely on their own for the time being, while administrative effort was concentrated upon those areas that seemed capable of contributing towards the cost of occupation.

After the governor's repeated requests, the border region began to receive more attention from the Central Government. But in order to take appropriate administrative steps, it was deemed necessary to send a fact-finding mission to the area first. Accordingly, Asser made the visit in the summer of 1909. He found that things had gone from bad to worse. Not only was the Sudan Government losing

revenue across the uncontrolled frontier, but rifles were being smuggled into the country, with obvious dire implications for internal security. Asser gathered that after the Sudanese tribes had discovered that the highland Ethiopian cattle did not survive in the Sudan lowlands, they pressed for a change in the medium of exchange. Hence the introduction of rifles. The new currency was very attractive to the local tribes in three respects. Its possession made it easier to hunt elephants and accumulate tusks for trade; it would reinforce their ability to protect their property against predators, and it would enable them to replenish their food supplies by raiding vulnerable neighbours in the interior. The situation persuaded Asser to recommend action that would stop 'this undesirable trade and also ... secure the passage of the Sudan ivory through the Sudan'. To prevent ivory leaving the country through the back door, Asser recommended the stationing of government representatives in the Nuer country at places such as Nasser and Jokau 'to act as traders and buy up the ivory for trading goods'. On the arms issue, so long as the rifles remained confined to the Southern Sudan (where the people were assumed to be incapable of uniting against foreign aggressors), he saw 'no sign of danger' and did not 'anticipate that there will be any'. But any future development of the rifle trade in the Garjak Nuer country towards Northern Sudan (where common Islamic religion and Arab culture might easily produce a 'national' leader against the British), would require special attention. As he put it: 'I should say that the Southern Nuer country is not of great importance, but the other, with its outlet at Melut and towards the North, for a rifle trade is of decided importance'. Thus, to monitor such a development he suggested the stationing of police at strategic loctions.⁴²

Arms trafficking in the region offered an opportunity for the Financial Secretary, E. Bernard, to settle scores with a formidable commercial competitor. An Ethiopian business man, Ydlibi, was established in the area where he made a fortune in ivory, coffee and rubber. His success over his Sudanese counterparts was indicated

by various acts of retaliation. Two are worth citing: Governor Mathews held up a large consignment of rubber belonging to Ydlibi's Ethiopian Trading Company for three months at Gambella, until Asser later authorised its passage through the Sudan. In an apparent boycott, Sudan's steamers used not to call at the Company's station en route.⁴³ Ydlibi's fame or notoriety is further revealed by Asser's statement to Wingate: 'I very much doubt if I can tell you anything about Ydlibi which you do not already know.'⁴⁴ This was the same man associated with the trade of rifles, and Bernard found in Ydlibi's illegal business 'a useful weapon for his destruction'.⁴⁵

Wingate recognised the urgent need for more active government involvement in the region. The negative aspect of the arms trade was felt shortly afterwards in the Sudan. The Anuak had acquired a large number of rifles and were using them against the nominally administered Lau Nuer, who had devastated the Anuak lands in the past. The Anuak arms build-up, estimated at 10,000 by 1911, had even frightened the unadministered Garjak into seeking government protection and accepting to pay tribute. The Anuak raids on the Lau during 1911 and early 1912 took them across a distance of about 250 miles from the Ethiopian border to the neighbourhood of Bahr al-Zeraf, sending the Nuer appealing for government support.⁴⁶ While taking a defensive posture, the Nuer themselves quietly acquired rifles which they later turned on both the Anuak and the Southern Dinka (Ghol, Nyarweng, Twi and Bor).⁴⁷ The government was therefore morally bound to come to the rescue of the Lau, particularly as they paid taxes.

It was not the plight of the Nuer alone that swayed Wingate. He was under strong pressure from the British Government to combat drunkenness among native Sudanese as this state of mind encouraged crimes.⁴⁸ Accordingly an order was issued in 1908 prohibiting the sale and consumption of liquor by Sudanese.⁴⁹ But this produced an illicit trade in alcoholic drinks across the Ethiopian border into eastern Upper Nile. By 1912 it had been confirmed that the Anuak and Nuer had

access to liquor from that source. The plan to increase government presence in the border area was therefore partly to seal off this source of alcoholic infiltration.⁵⁰

More important, perhaps, was what Wingate saw as a 'self-evident political danger'. The seriousness of this concern is borne out by the impatience with which he bothered the Agent and Consul-General, Kitchener, sending him three letters on the same day about the same border situation.⁵¹ Wingate was anxious about a rumoured German encroachment into the Gambella trading district. To minimise any political risk or loss of revenue from such an intrusion, he suggested that Ethiopia be asked to accept the employment of British officers to administer the Anuak country northwards to the Beni Shangul area in Northern Sudan. However, this suggestion was rejected by Kitchener on the ground that it would provoke hostile nationalist reaction in Ethiopia.⁵² It is also possible that Kitchener did not approve the proposal because such a move would expose prematurely the ultimate aim of British policy in Ethiopia, which, as will be seen below, only became clearer from 1913.

All those considerations propelled the Sudan Government to take action along the Sudan-Ethiopian border. Wingate suddenly found sufficient funds to finance two military patrols, of which one, the Beir patrol, had been shelved since 1910 due to lack of funds. In early 1912 military operations were carried out against both Beir and Anuak with the objective of establishing 'without delay a permanent system of control along the Border'.⁵³ The Beir were duly conquered and subsequently administered from the newly established Pibor post on the Pibor river. But in the case of the Anuak no administration followed their defeat, and this needs further explanation. Occupation of the Anuak country might easily be construed by the suspicious Ethiopian Government to be the start of a British occupation of the Kingdom. And complete victory over Akwei, the Anuak leader, and his warriors would have entailed pursuing them across the border into Ethiopia where they had taken refuge, thereby giving substance to Ethiopian suspicion. Kitchener had foreseen

such a likely course of action and in his approval letter sternly warned Wingate against violation of the border:

I would only remark that ... you will be careful to restrict as far as possible your operations to the necessities of the case, and that instructions will be given to avoid any complications with the Abyssinians, and that no infraction of their frontier will be allowed to take place.⁵⁴

Such a warning could be disregarded, with borders being secretly crossed to track down recalcitrant groups, and deny later that violation ever took place. Kitchener, far away in Cairo, would believe it. Nevertheless the order was strictly adhered to, not on its own merits, of course, but in conjunction with other pressures, though Wingate pretended to be in charge of the situation. Unable to take any further action against the Anuak after they had crossed the border, the Governor General turned his failure into a new policy:

I believe that we should pacify the tribe without further fighting. This is naturally the course I should prefer, as we are far too busy and occupied to worry about them so long as arms are not being passed across the border into the Sudan.⁵⁵

In fact, Wingate was not in full control of the situation on the frontier. While the Beir and Anuak patrols were still under way, Kitchener had notified the Sudan Government that henceforth, the cost of military operations in the Sudan would be shared between the Military and the Sudan Government.⁵⁶ Cairo must have judged the condition of the Sudan to be stable enough to justify dropping her from what could have been some sort of open-ended emergency budget. The change was a great blow to Wingate's plans; for he had no money for a costly and long war:

Under the new arrangement ... the tendency will naturally be - in time of financial stringency like the present - to subordinate political to financial considerations - the occupation of the Abyssinian Frontier from Akobo to LAKE RUDOLF and thence to NIMULE is a case in point.⁵⁷

Pressure came also from the business sector. The Sudan commercial agent at Gambella, Walker, complained to Thesiger in Addis Ababa that the operations against the Anuak had adversely affected trade in the area and strongly advised against further military action in the neighbourhood of the trading centre. The Sudan Government was informed and did not insist. 'In view of the serious effect on Gambela trade of further operations against the Anuaks on our side', Wingate told Clayton, 'I am inclined to think that our best plan is now ... to get Thesiger to put on all the diplomatic pressure he can ... to force the stoppage of arms traffic on the frontier'.⁵⁸ Henceforth, Wingate pursued a conciliation policy with the Anuak - a policy of 'letting by-gones be by-gones',⁵⁹ after which the Anuak remained a free people until their great leader Akwei died in 1920.

Despite the abandonment of his programme of effective administration of the eastern Upper Nile due to circumstances beyond his control, the Governor General continued to fight for the Sudan Government in other areas. Wingate had not been an Intelligence officer for nothing. He was soon to prove his worth as a planner. Here was a situation in which an understaffed administration had been suddenly deprived of external financial support, yet was still expected to control so vast a country as the Sudan. Contrary to what the authorities in Cairo might have imagined about the Sudan as an effectively occupied territory, the bulk of the Southern Sudan still remained unoccupied. The situation along the whole length of the Southern Sudan-Ethiopian frontier has already been described. The Dinka of northern and central Bahr al-Ghazal, and the Nuer of the Eastern district were still unadministered. Added to these vast districts were the equally extensive lands east of the Bahr al-Jebel which were soon to join the Southern Sudan from Uganda. As had happened earlier with the now occupied districts, armed patrols were the rule. Under the new financial arrangement the government could do very little to occupy new areas.

Wingate nevertheless found the solution. He had to circumvent Kitchener's decision. As Sirdar of the Egyptian army, the Governor-General could make such departmental changes as he thought appropriate. In tackling the problem before him, Wingate had a precedent to draw upon and did not hesitate to apply it to the situation before him. To the Adjutant General he wrote:

Our policy should be to consider the occupation of the Nuer and Anuak country as a new item of expenditure, very much on the lines on which we arranged for the re-occupation of the Bahr al-Ghazal. You will remember that in that case we made it a purely military occupation and I wish to do the same, if possible, as regards the Nuer and Anuak country, and I think the precedent is a perfectly sound one. Later on, as matters become settled, we will endeavour to administer it like the rest of the Sudan, and in that case it will fall into normal lines, but for the present, and in view of the very unsettled state of the country, I propose to keep it entirely on Military lines and, as such, to endeavour to arrange for it to be an additional military charge.⁶⁰

Having thus justified funding for the Sudan's security needs, Wingate was faced with the challenge of presenting a compelling case for the release of the funds by Cairo. In this matter, he proved an adept. The arms trade in the Garjak Nuer country, north of the Anuak, offered him a rare opportunity to build up his case. It is to be recalled that Asser had earlier hinted at the gravity of the situation in the Sudan, should arms change hands in those Southern areas adjoining Northern Sudan. The Garjak country presented that reality by 1912, and every effort had to be made therefore to prevent a spill over into 'developable' Northern Sudan. The strategy was to report in detail, not without a bit of imagination,⁶¹ the extent of this arms trade, the level of insecurity which that trade had created, and the challenge the Garjak presented to the government.

In early 1913 Wingate had been relieved of the delicate balance he had to maintain between attending to his administrative responsibilities, and ensuring British interests in Ethiopia through a policy of appeasement. The relief came from Addis

Ababa where Thesiger 'strongly recommended that the fear of arousing Abyssinian susceptibilities should no longer be considered a ground for refraining from taking such measures as are necessary for the protection' of Sudan's interest. He further pressed Wingate to take immediate steps, as 'any further delay ... could only be harmful to our prestige in the eyes of the frontier tribes'.⁶² Thesiger's apparent indifference to Ethiopian reaction to any military action by the Sudan Government seems to stem from his foreknowledge of the following British plan, which threatened the very existence of the Ethiopian state. In July, the Foreign Office convened a meeting which Wingate and Clayton, Sudan Agent in Cairo, on the Sudan Government side attended. The subject for discussion was partition of Ethiopia, should the Empire break up as a result of an internal power struggle following the death of the senile King Menelik.⁶³ How committed the Foreign Office was to the idea cannot be ascertained and in any case it does not concern us here. What is important is that the Sudan Government became free to initiate border policies without fear of spoiling British plans in Ethiopia. Incidentally, it was Wingate who advised the July meeting against early intervention, arguing that the Sudan Government was too preoccupied with internal problems to assist in this venture.

With the Ethiopian diversion sealed off and his war efforts supported, the Governor-General turned to the Garjak question in earnest. These were a people not yet administered and the outcome of initial contacts had still to be seen, but already there were moves to subdue them, a policy the Adjutant General did not approve of. 'I have heard a lot of talk of taking on the Garjak sub-tribe', Asser told Wingate, 'but one can't ... expect savages who have never been administered to welcome us suddenly with open arms'.⁶⁴ A logical argument, but Asser should have known that if the powerful were to take into account views and feelings of the weak, there would have been no imperialism. In fact the Garjak did not resist when a patrol was sent

against them towards the end of 1913, after which a post was established.⁶⁵ Yet they continued to be Wingate's principal internal security concern.

By April 1914 the Governor-General felt he had built up a strong enough case to seek approval for 'an effective military occupation of the Garjak country'. His subsequent despatches painted a very grim picture of the security situation in the region. On 5 April, Wingate warned Kitchener that any further delay in the occupation of the Garjak country 'would involve a loss of prestige that would have the gravest effect on the administration of the Nilotic tribesmen of the Southern Sudan'.⁶⁶ The next day the situation was presented so desperately that even the evacuation of the Nuer country could not be discounted:

If some such action as I now suggest ... is not taken ... I think that in all likelihood we may find ourselves in the very unpleasant position of having to abandon the country between the Bahr al Jebel and Bahr al Zeraf and the Abyssian frontier.⁶⁷

Later in the month, Wingate was frantically canvassing for more support to block 'the stream of rifles' which was 'increasing daily'.⁶⁸ Not long afterwards, his compelling presentation won him the approval of the British Government,⁶⁹ and so prevented a repeat of what the Governor General had made to look like another Gordon crisis in the making.

Once approval had been secured, the looming danger of the pre-May period seemed suddenly to have become manageable, giving the Sudan Government respite to discuss plans in a much more relaxed atmosphere. The Council met under Stack, the Civil Secretary, to decide on the next course of action and it recommended taking on the Anuak first instead of the already publicised priority target. Surprisingly, it transpired that Wingate had privately favoured going again for the Anuak and readily endorsed the recommendations while away in Cairo. But as such a sudden reversal

would be embarrassing, it is implied, Wingate decided to stitch the two opposing positions together:

It is very important, however, that if we decide on this line of action, which I may say in my own mind I have practically decided to do, we should make all our preparations as it were for taking on the Garjaks first, as this would put the Anuaks off the scent, and by this means we should only move to Bonjak at the last moment.⁷⁰

With Kitchener's support the Governor-General had earlier applied to the British Government for the use of British air power in the planned military operations against the Garjak.⁷¹ Very little else was heard about the military options until the originally proposed date for the commencement of operations in September had almost passed. It was only then that Wingate tried to reactivate the project, and that was only to give a reason for the delay. His explanation was that no operations could be conducted until it had been ascertained beyond doubt that the Turks would not 'jump off on the German side of the fence'.⁷² That made sense as far as international considerations of the war period were concerned, but it does not explain why what was in fact aimed at the Anuak was being pursued under the cover of action against the Garjak. An explanation of this strategy will be attempted shortly. In any case the World War soon overshadowed Wingate's domestic war efforts and by November the Anuak-Garjak expedition had been postponed.⁷³

The Garjak campaign was eventually carried out in 1920. The Nuer had during the War intensified their raids on their neighbours and by 1918 they had silenced the Anuak.⁷⁴ They then turned against tribes in Sennar Province, carrying away in one raid in November 1918 about 240 Burun women and children, suspected by the government to be for sale as slaves in Ethiopia in order to acquire more rifles.⁷⁵ It therefore became an urgent problem to be attended to by the Sudan Government, mindful of repercussions of such activities on the security situation in Northern Sudan. But the subsequent operations, in which the RAF bombed villages and cattle

camps,⁷⁶ were more a sheer show of technological superiority by a victor fresh from a bigger war than a response proportionate to the danger presented by obsolete Ethiopian rifles. Within the year the Garjak had been pacified.

(c) *The Western Nuer Resistance 1922-1924*

The Nuer tribes on the west bank of the Bar al-Jebel received their first government official as late as 1922. Although it is maintained that this delay occurred because 'they were effectively shielded from British intervention by the belt of Dinka to the west and south of them',⁷⁷ direct contact would still have been possible, if either of them was interested. The Nuer were accessible by river, being found on the banks of the Bahr al-Jebel and Bahr al-Ghazal. Whether they would resist the government or not was not put to a test so the description made about them by a brief visitor in 1917 that they were 'the most truculent natives I have till now come across',⁷⁸ should be treated with caution.

Due to the shortage of British staff and perhaps also because there was no urgent need to occupy an inland area that did not present an immediate security problem to the government, the western Nuer had been left alone. They continued to pursue their economic mode of life - that of raiding for cattle. Such practices were normal in pre-condominium days, but the times had changed. Eventually, in 1915, the Sudan Government's attention was drawn to the area by a series of devastating raids on the administered Dinka of Eastern district of Bahr al-Ghazal Province. As a result of those incidents, sixteen Dinka chiefs threatened to cease paying taxes if the Government did not protect them.⁷⁹ Such raids continued through the War period, and after the War the government decided to end them by occupying and administering the region. The task was entrusted to Captain V.H. Fergusson, the inspector of the adjacent Eastern district in 1922.

Fergusson did not meet initial opposition on entering the new district. It was a 'peaceful penetration',⁸⁰ and for almost two years the situation remained calm. However, those 'cordial' relations came to an end in 1923. Conflict arose from three issues: cattle rustling, tribal authority and Fergusson's agricultural policy. Fergusson insisted on the Nuer returning stolen cattle to their Dinka owners, and to stop raiding others in the future. Such orders proved difficult for some of the Nuer to implement. Resistance followed and he had to enforce compliance. Fergusson introduced a system of administration whereby the district was divided into areas and chiefs appointed for each. But in this direction he was opposed by 'prophets' who would not accept being replaced or controlled, and Fergusson hit them hard. The District Commissioner also introduced cotton growing in order to raise revenue for the district and to introduce the natives to cash economy. The initiative was a good one, but the Nuer could not as yet comprehend its benefits. They resented it because they could not within such a short time relate the new development to their cattle economy. Fergusson's methods of implementing his agricultural policy also provoked ill feeling. He made cotton growing compulsory in areas where it would grow well. Those who failed to comply were fined a calf each and in 1924 one section of the tribe was fined 200 head of cattle,⁸¹ not a loss that could be borne with a lot of patience.

As a result of Fergusson's administrative policy, a strong resistance grew in the district and ultimately claimed his life in 1927. But the situation developed into what it became partly because he was something of a warmonger himself. He was determined 'to discipline' the Nuer,⁸² and made this apparent during the conflict by trying to goad them into a fight. While he considered it 'most regrettable that such a useless community of people should necessitate the government spending money on them in the form of a patrol', Fergusson stage-managed the conflict:

Our objective is to do everything in our power to induce them to fight in force so as to inflict heavy casualties and by so doing break their morals [sic] to such a degree as to make the necessity for future operations unnecessary. To destroy all property ...⁸³

The foregoing pages have provided a basis for making the following observations. First, the argument of 'obstructive' resistance by the Southern Sudanese finds very little support in the Anuak, Beir and Nuer cases. True, there were a few clashes between the government and some Southern Sudanese, but with the exception of the Lau Nuer raid on Duk Fadiet, the tribes fought only on the defensive. The offensive actions were taken by the government, and these were always successful. This was hardly an administration emasculated by local opposition. Secondly, not a single tribal resistance lasted beyond a few months. Moreover, such incidents were small scale, leaving other areas quiet, with other tribes working hand-in-hand with the government. The northern Dinka, Shilluk and Bor Dinka districts are examples of such safe areas. In fact tribal resistance often originated as inter-tribal wars which the government initially joined as a peace maker, but in the process absolute impartiality was difficult to observe because the government generally sided with the weak. All in all, the outbreaks of tribal resistance arose from more or less petty crimes such as cattle rustling and trade in contraband goods, which every established government would normally try to control. But in the case of the Southern Sudan they were made to appear enormous, sometimes by design.

Wingate clearly manipulated the Anuak and Garjak situation to exploit the ignorance and emotions of those far away audiences, in order to maintain the prestige of, and obtain assistance for, the Sudan Government. He had largely to manufacture a military crisis, for instance, in order to impress departments like the War Office, which, for 'some obscure reason ... appears to dislike the Sudan and all that we do there'.⁸⁴ Thus, the locally manageable Anuak situation was blown out of proportion in order to make it possible to tighten control over economic resources in the area, and was only unwillingly suspended when the policy conflicted with higher British

interests in Ethiopia. Likewise, the Garjak situation was projected prominently at a particular time in order to ensure the retention of the Sudan Government on the Egyptian list for financial assistance. In a clear attempt to let Cairo and London feel the pain where it hurt most in the Sudan, Wingate drew Kitchener's attention to the fact that the arms danger he was talking about had already reached Northern Sudan's door steps. Armed natives on the White Nile were reported to have just attacked a *mamur* and his police from the White Nile Province, killing a sergeant.⁸⁵ Such a development towards the country of potential Muslim 'fanatics' would be carefully noted in Cairo and London. Once funding for military purposes had been guaranteed, the Garjak threat became priority number two, after that of the Anuak in whose country the economic war had already started.

The western Nuer armed resistance arose where a British 'medal hunter' manipulated the security situation under his charge in order to advance his career. Military victories offered the best chance of progress open to a Political Service official whom his seniors knew to have 'managed to get through life without passing any examinations'.⁸⁶

Thirdly, the evidence presented has partially challenged the umbrella contention that the British had no interest in the Southern Sudan except as an outpost for safeguarding Egyptian interests. The activities on the Ethiopian border were in part attempts to realise those commercial interests in the region, which had been conceived before the reconquest and confirmed by early experiences on the ground.

Fourthly and finally, in the slow penetration and occupation of the South, a new hindrance which has hitherto eluded identification has been revealed. External considerations continued to influence Sudan Government actions in the region long after the international threat to the Nile waters had ceased to exist. What to do and when to do it came to be determined more by concerns beyond the Sudan border than by internal constraints.



Notes

1. Warburg, The Sudan Under Wingate, p.138.
2. Wingate to Bridgman, 26 April 1912, SAD181/1/186-321.
3. El Bashir, 'Confrontation Across the Sudd', p.158; O. Digernes, 'Appearance and Reality in the Southern Sudan: A Study in the British Administration of the Nuer 1900-1930' (Bergen University M.A., 1978), p.32.
4. Sanderson, 'Aspects of Resistance', p.348.
5. SIR no.60, app.56.
6. Markham to Wingate, 29 July 1901, SAD281/7/1-51.
7. SIR no.94, May 1902, quoted in Warburg, The Sudan Under Wingate, p.148.
8. Sanderson, 'Aspects of Resistance', p.351.
9. Johnson, Nuer Prophets, pp.116-119.
10. 'Account of A Trip up the Khor Felus', April 1902, SAD272/5/1-62.
11. Newspaper Cuttings, SAD272/4/1-89.
12. Wingate, 'The Sudan Past and Present'. In the late 1920s the Upper Nile Governor Willis, dealt with Dengkur's son, Gwek, on the same principles. When he was preparing the ground for the launching of a military offensive against the Lau in 1927, Willis justified his planned action by arguing thus: 'The Kujur are comparable to the 'hedge fikis' of the Northern Sudan ... They exploit the superstitions of the people and their position and wealth depend on keeping the people ignorant and frightened of their supposed supernatural powers; and in the nature of things they must be reactionary and opposed to a policy of progress such as the Government purposes' (Willis to Civil Secretary, 6 August 1927, SAD212/11/1-34, Province 'handbook' 1927-1928).
13. Johnson, Nuer Prophets, p.118.
14. Annual Report for 1903, p.102.
15. Wingate to Cromer, 6 May 1904; Wingate to Matthews, 11 May 1904, SAD275/4/1-60.
16. Johnson, Nuer Prophets, pp.25-26, 161.

17. Ibid, p.161.
18. The Inspector General, Slatin Pasha, was glad to hear the news that the Nuer were 'ready to appoint Matthews instead of he old chief Dunkur' [sic], Slatin to Wingate, undated, SAD278/3/1-73.
19. Asser to Wingate, 23 August 1909, SAD288/4/1-126.
20. Wingate to Asser, 2 August 1908, SAD283/3/1-95.
21. Collins, Land Beyond the Rivers, p.236.
22. Matthews to Wingate, 3 February 1904, SAD275/2/1-49.
23. Owen to Wingate, 16 August 1908 SAD283/4/1-95.
24. Owen to Commander of Beir Patrol, 24 May 1908, quoted in Collins, Land Beyond the Rivers, p.194.
25. Phipps to Wingate, 3 July 1908, SAD283/1/1-110.
26. Owen to Wingate, 16 August 1908, SAD283/4/1-95.
27. SIR no 174, January 1909.
28. Johnson, Nuer Prophets, pp.12, 116-167; Mayne to Wingate, 10 June 1910, SAD296/3/1-104.
29. Collins, Land Beyond the Rivers, p.194.
30. Johnson, Nuer Prophets, p.208; NRO/UNP1/44/328 'Upper Nile Annuals 1898-1948'.
31. 'Upper Nile Annuals'.
32. NRO/CivSec.57/2/8, Extracts from Intelligence Reports 1898-1932.
33. Sanderson and Sanderson, Religion, Education and Politics, p.15.
34. Annual Report for 1902, p.91.
35. Sudan Government Gazette, no 47, 1903.
36. Ibid., no. 55, 1903.
37. Matthews to Wingate, 3 February 1904, SAD275/2/1-49.

38. Phipps to Wingate, 29 June 1905, SAD276/6/1-79.
39. Annual Report for 1906, p.119.
40. Asser to Wingate, 23 August 1909, SAD288/4/1-126.
41. Annual Report for 1908, p.74.
42. Asser to Wingate, 23 August 1909, SAD288/4/1-126.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Bernard to Wingate, 19 September 1909, SAD288/6/1-126.
46. Wingate to Kitchener, Despatch no. 113, 7 December 1911, SAD301/6/1-89; Sanderson, 'Aspects of Resistance', p.358.
47. Sanderson, 'Aspects of Resistance', pp.358-359.
48. Warburg, The Sudan Under Wingate, p.141.
49. Sudan Government Gazette, no.129, 1908.
50. Wingate to Bridgman, 26 April 1912, SAD181/1/186-321; Warburg, The Sudan Under Wingate, p.141.
51. Wingate to Kitchener, 7 December 1911; Despatches nos. 113 and 114, same date, SAD301/6/1-89.
52. Kitchener to Wingate, 14 December 1911, SAD301/6/1-89.
53. Wingate to Kitchener, 7 December 1911, Despatch no. 113.
54. Kitchener to Wingate, 14 December 1911.
55. Wingate to Russell, 4 August 1912, SAD182/2/1-152.
56. Palmer to Wingate, 30 March 1912, SAD180/3/1-179.
57. Wingate to Kitchener, 7 April 1912, SAD181/1/1-68.
58. Wingate to Clayton, 22 August 1912, SAD/122/3/1-37.
59. Wingate to Thesiger, 25 September 1912, Ibid.

60. Wingate to Asser, 31 August 1912, SAD182/2/153-301.
61. See below.
62. Thesiger to Wingate, 28 May 1913, SAD122/4/1-101.
63. 'Notes of a meeting held at the Foreign Office', 2 July 1913, Ibid.
64. Asser to Wingate, 15 August 1912, SAD187/2/109-216.
65. Clayton to Wingate, 10 November 1913, SAD188/2/1-207.
66. Wingate to Kitchener, 5 April 1914, SAD190/1/1-71.
67. Wingate to Kitchener, 6 April 1914, Ibid.
68. Wingate to Thesiger, 23 April 1914, SAD190/1/72-195.
69. Wingate to Doughty Wylie, 10 May 1914, SAD157/5/1-68.
70. Wingate to Stack, 8 June 1914, SAD157/6/1-50.
71. Wingate to Drake, 3 June 1914, SAD157/6/1-50.
72. Wingate to Woodward, 20 September 1914, SAD191/3/1-111.
73. Wingate to Doughty Wylie, 25 November 1914, SAD192/2/1-248.
74. Sanderson 'Aspects of Resistance', p.359.
75. A.S. Cudsi, 'Sudanese Resistance to British Rule 1900-1920' (Khartoum University M.Sc., 1969), pp.182-183.
76. Ibid., pp.183-187.
77. Sanderson, 'Aspects of Resistance', p.359.
78. O. Bentley's report on the western Nuer, 29 October 1917, quoted in Ibid.
79. Collins, Land Beyond the Rivers, p.191.
80. Willis, to CivSec. 6 August 1927, SAD212/11/1-34
81. R.O. Collins, Shadows in the Grass: Britain in the Southern Sudan, 1918-1956 (Yale, 1983), pp.131-132; Digernes, 'Appearance and Reality', pp.72-73, 75; Willis's statement quoted in SAD212/13/1-59.

82. Quoted in Collins, Shadows in the Grass, p.132.
83. Fergusson's report on 'Nuer Patrol no 107', 6 December 1924, NRO/Intel 2/27/217, Bahr al Ghazal, Patrol no 107 - Nuong Nuer, 1923-24.
84. Wingate to Asser, 15 June 1912, SAD181/3/1-159.
85. Wingate to Kitchener, 6 April 1914. SAD190/1/1-71.
86. M. Duincow, 'Initiation', a report on the hanging of the murderer of Fergusson, SAD212/16/1-8.

**Chapter V: Resistance; The Azande, Fertit, Dinka and the Inheritance from
Uganda, 1900-1924**

This chapter will consider the resistance of the Azande, Fertit and Dinka peoples, and the problems faced by the Sudan Government in the integration of the territory acquired from Uganda Protectorate in the 1914 boundary adjustment. It will assess the effect of these matters upon the British administration in the Southern Sudan.

(a) The Azande Resistance, 1903-1905

The strategic importance of the Zande land to the Anglo-Egyptian Government has already been emphasised. The Khartoum government gave clear directives on how the territory should be acquired. Considering its slender resources and the huge demand that a campaign of military conquest would impose upon its budget, Sparkes was instructed not to use force but to secure the submission of the tribe by peaceful means.¹ The important questions are: to what extent did officers in the field follow these instructions, and how did the Azande respond to their actions?

In accordance with his orders, as soon as Sparkes arrived at Wau in January 1901 he sent out letters of friendship to the different Azande chiefs. Sultan Tembura responded four months later by sending a peace delegation to him in May, after which Sparkes returned the visit in June accompanied by just a small escort of two officers and twenty-five troops. The size of the escort clearly indicated that no use of force was contemplated. Tembura impressed his guests with a display of his 4,000 strong army, of whom one thousand were armed with rifles.²

Yet despite his seemingly unassailable military strength, Tembura was vulnerable. He had a formidable foe in Sultan Yambio, a rival Azande leader further

south. Since the 1870s, Tembura had been keeping his domestic rivals at bay by allying with one foreign power or the other. He allied with Gessi to expel Arab slave traders from his country, after which he was rewarded with rifles to consolidate his position against Yambio and other Azande leaders like Ndoruma and Gedi. When the French passed through his territory on their way to Fashoda in 1897, he signed a treaty of friendship and co-operation with Marchand after which a French station was established near his headquarters, and he was given rifles, ammunition and military instructors.³ The arrival of the British in Bahr al-Ghazal gave Tembura another chance to forestall his enemies by befriending these powerful newcomers who had ejected the French.

Tembura's overtures were handsomely rewarded. A military pact was soon concluded between him and Sparkes, putting his country under the protection of the Sudan Government and promising 'all assistance for maintaining the integrity of his country against aggression or occupation by any party'.⁴ From Sparkes' perspective, the policy of peaceful penetration had worked in one part of the Zande land, and he could feel satisfied with having successfully carried out the first stage of his assignment.

The response from Sultan Yambio was not as cordial and prompt as Tembura's. The message had reached him, but the reply was longer in coming back. The delay seemed to have been caused by domestic problems: he was preoccupied with a Belgian intrusion into his domain.⁵ When the Sultan's envoy at last arrived at Wau in July 1902, he conveyed Yambio's acceptance of British overlordship and Sparkes reciprocated by despatching Captain Armstrong to his village in February 1903. Unfortunately, Armstrong was killed by an elephant on the way and his small escort of only twenty soldiers was forced to retreat after being harassed by the forces of one of Yambio's autonomous sons, Mangi.⁶

Nevertheless the small size of the patrol again suggests that the Sudan Government representatives in Bahr al-Ghazal did not expect confrontation with Yambio, who had given sufficient assurances of friendship and co-operation. Even Wingate in distant Khartoum knew that Armstrong party was organised 'more on the lines of an embassy than of a force to meet and overcome difficulties'.⁷ Despite his delayed reply, it would appear that Yambio was positively inclined; but that others sought to sour relations between him and the Sudan Government. The chief culprit was Sultan Tembura who believed he had much to lose by close relations between the two. He had become the de facto government adviser on Azande affairs since Sparkes instructed him 'to keep me fully posted in it all' ⁸ and he used that opportunity effectively to protect his monopoly of being the only protégé, as will become clear.

The Belgian encroachment into the region had by 1903 become such a serious issue that all the British authorities - Khartoum, Cairo and London - reacted strongly by sanctioning the immediate occupation of the remaining Azande land on the Congo-Nile divide. By October 1903 Belgian troops had appeared in Rumbek district towards the Bahr al-Jebel, while Captain Lemaire established a post at Muolo on the district's common border with Mangi's territory.⁹ This development had to be arrested by a more rapid and effective occupation, so Wingate initiated the move by requesting Cairo's authorisation of a force for the mission. With Cromer's consent, in early 1904 the Yambio Patrol, commanded by Major P. Wood, set out to annex the country of Sultan Yambio. However, the patrol did not reach its destination because complications developed on the way. Apparently Wood felt slighted by Rikita, another of Yambio's son in charge of a frontier district. On his way to Rikita's village, he was met by the chief's messengers who conveyed their master's greetings and a gift of ivory. Wood rejected both the gift and the greetings on the grounds that the ivory was of poor quality and the delegation was only of common Azande instead of the

Avongara royal clan. As a result, the British forces' passage was barred, and clashes occurred during which several people were killed on both sides.¹⁰

Tembura's influence can be detected in the behaviour of both Wood's patrol, and the earlier one of Armstrong. Both seemed almost designed to provoke hostilities. Armstrong had been instructed not to extend a promise of Government protection to Yambio.¹¹ Yet such protection was freely and readily given to Tembura himself in 1901. Wood's actions en route to Rikita's village also suggest malicious advice from Tembura's agents. A foreigner like Wood who had never been to the Zande land before, would not distinguish common Azande from the royal clan.

It was in Tembura's interests to provoke a confrontation between Yambio and the British. After the second attempt to reach Yambio failed, Tembura began to agitate for military action against his rival: 'To go to Yambio must be for fighting him and if you are determined to do so, please let me know as we all shall be with you like slaves and know his ways'. His ultimate objectives were very clear: 'When Yambio is dead I shall be a much bigger man, for numbers of people will come to me'.¹² The British found they had to speed up the invasion of Yambio's country if they were to 'maintain T's ... confidence in us'.¹³ Henceforth, the campaign against Yambio had the dual objective: colonial territorial acquisition on the one hand, and advancement of Tembura's struggle for supremacy among the Avongara contenders on the other.

Realisation of those objectives by the British-Tembura alliance turned out to be a remarkably easy task. The invasion of Yambio's country was preceded by elaborate preparations: road clearing, bridge construction, food and transport provision, after which the final offensive was launched in late December 1904. The advance was not opposed, and Yambio's capital, Bilikiwi, was reached on 8 February.

While the Anglo-Egyptian forces advanced, Yambio was also engaged in fierce fighting to keep the Belgians out of his territory. He was defeated by the Belgians at the battle of Mayawa on the Nile-Congo watershed and, realising that he could not

stand another defeat without destroying his country, Yambio sent his son, Prince Gangura, to the British to reiterate his earlier pledge of loyalty. On arrival at the British camp, Gangura was met with the most unexpected reception. He was seized soon after conveying his message, a cord was placed around his neck, and he was ordered to reveal his father's location. But Yambio had scented the danger early, for he escaped from his house before the invading troops closed in on the town. When the troops arrived with Gangura on 8 February, only Yambio's guards were at the house. Some of these guards protested at the way the prince was being treated, but this was soon brought to an end when the commanding officer, Fell, gave orders to fire on them. Two sentries were killed and the rest either fled or surrendered. The troops then spread through the town looking for the fugitive Sultan, who was easily located hiding in a nearby bush on 9 February and fatally shot while resisting single-handedly.¹⁴

It is therefore difficult to accept the assertion that in the final stages of the occupation of his country, Yambio 'accelerated ... hostilities and skirmishes'.¹⁵ He tried to preserve the independence of his country, but he also knew when the game was up. Young army officers who had looked forward to a good fight with the 'cannibals',¹⁶ were left disappointed and still spoiling for a fight. Four months later, Major A. Sutherland, a senior officer in the expedition, remained bitter that the sudden demise of Sultan Yambio had deprived the troops of an opportunity to impress potential resisters with Government military superiority:

It is most unfortunate that the Belgians came and fought the Niam Niams¹⁷ ... If we could have given the Niam Niams a good beating it would have made an excellent impression on the Dinkas who cannot understand our going down there with a large force and coming back without a single slave.¹⁸

The Yambio situation constituted a small security problem to the government, but it was made to seem explosive by the attitudes and actions of such people like Major

B.C. Carter, an officer known to have had 'too dangerous an eye to be on his own in such circumstances'.¹⁹ While admitting that his 'capturing Yambio was debited against [him] as mere bloodthirstiness', Carter was unrepentant. He wanted tougher measures taken to ensure the security of the occupying force, for he feared 'being shot 300 odd miles from a doctor or a steamer'.²⁰ Accordingly, Carter applied to the Civil Secretary for more powers to deal with the Azande:

The Americans, you will remember, found that the only good Indian was a dead one. We need not go so far as that but I may say plainly that unless the British Officer engaged on the spot are given a reasonable free hand in such matters, it is worse than useless beginning anything.²¹

'Please let me know your views', Carter pleaded, adding rather defiantly that he would not 'care to take any steps without orders'.²² A few days later, a Zande man was shot dead and Carter informed Wau on 11 May that the man would have speared a soldier if he had not been pre-empted.²³ Carter's request was rejected.²⁴

Once Yambio had been killed, the establishment of government authority in the new territory was effected with only a few problems, most of which emanated from government policies and actions. The Anglo-Egyptian Government became active in two areas: liberation of Yambio's 'slaves' and reorganisation of administration. Repugnant and repressive as the means initially employed by the Avongara royal clan to create their states appeared to the British, they were accepted by the Azande themselves. Tembura imposed himself over a population that was predominantly non-Azande: his subjects were mostly the vassal Belanda, Bongo and Ndogo tribes, but they had become an integral part of the new Azande nation with whom Sparkes and his successors made agreements. The eastern Azande state ruled by Mangi was even more non-Azande in composition. 'Most of the people in Magi's districts are slaves', Boulnois reported, 'and in some cases one Niam Niam Zande was in charge of a whole village of slaves'.²⁵ These 'slave' tribes - Avonkaya, Mundu, Baka and Makaraka - were, nevertheless, settled quietly under their Azande overlords. But in

the subsequent British drive to break the power of the Avongara rulers, the subject people were encouraged to rebel against their chiefs with promises of government protection.²⁶

After the Azande 'imperialists' had been removed or weakened by the 'liberators', chaos set in as the freed 'slaves' turned on their fallen masters. And with little feeling of remorse, Governor Boulnois felt 'inclined to leave them to settle their differences' as long as the 'revolt of the slaves ... reduced the power of Mangi and the Zandehs under him'.²⁷ Here, as in other parts of the Southern Sudan in the early years of the British occupation, 'the activities of the administration tended to perpetuate violence and even to increase its scale'.²⁸ However, Boulnois eventually found involvement in local struggle unavoidable. The area was still being contested with the Belgians, and should the situation be allowed to degenerate into anarchy, it could be exploited by the other colonial competitor to its own advantage. It therefore became incumbent on the governor to see that they 'all settled quietly without fighting'.²⁹ Sutherland inherited this state of insecurity following his appointment as governor on the death of Boulnois at the end of April. It was because of this concern that Sutherland objected to a suggestion by Carter in 1906 for the troops to be withdrawn from the Yambio territory. Sutherland was 'totally opposed to this' because 'if we return from there after the Belgians do' he argued, 'a state of chaos will ensue in which the strongest men who are those who have been more in contact with the Belgians than with us - will get the upper hand'.³⁰

Administrative arrangements were established after the fall of Sultan Yambio. Three districts of Tembura, Yambio, and Maridi, were created, each with a leading chief. Sultan Tembura retained his position while two Azande commoners, Oku and Yango, were appointed at Yambio and Maridi respectively. But these other two chiefs had to be propped up by the government in the face of serious opposition from the Avongara clan. At one stage Sutherland had to issue a stern warning to the

opposition that 'any interference with Oku will be considered as a declaration of war against the Government'.³¹ But in the end some of the complaints were seen to be genuine, and from time to time changes were made to pacify local pressure groups and to make the chiefs more dependent on the government that appointed and removed them at will.

There were a few continuing problems for the British in Zande land but these were easily-manageable administrative issues. Their resolution did not demand external assistance, but could be settled within the province. There was a great difference between what the literature maintains about the Zande resistance, and what actually happened when the British had occupied the country.

(b) *The Fertit Resistance 1907-1912*

Tribal resistance in the Fertit territory is significant in two respects. Firstly it occurred among peoples who initially had warmly embraced the Anglo-Egyptian Government. What altered those cordial relations could be traced to a breakdown of communication between the ruler and the ruled. There was a much more difficult conflict to resolve than initial disagreement, which could be patched up as the contending parties come to know each other better. Secondly, the situation had the potential for wider political implications of the Northern Sudan type: Islamic militants, relative cultural homogeneity, and a threat from the autonomous Darfur Sultanate not presented by other tribal opposition to the government.

Western Bahr al-Ghazal is inhabited by tribes of the same Fertit group whose initial contacts with the occupation force at Wau have already been mentioned. In this area lived a conglomeration of refugees from the Azande and Fur imperial expansion, free booters known as Mandala, and survivors of the days of slave trade. As the area had been a traditional slave-hunting ground for the Arabs and Fur from

Kordofan and Darfur, and served in the 1870s as the operational base of the notorious Jaali slave trader, Zubeir Pasha, most of the inhabitants became Muslims - at least nominally, for they acquired Arab names and customs. Living in such a state of insecurity, the Fertit welcomed the government as a liberator. They sent a delegation to Khartoum in April 1900 to declare their support for the government.³² When Major Boulnois entered the area in March 1901 and established a post at Dem Zubair, he was invited by two leading chiefs, Naser Andel and Musa Hamid, to open another station at the village of Gossinga. Major D.C.E. Comyn completed the annexation of Western Bahr al-Ghazal (also known as Dar Fertit) in 1904-1905, during which the posts of Kafia Kingi, Raga and Kabuluzer were established.³³

Apparently in line with the general Sudan Government policy of avoiding provocation of Muslims, Comyn and his successor H. Walsh did not appoint new chiefs but - as long as they co-operated - continued to work with the existing ones. However, the vulnerability of these small tribes was so taken for granted that Government officials began to exert more authority and make excessive demands on them. There were many contentious issues in this area. Labour demand was very high and the population was small. Slave trade and illegal firearms traffic across the common border with the French territories had to be contained. Indeed, the two went together: slave raiding encouraged the import of rifles. In the course of time the local people acquired the technology for making rifles,³⁴ a very uncomfortable development which the government would not allow to develop further. Combating such developments could only succeed with the full co-operation of the local leaders.

The anticipated co-operation of the chiefs did not, however, reach the satisfactory level the officials had expected. Either the chiefs did not perform well, or the demands made on them by the officials were too high, or both. Quarrels ensued, culminating in the arrest of: Andel Abdullahi and Murad Ibrahim in 1905 and 1908 respectively for non-co-operation with the government. A third chief, Musa Hamid,

resented what he felt was too much government presence in his area. While the administrative capital of the district was at Dem Zubair, Musa had continued to enjoy some autonomy in his village of Raga. But with the transfer of the administrative centre to Raga in 1906, the situation changed. Musa felt overshadowed and restricted as he came under the direct supervision of the inspector, with the attendant numerous demands on obedient subjects. Tension grew until in 1907 he was accused of having masterminded the murder of a soldier in the town, after which he attempted to flee into the French territory before he was arrested and exiled to Khartoum.³⁵

The chiefs had grounds for complaint against the way some government officials conducted themselves among the natives. The intention could be good - like the liberation of slaves which Comyn attempted - but the discharge of duties could be over-zealous. Of such conduct, Governor Sutherland complained: that 'Comyn is too impulsive and seems to have upset everybody ... He should know better than to go into a Sheikh's harimat himself to hunt for slaves as he did recently'.³⁶ Such actions like violating the privacy of Muslim women was an act little short of insane, for it could lead to physical attacks upon offenders. The inspector could go unharmed but such a blunder could easily be exploited by malcontents, who were numerous in Western Bahr al-Ghazal.

Two of these hostile elements are worth mentioning. There were the Fur claims to the territory based on an old association when parts of the Dar Fertit was a dependency of the Sultanate of Darfur. Sultan Ali Dinar revived this claim after his return from imprisonment at Omdurman in 1898. He even questioned the Anglo-Egyptian Government's right to patrol the region of the copper mines, Hufra at-Nahas. He further endeared himself to the Fertit by protesting to the Sudan Government against mistreatment, and the arrest and deportation of their leaders. As a direct challenge to the Sudan Government, Ali Dinar made his own appointments and confirmations of Fertit chiefs.³⁷

The Ansar refugees in the district also incited people to rebellion against the British. After the defeat of the Khalifa, many Ansar from the Fertit tribes and immigrants of West African origin, returned to the area and continued to oppose the Anglo-Egyptian Government. And according to an authority on the region's history, these Mahdist elements became 'a ready reserve for rebels', making the Muslim dimension 'a unique feature of the Western Districts resistance'.³⁸ This smouldering fire of resistance was set ablaze by what the people saw as overbearing actions of local British officials. The Fertit split into those in favour and those against the government, with the latter crossing into French territory. From there they waged guerrilla warfare against the pro-government Fertit, until the rebel leaders Murad and Andel were killed in action by government troops in 1912.³⁹

Although the forces arrayed against the British posed a considerable security problem in the district, the local government force was equal to the task of maintaining law and order, and to collect taxes. Local interests worked effectively against the emergence of a united Muslim rebel front to oppose the government, which the officials exploited to their advantage. Government officials were careful to limit their quarrels to those immediately implicated in opposition while becoming generous to neutrals and allies. Dismissed chiefs were replaced from within the ruling clan or family,⁴⁰ to narrow opposition. In addition, the small size and mixed composition of the Fertit populations was advantageous to the government. After the 1912 revolt, 'no other leader emerged to unify the peoples of Dar Fertit, and by isolating their petty chiefs, the British successfully kept them powerless and peaceful'.⁴¹

(c) *Dinka Resistance*

Dinka resistance was perhaps the only opposition that exhibited wide regional dimensions and it therefore created more concern to the Sudan Government than the other tribal revolts. Believed by government officials before the reconquest to be 'the most warlike and powerful tribe', with a population estimated at several million, it was feared that the Dinka could raise a revolt that would cost the government much in resources. Such concerns were always at the back of the minds of government officials when dealing with a Dinka situation. Three stages in Dinka resistance can be identified: the stage of localised and assumed resistance; brief attempts to link Dinka dissatisfaction with the government to the urban anti-colonial movement; and budding Dinka 'nationalism'. Each of these stages dictated a distinct response from the government.

The Agar Dinka revolt of 1902 had a significant impact on subsequent British policy towards the whole tribe. It would be an over-simplification, however, to attribute the British image of the tribe to the single incident in which a British officer was killed. This served rather as a confirmation of what they had suspected all along. The initial contacts between Sparkes and the Rek Dinka at Mashra ar-Raqq did not impress the former. There was no jubilant reception accorded to the representatives of a government that had removed the raiding Mahdist rule. They were met instead by 'apathetic and sullenly unco-operative if not openly hostile' on-lookers who in addition refused to supply porters.⁴² To brave all the hardships and hazards of the unknown only to be met on arrival in such a manner was a great disappointment.

British frustration with the Dinka was expressed in the liberal use of derogatory adjectives. Several months before the Agar clashed with the Sudan Government at Rumbek, those Dinka were referred to as 'those treacherous' and 'pigheaded brutes'. It was therefore decided to send an additional force from Wau to Rumbek 'to parade a

bit in front of the Dinkas'.⁴³ The opportunity came soon enough for government forces to demonstrate their undisputed military supremacy.

Scott-Barbour, who was in charge of the district, was killed in January 1902 by one Agar section which had accused the inspector of taking sides in intersectional quarrels involving cattle stealing. The government reacted swiftly and devastatingly. Forces from within Bahr al-Ghazal Province and from Khartoum carried out successful operations against Chief Mayen Mathiang, who led the resistance. Many Dinka were killed including the chief; villages were burnt down and cattle taken. By July the Agar resistance had collapsed.⁴⁴

This Agar revolt of 1902 was to be the only Dinka offensive throughout the first decade of the Anglo-Egyptian rule, yet the Dinka continued to be viewed with suspicion by the government. Other sections of the tribe played helpful roles that would normally have earned praise and enhanced their chances of being accepted as good subjects. The Dinka around Wau responded positively to the government call to supply the town with food. In 1903 for instance, they supplied so much grain that the local authorities decided against importing food from Khartoum.⁴⁵ Their willingness to co-operate was further shown by their supplying bulls to be trained for transport within the province.⁴⁶ The bulls must have been paid for, but considering the near-spiritual attachment the Dinka have for their cattle, this was a significant concession.⁴⁷ When Wingate visited Bahr al-Ghazal in 1904, several Dinka chiefs came from distant regions to meet him at Wau.⁴⁸ Likewise, when a Dinka district in northern Bahr al-Ghazal which had not been visited before was entered at last in 1904, Chief Mayar Amet, who had been assumed to be hostile, 'came into Wau to pay his respects, as fast as he could lay legs to the ground'.⁴⁹

Still, these services and demonstrations of loyalty did not alter government suspicion of the Dinka. They fell short of the level of submission reached by the Fertit tribes around Wau. The Fertit were considered as 'far more useful members of

society than the Dinkas' because the former were 'willing' and could 'be relied on'.⁵⁰

As for the Dinka they were 'the worst', predicted to take a long time 'before they can be improved'.⁵¹ Government officials believed that the Dinka could not be easily

won over:

... the character given to the Agar branch applies equally well to all the Dinkas; they would make fine soldiers, but are not desirable citizens ... They accept the Government as unavoidable evil, but they would far rather be without.⁵²

Faced with such prejudice, it was difficult for the Dinka to placate the government. Thus those chiefs who went to Wau in 1904 to show their support for the government were seen by Governor Boulnois as 'none of any importance'.⁵³ The important ones, if appears, were those whom the governor imagined to be still holding out, even if they did not exist. In another situation, a friendly reception accorded to a government mission in the country-side in 1905 by a leading Agar chief, Wot Tiang (Wol Athian) was largely swept aside by Governor Sutherland's attitude that 'you cannot trust the Dinkas much'.⁵⁴ Dinka reluctance to serve the government in the only area they were believed to be useful in - military service - did not improve their standing either. Government patrols traversed the countryside looking for recruits for the army. Yet, six months of hard effort in 1904 to get men who could fill the 100 to 150 under-establishment of the Sudanese Battalions secured only 45 recruits⁵⁵ When the tribe could not be persuaded to enter military service in large numbers, most likely because military service had in the past been a form of slavery, relations with the government deteriorated further. 'Unless the Dinkas change their attitude considerably', warned Sutherland, 'we shall have to give them a lesson'.⁵⁶

It was under such clouds of mistrust that the penetration of the vast Dinka country was undertaken. Patrols were sent against the Atwot and Rek of Chief Ajaaker between 1907 and 1913. Immediate reasons were insubordination and aggressive acts against government agents. But the more fundamental motive for government action was the removal or intimidation of spiritual leaders like the Atwot

leader, Awo, as the prelude to the establishment of permanent administration in their territories. Both Awo and Ajaaker were suspected by officials to be responsible for the tribes withholding support from the government. Thus after Awo's death during operations in 1907, Wingate believed his disappearance would facilitate a settlement with the Atwot.⁵⁷ However, sporadic revolts continued to occur from time to time in different Dinka areas throughout the War period,⁵⁸ though they were effectively contained as soon as they appeared. Some of the incidents occurred because both sides pre-judged each other. The government presumed those Dinka who remained aloof while following their own way of life to be anti-government, until contact proved otherwise. For their part, the Dinka saw the government at a distance as cattle raiders,⁵⁹ from whom they should keep clear. As tension developed some of the more politically-aware Dinka realised the futility of the localised sectional revolts, and tried to inject new spirit into Dinka resistance. Associated with this move are two names: Mirsal and prophet Arianhdit.

Abd al-Latif Mirsal was a Dinka army officer, commissioned in 1911 as second lieutenant in the 12th Sudanese Battalion. In Wau garrison where he was stationed in 1915, Mirsal observed the struggle between recalcitrant Dinka sections and the government, and thereafter decided to champion his people's cause. According to his own version of events, he had disagreed with his British commander over purely administrative matters. In order to reduce the tension between them, Mirsal applied to an Egyptian deputy commander for a three-day local leave to be spent with his relatives in the Dinka villages. But he over-stayed this leave by three days, and the governor ordered a search for him. Mirsal maintained that he decided of his own free will to return, only to be arrested, chained, and sent to Khartoum.⁶⁰

The Intelligence Department had a different version. According to officials, Mirsal left in August 1915 with seven Dinka chiefs to join Ali Dinar against the Sudan Government.⁶¹ Suspecting, rightly, that Turco-Egyptian anti-British wartime

propaganda had infiltrated the army,⁶² Wingate urged the Adjutant General to exert more efforts in order to remedy the situation. The hunt for Mirsal was accordingly intensified leading in about October to his arrest and subsequently removal to Khartoum.

The circumstances of Mirsal's defection and arrest may never be known for certain, but his later testimony clarifies matters a little. What he said, the manner in which he said it, and the contacts he made while awaiting trial, indicate that Mirsal was indeed a threat to the cohesion of the Sudanese-British alliance which Wingate and his lieutenants had strenuously worked to achieve.

In detention, Mirsal's attitude towards the Sudan Government hardened. He confided to a German prisoner that he was pro-Turkey in the War. To a government official (most probably in disguise) who conversed with him, Mirsal was forthright about his political views: 'My relatives, the Dinkas of Bahr al-Ghazal, are discontented', he declared, 'but unless some movement against the Government is started and is manoeuvred from Khartoum and Omdurman, it will not be of any use'; adding wistfully that the 'German and Turks are victorious, but are still far away'.⁶³

Mirsal's thinking was an indication of his political sophistication. It had become clear to him that traditional Dinka war tactics had proved hopelessly ineffective against modern military technology and the organisational capability of their new masters. Urban dissidents in Khartoum and Omdurman could provide better ideas to make Dinka resistance more effective. The so-called detribalised blacks of Southern origin in urban Omdurman among whom the Dinka preponderated, had also acquired some material means of assistance:

This class has shown itself readier in the past than most others to avail itself of the educational facilities offered since the British occupation, and is, consequently, strongly represented in the lower ranks of officials, military and civilian, and similar capacities in commercial life.⁶⁴

Unfortunately for himself and luckily for the Sudan Government, Mirsal did not get the chance to try his ideas in Omdurman or other urban centres for he was considered to be too dangerous to remain in the country in war time. If the numerous and warlike Dinka were to be introduced to the wider national - perhaps even international - politics that Mirsal intended to preach, Dinka resistance might easily have affected the Arabs and Muslims along their common border, for many of these were secretly sympathetic to their Turkish co-religionists.⁶⁵ Wingate had wanted Mirsal exiled as far away as Malta; but as its prisons were full, he was interned in Cairo and was not to be allowed back in the country until after the War.⁶⁶

It is not known whether Mirsal had been embarked on his mission of Dinka liberation long enough to recruit adherents within the army, nor is there evidence to show that the alleged seven Dinka with whom he associated carried the message further. There is, however, a hint that his dissatisfaction was shared by other Dinka in the province. Fergusson of the Eastern district, (who faced his own Dinka opposition in 1921, narrowly escaping death twice: from being drowned by a rebel chief on one occasion and being clubbed on the head, on the other⁶⁷) believed that the cause of the unrest had roots in the past. He could easily relate 'this infernal anti-Government feeling among the Dinkas' to 'serious trouble concerning one of the native officers' who had served in the province and was at the time in detention in Khartoum.⁶⁸

If Fergusson was right to link his 1921 troubles to earlier discontent, then one of the two interpretations are possible. Either the anonymous native officer was Mirsal, which would suggest that he had managed before his arrest to spread his gospel to a few disciples who continued the political resistance. Or it was a different officer with the same objective as Mirsal, which would show that there was a more widespread Dinka movement seeking liaison between the urban and rural Dinka. In either case, Dinka resistance was a potential threat that had to be dealt with in its infancy, and Wingate and his provincial officials did not take risks.

Concurrently with the efforts to remove Mirsal from the scene, other plans were made to counter-act whatever he might have sown among his people. The problem was thought to be so potentially serious that the relevant decisions were taken at the highest level by: the Governor-General, Civil Secretary and Adjutant General. They appear to have suspected that the Mirsal incident was linked to a rumoured Dinka - Ali Dinar alliance: certainly both had directed attacks against a tribe friendly to the government, the Rizeigat. The Dinka attack had already sent the Rizeigat leader, Madibbo, to the government appealing for intervention to check the incursion⁶⁹ at the same time as Ali Dinar threatened invasion of his lands.⁷⁰ It was decided that a patrol of about six companies should be sent against the Dinka of northern Bahr al-Ghazal, which would also act as 'a veiled threat to Ali Dinar'.⁷¹ But when it came to implementing the decision, the two governors of the relevant provinces had different views. Governor R.V. Savile of Kordofan - whose Arab subjects on the border with Bahr al-Ghazal were not all that dependable - supported military operations against the Dinka in the hope that it would help his rapprochement with Musa Maddibo.⁷² But, Governor R.M. Feilden of Bahr al-Ghazal - whose vast and remote province had been drained of officers by the war - advised against the patrol as it would be 'a most costly undertaking'. Wingate was convinced by Feilden's argument and the Dinka patrol was cancelled.⁷³ It was left to provincial authorities to handle the situation as best they could.

After surveying the situation in his province, Feilden saw the need for frequent contact with, and closer supervision of, the hitherto unadministered Dinka. In this way discontent could be detected early enough to be contained. The likes of Mirsal could not then be concealed among the people, and proximity with the tribe would enable local officials to identify collaborators through whom they could channel policies. So Feilden initiated a policy of peaceful penetration by being the first governor of the province ever to visit the Nyamlel area in April 1916. His physical

presence among the local people and the talks they held with the governor pacified many leaders and their followers, who then expressed willingness to pay their taxes and render other services like cleaning the road. But Feilden did not employ diplomacy at the expense of authority, lest the Dinka took it as a sign of weakness on the part of the government. When one chief whose people refused to clear their portion of the road declined to meet the governor, he was fined twenty bulls.⁷⁴ After this high profile visit to northern Bahr al-Ghazal, local government officials maintained frequent contacts with the Dinka villages. But the creation of new administrative posts in the district was out of the question for the time being, as these would demand additional financial resources and manpower, at a time when 'not a single British soldier' had been added to the garrison in the Sudan since the War began.⁷⁵

As the government grip on the Dinka started to bite with tax collection and the gradual enforcement of labour on roads, resistance was stepped up by die-hards. Their ideal targets were collaborating government chiefs (who facilitated the loss of Dinka independence), rest houses (which resisters believed were used as staging posts for patrols against them), and obstruction of road work (as it brought government officials nearer to the people). Opposition continued to rise in both scale and quantity. It became more widespread through the work of individuals who spread anti-government propaganda from Nyamlel district in northern-western Bahr al-Ghazal through the central region to the Eastern district, Rumbek. Behind this tide of opposition was a minor Malual chief, Bol Yol.

With Bol Yol, chief of Pariath clan, best known by his religious name of Arianhdit, Dinka resistance was carried further. In 1915 Arianhdit is said to have disappeared or - as it was believed by the Dinka - was carried away to a distant country by *Nhialic* (God). Returning to Nyamlel district as a prophet in 1917, Arianhdit announced his divine mission to the Dinka. It was clear and direct: God

had directed him to tell the Dinka to abandon the government and to move from its reach to a land of peace and prosperity.⁷⁶ While sending out agents to spread his message among the Dinka and the neighbouring Jur tribe, and assuring the people of victory as he claimed to turn bullets into water and raise the dead, prophet Arianhdit went to work in earnest to set up a rudimentary alternative government. This he tried to achieve by emulating as best he could certain aspects of the Sudan Government. He chose a site for his headquarters in a region not easily accessible to government agents on the Lol river where he built a large house for meetings with a capacity of between 300 to 400 persons.⁷⁷ As a symbol of authority and test of the people's loyalty to him, Arianhdit introduced his own tax (paid in bulls).⁷⁸ He also made efforts to maintain law and order in the area by suppressing crime and reconciling feuding groups. On petty crime for example, Arianhdit ordered the release of stolen Sudan Government donkeys, and restored property robbed from a Northern Sudanese trader passing through his territory.⁷⁹

Arianhdit's role as a peacemaker between the Twic of Bahr al-Ghazal and Ngok - who were administratively part of the Northern Sudan - deserves comment because it provides strong testimony of his acceptance as Dinka leader. As early as 1914, Chief Akonon, deputy of the Ngok's overall leader, Kuol Arop, combined forces with a Baggara party under Ali Gula and raided the Twic cattle of Chief Bol Chol.⁸⁰ For one reason or another, possibly evasion of the local authorities or resistance to orders, it was only early in 1920 that the provincial authorities of Kordofan compelled Akonon to release Twic cattle. To his great disappointment, the plaintiff discovered that some of the stolen cattle had remained with the defendant. Surprisingly enough, the appeal against this continuing injustice was made not to the Sudan Government but to Arianhdit. The prophet responded by visiting the Ngok country, and securing the release of the rest of the Twic cattle to their owner. While in Kordofan, Arianhdit also settled disputes among different Ngok sections, one of which was a chronic

blood feud which he brought to an end by imposing payment of compensation in cattle.⁸¹

In an ordinary condition of Dinka society, in which there were sharp inter-sectional and clan differences, it would have been unthinkable for a Twic to take his complaint against a Ngok to a Malual chief. Conversely, it would have been presumptuous of such a Malual chief to think that a Ngok would respect his arbitration. But with prophet Arianhdit on the way towards forming a united Dinka nation, some leaders felt obliged to operate above tribal differences.

While Arianhdit campaigned for the unity of the Dinka and to woo away people from the Sudan Government, he was invited several times to visit Wau and Nyamlel for discussions with government officials.⁸² But he declined, and then stopped further requests with the defiant statement: 'My father and my mother did not speak with the English. Why should I?'⁸³ Reporting to Wau or Nyamlel would have implied recognition of the Sudan Government, which Arianhdit was not prepared to accept. As well as being unable to influence the leader, government officials were unable to win over the prophet's agents who visited government centres to argue their case with them. Arianhdit's agents would ask officials to produce convincing reasons why they should expect the Dinka to desert the prophet, who in addition to being a power in his own right, taxed the people less than the government.⁸⁴ Arianhdit's influence continued to grow, to the alarm of Governor M.J. Wheatley:

... his influence has been gradually extending until he now practically rules all the Dinka in the neighbourhood of Nyanlell and only those in the immediate proximity to the post make any pretence of obeying government orders or paying their taxes. The Mamur and police cannot without risk of attack venture very far from the Merkaz.⁸⁵

That situation now demanded a different treatment. To curb Arianhdit's anti-government activities, therefore, the governor decided in early 1922 to subdue him militarily, and a three-pronged patrol was despatched against him in February,

Outmanoeuvred and realising, it appears, that his effective weapons against the Sudan Government had been his tongue and boycott, not spears, Arianhdit surrendered in March, the troops having encountered only feeble resistance from pockets of Arianhdit's die-hards.⁸⁶

Although his struggle to liberate the Dinka seemed to have ended in anti-climax, Arianhdit had organised the only tribal resistance in the South which made government officials feel serious apprehension. While he consolidated his position in northern and central Bahr al-Ghazal, other Dinka leaders, possibly inspired by him,⁸⁷ organised resistance against the British in the eastern part of the province and in adjacent Mongalla Province. Although none came anywhere near Arianhdit's achievement, these outbreaks provide substantial evidence that a general Dinka uprising was contemplated. The different Dinka revolts from 1918 to 1921, reveal an unusual spirit of unity among all the Agar, Atwot, Aliab and the Twic leaders. The Agar and Atwot leaders, Malual Mathiang and Dhieu Alam, whose peoples the government had employed interchangeably as friendlies whenever it was at war with one or the other, were by 1918 willing to bury past differences in order to co-operate against the British outpost at Rumbek.⁸⁸ Even the traditional Dinka enemy, the Nuer, were approached by Malual to shelve their differences and join in the war of liberation against the British.⁸⁹ The Aliab co-ordinated plans with the Bor Dinka for a simultaneous attack on the government towns of Bor and Mingkaman.⁹⁰ Farther north of the Bor, three Twic sections - Ayual, Dachwek and Awulian - contacted the Kongor section to join them in an uprising against the government post at Kongor.⁹¹

Faced by hostile Dinka across a wide front, extending from the border of Southern Darfur to the east bank of the Bahr al Jebel, and hopelessly outnumbered, there was some justification for the nervousness of government officials.⁹² In the event, the few government troops had practically a walk over. It goes without saying that the government's superior military technology and organisation almost alone

made its victory a foregone conclusion. However, the role of local allies cannot be ignored. Confrontation with troops was attempted on a number of occasions, but as in previous clashes, the Dinka were torn between group independence and local considerations. The conflict with the Twic and Aliab is a case in point. The appeal which Chief Bul Kuer of Ayual section made in March 1919 on behalf of the Twic war party, to their numerically strongest member, Kongor section, to join was rejected. Far from consolidating the Dinka front against the Anglo-Egyptian Government, the proposed Twic military strategy divided the people more than ever before. The Kongor rebuff accentuated existing tension created by section rivalries, precipitating in April an Ayual attack on Kongor for being government agents. In retaliation the Kongor joined a government patrol in May during which ten Ayual were killed, villages burnt and cattle confiscated.⁹³

The Kongor were happy with the government, it appears, because the government station which was targeted for destruction was sited in their village and named after their section. As the host, they would have felt bound to protect their guests. Moreover, the presence of government in their midst gave their chief, Aguer Bior, an unofficial paramountcy over the other Twic chiefs: Bul Kuer (Ayual), Lual Deng (Dachwek), Akoi Atem (Adhiok) and Biar Abit (Awulian). Above all, there was the general interest (which the Ayual seemed not to consider) that Kongor post was there in the first place to protect the Twic against Nuer raids. Given the two alternatives, the Kongor would rather cling to those privileges than to enter a war they knew would not be won for some time.

The Aliab uprising of 1919-1920 offers another interplay of 'national' and tribal interests in Dinka society. Administrative malpractices by the *mamur* in their country provided the Aliab with a direct cause to pursue their war of independence. In the planning stages, they were in consultation with the Bor Dinka on the opposite bank of the Bahr al-Jebel. The latter's immediate grievances were not apparent, as they had

been on good terms with the government since the early days of the reconquest. All the same they were involved in anti-government activity that was going on in the Aliab country. Chief Yuot Alier sent a three-man delegation to the Aliab leader, Chief Kon Anok suggesting that both the Aliab and the Bor should co-ordinate their attack. On the agreed date, the Aliab would start by overrunning the smaller Mingkaman station after which the latter would attack Bor town.⁹⁴

As agreed the Aliab executed their part of the deal but the Bor uprising never materialised. Two factors seem to explain their inaction. Stigand's show of force as he passed by Bor in November 1919 on the 'Tamai' enroute to the Twic region might have intimidated them. But considering the close attachment of the Bor Dinka to the government, which the Beir (Murle) raids necessitated, one would be inclined to think that Yuot Alier was momentarily swept along by the liberation appeal before he knew what he was about to jump into. The Aliab could risk a break with the government because they did not have a strong indigenous enemy from whom they needed government protection. The Bor on the other hand could hardly afford to lose the only ally who had protected them against Beir attacks since 1908 in return for a nominal herd tax. Thus, the desertion at the last hour after they have given the other party false hope of support.

Together with the difficulties faced by Arianhdit and other Dinka leaders in Bahr al-Ghazal, the Twic and Bor-Aliab micro-politics have further demonstrated that Dinka local issues were an asset to the Anglo-Egyptian Government. It was the same old plague that had devastated their forebears:

So large are the numbers of the Dinka and so extensive their territory, that it must be expected that they will long perpetuate their existence among the ... inhabitants of Africa. So far as regards their race, their line of life, and their customs, they have the material of national unity; but where they fail is that their tribes not only make war upon each other, but submit to be enlisted as the instruments of treachery by intruders from outside.⁹⁵

Dinka unrest, and especially Arianhdit's initial success acted as an eye-opener to the government which, realising the futility of *laissez-faire* in the interior of the Southern Sudan, took immediate steps to bring the whole region under effective administration. In the region previously controlled by Arianhdit, two new administrative centres were established in 1922 at Gogkrial and Aweil with resident officials. Considered in this context, Dinka resistance accelerated rather than impeded the opening up of the region.

(d) *Integrating the Inheritance from Uganda*

What became the eastern districts of Mongalla Province from 1914 had been a turbulent, largely unadministered, region of Uganda Protectorate. Several proposals by British officials to extend government administration inland to the tribes lying between the Nile, Ethiopia, and British East Africa (Kenya) were rejected by London on account of the enormous cost without prospect of corresponding revenue. Those administrators like Frederick, Johnston and Sadler, who came after the expansionists MacDonald and Sir Harry Johnston, were cautioned by the Foreign Office against further expansion in that direction. For example, Commissioner Sadler was told in 1902 'not ... to push too quickly amongst tribes in outlying districts who have little to offer at the present in the way of commerce, and who have not yet become accustomed to the sojourn of the white men in their midst'.⁹⁶ In addition transport of any goods from this production area would be prohibitively high as not 'a single product that might be grown ... would pay for the cost of its carriage to the seaboard'. By 1906 even an already established station inland like Fatiko had to be abandoned because:

... the further we push our active authority into those wild regions eastwards of the Nile, the more rapidly will our responsibilities grow and we would probably find ourselves, a few years hence, committed to the

proper government of a vast territory reaching to the very borders of Abyssinia, the commercial value of which would never pay for one tithe of the cost of its administration.⁹⁷

Even more discouraging to the British was the task of administering the 'stateless societies' found in the area. The British had found it easy to control most of Uganda through the centralised tribal system existing among the Bantu tribes. These were administered by the officials controlling the local kings, who then passed down government directives to their submissive followers. In contrast, the tribes in Uganda's Nile Province, like many of the tribes across the border in Sudan, lived under many chiefs, and they would not be directed by these chiefs without their consent. In fact the chief was only the first among equals, and his degree of authority over his clan or tribe was largely dependent on his personality. Uganda officials thus found it especially exasperating to administer such peoples who had 'no powerful local authorities through which we might transmit our directions.'⁹⁸ Nevertheless, the Uganda Protectorate authorities continued to penetrate the region slowly and grudgingly until the 1914 boundary adjustment with the Sudan Government offered an opportunity to transfer responsibility for the area to the Sudan Government.

On taking over the new territory, the immediate task for the Sudan Government was to extend control over peoples who had been used to a colonial government that did not seem to have the ability to interfere with their independence. Petty crime, insubordination, inter-tribal conflict, and the presence of firearms brought about an early clash between the two sides. The small mountain tribes, the Latuka, Lokoyia, and Didinga, came within reach of the government for the first time with the establishment in April 1914 of the administrative centre at Torit in the Latuka country about eighty-four miles eastwards from Mongalla. Initial contacts with the Latuka were impressive. Governor Owen during the opening of Torit received their chiefs, of whom Sultan Lokitei (Lohide) arrived in 'a royal procession' with his police in uniform.⁹⁹ Lohide was apparently trying to let the Sudan Government know that he rather than other chiefs was the man to work with in the district. He succeeded to the

extent that a government patrol which he had requested was sent against a rival chief of Calamini village in June 1914. But the co-operation did not last. Lohide insisted on maintaining effective authority over his tribe with the help of the government, and resented being reduced to a government agent. He was apparently opposed to the recruitment of Latuka youth into the Equatorial Battalion of the Sudan army, and eventually was accused of being an accomplice in the desertion of some recruits. His change of attitude was confirmed by his refusal to co-operate in the collection of firearms which the Latuka were getting from Ethiopian traders. Not only did he refuse to disarm the Latuka but Lohide himself withdrew in 1917 to his village of Tirangore, acquired more firearms from Ethiopian traders and openly defied government orders. The government responded by sending a punitive expedition on 1 June 1917 which the Sultan resisted till he died fighting. His death ended active Latuka resistance and his successor, Onyong, co-operated with the government.¹⁰⁰

The Lokoyia through whose country the telegraph line from Mongalla to Torit passed refused to recognise the government and even provoked it by destroying the telegraph line and using the wire for bracelets. Although they are a small population, the Lokoyia presented an obstacle by preventing government mail passing through their mountainous region. After attempts for a year to negotiate a peaceful settlement with the tribe proved a failure, it was decided to subdue them by force of arms. From January 1915 to July 1918 all the difference Loyoyia villages were brought under firm Sudan Government control.¹⁰¹

Further east of the Latuka were the formidable Didinga and Toposa tribes who with the help of firearms from Ethiopia continued to devastate their neighbours. Owen had decided as early as 1915 not to occupy the Didinga country until the government was in a position to administer it effectively.¹⁰² Didinga raids against tribes in both the Sudan and Uganda continued unhampered until 1921 when the powerful Didinga chief Enamoi challenged the Torit District Commissioner, R.B.

Black, to subdue him by force if he could. The Sudan Government was still unprepared to take on the Didinga, but since the tribe was also a threat to Uganda security, the latter was accordingly informed in July 1921 of the difficulty. Fortunately for the Sudan Government, the Uganda Government was now ready to conquer the Didinga, and asked only for assistance in its own operations. This Sir Lee Stack could afford, and accordingly one company of the Equatorial Battalion was despatched to help troops of the King's African Rifles (KAR). By January 1922, the tribe had been subdued. An administrative post was established in February at Nagichot under the Uganda administration until it was handed to the Sudan in 1923.¹⁰³

This survey of tribal resistance has revealed an extremely complex situation, which controverts any general argument that the behaviour of Southern Sudanese tribes created a major obstacle to progressive British administration. While some tribes resisted on their own initiative, others were provoked by actions of British officials. Some of the resistance arose from only minor differences between officials and tribes, but was magnified to justify proposed lines of government policy. In other situations, officials simply assumed that tribes were unfriendly, and harsh decisions were reached upon little, if any, tangible evidence. Where armed confrontation occurred, none of the incidents lasted long enough to hold up government programmes, whenever such existed.

Moreover when we discuss resistance in the Southern Sudan it should not be forgotten that similar conditions faced the British in Northern Sudan. Both resistance against the government and inter-tribal conflicts in which the government became involved dotted the history of the North from 1903 to 1921. There were religious revolts in Kordofan in 1903 of Mohammed el Amin; at Singa in 1904 by Mohammed Wad Adam; and in the Gezira in 1908 by Wad Habouba, while the many Nuba revolts

persisted till 1930.¹⁰⁴ In Kassaa Province Major J.L.J. Conry and three of his men were killed in 1914 by Arab tribesmen.¹⁰⁵ Two British officers were killed at Nyala in 1921 by Arab.¹⁰⁶ Since resistance was not unique to the Southern Sudan, the effects of Sudanese opposition to the British cannot convincingly be used to explain the disparity in the development of Southern and Northern Sudan.

Having considered the constraints upon British rule, certain problems remain. Before such constraints were even experienced, government officials were already making disparaging statements about the Southern Sudan and its people - statements which could not have been based upon what they had learnt in the short time since they had entered the country. Upper Nile region was described in 1899 as an area 'only fit for hippos, mosquitoes and the Nuer to live in'.¹⁰⁷ Why did Wingate think in 1904 that it was not necessary 'to strive at a higher standard for the actual inhabitants of the Bahr al-Ghazal'?¹⁰⁸ On what was the conclusion based in 1902 that it would take a long time before the Dinka 'can be improved'? The ideas or preconceptions which produced these and many similar statements will be the subject of the next two chapters.

Notes

1. Collins, Land Beyond the Rivers, p.82.
2. Ibid., p.85.
3. Ibid., pp.84-85.
4. Ibid., quoted on p.86.
5. Armstrong to Wingate, 3 August 1902, SAD272/6/1-47.
6. Annual Report for 1903, p.98.
7. Reports on the Finances (1905), p.6.
8. Sparkes to Wingate, 7 January 1903, SAD273/1/1-52.
9. Collins, Land Beyond the Rivers, pp.101-102.
10. Ibid., pp.108-110.
11. Ibid., p.100.
12. Bethell's Weekly Report, 3 July 1904, quoted in Ibid., pp.113-114.
13. Boulnois to Wingate, 23 December 1904, SAD275/9/1-64.
14. E.E. Evans Pritchard, The Azande, History and Political Institutions (Oxford, 1971), pp.388-391.
15. El Bashir, 'Confrontation Across the Sudd', p.166.
16. Sparkes believed the local stories created by Azande enemies among the other local tribes and Arabs that the Azande ate people: 'It is strange that such people should be cannibals', he lamented, 'but that the practice exists among them is beyond doubt'. Quoted in Annual Report for 1902, p.32.
17. Niam Niam or Nyam Nyam was the nickname given to the Azande by others to mean cannibal.
18. Sutherland to Wingate, 20 June 1905, SAD276/6/1-79.
19. Asser, who knew the character of his officers, ordered the withdrawal of Carter from a patrol in Northern Sudan in 1910 for fear that as he had no senior officer

- to supervise him, he could complicate things rather than restore law and order.
Asser to Wingate, 12 October 1910, SAD298/1/1-77.
20. Carter to Stack, 7 February 1906, SAD278/2/1-126.
 21. Carter to Phipps, 29 April 1906, NRO, Palace 5/1/1.
 22. Ibid.
 23. Sweny to Civil Secretary, undated, Palace 5/1/1.
 24. Civil Secretary to Governor, Bahr al-Ghazal, 1 July 1906, Palace 5/1/1.
 25. Boulnois to Wingate, 23 April 1905, SAD276/4/1-99.
 26. Ibid.
 27. Ibid.
 28. Sanderson, 'Aspects of Resistance', p.349.
 29. Boulnois to Wingate, 23 April 1905.
 30. Sutherland to Wingate, 23 August 1906, SAD279/2/1-79.
 31. Ibid.
 32. A.A. Sikainga, The Western Bahr al-Ghazal Under British Rule: 1898-1956 (Ohio, 1991), p.24, citing SIR no 73, 30 September 1900, app(b).
 33. Ibid., pp.23-24.
 34. Ibid., p.48.
 35. Ibid., pp.48-49.
 36. Sutherland to Wingate, 20 June 1905, SAD276/6/1-79.
 37. Sikainga, The Western Bahr al-Ghazal Under British Rule: 1898-1956, pp.36-37.
 38. Ibid., p.48.
 39. Reports on the Finances, Administration, (1913), p.13.
 40. Beshir, Southern Sudan: Regionalism and Religion, p.98-100.

41. Collins, Land Beyond the Rivers, p.222.
42. Ibid., p.80.
43. Boulnois to Wingate, 11 June 1901, SAD271/6/1-26.
44. For details of the revolt, see Mawut, Dinka Resistance to Condominium Rule, pp.20-23.
45. Boulnois to Wingate, 2 October 1903, SAD273/10/1-27.
46. Ibid.
47. Even now, the rural Dinka consider employment of bulls for transport and ploughing as a cow abuse (yaang)
48. Boulnois to Wingate, 24 November 1904, SAD275/8/1-59.
49. Boulnois to Wingate, 23 December 1904, SAD275/9/1-64.
50. Sparkes in Annual Report for 1902, p.88.
51. Brown to Wingate, 22 February 1902, SAD272/1/1-49.
52. Sparkes, quoted in Annual Report for 1902, p.88.
53. Boulnois to Wingate, 24 November 1904, SAD275/8/1-59.
54. Sutherland to Wingate, 20 June 1905, SAD276/6/1-79.
55. Wingate, 'Memorandum' on recruitment, January 1905, SAD276/1/1-82.
56. Sutherland to Wingate, 20 June 1905, SAD276/6/1-79.
57. Wingate to Matthews, 7 February 1907, SAD280/2/1-97.
58. Mawut, Dinka Resistance to Condominium Rule.
59. P.S. Santandrea, A Tribal History of Western Bahr al-Ghazal (Bologna, 1964), p.14.
60. 'Result of a Personal Conversation with M.T. Abdel Latif Eff. Mirsal, the Officer who Deserted in Bahr al-Ghazal and who was Returned to Khartoum under Arrest for Trial', author unknown, November 1915, SAD158/10/1-59.
61. Wingate to Drake, 23 August 1915, SAD196/2/203-316.

62. According to Wingate, censorship had revealed that there was a certain amount of pro-German feeling among young army officers. Wingate to Clayton, 7 November 1914, SAD469/7/1-80.
63. 'Result of a Personal Conversation with M.T. Abdel Latif Mirsal'.
64. Ewart-Baily-Davies 'Report on Political Agitation in the Sudan', 1925, PRO, FO371/10905. In 1921 the Dinka were put at over one thousand of an estimated population of Omdurman of 43,520, a town inhabited by more than sixty different ethnic groups. They were also the largest non-Arab community (F. Rehfish, 'An Unrecorded Population Count of Omdurman', SNR, 47 (1965), pp.34-35).
65. A prominent Northern Sudan Islamic scholar was once asked by a British official before the War broke out where the Sudanese would stand in the event of war between Britain and Turkey. He replied by saying that enlightened public opinion would pray: 'God send victory to the Sultan ... and preserve to us our present ... Government'. Wingate, 'Note on the Political State of the Sudan', 17 January 1916, SAD199/1/1-219.
66. Wingate to Feilden, 9 January 1916, SAD159/1/1-128.
67. Fergie Bey, (London, 1930), pp.136, 142.
68. Ibid., p.136.
69. Wingate to Savile, 21 October 1915, SAD197/1/123-234.
70. Wingate to Feilden, 21 October 1915, Ibid.
71. Ibid.
72. Savile to Wingate, 24 October 1915, Ibid.
73. Wingate to Feilden, 9 January 1916, SAD159/1/1-128.
74. SIR no 261, April 1916.
75. Wingate, 'Note on the Political State of the Sudan'.
76. Intel, 1/20/109.
77. SIR no 328, November 1921.
78. SIR no 323, June 1921.
79. SIR no 321, April 10921; SIR no 323.

80. Annual Report for 1914, cited in SAD292/21/1-157.
81. SIR no 324, July 1921.
82. SIR nos 322, May 1921; 323.
83. Statement by Dirar Ali, 10 November 1921 quoted in Sanderson, 'Aspects of Resistance', p.356.
84. SIR no. 323.
85. Ibid.
86. SIR nos: 332, March 1922; 333, April 1922.
87. Arianhdit was believed by the Dinka to have been associated with the 'miraculous' appearance in 1921 of the 'holy lake' in the Eastern district, in which Fergusson was almost drowned by Chief Dhieu Alam while the inspector made his offering to the Dinka god in the pool. Lamenting such an association, the inspector of Nyamlel district said that 'if only ... the fatal spring had delayed its appearance 12 months, Arianhdit would not have gained so much power. As it is, the Dinka all really believe that he is appointed by God to liberate them from a foreign yoke' (SIR no 332, March 1922).
88. inspector, Eastern district to Governor, Bahr al-Ghazal, 24 December 1917; note by Governor, Bahr al-Ghazal, 3 January 1918, Intel 2/27/216 'Patrol against Atwots and Matiang'.
89. Ibid., inspector, Eastern district to Governor, Bahr al-Ghazal, 24 December 1917.
90. Report by R.G.C. Brock on the Aliab patrol, 9 May 1920, B.G.P. 1/2/7.
91. Report on Ayual clan by inspector, Bor district, May 1919, Intel 2/48/408.
92. When the Aliab uprising occurred in October 1919, the Governor of Mongalla Province, C.H. Stigand rushed troops to Kongor on the east bank of the Bahr al-Jebel to prevent simultaneous revolt by the Dinka on both sides of the river, C.H. Stigand, Equatoria: The Lado Enclave (London, 1923), p.xxxvi; SIR no 304 November 1919. A government agent reporting back after a visit to Arianhdit's village suggested the use of aeroplanes as he feared ground troops would be overpowered by thousands of Dinka spear men (Statement by Dirar Ali, 13 November 1921, Intel 1/20/109).
93. Report on the Ayual-Kongor fight by inspector, Bor district 1919, Intel 2/30/247.

94. Report by Brock on the Aliab patrol, B.S.P. 1/2/7.
95. G. Schweinfurth, The Heart of Africa, vol.I (London, 1873), p.167.
96. British Government instructions to Sadler, 28 January 1902, quoted in J.P. Barber, 'The Moving Frontier of British Imperialism in Northern Uganda 1898-1919', Uganda Journal, 29.1 (1965), p.29.
97. Ibid., p.31, quoting Commissioner Hesketh Bell, 13 September 1906.
98. Ibid., p.32 quoting F.K. Girling, The Acholi of Uganda (1960), p.109.
99. Owen to Wingate, 8 May 1914, SAD190/2/55-158.
100. S. Simonse, Kings of Disaster: Dualism, Centralism and the Scapegoat King in Southern Sudan (Leiden, 1992), pp.116-117.
101. Ibid., pp.132-134.
102. Owen to Wingate, 4 November 1915, SAD197/2/1-91.
103. Collins, Shadows in the Grass, pp.25-27. The Toposa were annexed after 1924.
104. See MacMichael, The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan for details.
105. Annual Report for 1914, p.6.
106. Reports on the Finances, Administration, (1921), pp.10-12.
107. Maxwell to Wingate, 17 January 1899, SAD291/1/1-40.
108. Wingate to Boulnois, 21 November 1904, SAD103/5/1-72 'Mission Schools in Sudan' Vol.2.

Chapter VI: Securing Southern Sudan Against Local Competitors

The contrasts between Southern and Northern Sudan which the historical debate about constraints have highlighted seem to have been based on incorrect assumptions. They appear to emanate from a premise that the Sudan Government had one policy for the entire country; it is then assumed that the quality of administration, the level and extent of education, and socio-economic development of the two regions could be fruitfully compared. Implicit in all this is the presupposition that if certain constraints had not intervened, the administration, education and development of the South would have been similar to that of the North. The truth is that while the Sudan remained nominally one entity, the Anglo-Egyptian Government in practice treated Northern and Southern Sudan as separate colonies. The different regions attracted different responses from the British, depending on how each related to their specific objectives. As shown in Chapter II, the British had particular interests in the Southern Sudan which would necessitate different approaches from those applied in Northern Sudan. It would not be convincing, therefore, to conclude that the policy of the Sudan Government in the Southern Sudan for the first two decades was a failure¹ if the criterion was simply comparison with what emerged in the North. The success or failure of British administration in the region would only be meaningfully assessed in relation to those regional concerns.

The British in fact followed a two-level programme in the South. This can be considered from two perspectives: what the colonial administration wanted from the area, and their obligation towards the indigenous peoples whose role was important to the British attainment of their own objectives. The first part will be considered in the present chapter, while the second will be discussed in Chapter VII.

It has been shown in an earlier chapter how worried Christian Britain was by the steady Islamic penetration into central Africa through the Southern Sudan. Tentative

suggestions had been made for counteracting this development, requiring the establishment of a defensive front-line position in the region. This responsibility fell on the shoulders of the Christian rulers of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. Wingate and some of his lieutenants did not need to be persuaded, for they also entertained similar religious sentiments in addition to their political and economic ideas about the South. It must be pointed out from the outset, however, that this did not constitute an explicit and coherent government policy, set out systematically on paper and sanctioned by the various organs of the state at both the Central and provincial levels. Rather, it will be found in seemingly unrelated pronouncements and actions by individual British officials, which on first glance would appear to have arisen only from adjustment to local conditions. Despite their spontaneous appearance, these pronouncements and actions had two things in common which together qualify them to be called a general policy. One consists of Kitchener's policy guidelines, already quoted, which gave each British official the right to initiate particular policies in their respective localities, provided that these should operate towards the ultimate realisation of British objectives in the Sudan. The second factor is the inherited or acquired attitudes of officials towards the 'natives', which influenced the choice of policy priorities and the timetable for their implementation. Two matters require examination: the Islamic factor in the South, and the problem of military manpower.

(a) Wingate's Islamic Policy

The wish to secure the Southern Sudan for Christianity and Western civilisation was ever alive to the Governor-General, but he had some difficulties in achieving his objective. Wingate knew too well that the 1899 Condominium agreement limited British freedom of action in the Sudan: they had to take account of their Egyptian partner's concerns. The British had virtually become hostage to their own imperial

tactic for acquiring the whole Sudan at a cheap price. Doing anything exclusively to advance British interests in the Sudan was a problem which Wingate had to tackle with care. The Governor-General faced difficulties in four areas. First, the Anglo-Egyptian Government had adopted a policy of appeasement in Northern Sudan to pacify Muslims and deprive potential Islamic 'fanatics' of a cause for inciting the population against foreign Christian rulers. The Mahdist revolution was a warning to the new Sudan administration, and unnecessary provocation had to be avoided. In 1896 Kitchener had announced his future religious policy for the Sudan once the Khalifa had been removed. He had pledged 'to establish an Islamic state based on justice and righteousness, to build mosques and to help in spreading the true faith'.² Kitchener in 1899 emphasised this to his officials, telling them to see to it that 'religious feelings are not in any way interfered with, and that the Mohamedan religion is respected'. Officials were also instructed to build mosques in the principal towns,³ and by 1901 the government had built a mosque in Khartoum. A sum of money was released in 1902 towards the building of another mosque in the town of Kassala, which had not had one previously.⁴

In the government's endeavour to placate Muslims in the North, the activities of Christian missionaries, some of whom entered the Sudan determined to immortalise Gordon by converting Muslims, were prohibited. This provoked angry exchanges of letters between the two sides.⁵ Wingate's reply to a complaint by an Anglican Bishop on the non-observance of Sunday as a day of rest in the Sudan was: 'You must remember that the country is a Mohammedan country and that we are governing it in the first instance in the interests of the Mohammedan population'.⁶

Secondly although it was intended to exclude Islam from the South, the area had been reconquered using a predominantly Muslim army, units of which remained there on garrison duty to maintain law and order. While present in the South each of these 'hundreds of Moslems', was, 'by the very nature of his religion, an embryonic

missionary',⁷ who competed with Christian missionaries over 'God's inheritance' - the 'pagan' peoples of the region - whom General Gordon had earmarked since the 1870s 'for gathering in' to Christianity at the appropriate time.⁸

Thirdly, as Wingate was a servant of two sovereigns - British and Egyptian - with different religious convictions, this made his relations with his own co-religionists rather complicated. Some of the Christian leaders like Bishop Gwynne did not fully appreciate Wingate's predicament, and he had to bring them round by persuasion. When Gwynne pressed the Sudan Government to remove restrictions on missionary activities, Wingate sympathised with the Bishop's zeal and assured him of his support for the Christian programme. But the Governor-General also appealed to the Bishop to be realistic and not to push too hard. He told Gwynne to bear in mind that, 'although I am a Christian myself, I am in this country the representative of the King and the Khedive, and am responsible for maintaining an even balance over all subjects in the Sudan, whether Christians or Moslems'.⁹

Fourthly, education also presented Wingate with a problem. At the inception of the Condominium administration, primary education was given top priority in the Sudan to supply the government with local staff for the very junior jobs. James Currie as Director of Education commenced his work in 1900 with the opening of a training school at Omdurman for village school teachers. Three more schools were opened in 1901, a primary school each for Khartoum and Omdurman and a small industrial school at Khartoum dockyard.¹⁰ By 1902 Currie was considering immediate introduction of higher primary schools whose graduates would gradually replace the rather expensive Egyptian and Syrian clerks.¹¹ The Gordon College was opened that year. And as if Wingate and his officials were not going fast enough in the field of education, Cromer exhorted the Governor-General to 'do all in his power to create a class of Sudanese, who will before long be capable of filling ... the subordinate posts under the Government'.¹²

In theory, the educational policy was for the whole Sudan, but in practice it became a Northern Sudan programme. Although there were other factors (as will be seen in Chapter VII) only the Islamic factor will be considered here. The medium of instruction in elementary (kuttab) schools was Arabic. If such schools were allowed to operate in the Southern Sudan, there was the likelihood of Islam being gradually exported to the region, a development which a political Christian like Wingate would not encourage. The challenge came soon enough. The governor of Bahr al-Ghazal Province, Boulnois, acting innocently on the assumption that the government education system was for the whole Sudan, opened an elementary school in 1904 at Wau and asked the Central Government to assist financially. Currie's response to the governor's requests reveals the influence of the Islamic factor. As he explained to the Civil Secretary:

The Sudan Government as a whole has not yet made up its mind what it is to do in the matter of education of these Blacks. Till they do I don't want to be committed to any line of policy. I rather doubt if all the considerations have occurred to the Mudir in this case. If the teacher he is employing is a Mohammedan the net result of this teaching must tend towards Mohammedanism.¹³

Wingate agreed with Currie:

The question of education in the Southern Provinces which are not really Mohammedan, presents certain difficulties, for instance all preliminary class books in Arabic contain plentiful references to the Prophet ... and I am not at all keen to propagate Mohammedanism in countries in which that religion is not the religion of the inhabitants.¹⁴

The Governor-General was particularly anxious about the possibility that 'every boy would eventually become an Arab speaking Moslem' if the type of education which existed in Northern Sudan were allowed in Bahr al-Ghazal.¹⁵ But while he exerted every effort to exclude Arabic and Islam from the region, Wingate was conscious of the outcry that a leak of the government's anti-Islamic regional policy would provoke

in Northern Sudan and in Egypt. He therefore dealt with the problem in confidence with his subordinates. Wingate cautioned the two governors of Bahr al-Ghazal, Boulnois and H. Hill, to keep his views confidential¹⁶ because the time was 'not ripe yet for a formal disclosure of the policy' the government intended to pursue.¹⁷

Arguing ostensibly that Arabic was more difficult than English, Wingate defined 'the present object' of education in the province to be 'to provide a certain number of trained artisans, carpenters, blacksmiths ...'.¹⁸ He accordingly ordered the creation of two separate school systems. Boulnois's school was replaced with an Arabic-free, low-standard, non-sectarian, school run jointly by the government and the Catholic mission for the children of non-Muslims.¹⁹ The children of the Muslim soldiers, provincial employees and Northern Sudanese settlers were to be offered a sectarian education in Arabic in a proposed regimental school to be transferred to Wau from Khartoum.²⁰ But although this school was promised in 1904, Muslim children were to wait for six years before the transfer could be effected.²¹

In spite of the Sudan Government's preventive measures in Bahr al-Ghazal, Islam continued to infiltrate into the area (if it was not there already). It was simply too ambitious to combat Islam in a province which, besides the urban settlers and the army, had common borders with the Muslim province of Darfur and Kordofan. The local people continued to mingle in border areas and the government could not control such interaction. Wingate's attempts to insulate the province against a rival culture only succeeded in depriving native inhabitants of Bahr al-Ghazal of quality education.

The sensitivity of the religious problem is borne out by how the Adjutant General Asser, reacted to an insignificant incident. On an inspection tour of the military hospital in Wau in 1911, he found a small civilian boy circumcised, upon which he wrote to the Governor-General expressing his displeasure. 'This is a small fact in itself', he admitted, 'but it makes me think a lot'. Asser saw the incident in the

wider context of Islamic expansion in the town which the erection of a mosque²² and the presence of the army had accelerated, resulting in the reduction in the pupils' attendance at the mission school.

The Army undoubtedly has the effect of turning pagans into Mohammedans simply by its example, but should not go still further and assist by circumcision. It seems to me most undesirable if, as I understand, the idea is that the tribes in at least the Southern portion of the Bahr al-Ghazal, should not adopt the Mohammedan religion. What is done at Wau is I expect done South. A tribe such as the Nyam Nyam seems to me good enough as it is and does not require Ramadan and Beirans ... but I don't see what is going to stop it ...²³

The situation in the Upper Nile Province was handled quietly. Through contacts with their northern neighbours, the Arabs of the Blue Nile and Kordofan, settlers and traders, the northern Dinka - Abialang, Ageer and Nyiel - had acquired some Arab habits like donning the long white dress known locally as *jallabia*, and its associated head gear, the turban. This was not acceptable to a government that favoured the maintaining of exclusive cultural zones in the country. The Dinka had to be prevented from inhaling more of the Islamic-Arab culture. Thus when a small number of Islamised Dinka petitioned the Administrator of Fashoda Province in 1902 for a school of the Northern Sudan 'kuttab' type to be opened in their area, they were ignored.²⁴ Repeated requests by different groups in Northern Upper Nile for schools in their respective localities between 1905 and 1911 were equally unsuccessful.²⁵

Meanwhile, plans were initiated to reinforce Dinka cultural resistance to Islamic influences by undertaking the study of their customary law for application in the district. By 1908, Captain O'Sullivan had successfully completed the research. However, the concern about Dinka culture was not prompted by admiration of this Neolithic way of life *per se*, but was also dictated by strategic considerations in other parts of the South. Willis, as an official of the Intelligence Department between 1915 and 1926, was privy to government thinking. In his retrospective explanation of the

policy in Renk district from early days he explained that the government wanted to preserve Dinka culture because these people were 'the nearest of the negroids to the Arabs', and the maintenance of their customs was 'therefore a bulwark to those further South'.²⁶

The attempt was an utter failure. Islamic influence in the main towns such as Malakal, the provincial capital since 1914, which has been described as a Northern colony in the Southern Sudan,²⁷ was well entrenched. The Civil Secretary, MacMichael, had virtually abandoned the town to Islam by 1927, objecting to the stationing of units of the Equatorial Battalion at Malakal for fear of these 'Pagan Troops' becoming Islamised.²⁸

Further south in the Mongalla Province, similar efforts were made to restrict the spread of Islamic influences. Christian missionaries, who had been barred from proselytising in the North, naturally resented the idea of sharing the 'pagan' Southern Sudan with Islam. The annexation of the Lado Enclave to Mongalla Province in 1910 spurred vocal Christian leaders like Bishop Gwynne into action, urging the government to adopt their proposal for ridding the province of Islam. They had expected the government to keep Sunday as a day of rest in the Lado Enclave, as it had always been when the area was under the Congo Free State. But this wish was not granted. Although Wingate was sympathetic to the missionaries' views, again he could not do exactly as demanded because of the delicate balance he had to maintain. Such a measured approach to so sensitive a question was misinterpreted by Christian zealots like Shaw as being pro-Islamic, indeed he described the government as 'a machinery for spreading Mohammedanism'.²⁹ Yet Wingate only wanted time and patience to realise some of the missionaries' goals. He even entertained at one stage a faint hope of a new order emerging in the future, which would release the Sudan from the cumbersome arrangement imposed by the Condominium agreement. On such assumptions, Wingate advised the Bishop not to embarrass the government with

requests which could only be realised later 'when some huge political upheaval takes place which has the effect of altering the status of the Sudan in such a manner as to bring [Gwynne's] scheme within the range of practical politics'.³⁰ But in the existing circumstances Wingate found it necessary, outwardly, to keep the Sudan Government 'rather Moslem than Christian',³¹ in order to control the situation.

The Governor-General was particularly apprehensive of the newly-arrived 'wrong-headed and fanatical Missionaries' who would 'dash about in the Southern Sudan' like bulls in a china shop,' thereby jeopardising 'the good and steady work which has hitherto characterised the efforts of the Missionary Bodies in these districts'.³² This steady approach Wingate continued to pursue. Unknown to the average missionary, the Governor-General was operating in the same direction as them. As he confided to Gwynne: 'I am doing all I can to bring about a change in the Military system South of Fashoda which will have the effect to some extent of eliminating the factors which go towards increasing Moslem propaganda ...'³³

At the provincial level, Governor Owen tried whenever he could to give his domain a Western cultural outlook by projecting British symbols to the exclusion of Egyptian considerations. Owen had administered parts of this Anglo-Egyptian territory as a district of the wholly British Uganda Protectorate in 1902, and in the split of allegiance between the British Crown and the Khedive, was inclined to lean towards his own country. For example, on a visit to the Uganda territory about to be handed to the Sudan in 1914, Owen spelt out the policy he would pursue once the territory had been incorporated. 'Having served in that country under one flag', he told Wingate, 'it will seem very odd to take it over and fly two'. He preferred to fly the British flag only.³⁴ The policy was carried a step further in the take-over ceremony in January 1914, when he assured an assembly of chiefs that they were practically under the same government - that is to say - thorough English.³⁵ Early in 1915, Owen, on a visit to the countryside, quietly removed the Egyptian flags which

he found flying over two or three villages, claiming that such flags could only be flown in government stations.³⁶ This was not a convincing argument unless a new policy restricting the flying of flags in the villages had been passed, for they used to be distributed to loyal chiefs to extend government influence. More significantly, Owen also moved against 'the more fanatical, super-religious Moslems'³⁷ like Sub-*Mamur* Ahmed Khalil, who was 'very energetically' teaching Islam in the Moru district in 1914. Khalil was replaced by a Coptic official.³⁸ Meanwhile, the Governor acted 'very quietly and inostentatiously to Anglicise Mongalla as much as possible' by introducing English in the police force, with similar plans for the army.³⁹

(b) *The Equatorial Battalion: Its Origins and Objectives*

Since the Turco-Egyptian conquest of the Sudan mainly to secure cheap manpower for military and domestic service, the acquisition of blacks had remained the main foreign interest in the Southern Sudan. The Anglo-Egyptian Government was similarly attracted by the region's human resources, though not for slaves but for military service. Thus shortly after the reconquest, the search for men for the army brought the Southern Sudan to the fore of government priorities. Drawing on their previous knowledge about Southern Sudanese military talents, British officials embarked immediately on recruitment in the South.

An annual recruitment of between 400 and 500 men was obtained from the region between 1904 and 1912, partly through a Recruiting Scheme set up in 1904 specifically for the populous Bahr al-Ghazal area. Some men were secured through the individual efforts of old soldiers who received financial awards for every youth they presented for recruitment.⁴⁰ The resort to this arrangement is an indication that the expected enthusiastic enlistment by tribesmen did not occur. Past experience had shown that those red or brown foreigners could not be trusted much. Young men had

been abducted or negotiated from their chiefs for such service, but many had ended up being enslaved in homes and agricultural fields and were never seen again by their beloved ones. There was therefore little incentive for the people of Bahr al-Ghazal, and the whole South, willingly to entrust their lives to seasonal caravans to the North. Faced with this difficulty, the government had to use every available device to maintain the strength of the Sudanese Battalions. Thus, presentable casual labourers in the towns, prisoners captured in patrols or convicted of petty crime like stealing telegraph wire, and contributions of men coaxed from loyal chiefs, were drafted into the army.⁴¹ The difficulty of finding recruits, and the government determination to get reliable troops from the South made the Director of Intelligence, L.O.F. Stack even suggest the purchase of young men with cattle.⁴²

By 1911, Southern Sudanese military recruitment had become so important for the British administration that a special Southern policy in this regard had to be pursued. Almost simultaneously three leading men of the Sudan administration: - the Governor-General, Adjutant General, and the governor of the southernmost Mongalla Province - converged on the need to have a separate military arrangement for the Southern Sudan. Professor Collins has credited the latter, Owen, with originating the idea of this Southern Sudan army, known as the Equatorial Battalion. In a memorandum dated 29 March 1911, Owen did indeed propose to the Sudan Government that a battalion composed entirely of Southern Sudanese should be formed for garrison duties in the South. This army unit would be English-speaking and Christian. The military proposal was part of a grand plan to create in the region 'a large Christian population which would eventually link up with Uganda and from a substantial buffer or check to the spread of a faith, such as the Muslim, which may at any time break out into a wave of fanaticism'.⁴³ Collins limits Wingate's role to only approving the request.

However, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that Owen only articulated his part of an opinion generally held by the Sudan Government. Wingate had in fact proposed a similar scheme to the British Consul-General four weeks earlier. While on the Bahr al-Jebel on a return journey to Khartoum after a tour of Mongalla Province in February 1911, Wingate had dispatched an eleven-page report to Gorst. Wingate was baffled by the way the tribes of the Lado Enclave reacted to recruitment into the Sudanese Battalion, an experience he used as the direct justification for his submission. When the Enclave had been taken over by the Sudan in 1910, there was an initial influx of recruits; but by the end of the year the people were not willing to enlist. Wingate suspected the Islamic factor:

Personally, I am rather inclined to think that the system which prevails in Sudanese Battalions, of turning all recruits into Moslems and circumcising them, has something to do with it, and this leads me to the consideration of the desirability ... in the Mongalla Province ... [of] replacing our Regular Troops by some Territorial system which would have the advantage of enabling us to tell all volunteers who joined such a force that there was no chance of their being transferred out of the Province ...

Further reforms would be effected under a proposed reorganisation of the army which would be exploited for 'getting rid of Moslemising influence in the shape of Egyptian Officers and fanatical Sudanese N.C.O.'s, and very gradually dropping the Moslem conditions which prevail in all Sudanese Battalions of the Egyptian Army'. But mindful of the religious repercussions of such changes, Wingate proposed to deal with this sensitive issue under a camouflage:

Of course you will understand that these are ... submitted in strict confidence as it would never do to allow the religious question to appear prominently in any scheme of reorganisation, but I am personally convinced that the religious question has a great deal to do with our successful administration in these Southern districts ... If, therefore, a scheme is eventually matured somewhat on the lines I suggest, I should present it entirely from a Territorial point of view and should altogether avoid any reference to the religious aspect. It will take me some time to

think out a suitable project as there are many points which require very careful consideration, but I am practically convinced in my own mind that some such scheme will eventually become necessary and will give us a considerably larger amount of reliable fighting material at a possibly reduced cost.⁴⁴

What appeared to be Wingate's scheme or, as Asser maintained, an independent but similar proposal, materialised seven months later. In his submission to the Governor-General and Sirdar of the Egyptian army under the title 'Rough Scheme for Irregular Troops', Asser said that he had been actuated solely by economy as the regionally-based soldiers would be 'the best solution' to the transport difficulty. He even asserted that he had entertained the idea for years before putting it down on paper, and had not sought the views of others. 'You will see by the comparative table shewing what men in the Bahr-el-Ghazal and Mongalla ... Regulars receive', he pointed out to Wingate, 'that what we are offering is a minimum'.⁴⁵

Asser's presentation successfully concealed the religious motivation as Wingate had suggested, but whoever initiated the idea, it was in line with the religious inclination of the three men shown above. The approval of the scheme was a foregone conclusion. Units of the new Equatorial Battalion were formed by 1913, and between 1914 and 1917 the Equatorials completely replaced the Muslim troops of the Sudanese Battalion in Mongalla Province, paving the way for the declaration of Sunday as a public holiday throughout the province in January 1918. The system was extended to Bahr al-Ghazal in the 1920s after the last of the Sudanese Battalions had left the province in 1926. The Equatorials were briefly stationed in Malakal, Upper Nile Province, between 1927 and 1931, when they were withdrawn for fear of being converted to Islam in the Northern-Sudanese dominated town.⁴⁶

Three main objectives appear to have dictated the creation of the Equatorial Battalion: religious, political and security. The first two motives actually overlapped because their ultimate aim was a Southern Sudan under British rule and British religion - Christianity. The concern here is with the *objectives*, whether these were

realised or not lies beyond the scope of the present thesis. The creation of a Christianised population in the region was to be the fulfilment of the century-old British strategy of a buffer zone against the penetration of Islam into central Africa. The politico-religious motive behind the birth of the Equatorial Battalion was summarised by Wingate himself when he said: 'Quite apart from religious question *per se*, it would ... be politically undesirable for the Equatorial, who are presumably for the most part Pagan, to become Moslems'.⁴⁷

British security was another major consideration in the formation of a loyal army in the Southern Sudan. Owen's statement quoted above was not a false alarm. Fear of a resurgence of militant Islam had haunted the British since shortly after the reconquest. Gwynne's diary frequently recorded rumours of Arab uprisings between 1898 and 1910, and Wingate feared a *jihad* or Muslim holy war against the Christian rulers.⁴⁸ Another manifestation of this fear was that steps were taken to supplement the British garrison in Khartoum with European auxiliaries. Wingate in 1907 formed three Rifle Clubs in Khartoum - British, Greek and Italian - with a total membership of about 800 for self defence:

In the event of trouble in the Sudan which might lead to the Europeans in Khartoum being entirely isolated, I have formed three Rifle Clubs ... These various clubs are under the impression that they are Rifle Clubs pure and simple; my object goes considerably further. I am really training all the members of the clubs to handle our reserve rifles, and to shoot straight with them. In this way I am providing a very valuable supplementary European force which, under certain circumstances, might render enormous service.⁴⁹

At the national level, European security would be met by Southern Sudanese auxiliaries. If it were not because of the Islamic element in the Sudanese Battalions, Southern Sudanese would have continued to be relied upon by the British in the whole country. But as things stood, it became necessary to look for another brand of

the same 'reliable fighting material' - blacks minus Islam - which the Equatorial Battalion fulfilled.

In the formation of this Battalion, security considerations were obviously in the fore. There was a significant shift from recruiting the warlike Dinka to the smaller tribes of the former Lado Enclave and areas transferred to the Sudan from Uganda. The change of policy is understandable; the government wanted more reliable troops for the next stage of its intended development of the South. The tribes of the old Southern Sudan had been exposed rather more to what the British called the 'Northern outlook'. Their warlike qualities, particularly of the tribes further north, might be turned against the British if for one reason or another they fell foul of the government. Throughout the early history of the Equatorial Battalion, from its inception to about 1930, recruitment into the force was mostly confined to Mongalla Province, forcing the governor of Bahr al-Ghazal to request extending it to his province in 1929. The governor's concern was the enormous cost of transporting troops from Mongalla and back, which could be cut by recruiting resident troops from among the tribes of Bahr al-Ghazal. To this request, the Civil Secretary told the governor that the Army held strong views that cattle-owning tribes like the Dinka were not of 'any use as soldiers'.⁵⁰

In contrast, the peoples of the Lado Enclave, who, through contacts with the Belgians, were considered 'more advanced'⁵¹ than such tribes like the Bari, Dinka and Shilluk would be more suited to the new security needs. With the Nilotic buffer to screen them from direct Islamic influences, a reliable force with a Southern outlook would emerge. These local troops soon proved their worth in operations against recalcitrant tribes like the Lokoyia, which raised Wingate's hopes of ultimately creating a 'Sudan Army'.⁵²

The British may not have achieved all they intended in the creation of the Equatorial Battalion, but for the Southern Sudan, if there is only one act of the British

in the Sudan to enshrine, it is the birth of the Equatorial Corps. Its existence enabled the disrupted Southern society of the 19th century to salvage something of its own ethnic and cultural identity. In the long struggle between the South and the North, Southern Sudanese peoples remember 1955 and Torit, the headquarters of the Equatorial Corps.

This chapter is yet another example of British early concern about some of their original objectives in the South. It was realised that for the region's economic and human resources to be fully exploited, the area had to be fenced off first against possible external contenders. Three imperial powers had earlier been excluded from the area through treaties; the fourth - Islam/Arab - had to be tackled by sealing channels of possible physical infiltration and cultural flow southwards.

As far as Southern Sudanese were concerned, Islam and Arabism were as foreign as were the Ethiopians, French, Belgians, British and Christianity. There is therefore no basis whatsoever for the existence of a Sudanese 'national' grievance against a 'divisive' colonial power - British for only trying to keep out another colonial rival from a contested colony - the Southern Sudan. Although British anxiety about Islam in some respects might be seen to have retarded Southern development, especially in education, for British officials, as will be seen in the next chapter, it was a question of what had to be addressed at first.

Notes

1. Sanderson and Sanderson, Education, Religion and Politics, pp.111, 117, citing W. Sterry, Acting Governor-General of the Sudan in 1920 and Stigand, Governor of Mongalla Province in 1919.
2. G.M.A. Bakheit, 'British Administration and Sudanese Nationalism, 1919-1939 (Cambridge PhD, 1965), quoted on p.22.
3. See Appendix I.
4. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan (1902), p.299.
5. R. Hill, 'Government and Christian Missions in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan 1899-1914', Middle Eastern Studies, 1, 2, (1965), p.113-134.
6. Wingate to Smith, 25 March 1907, SAD280/3/1-130.
7. Wingate to Gwynne, 4 December 1910, SAD298/2/1-175.
8. Gordon, Letters of General Gordon to his Sister, p.133.
9. Wingate to Gwynne, 14 May 1911, SAD300/5/77-212.
10. Annual Report for 1901, p.66.
11. Report on the Finances, Administration (1902), p.75.
12. Cromer's speech in Khartoum, 27 January 1903, SAD273/1/1-52.
13. Currie to Nason, 2 February 1904, SAD103/5/1-72.
14. Wingate to Boulnois, 3 February 1904, Ibid.
15. Wingate to Boulnois, 21 November 1904, Ibid.
16. Wingate to Boulnois, 3 February 1904, Ibid.
17. Wingate to Hill, 21 February 1907, Ibid.
18. Wingate to Boulnois, 21 November 1904, Ibid.
19. Ibid., and Wingate to Hill, 21 February 1907, Ibid.
20. Wingate to Boulnois, 21 November 1904, Ibid.

21. Sanderson and Sanderson, Education, Religion and Politics, p.66.
22. The mosque was built in 1908 by Egyptian army officers and Northern Sudanese traders apparently with the approval of the governor, Gordon, which Wingate deplored (Reports on the Finances, Administration (1908), p.466; Wingate to Gwynne, 9 October 1911, SAD301/4/1-77).
23. Asser to Wingate, 8 September 1911, SAD301/3/1-111.
24. Reports on the Finances, Administration, (1902) p.347.
25. Sanderson and Sanderson, Education, Religion and Politics, p.66; Reports on Finances, Administration (1908), p.609; Ibid., (1913), pp.272-273.
26. Willis, 'The Present Position in the Upper Nile Province, 1927', SAD212/10/1-4.
27. Sanderson and Sanderson, Education, Religion and Politics, p.85.
28. Ibid.
29. Shaw to the Church Missionary Society, 9 August 1910, quoted in Hill, 'Government and Christian Missions', p.120.
30. Wingate to Gwynne, 31 March 1910, SAD290/3/149-285. It seems that the expected change was a break between the Sudan and Egypt, after which the North and South could be separated since the only thing which bound the two parts of the Sudan together was the Egyptian connection. The British would then be free to do what they wanted in the South without fear of a Muslim backlash.
31. ibid.
32. Wingate to Gwynne, 9 October 1911, SAD301/4/1-77.
33. Ibid.
34. Owen to Wingate, 22 January 1913, SAD185/1/179-283.
35. Owen to Wingate, 26 January 1914, SAD189/1/1-158.
36. Owen to Wingate, 10 April 1915, SAD195/1/88-186.
37. Quoted in Sanderson and Sanderson, Education, Religion and Politics, p.85.
38. Owen to Wingate, 28 March 1914, SAD189/3/1-130.

39. Owen to Wingate, 7 February 1916, SAD199/2/1-101.
40. Handbook of the Egyptian Army (1912), p.55.
41. After the Agar 1902 incident a few prisoners were recruited, one of whom later returned to Rumbek as a government-appointed chief (Beshir, Southern Sudan;: p.91); Sultan Tembura contributed forty men when requested, and many Azande water carriers in Wau town were to be attached to the regiment (Carter to Asser, 27 September, 1906, SAD279/3/1-69). Owen sent Lokoyia telegraph-wire thieves to Khartoum for military service (Owen to Wingate, 28 March 1914, SAD189/3/1-130). Expansion in the army had come to depend more on such precarious sources, and hopes were raised whenever a punitive expedition was sent into the country side. For example, a proposed reorganisation of the units had to be suspended when the Beir and Anuak patrols failed to return with the 300 captives projected for the implementation of the scheme (Asser to Wingate, 12 August 1912, SAD182/2/1-152). It was actually because of a shortage of blacks for the army that an experiment in recruiting Arabs was made in 1907, although the government did not expect 'to get quite the same high discipline out of the Arab' (Wingate to Asser, 18 July 1907, SAD281/1/1-120).
42. Stack to Wingate, 7 September 1913, SAD187/3/1-139.
43. Memorandum by Owen, 29 March 1911, quoted in R.O. Collins, 'The Sudan: Link to the North', S. Diamond and F.G. Burke (eds), The Transformation of East Africa (New York, 1966), p.379.
44. Wingate to Gorst, 1 March 1911, SAD300/3/1-176.
45. Asser to Wingate, 16 August 1911, SAD301/2/1-130.
46. Sanderson and Sanderson, Education, Religion and Politics, pp. 83-85; Collins, Land Beyond the Rivers, pp. 177-178.
47. Wingate to Feildon, 18 April 1914, SAD190/1/1-71.
48. Collins, Land Beyond the Rivers, pp.174-175.
49. Wingate to Harvey, 26 November 1907, SAD281/5/1-120.
50. Governor, Bahr al-Ghazal to Civil Secretary, 12 June 1929, CivSec. 5/5/26.
51. Wingate to Gorst, 1 March 1911, SAD300/3/1-176.
52. Wingate to Owen, 5 March 1915, SAD194/3/1-137.

**Chapter VII: Highlights on Administration, Education and Economic
Development**

As the anti-Khalifa propaganda had made the planned reconquest of the Sudan appear as a rescue operation, the British public expected much from the Anglo-Egyptian Government. *The Sun* for example, was by 1902 lavishly crediting the victor of Omdurman with having

made a race of men out of a conglomeration of serfs and chattels [.. An] oppressed and broken-spirited people he raised to a sense of dignity and independence, while at the same time he restored manhood, courage and ambition to human beings in whom these qualities had hitherto seemed irretrievably crushed out.¹

The paper expressed public sentiment correctly, though much of what it claimed was in fact still to be realised. The road to progress was actually chosen by Cromer more than Kitchener. Mindful of the dire consequences of centralised Turco-Egyptian administration of the Sudan from Cairo, Cromer proposed a system of government that would give the man on the spot a chance to recommend or make decisions in the light of the situation before him. He therefore announced soon after the reconquest that the Sudan Government would best administer the country through a policy of decentralisation in order to avoid 'the evils which are likely to ensue from the system of over-centralisation'. As he favoured less interference by Cairo in the administration of the Sudan, Cromer similarly deprecated 'any excessive amount of interference' by the central government in Khartoum in provincial administration.² Kitchener adopted this approach in his 'Memorandum', and Wingate inherited the same policy, for Cromer reported to the Foreign Office shortly afterwards that the Governor-General had 'most wisely left a wide latitude of action' to the governors.³

As stated in the last chapter, educational development was originally conceived for the Sudan in general. To involve the local people productively in the government

campaign for their socio-economic betterment, a certain amount of training was a prerequisite. It is not surprising therefore that the opening of schools which should have come secondary to the restoration of law and order was in the fore of government priorities.

General though the Sudan Government policies were in principle, in practice there were two levels of policy, indeed two separate policies, for each of the main cultural regions of the Sudan - the North and South. These differences will be analysed under three sub-headings: Administration, Education and Economic Development.

(a) Administration

The policy of creating an administrative apprenticeship for Sudanese was easier to apply in Northern Sudan than in the South. The government could delegate powers to local Northern leaders who were considered more civilised⁴ and 'knew what administration was'.⁵ The need to neutralise the 'fanatical' ill-educated Muslim leaders with better educated Islamic graduates of the government schools allowed for the emergence of autonomous urban Northern judges of *Sharia* law courts. They were supervised from a distance by the Legal Secretary, and as these native officials were mostly selected from 'good families' (meaning loyal Northern Sudanese), this indirect rule functioned well.

In line with the same policy of minimising conflict with Muslims, the government allowed the Arab nomads to continue to enjoy their own independence for the time being, stepping in only in extreme cases of disorder or insecurity to remove and appoint a chief.⁶ It was only in 1922 that the government ended the autonomy of the nomads.⁷ Strangely enough, this was at the time when the government applied the policy of further decentralisation as recommended by Lord

Milner in 1920. The purpose seems to have been to demonstrate clearly and finally to the nomads that the government was their paramount chief. The move was made safely in a period when there was no fear of again provoking Muslims, since many people had been won over by well calculated confidence-building actions during the first two decades. The most important thing to note, however, is the early association of Northern Sudanese with their own administration. The government came to be seen more as a means by which local leaders could achieve higher objectives than as an obstacle to attaining them, and a working relationship was therefore forged and maintained. Of the long-term result of this Northern Sudanese colonial experience, an official of the Sudan Political Service wrote:

These are the people who are the backbone of the Sudan and on whom the administration has been largely built with such success. And why? The clue lies in all aspects of their character ... These were people who had learnt in the hard school of a land where famine, locusts, pestilence, pillage and the climate itself had combined to make them appreciative of anything which had obvious practical usefulness. This and certain similarities of character ... made them very ready to follow the lead of the British in the spectacular improvement of their country; ... made them progressive tribal leaders; and above all made the first of them who got modern education, excellent civil servants, imbued with loyalty.⁸

In the South, however, the British had instant difficulties finding the right systems and individuals to work with. In contrast to the 'more civilised' Arab North, the Southern Sudan was inhabited by peoples commonly described as pagan and savages, with hardly developed indigenous systems through which collaborators could be recruited and improvement introduced. Multiplicity of tribes and the nominal nature of tribal authority are commonly cited as obstacles to successful British interaction with many Southern Sudanese. Officials are said to have looked for but could not find centres of local authority through which the region could be ruled. In fact, such leaders did exist; the real problem was that their people were considered to be in a low state of human development. They were associated with 'practices repugnant to civilised

standards of justice and morality'. It is argued that 'the attributes which caused the chiefs in many primitive tribes to command the acceptance and respect, or at least the fear, of their people had more to do with witchcraft than administrative talent'. The officials came to realise that it would be retrograde to entrust such leaders with government authority. So although the aim was to decentralise, government 'came more and more to mean direct rule'.⁹

There were several other factors which militated against an early devolution of power to native leaders in the Southern Sudan. Using as their basis for assessing tribal leadership what has always been considered as unprecedented state of anarchy in the region during the late 19th century, British officials were not attracted to the chiefs they found still in power. They believed that the good chiefs had either been removed or killed by the existing ones who 'owed their survival to qualities of toughness, ruthlessness and cunning which hardly commended them to the new administration'.¹⁰

The Sudan Government policy of confining Islam to the North also necessitated the imposition of direct rule in the South. Tribal leaders of some Nilotic people, the Dinka and Shilluk, for example, were (falsely) suspected of Islamic or Arab connections¹¹ and had to be watched closely, or to be removed if a chief failed to adjust to the standards of the new government. That was the case with *Reth Kur Abdel Fadil* of the Shilluk.¹²

There was some truth in the British complaint that they could not find suitable chiefs with whom to work. What government officials wanted was an ideal system to be operated at minimum cost to the government. 'An essential feature of tribalism', explained the British official quoted earlier, 'is the collective responsibility of a tribe for the acts of its individuals'. A strong tribal authority could be utilised in the detection and handing over of criminals and for obtaining compensation for any damage done by tribesmen, by the simple process of taking a chief as hostage. If such

a system existed, 'a considerable part of the policing of a country can be done without the use of government forces'.¹³ Yet this attitude towards local leaders was the very reason why those ideal leaders were difficult to identify. Because of the victimisation of chiefs in the 19th century through administration by hostage, some Southern Sudan peoples devised a two-stage system of leadership. According to one British official, in the selection of formal chiefs certain groups would 'put forward some complete nonentity as a scapegoat to bear government wrath, the real holder of the office who is recognised as such by everyone remaining in discreet obscurity in the background'.¹⁴ Under such conditions the wisest thing for officials to do was to prevent a relapse into the disorderly past by themselves virtually standing in for the tribal leaders, using the nominal chiefs as agents among their own people. In short, it was direct rule. Administrators like Governor Matthews of Upper Nile Province exerted every effort to enlighten appointed chiefs in order to cope with the modern way of doing things under the Anglo-Egyptian Government. Wingate in 1903 praised Matthews for 'endeavouring by every means in his power to inculcate in this somewhat civilised potentate [a Shilluk king] the elements of justice and honesty'.¹⁵ Two years later, the governor was still trying to raise the king to the desired standard, and although he believed that the Shilluk monarch was 'only a savage', Matthews was still prepared to support him 'up to the hilt'.¹⁶

If even the most developed system in the Southern Sudan, that of the Kingdom of Fashoda, was so poorly appreciated by British officials, their assessment of leadership in the stateless societies would be very harsh indeed. The Shilluk have a national capital, government with the *reth* on the top below whom are provincial chiefs of Luak (Southern Shilluk) and Ger (Northern Shilluk), and an electoral college. In the case of the other Southern peoples, it would mean in administrative terms delegating even lesser authority to the chiefs. This is precisely what happened in 1920 in the wake of the Milner report. When the Central Government asked the

three governors of the Southern provinces to respond to its suggestion that some government authority should be delegated to tribal chiefs, all of them objected to the proposal. Writing to the Civil Secretary, the governor of Bahr al-Ghazal stated: 'Owing to ignorance of the population on matters concerning law ... I do not consider any ... advanced form of Administration should be placed in the hands of the Chiefs'.¹⁷ The governor of Mongalla Province did not believe that there were 'any chiefs ... capable of being entrusted with individual magisterial powers'.¹⁸ The governor of Upper Nile Province objected to the suggestion on the ground that besides the Shilluk, no other tribe was capable of exercising powers on the behalf of the government.¹⁹

The greatly condemned primitiveness of Southern Sudanese does not appear to have been a unique experience for the British. Similar heterogeneous tribes with repugnant practices and systems of beliefs were found in other parts of the Empire, yet British reaction to such characteristics differed in different territories. In Uganda and Kenya, for example, African superstition was not condemned but brought into alliance with the cause of the Empire. Diviners among the Ankole and the Luo used their spiritual influence to win support for British rule, and in the case of the Kenyan tribe, the spiritual leaders established lasting collaboration with the government.²⁰ While the British in the Southern Sudan blamed weak tribal leadership for their administrative difficulties, in South Africa they considered the very existence of the institution of chiefdom as an obstacle to progress. One administrator maintained that if chiefs were removed from the Basuto nation, it would 'be an easy one to rule, and capable of attaining the highest degree of civilisation and prosperity which any native race can achieve'. Another official believed that those societies which had no chiefs made 'the best and most progressive subjects'.²¹

These examples clearly show that circumstances largely determined British attitudes towards the usefulness or otherwise of African tribal structures and

practices. Thus, the standards of bad and good, for indigenous characteristics were only relative to the restricted region or colony in which the comparison was made. In the case of Southern Sudanese, the negatives became more pronounced because the comparison was not within the same African cultural context, but with a different society which the colonial master believed to have attained a higher level of civilisation. The practice of subjecting African standards to Arab and Islamic norms in the end became detrimental to Southern Sudanese in their different walks of life. This will be illustrated in the administration of justice and maintenance of law and order.

The Sudan Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure and Sudan Civil Justice Ordinance, issued in 1900 were in operation in the various provinces from 1903. Exception was however made of the Southern Sudan, where governors were empowered to opt out of certain rules whenever they deemed it expedient. Proceedings were to be taken under the Codes 'in such cases only as shall be ordered in any general or special instructions from time to time issued by the respective governors of these Provinces'. It was further stated :

Any such instructions may provide for omission of all or any part of procedure which under the provision of the Code of Criminal Procedure ought to take place before the trial of any accused person.

The Governors of these Provinces shall have power by any general or special instructions from time to time issued by them to order that any particular case or cases or any class of cases shall not be dealt with under the Civil Justice Ordinance ...²²

These special legal arrangements were necessitated by the existence of different levels of civilisation among the Sudanese, broadly assumed on a North-South basis. Defending the decision taken by his Department, Carter argued:

One has to deal with several races of different grades of civilisation and with different ideas and habits. The same crime if committed by a

Sudanese black, a Jaalin Arab, or a Kabbabish nomad would probably not be fairly met by the same punishment.²³

He cited a case of murder among the Shilluk on charges of witchcraft as an example of those conditions under which the normal legal standards would not apply. But Carter was quick to state that such laws could be safely operated in Northern Sudan where the Arabs 'as a rule have no difficulty in understanding the principles of criminal responsibilities administered by the Courts'.²⁴ For Cromer the Shilluk incident showed 'that the principles of European criminal justice will have to be applied with some caution in the districts inhabited by Negroid tribes in a low state of civilisation'.²⁵

The discretionary application of criminal laws is demonstrated by two contrasting incidents. In response to reports of lawlessness caused by raiding among the Arabs, Carter stated that 'even if murder results', such acts 'are, as once were cattle lifting on the Scottish Border, but manly exercises'.²⁶ Yet in 1908, two Shilluk who had robbed and killed an Arab trader were caught and executed on the scene of the murder,²⁷ a typical instance of the rough and ready justice Jackson admired.

Disparity was also experienced in customary laws. While the Arabs/Muslims and Southern Sudanese were administered respectively through the *Sharia* and Customary Law, only the former had training opportunities for self-regulation. Arabs/Muslims performance was improved by the service of 'broad-minded' Muslim scholars trained in government schools under the direct supervision of a grand judge. The Southerners on the other hand stagnated because their Customary Law was defined and directly supervised by government officials, since the natives were believed to be incapable of handling such a responsibility. As a result, local leaders could not get sufficient experience in managing local affairs. This situation continued until 1922 when adoption of the policy of Indirect Rule at last gave them access to limited powers. But even then it was less a real devolution of authority than a change of one foreign system for another. What in fact happened only confirmed that the

government was convinced that Southerners remained incapable of evolving a creditable system of rule. The British imported from the Buganda the Lukiko or Chiefs' Council, extending into the Southern Sudan what had come to be known as Buganda sub-imperialism by which the British ruled other tribes of Uganda using their institutions.²⁸

The paternalistic way the British handled Southern Sudanese in the area of administration echoes earlier advice from General Gordon to future rulers of the South:

... I think with respect to the natives; truths simple might and may be inculcated, and by degrees, as their understanding progresses, deeper truths may be explained; but, as a child must grow in age and knowledge before he attains the fullness of the truth, so must the Negro nations pass the period of their youth before they can do the same.²⁹

Gordon had warned that unless his successors adopted this process of gradualism in the South, they could hardly succeed in administering so primitive a people - because as the indigenous languages did not contain a vocabulary of 'more than 300 words ... any explanation, even of secular affairs, must be difficult'.³⁰ The similarity of views between Gordon and Sudan government officials suggests common cultural assumptions rather than knowledge gained by experience in the field.

Since the British recognised the existence of a social and cultural gap between the Southern and Northern Sudanese, they were bound to apply different paces in guiding the two charges towards mutual objectives. This meant that the distance between them would always be maintained, and the logical outcome was their arrival at the goals at different times. The training of Sudanese for the auxiliary role that the colonial administration intended for them might have narrowed the gap, if only the segregated training classes like the one which Stigand later proposed had been adopted. Those other constraints had their negative role in this area but their impact was exaggerated by colonial attitude towards the different Sudanese peoples.

(b) Education

In this area, gradualism became more evident. Cromer had before 1900 opposed Christian missionary entry into the Southern Sudan on the ground that the would-be converts were still too backward to understand the Gospel. Since the missionaries' mere presence in such a barren land would create suspicion among Muslims in the North, Cromer preferred to exclude them from the Sudan altogether.³¹ But when mounting pressure from the C.M.S. forced him to relent, Cromer and the Sudan Government decided to control the missions by designating each a specific territory and directing their operations. They were, for example, encouraged to engage in practical things which the 'pagans' would easily absorb like welfare work in the medical field and the teaching of simple crafts. Abstract conceptions like the Christian doctrine and literary education were to be delayed until the natives were advanced enough to cope. Cromer accordingly advised the Catholic mission in 1902 to instruct Southerners in 'some useful technical trade or craft', and appealed to the C.M.S. in 1904 to pay special attention 'to some simple forms of industrial and agricultural instruction'.³² Cromer hoped that thus employed, the missions 'might ... be of some slight assistance in gaining the confidence of his ... 'half devil and half child' and possibly even in transforming them into industrious labourers and artisans'.³³

In the view of Jackson, first administrator of the Southern Sudan (only Fashoda military district), early introduction of alien cultural influences would be totally disruptive on the natives' natural growth. 'From the time missionaries enter their countries, these tribes will disappear'. Jackson did not of course fear their physical disappearance but their moral decay, as the people would have been suddenly removed from their traditional way of life yet be still too low in human development to benefit from the sophisticated Christian ideas. Thus suspended in a cultural

vacuum, the 'pagan' would become 'a scamp, loafer, scoundrel and liar' instead of as he then was: 'happy, contented, and honest and vice unknown'.³⁴

The missionaries, who came from a similar cultural background to the administrators, did not differ significantly in their approach to the peoples of the South. The three missions - C.M.S., Presbyterian and Catholic - did concentrate in the early stages on practical work rather than spiritual teaching. The would-be converts were attracted to their stations by such free services as treatment of the sick, after which a few young men were introduced to practical skills, for example, carpentry, brick making and modern crop production. On his Presbyterian mission's relations with the Shilluk among whom they settled, Giffen wrote:

Our principle was that without labor, - productive, useful labor, - there could be no development of character. We must teach the people to do something, before we can expect them to be anything. We took advantage of every opportunity to get them to labour ...

Thus, little by little, some of them ... learned something of a day's labour ... and something of the meaning of responsibility in labour, of which they had been entirely ignorant.³⁵

Similarly Gwynne, accompanying the C.M.S. team that visited Mongalla Province in 1906 spared some time to talk to the Dinka at Malek about labour, as they 'hadn't the slightest idea of what work meant'.³⁶

Although the missionaries did not strictly adhere to the government guidelines (for they also preached and taught some reading and writing alongside practical training), they were still seen by government officials as generally conforming to them. Slatin saw their work as having 'an improving effect on the character of the people among whom they have settled'.³⁷ For Governor Matthews of Upper Nile Province, the priests were 'setting a noble example', for they avoided doctrine, 'which they knew the native cannot grasp'.³⁸

Yet despite this modest start and slow progress, some people outside and within the government feared that the missionaries were going too fast. Comments made by two British visitors to the Sudan provide yet further evidence for the argument that much of the British relationship with Southern Sudanese was governed by stereotype. Edward Fothergill, while on hunting trips from 1901 to 1905, felt both tremendously impressed and greatly dismayed by what he saw of the Catholic and Presbyterian missions in the South. He took the first as a model of the Western agents of civilisation among the 'savages':

The Catholics ... devote their labours almost entirely to lay teaching; they teach the native to till and work the land, to build, and they instruct them generally in the methods of organised labour. The question of actual religion is left to a future generation, when the minds of the people will be more receptive; when they will have at least attained that balance of thought which it is necessary to give to the subject, if their religious professions are to be anything more than a mockery ... They are accomplishing slowly and surely, the very work which is the most essential to the extended civilisation of the savages with whom they have to deal ... The appalling conservatism which stands as a barrier to universal labour has yet to be broken down, and that will be the work of many years.

In contrast, Fothergill was bitter in his condemnation of the American mission. They had introduced literary education too early, with the possibility of negative results for all. 'In my opinion they go to work in the wrong way; in a way which is ... only calculated to be useless for the attainment of the very ends that they are in the Sudan to secure'. He was not opposed to the mission serving the natives in other ways, Fothergill was only worried about the people being dislocated by accelerated development. 'What do they expect to make out of a savage race like this, if they deliberately spoil them at the very beginning?' His conclusion was that:

... to place a school in the heart of savagery, and expect a lasting good to come out of any efforts in the way of book learning, when the people who

are being taught are ignorant of the first rudiments of civilisation, is to expect too much.³⁹

The other visitor, E.S. Steven, during only one year's stay, claimed special knowledge about the blacks in relation to education. Like Fothergill, Steven stood against early introduction of literary education for its harmful side effects. 'In education ... it is necessary to go slowly - above all, with the tribes known as the "Pagans" in the South'. Driving the point further, Steven argued that 'literary education, as a matter of fact, has never brought the black happiness, and never will' and 'should we now attempt' to extend it to them 'we should be giving them a curse instead of a blessing'.⁴⁰

The Director of Education, Currie was also opposed to a forward policy in the education of the blacks. Currie feared that prescribing an advanced type of learning so early would have negative results, since the recipients would not know how to turn it to the good of themselves and the government. To guard against such adverse developments emerging from schools which did not fall directly under his authority, Currie sought government approval for the inspection of mission schools. His worries were confirmed soon afterwards by an incident beyond the Sudan. In far away Natal, where African armed resistance against the British occurred in 1906, there was a significant shift from earlier clashes. Whereas previous opposition was characterised by unconcerted tribal revolts, the later one became a broad-based organisation which transcended local allegiance. The 'native' or 'Ethiopian' Church had played a leading role in unifying the African ranks in a confrontation that left over three thousand people dead on both sides.⁴¹ And believing like many others that African resistance to colonial rule was reactionary,⁴² Currie looked at the Christian input into the Natal affair as abetting retrogression. He suspected the American mission in the Sudan of having similar potential and thought it should be preempted. Thus, with another official of the government, Ernest Bonus, Currie submitted a memorandum to the Governor-General:

We consider, in view of what has taken place and is taking place in South Africa, that the effects on Blacks of American Missionary school teaching ... ought to be very carefully watched, and, if necessary, firmly controlled. "Ethiopianism" in South Africa derives from an American Presbyterian Missionary body. There is no doubt whatever that this movement has been the driving force behind the late rebellion in Natal, and American Commercial enterprise, influence and teaching are certain in the near future, to be present in force in the Sudan.⁴³

With that justification, they then requested Wingate to procure a copy of a special report on native education by the South African Government to the Colonial Office. Currie got the document whose gist was the devising of a special system of education for the blacks which would 'result ultimately in greater abundance of native labour for European industries and in the greater steadiness and intelligence of the labourer himself'.⁴⁴ It greatly impressed the Director because he believed that not a single sentence of the recommendations did not apply to Southern Sudanese.⁴⁵

The central theme in all these educational suggestions was that labour-oriented training for the blacks was the necessary prelude to their adaptation to a variety of future opportunities. All that they wished to see adopted was the development of the native in stages, taking care that no phase should be advanced or skipped. Academic education of the Northern-Sudanese type was to come later in the South; if any attempt was made to reverse the order, it would meet objection from such education experts as Currie. It was partly due to his determination to maintain these principles that Currie refused to subsidise the Wau academic school in 1904. Apart from those in connection with the spread of Islam he declared: 'I have £1000 per annum for the vernacular education of the whole Sudan. Ought any portion of this *for the present* [my italics] to be spent in Bahr al-Ghazal'.⁴⁶ It was not a problem of money; it was a question of timing. Bahr al-Ghazal would be catered for ultimately by the Education Department, but only when the people would be enlightened enough to utilise the opportunity profitably.

Wingate and some officials in the South shared Currie's views. On the Wau school, the Governor-General argued 'from an educational point of view' that it was not 'necessary to strive at a higher standard for the actual inhabitants of the Bahr al-Ghazal'.⁴⁷ Considering the keen interest the Sudan Government showed in the question of education in the country generally, Wingate's statement can only be understood in terms of the proposed sequence of education for the region. He made things clearer three years later when he justified the minimal attention the government paid to Bahr al-Ghazal: 'The country is yet too uncivilised for education to be seriously considered'.⁴⁸ For Mongalla Province, where he considered the natives indifferent and distrustful of government intentions 'by reason of their backward mental condition', Wingate recommended the introduction of only technical education, which would be useful to them 'especially for the making of spearhead'.⁴⁹ The governor of the Province, Cameron, had earlier made a similar judgement on his subjects' prospects in education. He maintained that the need for it would not become pressing 'until the immigrant population increases or the intelligence of the native develops somewhat by contact with better educated people than himself'.⁵⁰ General Gordon had earlier suggested that for Southern Sudanese to be receptive and benefit from new ideas, it would be necessary for them first to mix freely with 'more civilised races' over a period of time in order to widen their perspective.⁵¹ We need not assume that Cameron was influenced by Gordon's ideas; the point is that both comments suggest a common cultural attitude about the natives.

While other officials monitored the social conditions of the natives, Currie continued his search for an appropriate system of education for them. On his suggestion in 1909, the government engaged an anthropologist, Dr. Seligman, to undertake studies of the Southern peoples. His preliminary report of 1911 only entrenched what the layman had assumed about the natives. The anthropologist congratulated the government for deciding not 'to rush into action until some

extremely obscure points, dealing with the psychology of these primitive people, have been to a certain extent cleared up'.⁵²

The government continued to study the situation while education for Southerners waited. It was not until 1922 that the issue came up again. A senior official of the Education Department, Hillelson, went to the South in late 1921 to prepare a report on missionary education. He subsequently compiled one in which he raised several questions for consideration. While he realised that there was an urgent need for literate Southerners to solve 'the practical problem of providing a class of native chiefs, clerks, artisans ... who will be of use to the administration', education of the people had by necessity to be selective. Introduction on a wide scale of a literary type of education was to be discouraged because its provision at that early stage 'would result in the breakdown of tribal standards and the loss of primitive virtues before they have ceased to play a useful part in the life of the native'.⁵³ Moreover, it had to consider the psychology and aptitude of the different tribes. Peoples like 'the versatile Acholi always eager for new things' could be given the opportunity to read and write in the recommended vernacular district schools, while others like 'the intensely conservative' Dinka and Azande 'whose aptitude seems to lie in the direction of arts and crafts', required separate arrangements.

I cannot help feeling that in other areas - the Dinka country for example - the teaching of reading and writing might be of no real value either educationally or practically and it is worth considering whether in such districts the most suitable type of school would not be an institution of the Boy Scout type designed for the inculcation of honesty, discipline and regular habits of work without the addition of literary subjects.⁵⁴

The target had once more proved elusive and the search for the ideal type of education continued beyond our period.

Inconclusive though it was, this government intervention in Southern education made one significant step forward. The largely understaffed, financially-limited

mission schools were for the first time to receive a government subsidy.⁵⁵ Some more money was put aside for the 'Boy Scout school' experiment. These schools were opened in the early 1920s in Malakal, and at Renk among the northern Dinka who had made repeated requests for a school since 1902. But because the training which those 'Boy Scout schools' offered did not prepare their graduates for a career, they were a failure and had been abandoned by the early 1930s.⁵⁶

Considering the Sudan Government educational policy from the very beginning, it is clear that its handling of Southern education was in line with its overall objective. Education was geared towards economic development, and as such it had to be given only when the government had a specific need to be met and the right tools to use in achieving it. Thus in the early years Southerners, who could not be considered for the more sophisticated role as junior partners in government because of their relative backwardness, were found useful assignment in the labour sector. By the 1920s some of the tribes were seen to be enlightened enough to be admitted into the role which Northern Sudanese had enjoyed for over twenty years. With the introduction of Native Administration, the next stage of British rule was in need of local literate administrative staff, and training for them had therefore to be provided. Currie had earlier advocated exactly this approach.

... if the man responsible for the educational development does not submit every phase of his policy to the test of what the economic needs of the country really are, it is inevitable that in the treatment of his own subject he will merely walk in the old educational rut, and repeat the old mistakes.

His educational policy was based 'on what the actual economic necessities of a tropical country demand', but not 'on what English public opinion of somewhat obsolete type laid down as educational desiderata'.⁵⁷ Currie's successors did not appear to have departed from his course. They continued to assess Southerners' capability and employed it when and where it was in demand.

(c) Economic Development

Previous academic works have emphasised the absence of any Southern Sudanese economic development worth mentioning. On the outcome, there is no disagreement. One is not fully satisfied, however, with what has been advanced as the causes of government's relative impotence. It is suggested here that more of the obstacles against progress in the region can be found in a cautious and paternalistic British treatment of the natives, largely influenced by inherited cultural attitudes.

Generally, as a matter of policy the Sudan Government took their time in the selection of development priorities in the whole country. From London, Cairo, and Khartoum and in the South, the message had always been *not* to rush into action as there was time to sort out things. After the defeat of the Khalifa and successful exclusion of France, the most formidable foreign competitor, Salisbury relaxed. Since there was 'no foreign nation .. likely to interfere with us ... there is no danger in taking a great deal of time over the job', he told Cromer.⁵⁸ Not only did Wingate acknowledge that progress would be slow but it was his policy that the government should not hurry if they were 'to succeed'.⁵⁹ 'For at least a generation to come, no complex question of how Western methods may best be adopted to Eastern minds will probably arise', Cromer assured the Foreign Office.⁶⁰ The Acting Governor of Bahr al-Ghazal, Carter had this to say:

The inhabitants, generally speaking, [are] savages ... They may not want the benefits of civilisation, but they have got to have them. Only we must do our spiring gently, and '*Festina Lente*' must be the order of our going.⁶¹

It is in the context of this measured approach that Southern Sudan economic regeneration will be discussed.

In the case of the North regional considerations encouraged early government concern with improving the socio-economic conditions of the local population.

Wingate, for example, planned for speedy railway building as the better means to 'control and civilise these wild Arabs ... than by a series of expeditions' which was the other alternative.⁶² Work had actually begun on this economic lifeline by extending the original military railway built by the army of the reconquest. An eastern line reached the Red Sea Coast in 1906 to handle exports and imports, while another branch which left Khartoum, passing through the Gezira in central Sudan, reached El Obeid, Kordofan Province in 1911 to promote trade by transporting the region's leading cash earner - gūm Arabic - to Port Sudan. In short, progress was in opening up the country to trade and contact.

As for the South, the reverse was the case. Throwing the door open to an influx of outsiders in the 19th century had brought untold miseries on the natives. This had to be prevented from happening again by screening those who entered the region. The known economic potential of the South was in agriculture, and it was there that a rush was originally expected. Rubber, ivory and cotton particularly attracted the private sector. A casual collection of rubber in Bahr al-Ghazal in 1902 by the government raised expectations so high that traders soon flocked into the area, destroying large vine fields through sheer ignorance in the methods of tapping, and Wingate had to issue an order banning trade in this commodity until further notice.⁶³ This was a sufficient reminder that the people of the South could be descended upon by the likes of those who exploited them in the past under the guise of ivory traders. Partly for this reason and possibly also in pursuance of the policy to restrict Islamic influences in the South, in 1903 the whole of Bahr al-Ghazal Province and most of the Upper Nile areas were declared closed districts to European and other foreigners. Such persons could only enter by special permission of the Governor-General. The ban was due 'to the local conditions of those districts'.⁶⁴

Apart from the determined effort to protect the tribes from unwanted foreign contact, and using the whip liberally to maintain law and order among them,

government officials waited patiently for any signs of social progress in the natives before definite development programme would be initiated. Progress was however bound to be slower since the native peoples had been made to believe that for the time being they were better as they were. The paternalistic treatment of Southern Sudanese by officials even seemed to increase with time,⁶⁵ with the possibility of an early introduction of innovations being postponed indefinitely.

Three important but unsuccessful attempts were made in this period to adopt a general economic policy for the region. Governor Stigand whose presentation has been cited in the Introduction was particularly unhappy with the Central Government. He had seen enough of the apparent unconcern about its future, both as a junior district official and governor in two of the three provinces. While governor of Upper Nile, Stigand made a complaint to the Central Government:

It appears to us in the South that we are neglected. Of the various Departments of the Sudan Government, such as Agricultural, Veterinary, Forestry and Education, which are presumably for the benefit of the whole country, we see little or nothing. This province (Upper Nile) with its principal revenue derived from cattle has never had a resident Veterinary officer ... The Forest Department cuts down forests but does no regeneration work.⁶⁶

His complaint was simply ignored, but around this time officials in Khartoum began to realise that something should be done about the Southern Sudan. Thus, in the first serious attempt to address the issue, an agricultural expert, E.R. Sawyer, was commissioned in 1918 to carry out a survey of the needs of the South and to suggest ways and means of introducing development. Sawyer conducted his research until early 1920, and submitted three separate reports. The 1919 report recommended that immediate action should be taken:

If progress halt [sic] with the establishment of law and order the financial situation becomes seriously compromised and capital increasingly difficult to obtain.

A clearly defined agricultural policy to which all immediate and future administrative measures may be assimilated, is consequently a first and pressing Financial need ...⁶⁷

Yet no immediate steps appear to have been taken to make use of such recommendations, for four years later a similar survey was again proposed by Khartoum. The difficulty was neither the lack of funds nor the government's ignorance of what the South lacked, but rather that there were persons who claimed to know the problems of the South better.

It was the Governor-General, Sir Lee Stack who again raised the issue of Southern development in 1924. On a tour of the region early in 1921, Stack had ample opportunity to see for himself its near stagnant condition. Something more positive had to be done and the Governor-General chose one of his senior governors M.J. Wheatley of Bahr al-Ghazal to take charge of the South.

I have come to the conclusion that the time has come to fix on a definite policy of development, economic and administrative, for the Southern Provinces.

In order to make this possible it is necessary to appoint somebody with the title, say, of Commissioner General of the Southern Sudan to visit the provinces concerned, ... and at the end of a prolonged and exhaustive tour of inspection of perhaps a year to put up recommendations to the Central Government ... I should be very glad to offer it you.

Your duties would be to examine at first hand the various methods, administrative and economic, employed in the three provinces and after collecting all the information available to formulate definite recommendations for us to consider in Khartoum in order to formulate a fixed general policy for the immediate future.⁶⁸

But the proposal was opposed by the Central Government who suggested that the idea should first be discussed in a preliminary meeting of the three Southern governors, and Stack had to withdraw it.⁶⁹ His death later in the year left his Southern project unaccomplished, and his successor Archer dismissed the proposal on 15 January 1925.⁷⁰ But, even if Stack's suggestion had been upheld, it is doubtful

whether his nominee would have seen things from the same perspective, as can be seen from Wheatley's statements to the Financial Secretary, Sir George Schuster, two years later when the idea of Southern development was once more mooted.

In January 1926, Schuster asked Wheatley to present a programme for development to the Central Government for discussion, with an assurance of 'generous support for any reasonable proposition'.⁷¹ The governor, unfortunately, did not capitalise on this rare generosity of Khartoum. His plans for the province were different:

As you know I am opposed to any rapid development. I consider we should develop [sic] the people only as fast as they can assimilate the new ideas. To rush ahead in order to gain a spectacular advance would only give them what might be called "mental indigestion" with all its attendant evil results, and no permanent good would be gained either by the people or the country. In fact it would be a case of more haste and less speed. The Nuer and Dinka who constitute about half the population are still wild and undisciplined savages and cannot yet be depended on for solid work on crops year by year. They have to be weaned from their love of fighting and taught to work as a normal proceeding of life. A desire for and need of the various articles of civilisation must be cultivated so as to become an inducement for them to work and earn the money with which to satisfy their desires ...

This Province is a vast area with a comparatively big population and large sums of money will be required for its development. I do not think that much can really be done from the ordinary revenue of the Sudan. I do not advise that the time has yet arrived for the Government to launch out in this way.⁷²

The evidence presented in this chapter reveals the existence of a policy of gradualism, which was based more on British preconceptions about the natives than imposed by practical constraints. The introduction of certain essentials of modern life were made contingent upon the achievement of recognised levels of social sophistication, and these - it was thought - had not been attained by 1924. This policy was pursued because the officials believed they were doing the right thing for the natives, and the people had no quarrel with those who allowed them to follow their traditional way of

life. It is the retrospect shaped by later political developments in the independent Sudan that sometimes subject this early period of British administration to blame. If only the custodians had taken one more step - to respect and maintain for all times the dualistic character of the Sudan which they inherited at reconquest, if only they had not amalgamated Southern Sudanese with people they had 'no ties of race, language, culture, religion - or sympathy', - the delayed development of the Southern Sudan would be a thing of the past. Similar uneven development of different regions of the same colony existed in other areas. It is known, for example, that in Uganda, the Buganda received different attention from the British than the tribes of the Northern regions, eg Acholi, but in their case, post-colonial history of Uganda has shown that disparity within one cultural group is bridgeable. In the colonial period road construction was centred in the Kingdom of Buganda; first schools were opened there and so were hospitals; it was also the area of cash crop production such as cotton and coffee.⁷³ But after independence the tribes of Northern and Eastern Uganda who had been marginalised, so to speak, like the Madi, Lango and Acholi, played an active part in the political and economic life of their country. These regions have so far provided three of the seven presidents of Uganda: Obote, Amin and Okello. Here, when groups could not get what they believed was their right, the complaint was directed against compatriots who withhold such rights, rather than valuable time being wasted castigating a former colonial ruler who had his own objectives to achieve.

The use of Christian missionaries in the Southern Sudan for education and civilisation was a common practice in many, if not all the British colonies in Africa. It was an essential preliminary stage of colonial rule to prepare the ground for later government entry into the field of development. Nearer home is the case of the Nuba peoples in Northern Sudan. The Nuba belong to the African cultural complex found in the Southern Sudan. They were for the most part what Christians and Muslims call pagan. Although they were closer to Southern peoples in that respect, the Nuba fell

administratively within Northern Sudan. This location put them at a special disadvantage as far as education was concerned. They were left without a government or missionary school for the first two decades of the Condominium administration. This was because of the self-imposed decision by the Anglo-Egyptian Government that Christian missionary proselytism should not be allowed in the predominantly Muslim North. A few Nuba who had been exposed to Islamic culture through service in the Egyptian army, and those in proximity to the Baggara Arabs in Northern Kordofan, acquired the externals of the religion. But those deep in the hills and bordering the South remained unaffected and continued to practise their traditional culture. This dichotomy presented the government with a dilemma. To allow the Northern Sudan type of schools in the Nuba country would, according to government officials, be detrimental, for their exposure to Islam in the schools would destroy Nuba tribal morality.⁷⁴ On the other hand leaving them without education would, it is assumed, be seen as government failure to extend their mission of civilisation to people who deserved it. If no steps were taken sooner than later, the Nuba were going to be the dregs of the Northern Sudanese society.

At last in 1920 a middle solution was found in the introduction of separate school systems to correspond to the cultural regions identified in the Nuba country. The Islamised areas were allocated government schools while the districts of non-Muslim Nuba became the 'sphere of influence' of an Australian-New Zealand Protestant missions known as the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM).

The places assigned to the SIM were considered as very backward, and the government expected them to civilise the natives.⁷⁵ By 1923 two elementary schools had been opened, teaching in the vernacular and in English. In an effort to give additional protection to the Nuba way of life, the Director of Education, J.W. Crowfoot, even suggested yet another system; for areas where the separation of Nuba and Arab pupils could not be successfully accomplished, the Nuba children were to be

taught the religion and customs of their own peoples with Islam totally excluded.⁷⁶

Whether that Nuba policy succeeded or not is immaterial; it is the intention which matters. Here as in the South, the government's main concern was the preservation of indigenous cultures for a time until better conditions should prevail under which gradual reforms could be embarked upon for the benefit of both the government and the subjects.

Farther afield in Southern Nigeria and Kenya the intention was the same as in the Southern Sudan. In those districts of Southern Nigeria where the 'mentally undeveloped' people afforded 'an enormous field for the pioneers of civilisation', missions schools were the first to be opened.⁷⁷ A similar practice was observed in Kenya. There the colonial administration encouraged Christianity 'because of its moral influence' upon the natives.⁷⁸

The system of regular government grants to mission schools in the Southern Sudan from 1926 was in line with a general British policy towards missions schools in the rest of Africa. In 1925, for example, the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies invited to London the governors of West and East Africa and instructed them to work in partnership with the missionaries by subsidising their schools.⁷⁹ London most probably reckoned that the natives had then advanced enough to be introduced to the next stage of their development which required government participation. This was certainly the application of the policy of gradualism continental-wide. Further evidence of the role of the missionaries as an important appendage of colonial rule can be gleaned from Appendix VI.

In addition, even the type of secular education prescribed for Southern Sudanese pupils was an integral part of an African education suggested in Britain as early as 1901. The African Society, which was formed to act as an information bureau for Africa, stressed the need for a labour-oriented education; to discover the talents of the different peoples in such skills as arts and handicrafts for appropriate

training. The two leading authorities on the affairs of the Sudan, Cromer and Wingate, were closely associated with the Society from its early days, and so was the Director of Education, Currie. Cromer had by May 1901 joined it as a life member and Wingate received a membership form with attached objectives of the organisation the same month.⁸⁰

Both Cromer and Wingate were known advocates of native development along the lines of his own institutions, customs and regulations, as opposed to the 'hasty insertion of the iron ramrod of modern commercialism among half-developed peoples'.⁸¹ Such persons would not, and in fact did not, hesitate to adopt some of the Society's proposals. The later actions and utterances of Wingate and some of the Condominium officials about Southern Sudanese show that the African education project was the basis for early educational planning for the region. Currie's search for an appropriate policy, and Hillelson's recommendations were within this broad programme.

To conclude, the effects of the different aspects of British administration in the Southern Sudan would, with only small variations, be similarly experienced in other former British colonies in the continent whose peoples have common or related cultures and traditions. As Sevier stated:

In fact, had the Southern Sudan emerged in 1956 as a sovereign state, separate from the North, its history would have been comparable to that of neighbouring African countries which also shared in the heritage of British colonial rule.⁸²

Notes

1. Cutting from The Sun of 9 June 1902, SAD272/4/1-89.
2. Annual Report for 1899, pp.44, 55.
3. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan (1904), p.5.
4. Annual Report for 1905, p.109.
5. Duncan, The Sudan: A Record of Achievement, p.100.
6. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan (1902), pp. 242, 298.
7. Sudan Government Gazette, no 396, 15 June 1922.
8. H.B. Arber, 'The Typical Sudanese', 30 August 1945, SAD715/9/1-62. He served in different capacities between 1928-1954: Assistant District Commissioner in Kordofan and Mongalla between 1928-1936, A. Director of Press, Information Officer, and governor of Northern Province.
9. J.F.S Phillips, 'Notes for a history of the Sudan Political Service', undated but written after his last mission to Khartoum, SAD712/5/1-32. Phillips was a district official, 1945-1954, and British Ambassador to the Sudan 1973-1977.
10. Ibid.
11. Hall, Handbook for Egypt and the Sudan, p.582. The book claimed that the Dinka and Shilluk were largely Muslims, and that although the faith was on the decline among the population, 'chiefs with Arab blood or connection' continued to profess it.
12. Kur was deposed in 1903 by Governor Matthews on charges of misappropriation, unjust treatment of his tribe, and insubordination. It also appears that his Mahdist background as a Khalifa nominee partly accounted for Kur's removal. His imprisonment as an Ansar political prisoner together with such leading Mahdists as Osman Digna at Wadi Halfa lends support to the suggestion. Warburg, The Sudan Under Wingate, p.133; Matthews to Wingate, 31 July 1904, SAD275/5/1-38; H. Daffala, 'A Note on the Political Prisoners of Wadi Halfa', SNR, 47, (1966), p.149.
13. Phillips, 'Notes'.
14. J.A. Hamilton, (ed), The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan from Within (London, 1935), p.109.

15. Reports on the Finances (1903), pp.ix-x.
16. Matthews to Wingate, 30 April 1905, SAD276/4/1-99.
17. Governor, Bahr al-Ghazal Province to Civil Secretary, 5 June 1920, NRO, CivSec. 1/9/30.
18. Governor, Mongalla Province to Civil Secretary, 7 September 1920, Ibid.
19. Governor, Upper Nile Province to Civil Secretary, 17 October 1920, Ibid.
20. B. Davidson, Africa in History: Themes and Outlines, (London, 1984), p.282.
21. Quoted in D.M. Schreuder, 'The Cultural Factor in Victorian Imperialism: A Case Study of the British Civilising Mission', The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, Vol.IV, 3 (1976), p.293-294.
22. Sudan Government Gazette, no 86.
23. Reports on Finances (1904), p.57.
24. Reports on Finances (1903), p.76.
25. Ibid., p.18.
26. Reports on Finances (1906), p.351.
27. Reports on Finances (1908), p.195.
28. Barber, 'The Moving Frontier', p.32.
29. Gordon, Letters of General Gordon, p.134.
30. Ibid., p.133.
31. Sanderson and Sanderson, Education, Religion and Politics, p.18.
32. Ibid., p.39; quoting Civil Secretary to Catholic Representatives, 20 February 1902; Cromer to Secretary, C.M.S., 23 December 1904.
33. Ibid., p.18.
34. Jackson to Wingate, 15 June 1900, quoted in Beshir, The Southern Sudan, p.25.
35. Giffen, The Egyptian Sudan, pp.107-109.

36. H.C. Jackson, Pastor on the Nile (London, 1960), p.87.
37. Quoted by Cromer in Annual Report for 1905, p.13.
38. Annual Report for 1906, p.146.
39. E. Fothergill, Five Years in the Sudan (London, 1910), pp.178-179, 181-182, 184.
40. E.S. Steven, My Sudan Year (London, 1912), p.61.
41. T. Pakenham, The Scramble for Africa (London, 1991), pp.648-649; R.O. Collins, (ed.), Problems in the History of the Colonial Africa 1860-1960 (New Jersey, 1970), p.52.
42. Nigerian resistance to British rule was, for example, seen by one Briton, Sir Alan Burns, as prompted 'less by a zeal for independence than by a desire to continue the habit of murder, robbery, and cannibalism, which had become the second nature of these primitive people' (quoted in Collins, Problems in the History of Colonial Africa), p.45.
43. Currie and Bonus to Wingate, 2 January 1907, SAD103/4/1-55.
44. Quoted in Sanderson and Sanderson, Education, Religion and Politics, p.68, from the Gordon Memorial College Annual Report, 1908.
45. Ibid.
46. Currie to Civil Secretary, 31 January 1904, SAD103/5/1-72.
47. Wingate to Boulnois, 21 November 1904, Ibid.
48. Reports on the Finances (1907), p.95.
49. Ibid., p.124.
50. Reports on Finances (1906), p.715.
51. Gordon, Letters of General Gordon to his Sister, p.133.
52. Quoted in Sanderson and Sanderson, Education, Religion and Politics, p.69, from Seligman's report.
53. Hillelson, 'Report on Education in Mongalla Province', 22 April 1922, CivSec. 17/1/2.

54. Ibid.
55. Sanderson and Sanderson, Education, Religion and Politics, p.130.
56. Ibid., p.128. The governor of Upper Nile Province Willis mentioned in a report that a school at Renk was closed at the end of 1930 'because the pupils did not appear to be learning anything' (SAD212/13/1-59) Although the report did not give the specific name of the school, it can be assumed that Willis was referring to the government 'Boy Scout School', especially when the report maintained that it was the only school in the whole district.
57. Reports on Finances (1905), pp.55-56.
58. Salisbury to Cromer, 12 April 1899, quoted in Bakheit, op. cit., p.16. His stand is in line with this general statement about European occupation of Africa: 'There were few parts of Africa which were expected to produce immediate wealth. The European nations had partitioned Africa mainly in order to ensure that they would not be excluded from regions which might prove valuable in the future. Possession was what mattered to them, not development' (R. Oliver and A. Atmore, Africa Since 1800, Cambridge, 1967), p.128.
59. Wingate to Cromer, 25 April 1904, SAD275/3/1-35.
60. Cromer to Grey, March 1907, quoted in Bakheit, op. cit., p.17.
61. Reports on Finances (1906), p.560.
62. Wingate to Cromer, 3 June 1906, SAD278/6/1-37.
63. Reports on Finances (1903), pp.xvii, 32.
64. Sudan Government Gazette, no. 55.
65. Governor Willis was still tightening his protection of the Nilotics in Upper Nile in the late 1920s: '... it is desirable that the tribesmen should not be given easy opportunity of losing their true customs for an illusory social rise - Thus, if they are employed on any extensive works, it should be made a special condition of such employment that they should not mix with more sophisticated labourers from the North and should be dealt with in their own language through "gangers" of their own under the control of a British official with proper knowledge of their language and customs'. (C.A. Willis, 1930, SAD212/15/1-24).
66. Stigand's statement in NRO, Equatoria 2/3/10, 1919, quoted in Sevier, op. cit., p.123.

67. Sawyer's report in Equatoria 2/3/10, quoted in Ibid., p.122.
68. Stack to Wheatley, 14 May 1924, SAD702/12/1-46.
69. Stack to Wheatley, 1 June 1924, Ibid.
70. SAD702/12/1-46.
71. Schuster to Wheatley, 16 January 1926, Ibid.
72. Wheatley to Schuster, 23 February 1926, Ibid. Twenty-three years later, Wheatley still maintained that his former charges had not made any significant improvement in their lives to be left alone (Appendix V).
73. Oliver and Atmore, Africa Since 1800, p.152.
74. L.P. Sanderson, 'Educational Development and Administrative Control in the Nuba Mountains Region of the Sudan', JAH, IV, 2 (1963), p.235, citing governor of Kordofan, Gillian.
75. Ibid., p.237.
76. Ibid., p.238, citing Kordofan provincial Education file of 1924.
77. W.N.M. Geary, Nigeria Under British Rule (London, 1965), pp.127, 243.
78. Proceedings of the C.M.S. for Africa and the East (1907-1908), quoted in B.A Ogot, 'British Administration in the Central Nyanza District of Kenya, 1900-1906', JAH, IV, 2 (1906), p.250.
79. Oliver and Atmore, Africa Since 1800, p.164.
80. Secretary of The African Society, R. Sewell to Wingate, 7 May 1901, SAD 271/7/1-51.
81. Currie to Wingate, 1 July 1901, quoting John Morley, Ibid.
82. Sevier, op. cit., p.2.

Conclusion

This examination of the constraints upon British administration in the Southern Sudan has revealed new perspectives. It has been amply demonstrated that although the obstacles to development described in the existing literature were real, they do not alone provide an adequate explanation. Two factors made the existing understanding of constraints gain ascendancy over a fuller and more accurate explanation.

Firstly, the conventional interpretation of the disparity between Southern and Northern Sudan was initiated by British officials of the Sudan Government who were conscious of critical voices in both the Sudan and Britain about their administration. The likes of MacMichael, Duncan and Henderson tried to convince their critics that they did the best they could under such trying conditions. They were absolutely right to defend their records, as anyone else would have done. Unfortunately some of the scholars who drew much of their evidence from official government statements could do little but build upon this existing interpretation, only saying more to strengthen the theory of helplessness as advanced by some members of the Sudan Political Service. According to Daly, administering Southern peoples became difficult, because they did not have recognised leaders. And to explain in part why the railway was not extended to the South, Collins argued: 'It was easier to lay track on desert sand than through bottomless swamps'.¹ Yet not even Wingate, the founder of British administration, would have gone that far in explaining his difficulties. In reply to a question by a visitor who had heard from other people that the Sudan was 'nothing else than a vast desert', the Governor-General said:

That idea comes largely from the bleak and barren sands through which the railroad takes travellers on their way to Khartoum. They have also read of the immense swamps of the Upper Nile, and, putting the two together, they look upon the country as only swamps and desert. The truth is the Sudan is ... a land of many climates and of all sorts of soils.²

Secondly, the current conflict in the Sudan has meant that the British administration remains highly controversial. Sudanese factions do not hesitate to point an accusing finger at this or that aspect of British rule in the course of their struggle to determine how much of the national cake each should get. Sometimes mere assumptions, prejudice or hearsay are converted into 'evidence', which naturally leads to wrong conclusions, thereby confusing the problem more than it clarifies things. This thesis claims to have provided a sound basis for understanding the later period of Sudanese history.

In investigating the subject, attention has focused on three areas: the legacy of the 19th century, the physical and economic constraints, and British preconceptions. The experiences of the earlier colonial period have been examined to assess their bearing on later developments and were found to be of more impact in only a few situations, for example in the mistrust the native peoples had for the British. This took a long time to fade: some of the less restrained among government officials acted in ways that confirmed the suspicions of the natives, even while the more diplomatic and humane patiently cultivated mutual trust with them. It is alleged that total anarchy had existed, yet in reality relative order prevailed under which some economic development had even started. As to the claim that chaos set in whenever the Southerners were not under the control of an overlord, this has been contradicted by the evidence of an escalation of violence under Governor Baker; and of a degree of co-operation and integration among tribes before the colonial period, when some of them collectively faced external adversaries. Gordon's alleged pro-Southern Sudanese stance has been put in its proper perspective. His sole concern was the well-being of his subjects and in order to achieve this, he sometimes made statements and decisions which would appear contradictory to observers. And supposing that all Gordon's different actions and attitudes were to be applied to the current Sudanese political scene, even just for the sake of finding an outsider to sling mud on, as Sudanese often

do, Gordon could also be seen as a forerunner of the futile attempts by Northern Sudanese to control and 'care' for Southerners, a people they believe to be too backward to determine their own future.

Equally important is an understanding of the relationship between British thoughts about the Southern Sudan in the 19th century, and the preconceptions and actions of British officials after the reconquest. The view that the British had long-standing interests in the region as an independent object of strategic, economic, imperial and cultural importance has been substantiated. Opinions held by many British officials about the peoples of the Southern Sudan are seen to have stemmed from common cultural attitudes dating from the previous century. Such attitudes were reflected in the officials' plans for the socio-economic betterment of their charges. On this count, therefore, generalisation of British native policy is possible. This will be elaborated further.

It has been shown that the place of assignment and professional background of British officials counted for very little in the undeveloped state of the South. Central Government officials were neither ignorant of the region's needs nor were they disinterested in it from the colonial point of view, as the previous literature maintains. The South was clearly not a negligible appendage, but of paramount imperial standing to the British. It was, however, thought to have special needs which dictated special treatment as a prelude to the successful attainment of higher objectives. On the slow process adopted to reach the level where rapid development could be launched, there were no serious differences of views between the Central Government and provincial officials, and between soldiers and civilians. There were some persons at both levels and in both professions who advocated a more rapid pace, just as there were voices counselling delay. But as such views were based on personal assessment of the native's potential for social progress as seen from Western ethnocentric perspective, it was realised that it would be difficult to reach the desired standard in good time if

things remained at the mercy of individual impressions. Moreover, political developments in Northern Sudan necessitated the reinforcement of the existing protective isolation of the Southern tribes against Islamic influences/Northern outlook. Islamised urban blacks of Southern origin were prominent in the anti-British movement of the 1920s, which culminated in the disastrous armed confrontation of 1924. This threat had to be confined to the North,³ else such peoples like the Dinka who had of late been known to be 'an imitative people', with 'a tendency to ape the Arab' could easily import the Khartoum politics to the South.⁴ Accordingly MacMichael summarised those practices and pronouncements by individual British officials since the reconquest, whose 'motives and purposes were mixed, combining ideas on political, administrative, educational, religious and ethnic questions',⁵ into his Southern Policy of 1930.

Of the many and diverse objectives and obligations with which the British entered the region, the government took immediate steps to pursue some despite the obstacles. This was because it was understood that on their successful realisation depended other projects which were to be attended to at a later stage. Matters given early priority included commercial prospects in eastern Upper Nile, the Islamic policy and the establishment of a military control. Early but limited economic investigation was undertaken to confirm the existence of the assumed wealth. Policies were initiated to contain the influence of Islam, and to exclude a possible source of disruption to government's yet unspecified plans. And a reliable military force was necessary to guard the security of the region while possibilities to develop its resources and determine its future were considered.

Those objectives which were shelved for the time being were postponed largely because of restraints imposed by the prevailing attitudes towards the natives. It has been demonstrated that those preconceptions militated against any early forward development policy. This delay was a deliberate decision, because government

officials believed that early exposure of such undeveloped societies to sophisticated aspects of Western civilisation would do them more harm than good. They had therefore to be protected from such disruptive foreign influences until they were considered mature enough. A decision not to develop education was one of these forms of 'protection'. Lack of funds cannot satisfactorily account for the almost total absence of government provision for education in the region for so long. If private schools could be funded and mosques built in Northern Sudan, the same government could have been capable of financing at least one primary school in the Southern Sudan. But it could not be done because of the cultural conceptions which weighed heavily in the mind of Education officials. These British attitudes were probably as important in 'retarding' the development of the Southern Sudan as all the physical, financial and manpower constraints put together. The full impact of the preconceptions can be appreciated best by briefly considering how the policy of delay was maintained into the interwar period.

Epilogue

The middle interwar period is generally considered to be a time of relative peace in which for the first time the Sudan Government took up the question of development in the South seriously. This was the time of devolution of power to native leaders and the birth of MacMichael's famous Southern Policy. It was Willis, appointed governor of Upper Nile Province in 1926, who was the first to be swept along by the wind of change that blew from Khartoum. Unlike his counterpart in Bahr al-Ghazal, who rejected out of hand a generous offer from Khartoum, Willis desperately longed for an opportunity to improve conditions in his province. In 1927 he submitted an ambitious development programme to the Secretary of Finance. Willis wanted money for the implementation of Native Administration, construction of

roads, provision of a number of trucks and workshops, and additional British staff.⁶ But the response was not encouraging; the big men in Khartoum still held some of the old cultural tradition. Schuster did not see the wisdom of such an expenditure in the Southern provinces which, he declared had 'little chance for many years of building up a system of agricultural exports which will make them pay'.⁷ So before any final decision could be made, the Civil Secretary, MacMichael went to Upper Nile to assess its needs. His findings did not augur well for regional development. Reporting back to the Governor-General, MacMichael wrote: 'My impression of Upper Nile Province ... was that it represented the most dismal portion of the Sudan - that it was a Serbonian Bog into which had drifted or had been pushed all the lowest racial elements surviving north of the equator ...'⁸ The governor's proposal was discarded on the ground that the tribes were not yet sufficiently advanced for Native Administration.⁹ Yet when Willis presented another request for funds in 1929, this time for military operations against Nuer prophets accused of being the force behind the backwardness in Upper Nile, £26,000 was promptly released to the province.¹⁰

Willis himself was not far from MacMichael in his preconceptions about the natives. Even if he had been granted his development budget, it is not clear how he planned to carry out his reforms. In a letter to the Secretary of Finance in 1928, Willis expressed this opinion about the local peoples:

It is to be hoped that the rate of progress with these tribes will increase appreciably under the system of 'Devolution', but the application of it above all things requires time; and I should view with apprehension any scheme which involved unduly hastening the stages of development of these tribes.

The past season's work has given abundant evidence of the normal difficulties of administering these tribes. The imposition on to their habit of a project of irrigation involving the most modern machinery and a complicated organisation must create disturbance not merely to their material conditions but their moral and mental outlook.

Our policy may be described as bringing the natives from the first Chapter of Genesis to the Book of Judges, but if we hasten too much, we shall be liable to be plunged into Revelations.¹¹

Willis meant what he said, and tried during his tenure of office to preserve tribal standards even against what does not appear to be at all disruptive. The governor endeavoured, for example, to discourage 'a tendency in some cases to try and teach natives a craft that can be of no obvious application to their own needs eg brick making'.¹²

Expansion in education was another source of worry to government officials. While R.K. Winter, Secretary of Education, admitted that the education of the African had in the past 'been subjected to criticism and even to actual opposition', and promising that henceforth it was going to become 'the business of everyone',¹³ he did not in fact turn his back completely on the past. In 1932 he spelt out his Department's policy as essentially to concentrate on elementary vernacular education, 'taking care that the teaching given sends the boy back happily to his tribal environment'. Winter considered this objective to be 'the ideal'.¹⁴ On the post-elementary education provided by the subsidised mission schools, Winter and the three provincial governors counselled caution. On behalf of this group, he expressed disquiet about what he saw as an alarming annual turn out of about sixty to seventy mission boys:

I am warned that this kind of progress can only result in detribalisation and the filling of our towns with educated unemployed. If so, is the prospect one which we can tolerate? Are we to build up a detribalised class to become a danger to morality and good government? We do not deny higher education to the few who can assimilate it, but any attempt to go too fast must be resisted.¹⁵

Many years were to elapse before the government felt it should become directly involved in Southern education. The first intermediate and a secondary school were only opened respectively in 1944 and 1948 at Atar in Upper Nile, and Rumbek in Bahr al-Ghazal. The caution seemed to have been heeded.

Finally, two more revealing comments from British district officials are worth citing. An administrator in Mongalla Province between 1931 and 1936 described the type of relations they maintained with their subjects all over the South thus:

Our attitude to the tribes and indeed the attitude of all the old Southern DC's was very district - proud and we thought our tribes better than anyone else's. But we were very paternalistic towards them, seldom shaking hands or accepting food as one did in the more egalitarian North where one would drink tea in the humblest *tukl*. We thought it our duty to help them preserve their way of life ... I was sitting in my office at Torit once when an irate doctor from the Roan Antelope mine in [South Africa], passing through and staying in the rest house, burst into my office and said: "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, letting these people go naked". It had never struck us so, ... In this way of thinking I was a supporter of Southern policy but not in favour of christianising them ...¹⁶

On the education of Dinka boys in missions schools, M.G. Richards, a long-serving British official among the tribe, was apprehensive, as revealed by the case of his servants. He had wanted them to become Christians and that meant sending them to a mission school, a sacrifice Richards was not prepared to make. He feared that if they attended such a school, 'they would acquire tricks and arts which would presently lead to their dismissal'. He therefore 'had them without change for 18 years (and they retired as good pagans)'. The boys' dismissal from school was not the only cause for concern. Richards suspected that if they, and any other Dinka boys, ever completed a full school course, they would not 'be properly reabsorbed into tribal life'. The boys would be a source of local insecurity as they would 'always be unsettled and won't know what they are striving for once they get back amongst the cattle and spears' for they would 'feel too good to get down to the ashes once again'. The result could be 'dissatisfaction and weak links in tribal organisation and life'.¹⁷ One of the remedies suggested by officials in the South was to have special schools for Dinka children (See Appendix III).

It is apparent from such instances that even if the physical, financial and manpower constraints had not existed, or were there but in manageable proportions, the South would still not have advanced significantly because of the rulers' attitudes towards its peoples. To be sure, the Southern Sudanese were not alone in receiving this colonial treatment, nor were the British the only colonial power practising phased development of the African natives. According to one African writer, gradualism was a common European policy towards the subjects.

... the African peoples were to be developed slowly, as rapid development would have the effect of upsetting the orderly process of evolution. The white man was to set the pace of this development. African progress - its volume and its rate - was to be given in small doses like prescribed medicine lest big quantities destroy the immature African.¹⁸

The difference with the Southern Sudanese situation is the time factor. They remained almost where they were found at the reconquest not because of neglect, or lack of funds and other constraints, but mainly because of over-concern - excessive protection, if you like. The officials, on the whole, meant well, but the period the Southern Sudanese spent in the nursery became too long, for its consequences have proved far-reaching. Even in the final years of the Condominium rule when 'much of what we did was in response to external events and to meet immediate needs and was not part of an orderly policy thought out and promoted on its merits',¹⁹ it was never lost on officials that this prolonged incubation period would in the future undermine the Southerners' ability to fend for themselves in a united Sudan. When James Robertson, Civil Secretary, decided on behalf of the Southern Sudanese in 1947 to unite the two parts of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, he did it in spite of warnings of the dire consequences of such a move from 'all' those British officials he had consulted. They expressed fears that without safeguards, in such a unity, the Southern Sudanese 'will not be able to develop along indigenous lines' for they 'will be overwhelmed and

swamped by the North, and deteriorate into a servile community hewing wood and drawing water for a superior Northern aristocracy'.²⁰

British officials in the South were particularly active in the campaign for safeguards. They knew their subjects better than the higher officials in Khartoum who were more concerned with political developments beyond the Sudan. The deputy governor of Upper Nile Province, J. Winder predicted rebellion by Southern Sudanese as early as 1946 - nine years before the Torit incident - if the amalgamation of the two parts of colony did not consider the special condition of the South.²¹ When the revolt of the Equatorial Battalion occurred in August 1955, Major J.W.G. Wyld, a long-serving district officer in the Dinka and Zande land did not hesitate to blame the incident on the 'ill-conceived experiment' of handing over a backward people to their traditional enemies without guarantees. Not only that: Wyld even went further to warn all concerned to brace themselves for more serious situations to come: 'No one can suppose that the chapter of disaster and misery is closed, only the first page has been turned'.²² Subsequent events have proved both men right. For another disappointed campaigner for safeguards for the South, B.A. Carlise, also a former district administrator in the South during the 1950s, what British officials did for the region has fallen down 'like a pack of cards' in the North-South conflict. His only consolation is the survival of the Christian Church.²³ One member of the Sudan Political Service, M. Parr, former governor of Upper Nile and Equatoria has, however, thrown the challenge to the Sudanese. Parr admitted that a mistake had been made, but 'the condominium cannot retrieve that mistake for it no longer exists'.²⁴

The open admission of mistakes is certainly soothing to the ear of the distressed in the war-torn Sudan and should spur the Sudanese on to correct them. But in fairness to the British, some of the results of their 'blunders' in the Sudan are the two legacies which the Sudanese enshrine today. In the South, the colonial administration

fostered a sense of shared identity among the hitherto heterogeneous peoples of the region. The practice of a semi-detached regional administration semi-detached from that in Khartoum, the effects of missionary education and the introduction of Christian religion began slowly to erode tribal allegiances, making the first of their educated leaders identify with one another as compatriots. And although the process of political integration had not been fully achieved at independence, due in the main to the small numbers of Southern graduates, the rural population were faintly aware of their new identity. At the Juba Conference of 1947 when the people of the South sat down together for the first time ever to take a collective political decision, tribal chiefs, police men, and junior clerks spoke not for their respective peoples but for a 'Southern Sudan' and identified themselves as Southern Sudanese. From that time the peoples of the geographical Southern Sudan have continued to rally around this pillar, which the Condominium created, for their collective security and socio-economic advancement in the Sudan. While some of the Southerners' criticisms of the Southern Policy may be justified, people should appreciate this fact of their life.

A parallel policy of regional consolidation was also pursued by the British in Northern Sudan, with the effect of making it more Arab and Muslim. The government ban on Christian proselytising has been cited. Arabic was taught as the first language, followed by English for higher studies, just the same as in the South where the different Southern languages and English were the medium of instruction. Arabic was not encouraged in the South because 'there [was] no room ... for the introduction of a second foreign language'.²⁵

There were other positive developments for the North under the Condominium policy of segregation between the two regions. As with many British officials in the South who identified with their subjects, so those in the North leaned a great deal towards Northern Sudanese. But as the officials in Khartoum were the decision makers such association yielded handsome dividends to the local peoples. Their

country, seen by some officials as the 'New Arabia', was 'being methodically equipped to take its ultimate place in the comity of Arab peoples'.²⁶ The Civil Secretary, Douglas Newbold, became so much committed to the Northern Sudanese that he had little thought for the other Sudanese peoples in the South. 'I don't think I shall ever be a good 'African' - tho' I like these blacks - my heart has been too long with Arabs in Kordofan and Kassala'.²⁷ Another intimate attachment of the Arab North to the British is demonstrated by the government concern over what could be called a personal identity crisis. During the First World War, the Assistant Director of Intelligence, C.A. Willis, went on a visit to Jerusalem with a Northern Sudanese notable, Sharif al-Hindi. This was at a time when the British fostered closer friendship ties with local leaders to prevent the spread of pro-Turkish propaganda. Part of the visit was to enable al-Hindi to see for himself the defeat of the Turks through the large number of their prisoners-of-war. The other reason, perhaps the main, was for the Sudanese dignitary to remove doubts about his pedigree. It appears the name 'Hindi' (Arabic for Indian) might have led to his background being questioned by his political rivals. Whatever the pressure behind the decision to settle this issue once and for all, Willis took al-Hindi to the mayor of Hebron, tutelary head of the Ashraf clan, to certify al-Hindi's claims to being an Ashraf.²⁸

The concern shown in this personal matter was a fulfilment of Kitchener's instructions to Condominium officials to secure 'the better class of native' by friendly gestures and by interest shown in their personal affairs. As there were 'pan-African' British officials so were there 'pan-Arabs among them. Therefore, a block allegation of British victimisation of one Sudanese group or region would be too sweeping a generalisation. In fact the Condominium Government tried until 1947 to preserve 'to the full the British tradition of the predominance of the interests of the native in his own country over that of the immigrant races', which was the policy pursued also in East Africa.²⁹ For example, when settlers in Kenya pressed for more land and forced

native labour, the British Government declared in 1923 that the interests of the indigenous peoples must be to the fore,

and ... if and when these interests and the interests of the immigrant races should conflict, the former should prevail. The principle of Trusteeship for the Natives ... is unassailable.³⁰

British officials in the Sudan understood this East African policy to be an endorsement of their own policies towards the South, and this principle of native trusteeship reinforced the existing factors in the relative isolation or insulation of the region. As Parr, a member of the Khartoum secretariat when the Southern Policy was formulated, wrote:

The [Sudan Government] were aware of the problems created in Kenya and Uganda by the unrestricted entry of Indians who monopolised trade and other functions before the natives were sufficiently educated to do things for themselves. They were determined that a similar misfortune should not befall the Southern Sudan by the unrestricted immigration of Arabs or anyone else.³¹

Similar protection was extended in Northern Sudan against the Egyptian settlers, most clearly expressed in the field of education. More keen to acquire education than the relatively unsophisticated peoples of the North, the settlers occupied most places in schools, a development which Cromer condemned. He accordingly directed that emphasis should be on the education of *bona fide* Sudanese.³²

The circumstances under which British officials operated as well as their objectives have been described and assessed. It is apparent that traces of colonial rule remain present in the post-independence Sudan, but the question to be asked is: have they diminished or been magnified? Surely almost forty years of Sudanese rule should have seen a change for the better. But as things seem to go from bad to worse, the Sudanese themselves have something to answer for. It is time they started to look for internal factors to explain their troubles; to rise to the occasion and abandon the habit

of looking beyond their own borders in times of internal crisis to find a scapegoat for problems of their own making. The British shadow still looms large in current North-South relations, almost four decades after independence. But the big challenge before the Sudanese is to prove by deeds that the colonial master was wrong and they are right.

Notes

1. Collins, Land Beyond the Rivers, p.238.
 2. Wingate's conversation with Carpenter, 1907, in 'Frank Go Carpenters Letters', SAD133/22/1-105.
 3. P. Woodward, Condominium and Sudanese Nationalism (London, 1979), pp.10-11.
 4. In his future plans for the province, written in 1927-1928, Willis paid special attention to the Dinka: 'They ... adopt anything that they think will give them a higher social status. For this reason they are easily Arabicised, but the result is deplorable. It is noteworthy that quite a number of the leaders of the White Flag League were Dinka (notably Ali Abdel Latif the head of it). It seems particularly desirable in the circumstances to keep the Dinka developing along their own lines and not adopting alien customs' (SAD212/11/1-34).
- Other prominent Dinka leaders of the 1924 events included: lieutenants Abd al-Fadil Almaz, who led the armed revolt in November; Zein al-Abdin Abd al-Tam, who organised armed demonstrations at Wau, Bahr al-Ghazal in August, and at Talodi in the Nuba Mountains in November; and Kabsun Al-Jack, who represented the League in one of the three wards of the town of Omdurman (H. Abdin, Early Sudanese Nationalism 1919-1925 (Khartoum, 1985, pp.84-86, 88).
- In Wau town situated on the fringes of Dinka country, isolation of the Dinka was attempted in 1930 when provincial authorities took measures to prevent settlement of 'detrified' Dinka in the town. These included the 'elimination of all dinka [sic] from the police and prison warders' and 'the total exclusion of dinka [sic] influence' (Ingleson, Governor of Bah al-Ghazal to Civil Secretary, protesting against the policy, 14 May 1935, NRO, CivSec 16/2/3).
5. Woodward, Condominium, p.9.
 6. Collins, Shadows in the Grass, pp.120-121.
 7. Schuster to Maffey, Governor General, 3 April 1927, quoted in Ibid. p.121.
 8. MacMichael to Maffey, 29 May 1927, quoted in Ibid., p.122.
 9. Ibid.
 10. Ibid., pp.123-143.

11. Willis to Huddleston, Secretary of Finance, 31 May 1928, SAD212/5/1-53.
 12. SAD212/13/1-59.
 13. Minutes of Juba educational conference, 1-4 April 1933, NRO, B.G.P. 1/3/18.
 14. Winter's Education policy submitted to the Governor-General, 2 July 1932, NRO, Equatoria 1/4/19. But in an education's committee which he chaired in Northern Sudan the same year, the emphasis was on the provision of training for the people 'in the administrative and technical departments of the Government in order to increase their usefulness and provide openings' for their future advancement. (Report by Winter and MacMichael, 7 March 1933, NRO, Equatoria 1/4/14.)
 15. Minutes of Juba educational conference, 1-4 April 1933, NRO, B.G.P. 1/3/18.
 16. H.B. Arber's memoirs, SAD736/2/1-27. The gist of the Southern policy which Arber referred is contained in one single sentence of a long document which runs as follows: 'The policy of the Government in the Southern Sudan is to build up a series of self contained racial or tribal units with structure and organisation based, to whatever extent the requirements of equity and good government permit, upon indigenous customs, traditional usage and beliefs'.
- Arber felt justified in opposing the natives' conversion to Christianity because the missionaries' message was the very anti-thesis of the government policy. An incident at Torit in 1929 is a typical example. A young Latuka man was prevented from marrying a girl by the Catholic mission on the ground that the girl had become a Christian and could not be married to a pagan. This was after the families had agreed and the bride wealth paid. The case went to the government native court and the Church won. (C.N. Wilson, District Commissioner, Torit, to Governor, Mongalla Province, 16 September 1929, NRO, CivSec 1/13/43.)
17. M.G. Richards to C.W. Cox, Director of Education, 25 October 1937, SAD663/13/1-37.
 18. N. Sithole, African Nationalism (2nd ed.), (Oxford, 1968), p.128.
 19. Philips, 'Comments'.
 20. J. Robertson, Transition in Africa (London, 1974), p.108.
 21. J. Winder, 'Note on the Suggestions made by the Sudanese Administration Conference, Committee 'A' on the Method of Including the Southern Provinces with those of the North ...') November 1946, SAD541/8/8-12.
Excerpts from the document form Appendix IV; draft in SAD104/13/1-16.

22. J.W.G. Wyld, to R.H. Turton in the Foreign Office, 14 December 1955, SAD779/7/1-28.
23. B.A. Carlisle, 'Memoirs', SAD725/10/1-22.
24. M.W. Parr to The British Weekly, 29 November 1963, SAD722/1/1-39.
25. Ibid.
26. K.D.D. Henderson, Survey of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan 1898-1941 (London, 1944), pp.1, 21.
27. Ibid., The Making of the Modern Sudan (London, 1953), quoting Newbold to Robertson, 1 July 1944.
28. Willis 'Sidelights on the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan', SAD646/1/1-172.
29. Governor General, Archer to Allenby, 27 April 1925, FO371/10880.
30. Quoted in Oliver and Atmore, Africa Since 1800, pp.163-164.
31. Parr to The British Weekly.
32. Cromer to Wingate, 3 February 1904, SAD275/2/1-49.

APPENDICES

I

Kitchener's Memorandum to Mudirs, 1899

(an extract)

The absolute uprootal by the Dervishes of the old system of Government has afforded an opportunity for initiating a new Administration more in harmony with the requirements of the Soudan.

2. The necessary Laws and Regulations will be carefully considered and issued as required, but it is not mainly to the framing and publishing of laws that we must look for the improvement and the good government of the country.

3. The task before us all, and especially the Mudirs and Inspectors, is to acquire the confidence of the people, to develop their resources, and to raise them to a higher level. This can only be effected by the District Officers being thoroughly in touch with the better class of native, through whom we may hope gradually to influence the whole population. Mudirs and Inspectors should learn to know personally all the principal men of their district, and show them, by friendly dealings and the interest taken in their individual concerns, that our object is to increase their prosperity. Once it is thoroughly realised that our officers have at heart, not only the progress of the country generally, but also the prosperity of each individual with whom they come into contact, their exhortations to industry and improvement will gain redoubled force. Such exhortations, when issued in the shape of Proclamations or Circulars, effect little; it is to the individual action of British officers, working independently, but with a common purpose, on the individual natives whose confidence they have gained that we must look for the moral and industrial regeneration of the Soudan.

4. The people should be taught that the truth is always expected, and will be equally well received whether pleasant or the reverse. By listening to outspoken

opinions, when respectfully expressed, and checking liars and flatterers, we may hope in time to effect some improvement in this respect in the country.

5. In the administration of justice in your province you should be very careful to see that legal forms, as laid down, are strictly adhered to, so that the appointed Courts may be thoroughly respected; and you should endeavour, by the careful inquiry given by the Courts to the cases brought before them, to inspire the people with absolute confidence that real justice is being meted out to them. It is very important that the Government should do nothing which could be interpreted as a sign of weakness, and all insubordination must be promptly and severely suppressed. At the same time, a paternal spirit of correction for offences should be your aim in your relation with the people, and clemency should be shown in dealing with first offences, especially when such may be the result of ignorance, or are openly acknowledged. In the latter case, they should be more than half pardoned in order to induce truthfulness.

6. Be careful to see that religious feelings are not in any way interfered with, and that the Mohamedan religion is respected.

7. Mosques in the principal towns will be rebuilt, but private mosques, takias, zawiyas, sheikhs' tombs, &c., cannot be allowed to be re-established, as they generally formed centres of unorthodox fanaticism. Any request for permission on such subjects must be referred to the Central authority.

8. Slavery is not recognised in the Soudan, but as long as service is willingly rendered by servants to master it is unnecessary to interfere in the conditions existing between them. Where, however, any individual is subjected to cruel treatment, and his or her liberty interfered with, the accused can be tried on such charges, which are offences against the law, and in serious case of cruelty the severest sentences should be imposed.

Source: Annual Report for 1899, pp.55-56.

II

A. List of Provincial Governors of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1898-1924

Governors of Bahr al-Ghazal Province

1. W.S. Sparkes, 1901 - 8 March 1904
2. W.A Boulnois, 9 March 1904 - 30 May 1905
3. A. Sutherland, 1 October 1905 - 1 October 1906 (Acting from 30 May 1905)
4. H.B. Hill, 1 October 1906 - 3 June 1908
5. R.V. Savile, 3 June 1908 - 28 December 1908
6. H. Gordon, 28 December 1908 - 12 November 1910
7. R.M. Feilden, 12 November 1910 - 1 April 1917
8. Viscount Hawarden, 1 October 1917 - 22 June 1920
9. M.J. Wheatley, 1 January 1921 - 22 July 1928

Governors of Berber Province

1. H.W. Jackson, 1899 - 1 January 1900
2. F.J. Nason, 1 January 1900 - 31 December 1901
3. H.W. Jackson, 1 January - 1 June 1902
4. A. de S. McKerrell, 1 June 1902 - 5 July 1903
5. H.B. Hill, 2 October 1903 - 1 October 1906
6. A. Sutherland, 1 October 1906 - 1 November 1907
7. E.B. Wilkinson, 1 January 1908 - 1 January 1910
8. C.H. Townsend, 1 January 1910 - 28 May 1913
9. G.C Kerr, 28 May 1913 - 19 August 1913
10. C.P. Browne, 1 November 1914 - 15 December 1921
11. T.A. Leach, 15 December 1921 - 10 August 1924
12. H.C. Jackson, 10 August 1924 - 24 September 1926

Governors of Darfur Province

1. P.J.V. Kelly, 23 May 1916 - 11 May 1917
2. R.V. Savile, 11 May 1917 - 1 November 1923
3. P. Munro, 1 November 1923 - 1 January 1925

Governors of Dongola Province

1. T.E. Hickman, 1898 - 9 December 1900
2. A. de S. McKerrell, 10 December 1900 - 1 June 1902
3. H.W Jackson, 1 June 1902 - 21 March 1922

4. G.E. Iles, 21 March 1922 - 10 August 1924
5. W.R.G Bond, 10 August 1924 - 22 September 1926

Commandants of Fashoda District and Governors of Upper Nile Province

1. H.W. Jackson, 1898 - 1899
2. W.S. Sparkes, 1899 - 1900
3. W. Hayes-Sadler, 1900
4. A. Blewitt, 7 December 1900 - 28 May 1902
5. G.E. Matthews, 27 May 1902 - 6 January 1910
6. H.D.E. O'Sullivan, 6 January 1910 - 16 August 1911
7. F.W. Woodward, 1 January 1913 - 23 March 1916
8. J.R. Bassett, 23 March - 2 October 1916
9. C.H. Stigand, 12 May 1917 - 16 March 1919
10. K.C.P. Struvé, 16 March 1919 - 17 December 1926

Governors of Gezira Province (sometime Blue Nile Province)

1. A. Blewitt, 28 May 1902 - 18 August 1903
2. E.B. Wilkinson, 7 - 16 October 1903
3. E.A. Dickinson, 1 January 1904 - 17 March 1914
4. G.E. Iles, 17 March 1914 - 21 March 1922
5. A.J.C. Huddleston, 21 March 1922 - 1 January 1928

Governor of Halfa Province

1. F.G. Anley, 1898 - 1899
2. C. James, 1900
3. W. Hayes-Sadler, 1901 - 21 December 1904
4. G.E. Iles, 1905 (Acting)
5. H.H.S. Morant, 5 December 1905 - 29 March 1908
6. E.D Young, 29 March 1908 - 9 March 1909
7. C.H. Townsend, 16 September - 31 December 1909
8. St. C.M.G. MacEwen, 1910 (Acting)
9. C. Percival, 1911 (Acting)
10. G.E. Iles, 1 April 1912 - 17 March 1914 (Acting until 1 January 1913)
11. C.E. Lyall, 1 March 1921 - 17 March 1914
12. S.A. Tippetts, 6 April 1917 - 2 August 1922
13. J.W. Sagar, 2 August 1922 - 7 November 1924
14. R.A. Bence-Pembroke, 7 November - 31 December 1924

Governors of Kassala Province

1. J. Collinson, 1898 - 29 August 1901
2. St. G.C. Henry, 12 March 1902 - 16 October 1903
3. E.B. Wilkinson, 16 October 1903 - 1 January 1908
4. A. Cameron, 1 January 1908 - 28 May 1913
5. C.H. Townsend, 28 May 1913 - 5 April 1917
6. C.E. Lyall, 6 April 1917 - 15 December 1921
7. C.P. Browne, 15 December 1921 - 26 May 1926

Governors of Khartoum Province

1. J.G. Maxwell, 1899 - 12 February 1900
2. E.A. Stanton, 1900 - 24 February 1909
3. C.E. Wilson, 24 February 1909 - 28 May 1913
4. R.E. More, 1 March 1914 - 1 January 1920
5. A.J.C. Huddleston, 1 January 1920 - 21 March 1922
6. E.N. Corbyn, 21 March 1922 - 10 August 1924
7. T.A. Leach, 10 August 1924 - 1 January 1925

Governors of Kardofan Province

1. B.T. Mahon, 1 February 1901 - 28 April 1903
2. J.R. O'Connell, 25 September 1903 - 31 December 1907
3. H.D.W. Lloyd, 1 January - 28 December 1908
4. R.V. Savile, 28 December 1908 - 11 May 1917
5. J.W. Sagar, 11 May 1917 - 2 August 1922
6. J.D. Craig, 2 August 1922 - 1 January 1926

Governors of Mongalla Province

1. A. Cameron, 1 January 1906 - 1 January 1908
2. R.C.R. Owen, 28 February 1908 - 1 February 1918
3. C.S. Northcote, 1 February 1918 - 16 March 1919
4. C.H. Stigand, 16 March - 8 December 1919
5. V.R. Woodland, 1920 - 6 October 1924
6. R.A. Bence-Pembroke, 6 October - 7 November 1924
7. A.W. Skrin, 7 November 1924 - 4 August 1929

Governors of Sennar Province

1. D.F. Lewis, 1898 - 1900
2. G. de H. Smith, 1901

3. G.F. Gorringer, 11 December 1901 - 30 December 1904
4. C.E. Wilson, 30 December 1904 - 24 February 1909
5. G.S. Nickerson, 24 February 1909 - 31 December 1911
6. A.A.C. Taylor, 1 January 1912 - 28 May 1913 (Acting)
7. A. Cameron, 28 May 1913 - 5 September 1921

Governors of the White Nile Province

1. J. Butler, 1 January 1905 - 16 November 1913
2. K.C.P. Struvé, 1 March 1914 - 16 March 1919
3. E.N. Corbyn, 16 March 1919 - 21 March 1922
4. J.D. Craig, 21 March - 2 August 1922
5. W. Nicholls, 2 August 1922 - 24 September 1926

Source: Selected from M W Daly, 'Principal Office - Holders in the Sudan Government, 1898 - 1955', July 1983 SAD725

B. List of Civilian provincial Governors of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1898-1924 (for the provinces in 'A').

1. Butler
2. Lyall
3. Browne
4. Iles
5. Struve
6. Leach
7. Sagar
8. Tippetts
9. Huddleston
10. Munro
11. Craig
12. Woodland
13. Corbyn
14. Bond
15. Nicholls

Source: Sudan Political Service, 1899-1956

III

An Extract from a Proposal for a Dinka Government School, by G. Janson-Smith, Inspector of Education, Equatoria Province, to Director of Education, May 1939

General Desiderata

- (i) The school will stress the fact that it is a response to a definite need, that it is a *Dinka* School based on Dinka social ideas and institutions, a corollary in the educational sphere of local self-government.
- (ii) The school would have its own herd and would pay great attention to following out in practice the principles of mixed farming.
- (iii) An elected body of local chiefs and elders would possibly be set up to advise in matters where the school came in contact with Dinka ideas and customs ... Contacts with Dinka life going on around the school would be as close as possible.
- (iv) The Christian religion would not be taught in the school, but there would be teaching in Ethics developing ideas which are already to be found amongst the Dinka such as their belief in God (Nhialic), their sense of responsibility to family, clan and chief, and their respect for tribal elders.

Source: SAD664/9/1-12

Note: When the school was opened after the Second World War at Tonj, it had a herd attended by a cattle-chief and a council of Dinka elders. And to maintain the link between the school and the rural Dinka life, where males enjoyed nudity, the pupils were allowed to strip off their clothes after lessons and joined the villagers in their social activities (Sanderson and Sanderson, Education, Religion and Politics, p.264.

IV

Excerpts from: 'Note on the Suggestions made by the Sudan Administrative Conference, Committee "A", on the Method of Including the Southern Provinces with Those of the North in a First Step towards the Independence of the Sudan as a Whole which was Foreshadowed by his Excellency the Governor General's Speech to his Advisory Council on April 17th 1946

by John Winder, November 1946

- (4) The Southern Sudan, non arab, [sic] black in colour, pagan or christian [sic] for the most part in religion, is very different from the mainly arab [sic] and nearly wholly Muslim North. It is surely dangerous to try to unite too closely such divergent types. At present the South is inarticulate and, in any case, so unaware of what is afoot, that, even if it could speak, it could not do so to the point... Is the future of the Southern Sudanese to be decided for them by unilateral action in the North? Is the Southerner, with his very different background, and his memory of the Northerner as the son of his slave raiding father, to be made to sink his identity with the North before he is grown up enough to know what he is about? Is the girl child of the South to be subjected to a marriage with a nearly full grown son of the North?
- (7) Historically, where a Union of people nothing like so different as are those of the Northern and Southern Sudan has been tried, it has usually been a failure: even such comparatively similar parties as Norway and Sweden, with their political good sense, found that complete union would not work and, after a trial, agreed to part again and search for some looser association ... The union of Ireland and England is perhaps the greatest blunder in history. The Thirteen

American States tried Union and quickly found they had to invent something looser if they were to hold together politically: they invented the idea of the Federal Union whereunder the cultural development of each member was left undisturbed while the questions necessary for the political good of the whole were delegated to a sovereign assembly. The Federal idea was adopted in Canada and it is doubtful whether a closer form of union would have held the French Canadians. Federalism enabled the Swiss to harness in sufficiently close national unit the German, French and Italian communities among which the country is divided.

(8) In not a single case quoted above has the divergence between the parties which it was desirable to unite been no great as that between the mainly arab [sic], arabic [sic] speaking and Mohamedan Northern Sudan and the predominantly African, pagan or Christian South, with its differing languages. Surely enough has been written to show how dangerous a cultural and social as well as political and economic amalgamation can be and to point to some much looser union as being essential in their case.

(9) There is however one major difficulty. In no case in history, I believe, has there been a Federal Union between two or more parties where each member has not been financially and economically solvent, and it is probably true to say that the Federal Idea would not work in such a case. It is clearly not desirable, even if possible, that one party should be financially dependent on the other or others. This has been realised in the case of the Federal Union of Australia where the Northern Territory is not yet regarded as a Member State due to its economic poverty, though there is little doubt that, as soon as it has been adequately developed, it will take its place in the Federal Union. The United States of

America only incorporated new territory as a State of the Union after due economic development had taken place.

- (10) Lying behind all the above is the plea that before a Union takes place between the Northern and Southern Sudan, the eventual economic position of the South should have been uncovered. If the South is always to remain a poor relation of the North, then by all means let it be realised for then the South, having no other future will have to sink its identity in the North. But, if as a result of a thorough Survey, it can be shown that the South possesses resources which being developed will enable it one day to be solvent, then let the example of the Northern Territory of Australia be followed: let it be developed as a special area in order that, in time, it may stand on its own feet and make its proper contribution to the Sudan as a whole.
- (11) The above plea is reinforced when it is realised what immense practical difficulties confront an immediate union on the lines suggested by Committee "A". Even if the Southern Provinces could produce 18 delegates who could understand questions under debate in the General Assembly, they would only represent their own small local tribal units. This state of affairs can only be remedied by a spread of education and the passing of time. Of course education must be pressed on as fiercely as possible in the South, but apart from financial difficulties there are all sorts of obstacles to quick returns. Then, neither the North or [sic] the South has an insight into the problems of the other, and there are geographical and linguistic reasons which will perpetuate such a state of affairs. Further, there is the fact that the Northerner despises the Southerner and the latter is deeply suspicious of the good intentions of the former: only association on equal terms over a long period can be expected to overcome this.

(12) Many of the Southern Peoples have character and ability, though much of the latter is still latent. I feel that a policy of 100% Union, as advocated by Committee "A", since it is bound largely to arabicise [sic] and Mohamedanise the South, and, consequently, to cut the Southerner off from the sources of his own culture further south, will retard the development of the South and make the Southerner, in every sense a poorer partner for the North. If the South can never be solvent this may be inevitable and must be accepted, but I believe that it is by no means certain that the South must always accept an inferior status and that adequate research may well show the opposite to be true, in which case, under some form of federation, the South could join the North with political and economic ties while retaining the freedom to develop [sic] socially and culturally unfettered by what is alien to it.

John Winder

Malakal November 1946

Source: SAD541/8/8-12

Wheatley's Reflections on:
The Modern Sudan 10 May, 1949

The Sudan is divisible into three very distinct areas.

1. Northern Sudan extending from Wadi Halfa to Khartoum.
2. Middle Sudan which contains (a) the old Fung Kingdom centring on the Blue Nile above Khartoum and (b) Kordofan on the West side of the White Nile between Khartoum and Malakal.
3. The Southern Sudan or Sudd region extending from Malakal to Mongalla, and to the boundary between Uganda and the Sudan.

In (1) the inhabitants favour in the main, it is believed, union with Egypt.

In (2) the great majority, it is believed, favour an independent Sudan.

In (3) there is no public opinion in this region in favour of either of the two parties (a) pro Egyptian or (b) for the Independence already mentioned. It is believed they then would prefer British beneficent rule.

Neither (1) or (2) have a strong, if any, wish to be saddled with (3), nor do any of them recognise the immense potentialities of the area. The people in (3) themselves do not recognise its immense value.

The potential value of (3) is enormous. It is a plain of some 40,000,000 acres. It is not a "level" plain in every direction. It has a slope from south to north which will allow of fairly easy drainage for a great part of the land, the remainder can be drained by pumps acting under low heads.

Today it is useless because the river spreads over it at all seasons of the year but of course much more during the flood season than at other times.

All the water so spilled out of the river is evaporated away from the plain.

Tomorrow when Egypt trains the river as she now intends to do this land will be free for cultivation of any kind.

In view of the belief of the Middle and Northern Sudan would be glad to be rid of the Sudd area it is suggested that Great Britain should arrange with the Sudan to take care of the area and the people, all of whom are in a very primitive state of civilisation.

This can be done by suggesting either of two courses.

(1) That the Sudan agrees to separate the area and leave it under British supervision and at Britain's cost for all time, or

(2) That Britain now appoints in collaboration with the Sudan supervising officials, and that British law and fiscal arrangements alone apply to the area for an indefinite period.

Under either of these arrangements the development of the area could be taken in hand as soon as the control of the river in Egypt's interest become effective during the next ten years. The potentialities of the Sudd Region are greater than in any other area of Africa for land development. It has some rainfall which is an asset. In the earlier stages cattle and timber may be the main products.

Source: SAD703/1/1-47.

VI

Anonymous Perspectives on: Missionaries and Education in Pagan Africa

In the majority of African Colonies education is largely in the hands of the Missionaries. One cannot but admire the self-sacrifice and perseverance they had shown in their uphill task and the conviction that has carried them on through adverse criticism and even ridicule and opposition from their fellow countrymen and professed Christians.

How many Converts have they? This is the first question asked by the average layman who seeks to estimate the value of Missionary enterprise among the pagan peoples of Africa.

Many Government Officials and other white residents have hitherto been inclined to accept "Conversions" as the criticism by which they may judge the missionary's success, but this shows a lamentably superficial examination of the subject.

What is the object of Christianity and civilisation? Surely to better the general state of these poor savages and educate them to higher ideals. The mere fact of persuading a pagan to profess Christianity does not, as will be readily admitted by all, necessarily attain that end. The reply to the opening question should be in the form of further questions. Are those who have been brought into contact with the missionaries whether as actual converts or as inhabitants of their stations or as their employees better men and women or not? Are they less savage, are they less unruly, are they less intractable? If the answer is in the affirmative than [sic] there can be little doubt that the missionaries are succeeding although they may not be able to claim a large number of actual converts. Except by force conversion is bound to be slow. The native is naturally suspicious and conservative - he clings to his old

customs and although ready enough to acknowledge the superiority of the missionary ideal as shown by the lives of the members of the mission and their teaching, he will not give up his ancient customs and profess his adherence to the new faith with, from his point of view, all its disabilities. History seems to show that on first contact with whitemen and civilisation the savage deteriorates. How can any other result be expected? Unfortunately the first who came to his country as representatives of civilisation are more often than not, the very reverse of Christian either in their manner of living or in their treatment of the native. They are often petty traders out to exploit the native in every possible way. Their standard of civilisation is so low that it can hardly be called by that name. No wonder the native deteriorates from his own savage state. According to his lights he may be upright and moral and with a clear natural bias towards honesty. The whiteman's intellectual superiority is obvious and the wild man succumbs. This is a phase. As the country opens up a better class of man arrives - mission stations are opened and the native is shown a different standard but it takes time to wean him from all the vices he has learnt to associate with the whiteman. Let us wait till education has spread - till the second and third generations have arrived - then let us take stock of the situation. I believe the majority of missionaries in these days own that the original efforts were not on the best lines - converts were the measure of their own success. It is generally recognised that education, industrial and otherwise, must be taught side by side with religious ideals. One is useless without the other. Education does not mean purely clerical teaching but general education - all forms of industrial work - how to build better houses - how to improve cultivation - elementary sanitation etc. etc. Often one hears criticism about the pupils of missions - that they ape the whiteman in apparel, are lazy and (to put it in the vernacular), become too big for their boots: that they profess Christianity, but actually practice their former customs. This criticism may be partly justified but it may be pointed out that many Europeans professing Christianity often stay by the

wayside. The question of clothes is surely immaterial. These primitive people are only children in intellect. The whiteman's clothes are of a revelation and being naturally vain and fond of dressing they obtain and wear these fine feathers which apart from pleasing their vanity is after all an outward sign that they [are] on the road to civilisation. In itself it is a proof they have in fact forsaken their former savage way of living. The great drawback to a more rapid advance is the paucity of schools. If only education could be made general and all children given a chance to attend schools instead of the very small number who at present have that opportunity. For some reason or other education seems to be left to the last when we set out to administer a country. It is not that missionary effort is at fault - it is that the authorities neglect this most important preliminary to civilisation - namely education - and with secular education must go hand in hand as already pointed out - moral education - the ideals of the Sermon on the Mount.

I suggest that greater success would attend the missionaries, if the churches could see their way to a broader minded policy. Is it impossible for a man brought up to the custom of a plurality of wives, to be a good man - to follow the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount - Civilisation, education and economics will in time bring him to the Christian ideal of one wife but it seems asking for the impossible to expect a negro to change his character in this respect all at once - Cannot time be allowed to work the cure - See how education is teaching the Mohammedan in this matter - how many now have only one wife - how many of their wives give up the customs of the harim when visiting Europe and even in their own countries. Why should not the same hope be held as regard the pagan of Africa? Surely the first step should be to make a better man of him and let time change his customs in the course of mental and moral development. I am no theologian but I cannot help feeling that strict adherence to monogamy is delaying the good work instead of advancing it and that by demanding obedience to one of the highest Christian ordinances at the outset the

missionary drives many a promising case away - Do not call them Christians to start with - let that be the final degree of their advancement. To a mind brought up to a plurality of wives there is nothing impure in the fact. There are more women than men; what is to become of the unmarried women? They have no outlook beyond marriage. The question of employment of the many women who do not marry had been accounted one of the great social problems in the civilised world. Why force it in these uncivilised peoples so early in their development?

There are other serious obstacles. In the nature of things there are in the early stages more male than female converts and it is difficult for the men to obtain wives. Pagan parents object to their daughters marrying Christian men as difficulties arise over the mahr (payment made by the bridegroom) and over the question of divorce and the latter is further complicated when the mission is of the Roman Catholic persuasion, for the Roman Catholic do not recognise divorce.

How is the administrator to view these questions? Do what he will to support the missions he is continually being run into a corner over the marriage complications. Many chiefs and others would send their children to the mission schools but they are suspicious as to what is to become of them. They feel their children will be practically lost to them, for as Christians and churchmen they will turn from the family. Cannot a system be evolved under which the children would be educated mentally and morally then returned to their homes without turning them into churchmen?

That I suggest might come in the later generations. Gradual development, it appears, should be the aim of the missionary. The children could take back to their homes the moral teaching they had learnt and by degrees there would be a leaven of good and higher ideals in the tribe or village. Do not keep them too long in the missions and thus make their natural and primitive life distasteful to them. Let them go while they are still young enough to be under parental control and as they grow up better workers and altogether more useful members of Society. Here would be the

field for the missionary pure and simple - Let the first stage be not mission stations where the primary object is conversion but schools presided over by Christian men and women.

As regards missions enterprise per se I very diffidently suggest that the village parson would have much more influence and consequently greater success than a community of missionaries, such as is usually found.

Source: 703/5/1-3, undated, but found in Wheatley's papers

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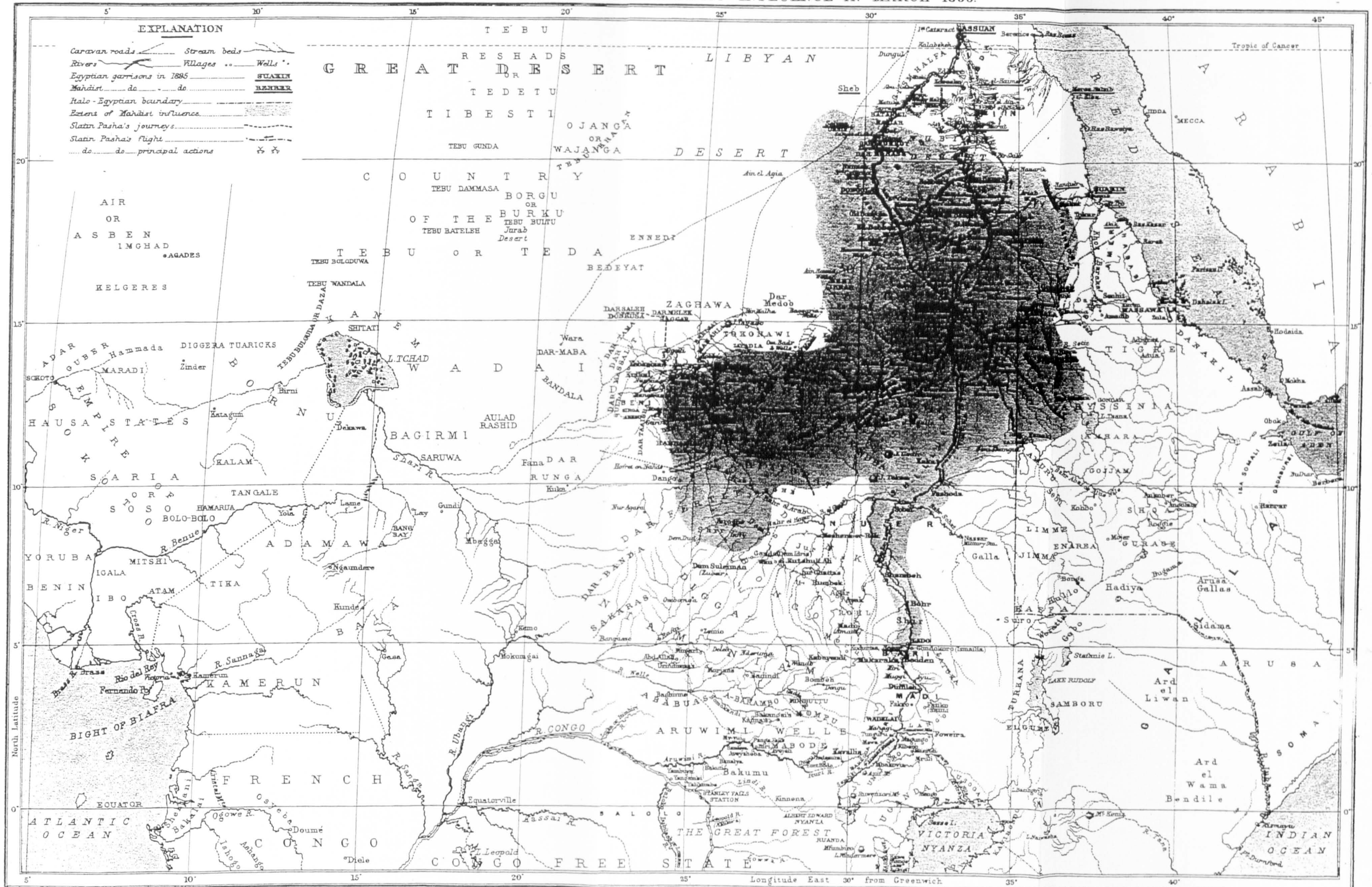
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MAP SHOWING EXTENT OF MAHDIST INFLUENCE IN MARCH 1895



THE ANGLO-EGYPTIAN SUDAN 1912

Scale 8,000,000

100 Miles

Reference

Province Boundaries
Hand Gns of Province
Railway
Telegraph

Logia

Tondubi

Selima

Dar

Sukkot

Dar

Mahas

Dalgu

Kerna

Argo

Dongola

Kareima

Merowe

Lefti

Tangassi

Arat

Debba

Abu Hamed

Darmali

Berber

Atbara

El Damer

Metemma

Shendi

Khartoum

Oni

El Dueim

Bara

El Obeid

Taiara

Um Ruaba

Kosti

Gedid

Abu Zabbad

El Nahud

Um Badr

Sodari

Foga

El Fasher

R. Bahr

R. Kuru

R. Kossinga

R. Bahr

R. Jur

Mau

Jojo

Rumbek

Shambe

Myolo

Rikita

Jambura

Meridi

Yambio

Dangu

Bomohandi

R. Welle

Dufie

Kagelu

Rejaf

Sh. Tanbe

Mongalla

Geondokoro

Rejaf

SOBAT PI BOR

(Military Dist.)

Nasser

Bor

Gambela

R. Bahr

Gore

Dunkur

Roseires

Renk

White Nile

Barbelle

Keili

JALODI

Kodok

JELIRI

Taufikia

Bahr el Zeraf

NUBA MOUNTAINS

Kadugli

White Nile

Barbelle

Keili

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Taufikia

Bahr el Zeraf

NUBA MOUNTAINS

Kadugli

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