University of Oxford
Faculty of History

Stories of a Failed Nation
Sudanese Politics 1945–69

Moritz A. Mihatsch
Nuffield College

Submitted for a D.Phil. in History
Trinity Term 2014

Stories of a Failed Nation
Sudanese Politics 1945–69

Submitted by Moritz Mihatsch, Nuffield College, University of Oxford, for a D.Phil. in History, in Trinity Term 2014.

(Short Abstract)

Between 1945 and 1969 the Sudanese achieved independence and overthrew a military junta with a popular uprising. Nevertheless both democratic periods were quickly ended by military coups. At the same time a civil war divided the country. The thesis asks why the democratic structures were so unstable, and unable to end the conflict between north and south. It argues that the ideas about the Sudanese nation by different groups were so contradictory, that no nation could be built. As a result, the political system failed to find a stable form and to deliver policy results to the constituents.

The thesis is using political parties as units of analysis and primarily the constitutional process and, secondarily, questions of independence and sovereignty, as prisms. It discusses the history of the political parties within the context of the political history of Sudan. The discussions about the constitution are understood as one form of expressing ideas about the nation. The thesis presents the different suggestions for the constitution by different parties, especially in regards to governance, federalism, and religion. These contradictory ideas led to the failure of the constitution writing process.

The thesis argues that the contradictory positions of the parties created a dual deadlock, which led to a breakdown of democracy. Firstly, due to reciprocal distrust, widely diverging platforms, and generally the difficulty of forming coalition governments, especially in the absence of a democratic tradition, coalitions became extremely unstable and politicians were forced to invest a lot of time and effort to keep coalitions alive and in consequence concrete political actions did not receive enough attention. Secondly, the divergent perceptions of the nation led to a situation where they stopped to see each other as part of the same nation and therefore stopped to recognise others as legitimately participating in the political process.

Stories of a Failed Nation
Sudanese Politics 1945–69

Submitted by Moritz Mihatsch, Nuffield College, University of Oxford, for a D.Phil. in History, in Trinity Term 2014.

(Long Abstract)

Between 1945 and 1969 the Sudanese achieved independence and overthrew a military junta with a popular uprising. Nevertheless both democratic periods were quickly ended by military coups. At the same time a civil war divided the country. The thesis asks why the democratic structures were so unstable, and unable to end the conflict between north and south. I argue that the instability is directly inter-related to a failed nation building process. The political parties serve as units of analysis. The thesis discusses how they emerged and developed and based on these histories, what ideas on the nation they proposed. I understand the constitutional process and, secondarily, questions of independence and sovereignty as prisms to look at the attempt to create a coherent and inclusive story about the nation. I suggest that the contradictory ideas about the nation prevented the emergence of the feeling of common belonging. This in turn led to regional instability. It also meant that different parties stopped to recognise each other as legitimate participants in the political process. The result of these developments I describe as nation failure.

The first chapter presents the historical and geographical background of the thesis. The immense size of the country, the distances between towns, the huge number of different ethnicities, cultures and languages, were all defining factors for politics. In the mid 19th century, Sudan was administered by Egypt as part of the Ottoman empire. In 1881 a certain Muḥammad ʾAḥmad declared himself to be the Mahdī, a millennial figure who is supposed to create a just kingdom on earth before the end of the world. He succeeded to rally many small ṭarīqahs, Ṣūfī groups organised around one sheikh, on his side and to throw out the Egyptians. He merged all these groups into a new movement called the ʾAnṣār. The Ḫatmīyah, one of the largest ṭarīqahs in the country, did not accept his claims and left to exile in Egypt. In turn the Mahdī had their mosques and places of pilgrimage destroyed. Few years later the British decided to fight the mahdīst

armies and in 1898 they re-occupied Khartoum. They used the Egyptian claim to sovereignty over Sudan as a legitimisation and created a condominium, a colony under the rule of two colonial powers, Egypt and Britain. Because the British occupied the Sudan fighting against a religious movement, they continued to pay strong attention to them, and by doing so cemented their role in Sudanese politics.

In the 1920s young educated elites, inspired by Egypt, formed a first national movement. In the aftermath of these events the British initiated a policy dividing the northern and southern provinces of the country. The heavy-handed reaction of the British ended nationalist political activities and the young nationalists instead formed literary circles. Eventually the Graduates' Congress grew out of these circles. The leaders of the two biggest ṭarīqahs, Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān, the son of the Mahdī who was rebuilding the ʾAnṣār, and Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī, leader of the Ḫatmīyah, started to support different groups in the Congress. Eventually two alliances emerged: Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān sided with the moderates in Congress and Sayyid ʿAlī sided with the younger graduates who were most prominently represented by a grouping called the ʾAšiqqāʾ, who worked together with ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī. The group around Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān, from 1945 onwards officially institutionalised as the ʾUmmah Party, participated in institutions created by the British for the affiliation of the Sudanese with their own administration; first the Advisory Council, formed in 1944, and later the Legislative Assembly in 1948. The ʾAšiqqāʾ on the other hand boycotted these institutions and partially cooperated with the Egyptians.

The second chapter discusses the surprisingly brief period leading up to independence and the first two years after. I also present the histories of the two large people's parties, the National Unionist Party (NUP) and the ʾUmmah Party. In 1950 the British made a proposal for a more extensive affiliation of the Sudanese with the administration, which would have simultaneously removed the remaining role of Egypt in Sudan. The Egyptians first declined to comment, but in July 1952 a group of young officers took power in Cairo. Ǧamāl ʿAbd-al-Nāṣir, who quickly crystallised as the leader of the group, was ready to sacrifice Egyptian sovereignty over Sudan, if he were able to get British troops out of the area. The following negotiations resulted in an ambitious timetable for elections, a transitional period, and eventually self-determination. During this period the different unionist and anti-ʾUmmah groups realised that now they needed a better organisational structure. Before they were various loosely organised groups who had used the Congress as organisational platform. As a result the NUP was formed, under leadership of ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī and affiliated with Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī and the Ḫatmīyah. In 1953 elections took place. The NUP won the elections and ʾAzharī became prime minister. Although ʾAzharī was elected on a platform of unity with Egypt, he eventually supported full independence –a decision mostly due to domestic pressures and developments in Egypt. In

December 1955 the Sudanese parliament voted unanimously for independence. On 1 January 1956 the Sudanese tricolour was raised for the first time.

Soon after independence the NUP broke apart. Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī who was increasingly worried of ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī encouraged the formation of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). The PDP became the junior partner in a new government coalition with the ʾUmmah Party and they elected ʿAbd-Allāh Ǧalīl as new prime minister on 5 July 1956. Ǧalīl's government remained notoriously unstable and nearly broke apart over requesting aid from the United States. Ǧalīl eventually became worried that the PDP and the NUP would re-form their coalition, which he believed was on instigation of Nāṣir. He believed this would lead to the loss of sovereignty. Therefore he decided to hand over power to the army. On 17 November 1958 the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces under leadership of ʾIbrāhīm ʿAbbūd declared that they had taken power.

I argue in this chapter that the conceptions of a two party system, as well as the idea of a relatively unified modern national movement, which have often been proposed for Sudan of this period, are essentially flawed because the two big people's parties were divided firstly between each other along a strong rift caused by mutual distrust, and secondly within each party over the question if authority was essentially inherited, or gained by education and qualification.

The third chapter discusses the period of military rule, the October revolution and the following transitional government. I also present the specific histories of the communist and islamist movements. The army successfully implemented a streamlined economic policy and the following years brought a hitherto unknown standard of living to many Sudanese. Simultaneously however the army increasingly restricted civil liberties, and in the southern Sudanese provinces, the army escalated the conflict, which eventually transformed into a full-fledged war for secession. By 1964 the economy was stuttering, partially due to the expenses for the armed conflict in the south. When the police attempted to break up a political debate at the University of Khartoum on 21 October 1964 a student was killed, which led to protests. In the aftermath the army handed power to a transitional government, which was dominated by professional associations and unions, which in turn were dominated by the communist party. The traditional parties who had been outlawed during military rule and had been less successful at keeping their structures alive underground needed a while to rebuild their institutions, but once they did, they challenged the communists. Eventually the government was re-formed, now dominated by the traditional parties. They quickly organised elections, after which a coalition of the ʾUmmah and NUP was formed, and on 10 June 1965 Muḥammad ʾAḥmad Maḥǧūb was elected as prime minister.

The transitional period after the October revolution also witnessed the formation of both the Sudanese Communist Party and the Islamic Charter Front as full-

fledged political parties. They emerged out of the communist and islamist movements, who had dominated politics at schools and university since the 1950s. I argue in this chapter that the two movements essentially developed as two sides of one coin with the islamist movement mimicking the communists. I furthermore demonstrate, that although both parties struggled to win seats in the parliament because of the Sudanese electoral system, both parties had massive influence on the socio-political developments and were able to drive the constitutional debate due to their position as vanguard movements.

The fourth chapter discusses the period between the elections of 1965 and the next military take-over in 1969. I also present the specific histories of the regional movements and parties, both in southern and northern Sudan. During the period of military rule Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān had died and his son Ṣiddīq took over the leadership of both the party and the ʾAnṣār. But soon after Ṣiddīq died as well and ʾImām al-Hādī became the leader of the ʾAnṣār. Politically Ṣiddīq's oldest son Ṣādiq tried to gain influence. In July 1966 ʾAzharī, who had quarrelled with Maḥǧūb and whose NUP had been the ʾUmmah's coalition party, withdrew his confidence from the prime minister. As a consequence Maḥǧūb was removed and Ṣādiq was elected in his stead. But Ṣādiq proved to become a challenge to ʾAzharī and in May 1967 Ṣādiq lost a vote of confidence and once again the ʾimām's wing of the ʾUmmah came to power and Muḥammad ʾAḥmad Maḥǧūb became prime minister again. This division of the ʾUmmah was fully institutionalised in the 1968 elections, in which the two wings participated as two completely separate parties.

This period also saw an increased role of regional parties in Sudanese politics with the Southern Front and the Sudan African National Union (SANU) from the south and the Beja Congress, the Dār-Fur Development Front (DDF), and the General Union of the Nuba Mountains (GUN) from the north, all being represented in parliament. In this chapter I argue that the regional parties were a reaction to the centralisation of the political system. While conceptions of an African majority by SANU triggered the emergence of African and Arab as political categories, the different regional parties nevertheless were not yet able to formulate one national vision and the demand of the southern groups for secession made the creation of one common platform additionally difficult for northern regional parties.

The resulting landscape of political parties was divided on a number of different axes. The people's parties were divided on a general left-right spectrum, with the NUP representing the more-urban and better-educated stratum of society, playing on ideas of pan-arabism and non-alignment. The ʾUmmah on the other hand represented landowners and other conservative sectors and was interested in cooperation with Britain and the United States. At the same time each party was internally divided over the issue where authority originated, with the PDP and ʾimām's wing of the ʾUmmah centred on the sheikh and the ṭarīqahs. The NUP and Ṣādiq's wing on the other hand were centred on the intelligentsia. An additional fragmentation of the political system and a substantial pressure on the

traditional parties was introduced by the ideological parties, the islamists and the communists. Finally, the regional parties questioned the concept of a state focused on a single strong centre without any federal devolution, and they rejected the idea of Sudan being primarily a Muslim and Arab nation.

The fifth chapter analyses the different conceptions of nation and sudaneseness, as proposed by different groups. I show how this massive fragmentation of the political system led to completely contradictory views on what the Sudanese nation was, and how this not only inhibited the process of writing a constitution, but eventually destabilised the political system as a whole. Already before independence Sudan had an ambiguous constitutional status and because independence was declared hurriedly and through a vote in parliament, Sudan became independent with a transitional constitution. During both democratic periods before 1969 constitutional commissions were created, both commissions made proposals to parliament, but both times parliament failed to discuss these proposals. This failure to seriously tackle the constitutional question was rooted in the fact that the different parties had completely contradictory views on what the constitution should actually say, especially in regards to questions of governance, federalism, religion. These disagreements in turn were not simply practical differences, but were rooted in the specific ways the different parties saw what Sudan was and should become.

In the final section I argue that the contradictory positions of the parties created a dual deadlock, which led to a breakdown of the democratic system. Firstly, due to reciprocal distrust, widely diverging platforms, and generally the difficulty of forming coalition governments, especially in the absence of such a tradition or a democratic tradition in general, coalitions became extremely unstable. Unstable coalitions meant that politicians were forced to invest a lot of time and effort to keep coalitions alive. Concrete political actions were either avoided, so as not to rock the boat, or they simply did not receive enough attention, because the maintenance of coalitions was always prioritised over actual policy decisions. As a result the governments failed to deliver tangible change to the electorate and therefore the people reacted with relief and hope when the army took over. Secondly, the divergent nation stories of the different parties led to a situation where they stopped seeing each other as part of the same nation and therefore believed that the others were not legitimately participating in the political process. When parties stopped recognising other parties as part of the same nation, the use of non-democratic mechanisms, be it the hand-over of power to the army or the attempt to outlaw the other party in order to protect the nation, became legitimate. The reciprocal recognition of legitimacy is a prerequisite for a democratic system and therefore the lack of a common nation story or sufficiently overlapping nation stories directly destabilised democracy.

Acknowledgments

First of all, I want to thank the *Gerda Henkel Stiftung*, the *Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst* (DAAD), the *BEIT Fund*, the *National History Center* in Washington DC, and *Nuffield College*, for their generous financial support, without which this thesis would not have been possible.

Secondly, I want to thank the Institute of African and Asian Studies (IAAS) of the University of Khartoum (UoK), the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), the Deutscher Entwicklungs Dienst (DED), the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (giz), the ʿAbd-al-Karīm Mīrġanī Center, the Muḥammad ʿUmar Bašīr Center at Omdurman ʾAhlīyah University, the Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at the University of Bergen, the university library of the University of Durham, and the Missionari Comboniani, for their institutional support.

Many senior academics have influenced my thinking, read my work, commented on presentations, and helped with ideas. Without them, I would not have been able to write this thesis. Without some of them, I might not even have started. I am especially thankful to my supervisor Dr Jan-Georg Deutsch, Prof Gesine Krüger, Prof Patrick Harries, Dr Paul Jenkins, Dr John Darwin, Dr Cherry Leonardi, Prof Sean Rex O'Fahey, Dr Douglas Johnson, Prof Tim Niblock, Prof Yūsuf Fāḍl Ḥasan, and Prof al-ʾAmīn ʾAbū-Manqah.

Numerous Sudanese deserve my gratitude and it is impossible to list them all. They have taken time for me out of their busy days to discuss my work and Sudanese history and have extended the famous Sudanese hospitality. I want to thank all the people who I interviewed for their time and insights. Many of my interviews in Khartoum would not have been possible without the help of ʾAnīs Ḥağğār. Yūsif Ǧibrīl has helped me extensively in Kadugli. Mo Ambrose Tiik, and

Justin and Thomas Muortat suggested many contacts in Juba. To all of them I say, thank you very much! I want to extend my special thanks to Fātiḥ Ḫayr who enabled me to travel on one of his family's transport ships to Juba. My gratitude is due to ʾIsmāʿīl al-Kuškuš who read my work and supported me as a research assistant at the archives. I also thank my Sudanese friends ʿUmar al-Faḍlī and his family, Ṭaha Šarīf, and Fāṭimah Yūsif, who have not only helped me with my research, but also have made my stay in Sudan much more hospitable.

Finally, I thank friends and family, who have mentally supported me, listened to my monologues, suffered with me, and helped with a thousand little things. I am especially grateful to my parents and brothers, and Engy Aly, Manuel Schwab, Mahadevan Ramachandran, Anja Dargatz, Maram Mazen, Yordanka Evgenieva, Tim Müller, Silke Schneider, Anja Neundorf, Thees Spreckelsen, Franziska Rüedi, Natacha Filippi, Shema Hayder, TJ Quinn, Oona Grauers, and Paul Haller.

Thank You!

شُكراً جزيلاً

Table of Contents

	Transliteration	XII
	Pronunciation	XIII
	Abbreviations	XIV
	Map of Sudan	XV
	Prologue	1
	The Question	2
	The Literature	12
	Comparisons	27
	The Thesis	33
I	Previously on...	38
	The Land and its People	*39*
	Entering the Anglo-World	*48*
	The Youth and the System	*59*
	Khartoum, Khartoum	*72*
	Conclusion	*79*
II	The Big Two	83
	Independence Stumbled Upon	*85*
	Divided Unionists	*94*
	A Family Affair	*104*
	Sovereignty & Legitimacy	*116*
	Conclusion	*131*

III Marx vs. Muḥammad 132
Transitions to Nowhere *134*
A Spectre on the Nile *141*
Islam and -ism *152*
Counter Transformations *165*
Conclusion *177*

IV Everywhere Periphery 180
Back to the Future *182*
Guerrilla Politics *188*
Vote GUN, Vote Beja! *204*
Subjects & Citizens *218*
Conclusion *233*

V Writing the Nation 236
Occupy Sūdānī *236*
Constituting for Godot *241*
Ideas about Home *248*
Stories of a Failed Nation *260*

Epilogue 274
Speaking Truthful to Power *274*
Speaking Truth to Power *279*
#SpeakingTruthToPower *282*

Bibliography 284

Transliteration

Transliteration is a complicated decision and all solutions have advantages and disadvantages.[1] In the thesis, I work with the DIN transliteration system, which is based on the standard Arabic. All names in the text are transliterated according to DIN, even in cases of Sudanese authors who have published in English. In the footnotes, their names are written according to their own transliteration. Equally, names of places are transliterated, with the exception of "Khartoum," "Omdurman" and "Sudan." Most specific and religious terms are transliterated such as "Qurʾān" instead of "Quran," with a few exceptions to increase readability, such as "sheikh" instead of "šaiḫ."

The DIN transliteration is developed to write each Arabic letter with one letter of the Latin alphabet, with a one-to-one correspondence. The system is an adapted version of the transliteration originally developed by the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft*. As slight modification, I add an additional dash to show that two parts of a name belong together, as in "ʿAbd-al-Laṭīf" instead of "ʿAbd al-Laṭīf," and "Baḥr-al-Ġazāl" instead of Baḥr al-Ġazāl." Furthermore changes of letters which are made when spoken are not represented, and instead the transliteration purely reflects the written form, as in "ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān" instead of "ʿAbd-ar-Raḥmān" and "Lā qadāsah fi al-siyāsah" instead of "Lā qadāsah fi-s-siyāsah."

Names in other Sudanese languages such as Beja, Nuba or Dinka etc. are given as accurately as possible. Often various spellings are in common use and sometimes people spell their own names differently over time or depending on context. Since many of these languages are at times written in Latin letters, names are not transcribed from their Arabic spelling, as in "Nuba Mountains" instead of "Nūbā Mountains" and "Taka Mountain" and not "Tākā Mountain."

1 For a good overview on possibilities and problems of transliteration, see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanization_of_Arabic.

Pronunciation

It helps to have a basic idea how different letters are pronounced to get a feeling for names of people and places, especially because it makes the names a little bit more memorable.

Letter:	**as in:**	**pronounced as:**
a, i, u	Muḥammad ʾAḥmad	short vowel
ā, ī, ū	ʾIbrāhīm ʿAbbūd	long vowel
H, h	ʾIbrāhīm	like “h” in hotel
Ḥ, ḥ	Muḥammad	sharp “h” spoken at the back of the throat
Ḫ, ḫ	Ḫālid	“ch” as in German “Bach”
Ġ, ġ	Mīrġanī	like “r” in “Paris”
Ǧ, ǧ	Ǧabal	like “j” in “jelly”
Q, q	Ṣādiq	guttural “k,” in Sudan “g” like in “bagel”
S, s	Ḥasan	like “c” in “cinema”
Ṣ, ṣ	Ṣādiq	guttural “s” like in “sold”
Š, š	Bašīr	like “sh” in “fish”
T, t	Turābī	like “t” in “tent”
Ṯ, ṯ	ʿUṯmān	like “th” in “think”
Ṭ, ṭ	Fāṭimah	guttural “t” like in “Tanzania”
D, d	Umm-Durmān	like “d” in “deer”
Ḏ, ḏ	Maǧḏubīyah	like “th” in “there”
Ḍ, ḍ	Qaḍārif	guttural “d” like in “bulldozer”

Abbreviations

AIF	Anti Imperialist Front
ALF	Azania Liberation Front
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain
DDF	Dār-Fur Development Front
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
EMNL	Egyptian Movement for National Liberation
FPTP	First Past The Post
GUN	General Union of the Nuba Mountains
HAMITU	al-Ḥarakah al-Miṣriyah li al-Taḥarrur al-Waṭani (Egyptian Movement for National Liberation)
HASUTU	al-Ḥarakah al-Sūdāniyah li al-Taḥarrur al-Waṭani (Sudanese Movement for National Liberation)
ICF	Islamic Charter Front
IFC	Islamic Front for the Constitution
ILM	Islamic Liberation Movement
KUSU	Khartoum University Student Union
NUP	National Unionist Party
PDP	People Democratic Party
SACDNU	Sudan African Closed Districts National Union
SALF	Sudan African Liberation Front
SANU	Sudan African National Union
SCAF	Supreme Council of the Armed Forces
SCP	Sudan Communist Party
SMNL	Sudanese Movement for National Liberation
SPLA	Sudanese People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudanese People's Liberation Movement
SPLM-N	Sudanese People's Liberation Movement – North
SPS	Sudan Political Service
SWTUF	Sudan Workers' Trade Union Federation
WAA	Workers' Affairs Association

Map of Sudan

Wādī Ḥalfā
Northern Province
Port Sudan
Kassalā
ʿAṭbarah
al-Dāmr
Khartoum
Kassalā
Dār-Fur
Kurdufān
Wad Madanī
al-Fāšir
al-ʾUbayyiḍ
Blue Nile
Nyala
Nuba Mountains
Kadugli
Malakal
Baḥr-al-Ġazāl
Upper Nile
Wau
Equatoria
Juba

Prologue

The German poet Matthias Claudius said in the late 18th century "if one undertakes a journey, he will be able to tell a story." This is mine.

I began looking at Sudanese politics with a relative vague sense of curiosity and wonder. When backpacking through Sudan over a decade ago, it struck me as odd, how in Sudan's post-colonial history three civilian governments were all followed by military regimes and how two military regimes were overthrown by civilian uprisings, just to give way to another junta soon after. Once I began looking at Sudan more academically and in more detail, the connection between Sufism, the supposedly apolitical and mystical version of Islam, and party politics gained my interest. Once I started working with documents in the archives, especially looking at election results, it became apparent that after 1956 Sudan's democratic governments all were coalition governments, as a result of the fragmented multi-party structure of the system.[2] In that period Sudan was virtually the only country in the region to develop such a model. These observations eventually informed my perspective and were the basis for first tentative research questions, which I took with me to the field.

My first attempts to specify the focus of my investigation were primarily a result of the lessons learnt from my Masters thesis; here the lack of focus had proven to be the one major challenge of the endeavour. Therefore, when asked about my topic, I answered that my research concerns the development of political parties

2 As multi-party democracy I understand a system in which more than two parties play an important role and coalition governments are the rule. This is in differentiation to the two-party model, where only two parties are relevant and coalition governments are rare exceptions. Germany is an example of a multi-party democracy, whereas the United States or the United Kingdom are examples of a two-party system.

between 1945 hand 1969. That of course is neither a question nor a hypothesis, it is merely a perspective. The most interesting aspects to be seen within this perspective eventually proved to be not the party situation itself, but the context in which it evolved and the interplay between the two.

The Question

In December 2010 my supervisor, Dr Jan-Georg Deutsch, decided to come and visit me in Khartoum. At the time I lived in Daym, one of the oldest areas of Khartoum, where once the Sudanese labourers and staff of the colonial elite had lived. Even today relatively few western foreigners live in Daym, but there are many Ethiopians and Eritreans and until the referendum on southern independence some of the better-off southern Sudanese. The area is characterised by small plots, mostly one-storey houses which are often individual rooms arranged around a small yard in the middle. For two days Georg and I had been walking around the city and I had shown him the few remnants of historical structures left standing after the uncompromising modernisation of the city at the hand of the islamist regime. Georg had kept shooting questions at me, which I tried to answer, often by having to explain another bit of context or adding another dimension or axis of complexity. Eventually we were sitting in the yard eating a dish of fūl, the Sudanese national dish made of beans, when he asked nearly disparagingly, "but what is your story?"

What Georg meant in that moment was, what angle was I was going to tackle, how to make sense of it all? But thinking the question over later on, it became palpable that there might be more to it than just that. Maybe the lack of a story, or rather the abundance of mutually contradicting stories, was at the core of Sudan's failure to maintain peace and democracy. From this and based on a number of authors and inspirations three thoughts developed. First, the idea that stories are not only post-facto explanations of disparate events, but also driving factors of

decisions and developments themselves. Secondly, the idea that collectively accepted stories are central to the construction of our societies and that *our nation*, or *the Sudanese nation* for that matter, can be understood as such a collective story. Thirdly, that the abundance of mutually contradicting stories about the Sudanese nation has led to a situation which can be characterised as *nation failure*.

I understand *stories* as the attempt to select a number of distinct bits of information and put them into a coherent or seemingly coherent order, possibly by underlying these bits with a logical or otherwise informed meaning. In other words, stories attempt to make sense of actual, imagined or assumed events, decisions, contexts, constellations, etc. Stories can never encompass all possible bits of information, they always select and omit and are therefore simplifications. In this production of meaning, stories feed on other stories, as was described by Roland Barthes in his theory of *intertextuality*.[3] In this way, older or previous stories can inform later understanding, and stories which are practically forgotten, live on through other stories which picked up on certain of their elements.

But maybe even more importantly, stories do not only influence our understanding, they have a concrete impact on our decision-making. As Terry Pratchett pointed out in a very simple example, the story of the man who came to work too late and got fired is the reason for us to get up early and catch the bus, although we would prefer to ignore the alarm clock. He took this a step further, when he argued that in one sense we ended up going to the moon, because for centuries we had told ourselves that one day in the imaginary future, we would. According to Pratchett, the story became an imperative.[4] That means, stories can be powerful influences for the individual, as well as the group.

The Nigerian writer Chimamanda Adichie pointed towards a similar idea when she discussed the negative impact of what she called the *single story*. If, as she said, we have only one perspective, one story of a person or a country or a people, we

3 Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', *Aspen*, No. 5+6 (1967).

4 Terry Pratchett, Ian Stewart, and Jack Cohen, *The Science of Discworld II* (London, 2003), pp. 23-27.

become unable to see or imagine them outside this framework, for example poverty or war. Single stories breed stereotypes, but as Adichie reminds us "the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue but that they are incomplete." She added another dimension by saying that stories are defined by the principle of *n'kale* –an Ibo expression which approximately means *to be greater than another*. For stories, she says, it is important "how they are told, when they are told, who tells them, how many stories are told" and all these "are really dependent on power."[5]

One could of course have taken a similar cue from Foucault and his views on the connection of discourse and power.[6] But it is important to remember that, while stories happen obviously within the limits of the discourse, they are nevertheless of a different nature. They are much more confined and specific, no matter if we talk about individual stories or collective stories. The issue of single stories that Adichie was mostly concerned with, comes up when one tells stories about the other –no matter how remote that other is, it can be a people at the other end of the world or the neighbour in the flat next door, whom one does not really know. There are however also the stories we tell about ourselves, individually and collectively.

More than any other, we are probably concerned with the stories we tell about ourselves. Individually, the clothes you wear, the stickers you put on your car and the photos you post on Facebook, all express how you see yourself and how you want others to see you. The same is valid for groups. Shared stories, more than shared interests bind groups and define friendships and the more epic the story, the stronger the effect. The German anthropologist, with whom I spent a day in military custody in South Sudan, and myself will retain a defining connection to each other, no matter if we agree on politics or just watch the same sports. However, shared stories are not only relevant to small groups or friendships, they are equally important to a people as a whole.

---

5 Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, 'The danger of a single story', *TED Global 2009* (http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html).

6 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York, 1970). And in the "Two Lectures" published in: Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* (New York, 1980), pp. 78-108.

The American writer Adam Haslett pointed to the relevance of these collective stories, when he argued that America has not been able to overcome the trauma of 11 September because the Bush government did not offer a coherent story; but rather used the lack of it to invoke an even greater feeling of terror to be able to implement its policies.[7] Stories are not only relevant in regards to dealing with negative experiences, they are also the key to positively define groups and identities.

While *nation* is an abstract concept of political science, attempting to describe some sort of unity of a people based on descent, history, culture, or language, *our nation* is something else entirely. *Our nation* is a story a people tell to themselves, describing who they are, or want to be, or how they want to be seen by others. The flag, the representative institutions, and the stories a people connect to their national day are all part of this bigger story of *our nation*. I distinctly use the pronoun *our* in this context, not because I would include myself in the Sudanese nation, but because *the Sudanese nation* when used as a term by an outsider again immediately becomes an analytical category from political science.

The philosopher Julian Baggini, who wrote about the concept of "you," explained that the common sense concept of how "you" is defined, is by assuming a "you" as a core, which has memories, desires, beliefs, knowledge, and sensations. Baggini however argued that this common sense idea is wrong and that there is no "you" at the core. He explained that "you" is those memories, desires, beliefs, knowledge, and sensations and the various links between those elements.[8] Equally *our nation* does not *have* history and heroes and stories, *our nation* is these things and the links between them. To avoid the term *our nation*, talking about Sudan as a non-Sudanese, I will refer to it as the Sudanese *nation story*.

The concept of the nation story or nation as story is very similar to the conception of nation suggested by Ernest Renan in his seminal lecture *Qu'est-ce que une*

7 Adam Haslett, 'Feeding the Fire', *Granta Online*, 19 September 2011 (http://www.granta.com/New-Writing/Feeding-the-Fire-The-Political-Context-of-9-11).

8 Julian Baggini, *The Ego Trick: What Does it Mean to Be You?* (London, 2012).

Nation? Renan first went to great lengths to show that the nation is not primarily an ethnic or linguistic category, and warned of the dangers if it would be indeed seen as such. Then he explained that:

> "A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principle. One lies in the past, one in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form. (…) A heroic past, great men, glory (…), this is the social capital upon which one bases a national idea. To have common glories in the past and to have a common will in the present; to have performed great deeds together, to wish to perform still more – these are the essential conditions for being a people."[9]

Renan argued here that the nation is the combination of a common history, a common understanding of the present and a common will to work for a better future. He aimed to describe the European nations and he tried to analyse what it meant to be a nation in reference to nations which were clearly existing in his time. Renan asked:

> "Why is Holland a nation, when Hanover, or the Grand Duchy of Parma, are not? How is it that France continues to be a nation, when the principle which created it has disappeared? How is it that Switzerland, which has three languages, two religions, and three or four races, is a nation, when Tuscany, which is so homogeneous, is not one?"[10]

He successfully answered this question in regards to Switzerland and France. For Hanover and the Grand Duchy of Parma, Renan offered a *post facto* explanation, why they were not nations then. However, he did not explain, why they failed to evolve as nations.

As Fred Halliday argued, in the Arab world, and the same is probably true for most of Africa, it was not nations who came first, being eventually expressed in states. Rather it was states which emerged as "boxes," which forged and fomented

9 Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* Lecture delivered on 11 March 1882 at the Sorbonne (quoted according to: http://ig.cs.tu-berlin.de/oldstatic/w2001/eu1/dokumente/Basistexte/Renan1882EN-Nation.pdf).

10 Ibid.

nationalisms.[11] With the concept of the nation story as I propose it, which heavily draws on Renan's ideas, I attempt to explain how nations can emerge in these "boxes", or actually why they can fail to emerge in the post-colonial and non-European context.

An idea which is related to this, is the *imagined community* of Benedict Anderson. The two concepts are not necessarily contradictory, it is more a difference of perspective. Anderson took an outside, analytical approach and ends up with a possibly maximalist conception of a group which is based on "deep, horizontal comradeship" or "fraternity." The *imagined communities* are, according to Anderson, inherently limited and sovereign and therefore they describe a result of nation building, rather than a process of emergence.[12] The idea of *our nation* as story is an inside, procedural approach which allows for an analysis of the process of emergence, the attempt at construction of the national from "proto-national" building blocks.

The other term which is related to this discussion, but which I have avoided intentionally, is the *narrative*. The problem with the use of the term *narrative* is in my view threefold; First, the term is being over-used and rarely properly defined. Secondly, it introduces a level of artificial and misplaced complexity. People tell each other stories and old men lament about certain things being the story of their life. Once this is described as narrative instead, the immediate clarity of an idea submerges in a haze of terminology. Thirdly, the term carries an elitist characteristic and introduces a singular focus on the constructedness. While it is surely true that the elite are often trying to define and dominate the meanings of identity and nation, the people are functioning at minimum as audiences and multipliers and only after they have appropriated the *nation story,* this story becomes truly relevant.

11 Fred Halliday, 'Nationalism in the Arab World since 1945', in: John Breuilly, *The History of Nationalism* (Oxford 2013), pp. 447-8.

12 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York, 1983).

If one understands the nation as a story, then it is central for newly created states to be able to establish, spread and share one coherent story within the community or, alternatively, find ways to balance multiple stories to be mutually inclusive rather than exclusive. Lonsdale argued the same, when he wrote: "Nationalisms—coalitions of energized patriotisms or class-interests with disputed expectations of sovereignty—have good reasons for imagined, inclusive, pasts"[13] and I would argue futures. The central argument of my thesis is that this process failed in Sudan and that this failure is at the core of the conflict and the instability of the democratic system. I will use the political parties as agents and, primarily, the constitutional process and, secondarily, questions of independence and sovereignty as a prism to look at the attempt to create a coherent and inclusive *nation story*.

Political parties, no matter if they form around an idea such as communism, or around a social base, such as a union or a religious grouping, evolve a concept of their community's and area's *status quo* and an idea as to how they want to develop or change this current situation. These two are in reference to and in dialogue with the party's idea of the nation or story of the nation as a whole. While two parties or two people will never understand the nation story absolutely identically, this does not pose a problem as long as there is some consensus or compatibility. However, when various parties propose nation stories, which are radically different and incompatible and these parties represent a large enough or important enough part of society, the creation or maintenance of one coherent nation story becomes fragile. The first hypothesis of my thesis is that the abundance of incompatible and exclusive stories proposed by different parties in Sudan prevented the emergence of a common nation story.

If the nation story fails to create a common umbrella, two effects are to be expected. If there is regional differentiation of the country, certain forms of regional or federal demands are to be expected, which can result in regional conflict if mediation of these demands fails. The second hypothesis of my thesis is

13 John Lonsdale, 'Anti-Colonial Nationalism and Patriotism in Sub-Saharan Africa', in John Breuilly, *The History of Nationalism* (Oxford 2013), p. 318.

that, due to the lack of an inclusive nation story, regional groups in the southern Sudan and various regions in the northern Sudan started to put their demands forward, which eventually led to civil unrest and civil war. The lack of a common story can be seen additionally in the failure of various regional groups to form one common front against the centre.

The second effect of the failure of the nation story is that various parties cease to recognise each other's legitimacy when they propose radically different stories for the nation, as they do not recognise each other as true members or representatives of the nation anymore. As a result, the reciprocal recognition of legitimacy, which is the key to democratic systems, fails to be enacted and the democratic system as a whole becomes unstable. The third hypothesis of my thesis is that, due to the lack of a commonly accepted nation story, parties in Sudan ceased to recognise each other's legitimacy and the democratically elected governments became vulnerable to military coups. The result of these three hypotheses I call *nation failure*.

I decided to use the term *nation failure* or *failed nation,* whilst acknowledging all of its problems. The expression carries all the problems of the term *failed state*, which has been discussed extensively. Primarily the term suggests a dichotomy between failed and functioning, where no dichotomy but gradual differences exists. Secondly, it refers linguistically to a state, or in this case nation, with prior existence which then failed. Thirdly, the failed state concept is a very general term which has been applied to highly divergent phenomena and similarly the failed nation concept is rather general. Additionally the term failed nation might suggest a distinctiveness between state and nation, which does not exist in such a clear fashion, since state and nation are intricately connected. Lastly the term is relatively crass and when failure is detected, the question of blame follows relatively quickly –although possibly the fact that no state or nation in the European sense emerged, might not be a failure, but simply a result of given pre-conditions. Therefore the term *failed nation building* or *hindered nation*, might indeed be more precise.

There is however a reason, why I believe the term is of value and why I used it before, first in a paper published soon after South Sudanese independence.[14] The term *failed nation*, more than any other possible term, builds a pair with the term *failed state*. It emphasises, maybe over-emphasises, this relationship. Talking to diplomats, members of international organisations, and NGO workers in Sudan one realises quickly that there is an exclusive focus on structures and numbers. How many babies die of malnutrition? How many cases of Malaria were measured? How few people can read and write? Slightly more abstract, what is the legal basis of the electoral process? How are governmental institutions structured? All this is without question important, but Sudan did not break apart because of malnutrition and infant mortality. Equally, the two new states will not succeed if exclusive attention is paid to what can be measured by counting numbers.

In a private discussion with a relatively high ranking United Nations official, I complained that the international organisations have no understanding of Sudanese history before the current regime came to power in 1989. He looked at me, laughing and said "Moritz, we have no idea what happened before the CPA (i.e. the peace agreement between the northern and southern Sudan) in 2005."[15] The international organisations active in Sudan have no understanding of relevant history, but even more important, they have no understanding that history is relevant. History, ideas, and with it the nation, cannot be measured as easily and are therefore sidelined in the analysis. This explains another encounter where I observed a UN official shake his head and exclaim "Why can't they just get along?"[16] The term *failed nation* attempts to underline the relevance of history, of ideas, and of the nation in enabling a positive development and hopefully a peaceful future for the Sudanese peoples.

In the summer of 2012 Sudanese students have, once again, begun to demonstrate against the regime and, in one of the key texts arguing for the uprising, Yūsif

14 Moritz Mihatsch, 'Sudanese Independencies, 1956 and 2011', SSSUK Bulletin, No. 44 (July 2011), pp. 15-31.
15 Personal discussion.
16 Personal discussion.

Mubārak ʿAbd-Allāhi al-Fāḍil al-Mahdī asked "Does the fact that we continue to do nothing make us a failed nation?" He drew attention to the economic situation and corruption, but his main focus was on why the Sudanese "are (…) so reluctant to take a stand." Yūsif had a point in that "it is hard to see how the situation in Sudan can become much worse than it already is."[17] However, overcoming the problems does not only mean overcoming the current regime. Qirifnā, the movement behind the demonstrations, listed in its demands not only regime change and the establishment of the rule of law, but also an end to "the use of religion to terrorize political opponents," and an end to "the ethnic monopoly over power and permit the participation of all marginalized peoples."[18]

But these challenges cannot just be blamed on the current regime, as the monopolisation of power in the centre and the interconnection between religion and power are rooted in the political developments of the 1950s and 60s. Arguing along the same lines, Yāsir ʿArmān wrote, in the name of the armed movement fighting the government in the Nuba Mountains and in the Blue Nile, that the opposition in Khartoum is at risk to repeat:

> "the experience of the past and the reproduction of the historical crises by adopting the same concepts, approaches and methods of the past, that there are certain groups within the nation-state who determine the destiny while alienating other groups and this was exactly what had happened at the eve of the Independence of Sudan and the promises given to the South Sudan Parliamentarians in December 19, 1955. It also repeats the failures of October 1964 and April 1985 to bring to an end the war with the South and to institute a sustainable democracy through a national comprehensive approach."[19]

Indeed, a regime change would not resolve the other crises automatically. A solution must break with the patterns of the past. To do so and to prevent the Sudan from becoming a failed nation, in the sense of Yūsif al-Fāḍil, these patterns

17 Yūsif Mubārak ʿAbd-Allāhi al-Fāḍil al-Mahdī, 'Sudan Need Not Be a Failed State', *Muftah Online*, 20 June 2012 (http://muftah.org/sudan-need-not-be-a-failed-state/).

18 Girifna, *Demands of a Nation,* 13 February 2011 (http://www.girifna.com/demands).

19 Yāsir ʿArmān, 'The SPLM-N Position on the National Consensus Forces Democratic Alternative Charter', *Notes of the SPLM-North*, 7 July 2012 (http://www.facebook.com/notes/ splm-north / the – splm – n – position – on – the – national – consensus – forces – democratic -alternative-char/438645082843113).

must be understood, which this thesis attempts to contribute to. Therefore, acknowledging all its problems, I nevertheless decided to use the term *failed nation* and thus *Stories of a Failed Nation* as a title for the thesis.

The perspective I have chosen to analyse the three hypotheses outlined above is to look at the political parties and their debates over the constitution and independence and sovereignty. Using political parties as the prism, I will look at the roots of nation stories within those organisations and on the ability or disability of the political system to find a compromise between various previously formed stories. The advantage of this perspective is that the results of the electoral process reflect the relevance of the various groups at different times, in different regions and among different social backgrounds. The second advantage is that the constitutional debates within the parliament are a relatively clearly defined environment. The disadvantages are that this limits the analysis to the strongly formalised contexts and that political parties and the parliamentary process are only one part of the socio-political field. However, through elections people mandate parties to conduct national debates on their behalf and therefore even if parties are not the only socio-political players, they represent a large section of the spectrum. Additionally, political parties as main units of the analysis, allow me to look at a relatively wide spectrum of opinion over a relatively long period of time and therefore, with all limitations considered, are the most productive level of analysis.

The Literature

While the academic literature on colonialism, decolonisation, state formation, nation building and nationalism in Sudan is vast, such a broad approach to understanding the emergence of the political system in relation to the nation story has, to my knowledge, so far not been attempted. Three reasons are mostly responsible for this: firstly only with historical distance is such an analysis

possible, secondly different individual issues have dominated the discourse over the last fifty years, and most importantly thirdly, such an approach can only be attempted because individual issues and parties have been studied already in detail in secondary literature. This not withstanding, a number of different approaches to the question of the Sudanese nation and state and the instability of the political structures can be identified.

The first authors, who produced academic and semi-academic writings on Sudanese politics, society and history, were themselves part of the colonial project. Writers like Harold MacMichael, J. S. R. Duncan and K. D. D. Henderson wrote their books while working in Sudan for the condominium, or after their retirement. These volumes gave a unique perspective on Sudan. There are probably few authors today, who can rely on such detailed and intimate personal experience of the country and its people. This inside view is especially interesting in regard to the functioning of the colonial administration and the conflicts between the administration in Khartoum, and the government in London, also in regard to the confrontations with Cairo. This administration is discussed in detail in Duncan's first book, which has the indicative title *The Sudan, A Record of Achievement*.[20]

The authors however revealed the same blind spots as the colonial administration itself. History seemed predominantly made by British administrators in Khartoum and London, and secondarily by Egyptian officials, who in this interpretation played the role of the villains, opposing the well-meaning British officers. Sudanese agency existed, if at all, only peripherally. In Duncan's second book, *The Sudan's Path to Independence*,[21] a book of just over two-hundred pages, the Sudanese political parties are discussed for the first time on page 139. After three pages about Sudanese parties, and another five pages about the Ṣūfī ṭarīqahs, the book returns to discuss British Egyptian contracts and negotiations. MacMichael's book *The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*, published in 1934 discussed in more detail the irrigation works done between 1914 and 1924, than the White Flag movement,

20 J.S.R. Duncan, *The Sudan, A Record of Achievement* (Edinburgh, 1952).
21 J.S.R. Duncan, *The Sudan's Path to Independence* (California, 1957).

which occurred in the same period, and was presented, in line with the colonial perception, as an Egyptian conspiracy.[22] The authors mainly focussed on pre-independence Sudan or the time leading up to independence, which they saw, as Duncan pointed out already in his title, as an "achievement".

Of course not only former members of the colonial administration wrote about this period. Other important books include Muddaṯṯir ʿAbd-al-Raḥīm's PhD thesis on the constitutional development during the colonial era[23] and Daly's *Empire on the Nile*.[24] These authors were more generally interested in decolonisation and state building in Sudan. P.M. Holt and W.M. Daly, whose book on Sudanese history is now in its sixth edition, took primarily a descriptive approach. Their explanation for the instability of the political system, focussed mainly on the personal rivalries, which I argue is missing the point. "The brief history of the first parliamentary period was thus characterized from the start by petty rivalries and crippling suspicions."[25] And about the second parliamentary period they wrote that "public confidence in the parliamentary system (…) could not survive the personal and ideological disputes that had dominated political life."[26] Robert Collins took a similar perspective in his recent book *Modern Sudan*, where he wrote: "The most intellectual, cosmopolitan, and politically sophisticated Sudanese appeared to have a perverse capacity to produce leaders of limited abilities, arrogance without restraint, and avarice without shame."[27] Not only non-Sudanese authors argued this way. Manṣūr Ḫālid described the elite in his book *The Government They Deserve* as intellectually inadequate and sometimes lacking integrity. "The elite has thus failed the country because of myopia, dogmatism, ethnocentricity, factionalism, and in the case of some, religious bigotry." Ḫālid however pointed out, that this was "aggravated by the demographic profile of the elite," a point I will return to shortly.[28]

22 Sir Harold Alfred MacMichael, *The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (London, 1934), p. 152.
23 Muddathir 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan* (Oxford, 1969).
24 M.W. Daly, *Empire on the Nile* (Cambridge, 1987).
25 P.M. Holt, and M.W. Daly, *A History of the* Sudan (Harlow, 2011), p. 116.
26 Ibid., pp. 128-9.
27 Robert O. Collins, *A History of Modern* Sudan (Cambridge 2008), p. 92.
28 Mansour Khalid, *The Government They Deserve* (New York, 1990), pp 10-11.

A similar argument pointing towards the personal qualities of the members of the elite, or rather the lack thereof, was, among others, made by Ruth First, who argued that the division and reconfiguration of political parties and government coalitions were primarily due to the elite's singular interest in holding power.[29] It is interesting how in this regard Europe and Africa are measured differently. In Europe, the behaviour of politicians is explained by a theory dubbed as "capitalism of votes." Politicians take decisions to maximise "profits," that is the votes to be won in the next elections. They do so because they are interested in staying in power. This interest of politicians is vitally necessary for the political system, as only a politician who is interested in getting re-elected will act according to the wishes of his constituency. Ergo, in Europe the power-hungry politician is a constituent part of the democratic system, in Africa he is the problem. Furthermore, the inability of ʾAzharī or Ṣādiq to create a stable coalition can hardly be argued to have been in their interest. If they indeed wanted to hold power for as long as possible, creating a stable coalition would have been a prerequisite. The instability of coalitions and the reconfiguration of parties have to be explained differently.

Over all, an analysis, which exclusively blames the character of the elite appears unconvincing. It seems improbable that Sudan should have fewer leadership personalities with integrity than any other country and if they fail to get into positions of power, or change once in positions of power, and do not do so elsewhere, there must have been underlying factors. Woodward tried to uncover these aspects, both in his book *Condominium and Sudanese Nationalism* and his more recent papers, where he said: "personal and factional rivalry was unfettered and appears to have been encouraged by the inevitability of coalition government, while it in turn weakened those coalitions."[30] Woodward is not alone in his assessment of Sudanese factionalism; a similar point is made by ʾAbū Ḥasabū

29 Ruth First, *The Barrel of a Gun* (London, 1970), p. 269.
Abdel Ghaffar Mohamed Ahmed and Samia El Hadi El Nagar, 'When Political Parties Fail, Sudan's Democratic Conundrum', in Mohamed Salih (ed.), *African Political Parties, Evolution, Institutionalisation and Governance* (London, 2003), pp. 105-6.

30 Peter Woodward, 'Is the Sudan governable? Some thoughts on the experience of liberal democracy and military rule', Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies), Vol. 13, No. 2 (1986), p. 142.

among others, in her book *Factional Conflict in the Sudanese Nationalist Movement*.[31] Woodward certainly had a point when he pointed to a link between factionalism and the super-majorities of Sudanese coalition governments. Nevertheless, factionalism is primarily a description and not an explanation. Factionalism exists in every country and every party to varying degrees over time. Therefore the question remains, why the Sudanese factionalism could not be bridged and resulted in the collapse of the political order.

Woodward also pointed to the fact that of course "not only the stagnation of the periods of parliamentary rule (…) gave rise to disaffection (but also) the tensions in the southern Sudan (… which had) developed into open warfare".[32] He argued that in part, a solution for the southern Sudan failed, because "it was of minor importance to the dominant northern parties."[33] What Woodward however does not ask, is whether the southern issue in turn made a solution to northern factionalism more difficult. Similarly Woodward briefly touched upon the Muslim Brotherhood and the communists, whose "wider appeal (…) was limited", yet they were "so influential among students and the frustrated intelligentsia."[34] Again the question remains open, if this strong appeal of the communists and islamists among a specific part of the elite inhibited a solution to factional challenge.

A variation of this idea about factionalism, which focuses on religious factions, has been supported by different Sudanese authors. They argue that sectarian divisions of Sudanese society are at the heart of the problems of Sudanese politics. Muḥammad ʿUmar Bašīr concluded in his book *Revolution and Nationalism in Sudan* that the instability in Sudan was due to the "conflict and continuous disagreements between the major political parties" which were dominated by "the two religious sects".[35] The most extreme proponent of this view is probably

31 Afaf Abdel Majid Abu Hasabu, *Factional Conflict in the Sudanese Nationalist Movement* (London, 1985).

32 Peter Woodward, *Condominium and Sudanese Nationalism* (London, 1979), p. 174.

33 Peter Woodward, 'Is the Sudan governable?', Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies), Vol. 13, No. 2 (1986), p. 143.

34 Peter Woodward, *Condominium and Sudanese Nationalism* (London, 1979), pp. 173-4.

35 Mohamed Omer Beshir, *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan* (London, 1974), pp. 202-3.

Gabriel Warburg, who argued that the intelligentsia had no tangible influence and the true power was completely with the "sectarian" leaders.[36] This aspect, the domination by the two "sects", is still often cited by Sudanese. The term, and the use of the Arabic "ṭāʾīfah" (sect) instead of "ṭarīqah" (path, the usual term for Ṣūfī brotherhoods) is indicative, as it is a holdover from the colonial period, where the so-called sects were seen as all-dominant. This analysis is problematic because firstly it depicts the two large parties as homogenous, which they were not, and secondly they do not attempt to explain why the Sudan would have been dominated by "sects" and therefore sectarianism functions as a catch-all for everything which can otherwise not be explained. Lastly, any analysis, which sees the "sects" as all-dominating, blanks out the influence of ideological parties and even to a degree the regionalist and secessionist conflicts.[37]

An even more radical stance was recently presented by the afore-mentioned Gabriel Warburg, who went as far as to argue that democracy and Islam are generally not compatible.[38] Warburg wrote: "(F)or as long as the religious-ethnic divide, dominated by sectarianism and led by a northern Muslim élite, continues to play a central political role, there is little hope for stability."[39] He then goes on to examine the various attempts at constitutional writing between 1956 and 1969, with a one-dimensional understanding of Islam and its role within the northern elite, to construct an absolute opposition between the southern wish for federation and the northern wish to connect Islam and politics in some sense.[40] While this connection unquestionably exists, both the mono-causal approach of Warburg and his understanding of Islam appear simplistic. A much more differentiated view on the emergence of the islamist idea in Sudan and the Muslim Brotherhood was presented by Sudanese authors such as al-Tiğānī with *Islam, Sectarianism and the*

36 Gabriel R. Warburg, *Islam Nationalism and Communism in a Traditional Society* (London, 1978), pp. 88-9.

37 Other works which substantially and more generally add to the understanding of Sudanese Sufism include: Ali Salih Karrar, *The Sufi Brotherhoods in the Sudan* (Illinois, 1992). And John Voll's thesis about the Ḫatmīyah: John Obert Voll, 'A History of the Khatmiyyah Tariqah in the Sudan' (Harvard Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1969). And: Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim, *Sayyid ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī* (Leiden, 2004).

38 Gabriel R. Warburg, *Islam, Sectarianism, and Politics in the Sudan since the Mahdiyya* (London, 2003), pp. 222-6.

39 Ibid., p. 142.

40 Ibid., pp. 143-51.

Muslim Brotherhood in Modern Sudan[41] and ʿAbd-al-Wahhāb with *The Political and Ideological Development of the Muslim Brotherhood in Sudan*.[42]

While Warburg's book is relatively recent and is therefore already swayed by the debates about global islamism and the war on terror, Tim Niblock's seminal book *Class and Power in Sudan*[43] was mostly based on his research in Sudan in the 70s. His writing was therefore still influenced by the Cold War and the early al-Numayrī period. The book, as the title already suggested, took a different approach and argued from a perspective of class. Niblock posited that the marked imbalances and inequalities differentiating regions and social groupings within regions were not solved by politics, because the position of politicians "did not depend on the pursuit of policies whose economic, social or political content attracted popular support" but on "their alliances with (…) senior establishment figures."[44] The instability of the system was a consequence of the disadvantaged growing in strength, "posing a threat to the stability and coherence of the polity – or at least to the ability of the establishment and the incipient bourgeoisie to retain the leading role."[45]

Niblock precisely demonstrated the interconnectedness of the Sudanese elite and the reliance of the political system on certain social classes. He unquestionably has a point when he argued a connection between these classes and the procurement of votes in elections. Nevertheless his understanding of the instability of the political system seems based on the assumption that a true integration of the disadvantaged or solutions to the regional and social inequalities could only come through a socialist revolution, as the capitalist "bourgeoisie" continuously perpetuated the *status quo*. This analysis is however in contradiction to the fact that Sudanese politics after independence did not produce many political outcomes at all. Had the system been subjected to a more or less coherent

41 Eltigani Abdelgadir Hamid, 'Islam, Sectarianism and the Muslim Brotherhood in Modern Sudan' (SOAS London Ph.D. thesis, 1989).

42 Abdelwahab A. M. Osman, 'The Political and Ideological Development of the Muslim Brotherhood in Sudan' (reading Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1989).

43 Tim Niblock, *Class and Power in Sudan* (London 1987).

44 Ibid., p. 204.

45 Ibid., p. 205.

"bourgeois" vision, one would expect political outcomes in line with that vision and not political stagnation, which in turn was a core aspect contributing to the political instability. An explanation for this stagnation must be sought elsewhere. Nevertheless Niblock's analysis of class in Sudan remains essential. Other authors who contributed to the analysis of the leftist current in Sudanese politics include Fawzī with his book on *The Labour Movement in the Sudan*,[46] al-Ṭayib who wrote about *The Students' Movement in the Sudan*,[47] ʾAmīn's series of papers on the Sudanese Communist Movement,[48] and Thomas Schmidinger's thesis on the Sudanese workers' movement.[49]

Peter Bechtold, whose analysis is mostly based on elections and their results, took a more theoretical approach when he argued in respect to the 1968 elections regarding the high number of participating parties: "Political effectiveness is closely related to both legitimacy and stability of the regime in question; without legitimacy, there can be no stability, and without stability, no regime can effect any program."[50] And he went on to point out that in turn the strength or weakness of the effectiveness of the regime actually influences how legitimate a regime is being perceived. Bechtold defined legitimacy in a limited fashion, as confined to legality of the regime and popular acceptance.[51] When Bechtold spoke about popular acceptance, he meant, acceptance of the system, not of the specific group in power. While I follow Bechtold in his analysis that the lack of popular acceptance opened the door for military coups, Bechtold does not really attempt to explain how it came to that lack of popular acceptance. Among other things he points to the weakness of the personalities of the different Prime Ministers, especially Maḥǧūb, whose weak leadership led to a proliferation of political factions.[52] I would however argue that the choice of Maḥǧūb was intentional and therefore rather a symptom of underlying difficulties. Bechtold is not alone in

46 Saad Ed Din Fawzi, *The Labour Movement in the Sudan* (Oxford, 1957).
47 Salah El Din El Zein El Tayeb, *The Students' Movement in the Sudan* (Khartoum, 1971).
48 Mohammed Nuri El-Amin, 'The Sudanese Communist Movement, the First Five Years – I', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (Jul. 1996), pp. 22-40.
49 Thomas Schmidinger, *ArbeiterInnenbewegung im Sudan* (Frankfurt, 2004).
50 Peter K. Bechtold, *Politics in the Sudan* (New York, 1976), p. 286.
51 Ibid., p. 287.
52 Ibid., p. 242.

pinning blame to a specific individual. ʿAbd-Allāhi ʿAlī ʾIbrāhīm saw the culprit in ʾAzharī, who he saw as lacking in personality,[53] and Maḥğūb blamed Ṣādiq al-Mahdī for the majority of the problems.[54] Similarly like blaming the personal characteristics of the elite as a whole, blaming a specific individual seems unsatisfactory as an explanation.

Similarly mono-causal seems the approach to blame foreign interference of some sort. Maḥğūb explicitly feared Egyptian interventions and the NUP believed that an aid agreement with the United States was the first step towards re-colonisation. Similarly, during many personal discussions my contacts alluded to the fact that if Sudan had been democratic, it would be a rich and strong country and that this was not in the interest of other nations, especially America. Indeed, at times foreign interference could be observed. Especially after the October revolution with its communist-supported cabinet, the arms support for the Anya-Nya increased and possibly foreign governments contributed or attempted to contribute to the return of ʾUmmah or NUP rule.[55] Nevertheless, overall evidence for foreign interference was minimal. The coup by ʿAbbūd was not entirely surprising to the foreign representatives, but there are no signs that they had any hand in the events. In the case of the Numayrī coup, considering Numayrī's left-leaning orientation, it was clearly against American interests. Overall, the ominous foreign hands, cannot serve as a valid explanation for the instability of democracy in Sudan.

Instead of looking at politics in Khartoum, one can also focus on the issue of national unity, especially in regards to the southern Sudan. A group of southern Sudanese authors has tried to explain where the schism between north and south

53 Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim, M*anichaean Delirium* (Leiden, 2008), pp. 165-83.

54 Mohamed Ahmed Mahgoub, *Democracy on Trial* (London, 1974), pp. 198-200.

55 The fact that Sudan was on an anti-insurgency list by that point in time ,at least points to the possibility that anti-insurgency measures were taken. Arms support for the Anya-Nya came from Congo and Lagu described how after the change of government in Khartoum, this support was stopped on, as Lagu assures, instructions from abroad. "Since the West no longer viewed Communism in Sudan as a real threat, our usefulness to the West was over and our services no longer required." (Joseph Lagu, Sudan, Odyssey Through a State (Omdurman, 2006), p. 153.) Additionally the German researcher Roman Deckert, who has worked on German Sudanese relations, has pointed out during a personal discussion that German sources imply that money was paid to the ʾUmmah to facilitate the ʾAnṣār protests in Khartoum.

originated; among them are Oliver Albino who wrote *The Sudan; A Southern Viewpoint*[56] and Joseph Oduho and William Deng who presented *The Problem of the Southern Sudan*.[57] Oduho and Deng pointed to racial differences. They used this point, among others, to argue why southern Sudan is not automatically or logically a part of Sudan as a whole.[58] They also explained that a large part of the discrimination of southerners was due to racist perspectives of northerners.[59] But interestingly, they did not use this racial difference as an argument why the south should be independent. According to Oduho and Deng, the historical and at the time on-going individual and systemic subjection[60] of southerners created a situation in which secession became inevitable. The nation in this sense is primarily created not by ethnicity or race, or religion, but by historical experience.

Oliver Albino argued along similar lines, but interestingly he first showed why the independence for the south would be good for both parts of the country on political and economic terms.[61] Only then did he continue to explain that the southern Sudanese form a "genuine national movement" based on a "national sentiment" which "is not a matter of debate (…) but a phenomenon to which unqualified respect is due."[62] Albino defined this national sentiment:

> "We feel African, and demand to be treated as such. (…) As a unifying principle we have our history, our common enemy, and our cultural similarities. We were enslaved together, we have fought together, and we are suppressed indiscriminately as a single subject race."[63]

If this explanation of the schism –based on the one hand on the rational reasons why a division might be positive, and on the other hand on personal experience and a personal reading of history– seems to a certain degree eclectic, one has to keep in mind that these texts were primarily political, rather than academic texts. They were addresses to an audience in Europe and America to explain the

56 Oliver Albino, *The Sudan; A Southern Viewpoint* (London, 1970).
57 Joseph Oduho, and William Deng, *The Problem of the Southern Sudan* (London 1963).
58 Ibid., pp. 15-8.
59 Ibid., p. 59.
60 Ibid., pp. 40-58.
61 Oliver Albino, *The Sudan, A Southern Viewpoint* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 112-6.
62 Ibid., pp. 117-8.
63 Ibid., p. 118.

southern Sudanese case in hope of moral or even material support. The opposite to this can be found in Bašīr's *The Southern Sudan; Background to the Conflict*, which in a sense is a northern explanation of what happened. Bašīr saw the primary responsibility in British policies, but admitted that the politics after 1965 did little to contribute to a positive resolution.[64] The interesting aspect of Bašīr's analysis is that he focussed completely on the state and the threat of separation into two states, while having no issue with references to "national differences" between north and south.[65]

Authors such as Douglas Johnson, Alex de Waal and Julie Flint, Gérard Prunier and Wendy James, who have more recently written about the conflicts in the Sudanese peripheries, have naturally taken a more analytical and academic approach. Of course the conflicts in Sudan are not mono-causal, and the different authors point to a whole range of local causes which started or reinforced conflicts at specific points, including climate change in Darfur, international conflicts and wars in neighbouring states, such as the Libyan aggression against Chad or the Sudanese weapon delivery for the Congolese rebel army known as *Simbas*. All of these are of course important, but they are primarily localised, temporary factors, they do not explain the underlying logic.

Flint and de Waal pointed to the unequal distribution of government positions in Sudan. They discussed the so called "Black Book" in detail, which was an anonymous publication, which statistically analysed the distribution of government positions on various levels by ethnicity and tribe and came to the conclusion that three Arab tribes living along the Nile controlled the government and the patronage networks and had done so since independence.[66]

Prunier on the other hand cautioned that at least in Dar-Fur post-independence politics were not characterised by ethnic or racial aspects in the first parliamentary period. He argued that a change only happened in the second parliamentary

64 Mohamed Omer Beshir, *The Southern Sudan* (London, 1968), pp. 99-101.
65 Ibid., p. 101.
66 Julie Flint, and Alex de Waal, *Darfur, A New History of a Long War* (London, 2008), pp. 16-7.

period when local political dynamics were linked up with national politics and were reinterpreted through a national lens.[67] Prunier concluded that this was the result of a process which he described thus:

> "»The Sudan«, that bizarre construct created by the Turco-Egyptians in 1821 and petrified by the British in 1898, is now a semi-zombie. It started to putrefy by degrees between 1956 and 1983 and the present Darfur horror is simply an extension of the gangrene reaching previously unaffected parts of the body."[68]

This dynamic of linking up local issues with national issues can also be read along the lines on an idea proposed by Wendy James, who pointed to the fact that local dynamics are not simply continuations of pre-existing conditions. She wrote:

> "(T)he struggle on the ground is not always best understood as between ethnic or religious groups, and drawing boundaries can produce as much conflict and misery as it solves (…). The conflicts which global modernity seems to provoke do not stem simply from pre-existing rivalries, but are created to a large extent by the processes of expanding modernity itself."[69]

It is exactly this integration of the region into a modernising state, and the conflicts connected to this, which this thesis explores. At the same time, Johnson is of course correct when he pointed out that the conflict had historical roots, often older even than the colonial modernising project:

> "The exploitative nature of the central state towards its rich, but uncontrolled hinterland, the coercive power of the army in economic as well as political matters, the prerogative of the leader in redistributing revenues to the peripheries, the ambiguous status of persons who are not fully part of the central heritage – all of these have (been entrenched by the Sudanic states, the jihad state of the Mahdiyya and the colonial state and) re-emerged with force in the Sudan since independence."[70]

While all of these authors made important points, and Johnson in particular deconstructs the relationship between centre and periphery, they did not explain, and indeed did not try to explain, why politics in the centre itself were so unstable

67 Gérard Prunier, *Darfur, A 21st Century Genocide* (Ithaka, 2008), pp. 38-42.
68 Ibid. 197.
69 Wendy James, *War and Survival in Sudan's Frontierlands* (Oxford, 2007), p. 3.
70 Douglas Johnson, *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars* (Oxford, 2011), p. 7.

and unable to produce political outcomes. Outside observers often make the automatic assumption that one led to the other, but this is not necessarily true. There are many states with regionalised violence and even war, which have at the same time a well functioning political system in the capital, or at least much better functioning than Sudan; examples go from India to Turkey and from the United Kingdom to Thailand. The failure in Khartoum surely was connected to these regional issues, but not in a mono-causal way. Johnson hinted at this dynamic when he wrote:

> "Parliamentary government in 1965-9 was dominated by a series of coalition governments (…). Splits within both parties (NUP and Umma …) made these coalitions unstable. (…) The parties' own internal weaknesses, the insecurity of their hold on power, and the challenges they faced from non-sectarian parties in the remoter regions, made them less willing to compromise on the issue of religion, this being the only appeal which justified their contention for power." [71]

However, his focus being on the regions and not Khartoum, he did not take this thought any further. While he argued that certain dynamics in Khartoum made compromise with the south on religious issues more difficult or even impossible, he did not ask if the problems in the south strained the ability of the parties in the north to develop a functioning balance or system among themselves.

The debate on identity politics in Sudan also focused on the north-south conflict, but unlike some of the racial arguments by South Sudanese authors, they understood identities as constructed and historically contingent, and not as racial or immutable. Various authors have tackled these issues from different directions, among them Heather Sharkey, Ann Lesch and ʾAmīr ʾIdrīs.

Lesch focussed a part of her analysis on the different understandings of history. She argued that groups in the north and the south understood historical events differently and that their identity in parts arose from these different understandings. While ʾIdrīs also made this point,[72] Lesch demonstrated it

71 Ibid., p. 35.
72 Amir Idris, *Conflict and Politics of Identity in Sudan* (New York, 2005), pp. 44-5.

systematically on the basis of various examples.[73] In her analysis however she saw each side as a homogenous unit, overlooking the massive differences in the understanding of history by different groups in the north and different groups in the south. This might in part be a result of her insistence to posit a central ethnic core to identity.[74] ʾAmīr ʾIdrīs demonstrated how this ethnic core, especially in regard to the south, was a historical construction, but more importantly he showed that the conflict was not the result of diverging ethnic identities, but "it is the racialized state which transformed these cultural identities into political ones."[75]

Heather Sharkey showed in her article "Arab Identity and Ideology in Sudan: The Politics of Language, Ethnicity, and Race" how the northern Sudan itself was step by step "arabised" and how then attempts were undertaken to "arabise" the south. This arabness was then politicised and arabisation policies became a tool for suppression of non-Arab groups. As a result learning Arabic stopped being a tool to become part of the Sudanese nation. As a result, as Sharkey pointed out, the spread of Arabic "will offer Sudan no shortcut to national unity and no guarantee for survival within present-day borders."[76]

Even if Lesch and ʾIdrīs showed the constructedness of identity and historicise it, they still mostly see it at the crossroads of language, ethnicity and religion. Sharkey showed that this equation is not necessarily true and that an assimilation in regards to language does not necessarily lead to a more unified identity. While language, ethnicity and religion are definitely important factors for identity, especially when they are, as ʾIdrīs showed, politicised, identity can and, as Amyarta Sen argued, should be understood much more broadly.[77] Overcoming the dichotomy of north-south, one can clearly see a broad differentiation of identities within the north and within the south. What Lesch said about different understandings of historical developments, and what Idris argued in regards to

73 Ann Mosley Lesch, *The Sudan; Contested National Identities* (Oxford, 1998), pp 25-44.
74 Ibid., pp. 5-6.
75 Amir Idris, *Conflict and Politics of Identity in Sudan* (New York, 2005), p. 6.
76 Heather Sharkey, 'Arab Identity and Ideology in Sudan: The Politics of Language, Ethnicity, and Race', *African Affairs*, No. 426 (Jul. 2008), p. 43.
77 Amyarta Sen, *Identity and Violence, The Illusion of Destiny* (New York, 2007).

the politicisation of identity is equally true for internal identities within the geographic regions.

This thesis stands at the crossroads of these various bodies of literature and draws strongly from them. The thesis argues that the interconnectedness of all these issues regarding the nation was at the core of the instability of the Sudanese political system. Each of these issues was represented by a different party. However, the essential point is not that Sudan had a multitude of parties in the 1950s and 60s, but that there were many parties, which were in one way or another important; while some represented large sections of society as a whole, others represented specific regions or relevant sections of the elite. To understand how they conflicted with each other, I first analyse each of them in their own right. I will then bring all the strands together and make my overarching arguments.

In the final chapter I show that the parties are dually challenged, firstly by the complications of creating and maintaining coalitions, which led to a lack of attention to actual policy outcomes, and secondly, the parties stopped recognising each other as legitimate participants in the political sphere. The parties failed to overcome these challenges because of the extreme breadth and differentiation of relevant political parties in Sudan, which inhibited compromises possible elsewhere. In consequence the challenges posed by differing ideologies and regionalist aspirations could not be met.

This differentiation mostly took place in regard to the debate about the constitution and the nation, where one can find a polarisation along three axes; the axis of sovereignty and legitimacy, represented by NUP and ʾUmmah, the ideological axis represented by the communist and islamist parties, and lastly the axis of federalism and secessionist conflict, represented by the southern and northern regional parties. Because each of these issues had consequences for the other issues, the different parties were at deadlock, preventing them from finding a compromise. Each of these positions was, as I demonstrate in the final chapter, an expression of their different understanding and imagination for a Sudanese nation.

Comparisons

The contribution of the thesis, lies in particular in the analysis of the Sudanese nation story as an explanation for the instability of the political system. While the thesis is looking at Sudan, the relevance of the findings goes beyond that. The conceptualisation of nation as a story, as well as the findings about multi-party democracy in Sudan and its challenges to nation building, are informative also within other African and Middle Eastern contexts. While the specifics of the Sudanese case as elaborated in the thesis, might allow specialists of other countries to pose interesting questions in their own contexts, I lack the detailed understanding of these contexts to make specific suggestions. In broader terms of the nation as a story, a number of parallels, questions and ideas are apparent. This discussion is not meant to be conclusive, but rather attempts to show how the concept of the nation as a story might be transferable to different contexts. A more detailed questioning of the theory, as well as the context, must be done by researchers with a better understanding of these specific environments. The three contexts which could give us interesting insights into the functioning of nation stories are the failure of the supra-national unions in West-Africa in the time of decolonisation, and the cohesiveness of Nigeria and Kenya against all odds.

The West-African context has been discussed in detail by Frederic Cooper. He pointed out that there were "several elite versions" of postwar pan-africanism.[78] As a result of this pan-africanism, politics were fought within the conceptual borders of French West-Africa. In Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea the dominant political party became the *Rassemblement Démocartique Africaine* (RDA), a party founded for all of French Africa with branches in the different countries. The ideology of the party was "cosmopolitan," with attempts to work across national boundaries. In Côte d'Ivoire Houphouët-Boigny "only became interested in independence (…) when it was practically a fait accompli."[79] Senghor in Senegal was "careful to

78 Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940, The Past of the Present* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 24.
79 Ibid., p. 46.

avoid too sharp a break with the idea of citizenship in an empire."[80] As Cooper stated "the biggest danger in looking back on the 1940s is the assumption that people should have known that their future was the nation-state."[81] Eventually however the future was the nation-state and even small-scale unions such as the alliance between Senghor's Senegal and Modibo Keita's Mali failed, partially because of the different mobilisation base of their different parties and their respective national appeal. As a result West-Africa was thrown into a "balkanization", which Senghor had warned against.[82]

Reading Cooper with the terminology of the nation story, two competing nation stories evolved in the late colonial period in West Africa. On one hand the supra-national story of a united French Africa was attractive to the elite, the citizens, the "évolué," who voted for representatives in Paris, all on the same day in the different metropolises in West Africa. These évolués had a shared experience of studying, often in the same schools and universities. They read the same literature and followed the same intellectual concepts and references, such as Senghor and Césare's "négritude." For the wider populations however, these supra-national references had no meaning, defining at best territorial institutions, such as the local colonial representatives, but also unions and parties which had their separate structures in each French colony. In the end, the unit of mobilisation fell together with the biggest unit of popular imagination and the smallest unit of elite imagination, the nation-state. As result, the nation story trumped the supra-national story, which demonstrated illustratively that the elite alone could not define political units and their respective imaginations.

While the French West-African example falls into similar lines to those I will argue in the thesis about Sudan, the example of Nigeria might indicate certain limitations to the concept. As Toyin Falola and Matthew Heaton explained, the idea of a Nigerian identity is relatively new, and never really took root. "Prior to the 1930s Nigerians by and large did not see themselves as »Nigerians« at all

80 Ibid., p. 47.
81 Ibid., p. 49.
82 Ibid., p. 80.

(… and) those who studied in the United Kingdom found an affinity with African subjects from other (…) colonies (…) arguing for a »west African« identity."[83] In a sense this was comparable to the phenomenon Cooper described for French West-Africa. As Falola and Heaton argued, with a new generation of graduates who had grown up in the colonial boundaries of Nigeria, a pan-Nigerian identity became thinkable and "between 1938 and 1941 the NYM (Nigerian Youth Movement) became the first pan-Nigerian nationalist movement in the country's history."[84] This pan-Nigerian nationalist movement was however short-lived, as "by the early 1950s it was becoming clear that Nigeria was congealing into three zones based on regional divisions." This was legally fixed in the so-called Macpherson constitution of 1951. In the following elections each of the regions was dominated by its own ethnic based party, but as Falola and Heaton pointed out, "in many ways (…) the various regional political parties tried to work together to form a strong national government."[85]

Nevertheless, when Nigeria became independent in 1960, the nation was at best a fragile construct. "Regionalism and ethnicity remained major problems barring the development of a national identity."[86] Falola and Heaton dubbed Nigeria "a state without a nation."[87] This problem was also recognised by many Nigerian intellectuals and accordingly they attempted to "construct a unique Nigerian culture." [88] During the brief period of the first Republic, politics were overshadowed by the fears of each region to be dominated by the other regions. "These fears (…) clouded any sense of national unity in Nigeria in the 1960s." In January 1966 the army took over power in Nigeria and after some months of in-fighting Yakubu Gowon became the new head of state. The in-fighting of the army gave way to retaliations of northern Nigerian soldiers against eastern Nigerian civilians and in multiple massacres up to 100,000 easterners were killed. This pushed the military governor of the eastern province into declaring the

83 Toyin Falola, and Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of* Nigeria (Cambridge, 2010), p. 137.
84 Ibid., p. 141.
85 Ibid., p. 154.
86 Ibid., p. 156.
87 Ibid., p. 159.
88 Ibid., pp. 159-63.

secession of the province and the creation of a new state called Biafra. The central government retaliated with war, which ended with the surrender of Biafra in January 1970.[89] In the short Nigerian civil war up to three million Nigerian were killed and another three million were displaced.[90]

I summarised this history in some detail, because the parallels to Sudan's history are striking. Nevertheless, and quite in contrast to Sudan, 1970 marked the end of regional secession movements in Nigeria. And even if Nigeria has been struggling ever since with grave political crises, and later presidents as Falola and Heaton argued have continually failed to unite the nation,[91] Nigeria was able to evade Sudan's fate of spiralling deeper and deeper into civil wars and eventually breaking up into two sovereign states. Reading this with the terminology of the nation story in mind, the difference in outcomes seems to be counter intuitive. However, a peculiar dynamic might be at play here, which would need more in-depth research to confirm or reject. While the prime identity marker in Nigeria seemed to be, as Heaton and Falola showed, ethnicity and regional geography, nevertheless the conceptions of Nigeria of the different groups might have been quite similar. All groups seemed to see Nigeria as a fragile balance of different regions and ethnicities with a multi-cultural and multi-religious society. In Sudan however one group dominated and believed that Sudan was in essence Arab Muslim and only secondarily multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-ethnic. Therefore one could argue that even if in Nigeria the nation story was at first relatively less important, there were still elements of one coherent nation story to build on over the decades.

Kenya and Tanzania on the other hand, took a different route. In both countries not the nation as such, but a more or less ambiguous national project formed the centre of collective imagination.[92] In Kenya this role was played by *Uhuru*, in Tanzania by *Ujamaa*. *Uhuru* is a Swahili word and simply means freedom and

89 Ibid., pp. 174-8.
90 Ibid., p. 180.
91 Ibid., pp. 190-1.
92 I have pointed to the lack of such a national project in Sudan in: Moritz Mihatsch, 'Sudanese Independencies, 1956 and 2011', SSSUK Bulletin, No. 44 (July 2011), pp. 23-4.

therefore one would assume that as a national project it lost its role when freedom or independence was achieved. Atieno Odhiambo however showed how *Uhuru* was again and again redefined after independence and as such remained a rallying ground.[93] At the same time these redefinitions were and remain to be problematic. As Bethwell Ogot showed, they lead to certain people being or not being recognised as national heroes of Kenyan independence. Therefore one wonders if Kenya like Sudan has actually failed to find a nation story and was spared the same consequences as Sudan only thanks to the monopolisation of power by KANU; a monopolisation which has ended. The election violence in late 2007 and early 2008 might indicate that these consequences might be yet to come.

Ujamaa on the other hand means something along the lines of brotherhood or friendship. *Ujamaa* was Nyerere's version of socialism, which he explained: "In a socialist society it is the socialist attitude of mind, not the rigid adherence to a standard political pattern, which is needed to ensure that the people care for each others' welfare."[94] As Mohiddin showed, Nyerere tried to apply the principals he saw in traditional African societies to the modern state.[95] What was the purpose of this exercise? Mohiddin argued:

> "It must be recognized that there is in Nyerere's outlook even on matters of current politics a strong streak of unrestrained idealism. (…) Granted the need for this strong emotional basis, Nyerere's concept of a classless society proves to be grounded in his ideas for a new and positive future at least as much as in a nostalgic past."[96]

In that sense, *Ujamaa* was not a theory divorced from practice, or an academic analysis of the past, but it was a vision for the future of Tanzania and the future of the nation story. This link between the nation building of Tanzania and the national project *Ujamaa* is also shown by Jan Blommaert, who stated that

93 E. S. Atieno Odhiambo, 'Matunda ya Uhuru, Fruits of Independence', in E. S. Atieno Odhiambo, and John Lonsdale (eds.), *Mau Mau and Nationhood* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 37-45.

94 Quoted according to: Ahmed Mohiddin, 'A Commentary on President Nyerere's Vision of Tanzanian Society', *African Affairs*, No. 267 (Apr. 1968), p. 131.

95 Ibid., pp. 132-3.

96 Ibid., pp. 137-8.

Tanzanian nation building began with *Ujamaa*.[97] Bloemmert made an interesting observation about the vagueness of *Ujamaa*:

> "Nyerere now appears as a notoriously ambiguous theoretician, and the vagueness in his speeches and writings triggered a dialectic of competition for the true interpretation. This dialectic probably lies at the root of the success of popular mobilization for Ujamaa. Each group in society could read its truth in the Ujamaa message. The political leaders defined the limits of interpretation, but in the interpretational space thus created, various social groups could actively contribute to nation- building and retain the feeling that they were doing this on their terms."[98]

Nyerere succeeded at creating a space where multiple stories could exist side by side, because they converged and were mutually compatible. This is what failed in the Sudanese case, where multiple versions of the nation story were mutually exclusive. It might however be easier to do this with a national project than with a nation story as such. These kind of national projects can however not replace the formation of a nation story *ad infinitum*, they can only bridge a gap. In a sense one can possibly understand the South African "rainbow nation" in the same way, as a national project to unite society until a cohesive nation story can be formulated. Certain national projects, like the rainbow nation, might be more productive on the path to formulate a nation story, than others like *Uhuru*. The terminology of the nation story might be helpful, looking at why certain national projects proved to be more and others less effective.

To conclude these points about other African contexts, the idea of the nation as a story could be helpful to gain another perspective and to add to the historiography of nation building in these countries. The concept of the nation story promises to be especially useful in countries where there is or was a strong tension between the national and the supra-national, or the sub-national, or where building the nation was strongly intertwined with a national project.

---

97 Jan Blommaert, 'Intellectuals and Ideological Leadership in Ujamaa Tanzania', *African Languages and Cultures*, No. 2 (Apr. 1997), p. 129.

98 Ibid., p. 143.

The Thesis

To answer these questions in regards to the Sudanese nation story, I applied a classical historiographical approach, based on and guided by primary and secondary sources. As primary sources I included the whole breadth of available material from official documents, to newspaper articles and from autobiographies to oral history interviews. I have tried to make use of as many secondary sources as possible, written by Sudanese as well as foreigners. I paid special attention to previous, unpublished PhD and MA theses. I also discussed the specifically relevant primary and secondary sources at the beginning of each chapter. To cope with the breadth of the period, the various parties, the available material and the questions posed, I used a fragmentary approach, analysing specific events which are exemplary and are most promising to contribute to the larger discussion, while giving a cursory background to put those fragments into a larger context.

Oral interviews were used in two ways in this thesis. Firstly they served directly as material for the arguments presented. In these cases the interviews are cited and a footnote is given. Interviews were conducted as systematically as possible. To identify potentially interesting interview partners, I generated a database, in which I entered all names of ministers, parliamentarians, founders and leaders of parties, etc., which I could find. In a second step, I spoke with people who are affiliated to a specific party and asked them, which of the people in my database affiliated with the same party are still alive. Once I identified who was still alive, I activated my network to find the contact details, to ask if I could potentially do an interview. Because the personal networks in smaller parties are more closely knit, this at times was more successful for all the small parties, and somewhat less successful for the larger parties. Additionally, the average member of the large people's parties was probably about ten to fifteen years older than the average member in the ideological parties, and they were ten years older in the 1960s than the members of the regional movements. Consequentially, while most of the founders of the National Unionist Party have already died, many of the founders of General Union of the Nuba Mountains are still alive.

A large number of interviews and discussions served however a more informal and impressionistic purpose. When I arrived in Sudan, I came equipped with ideas, opinions, theories and questions. When I started to discuss those with friends, experts and university professors such as Yūsuf Fāḍl Ḥasan and ʿAṭṭā al-Baṭṭaḥānī, and participants in the historical events, as well as contemporaries and family members of the early nationalist leaders such as ʿUmar al-Faḍlī and Ǧalāʾ ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī, some of these ideas were quickly confirmed, but equally, many seemed not in line with how the Sudanese saw their own history. I point out some of the specific influences in the chapters, but overall these discussions were especially informative for my understanding of the division between and within the two large people's parties discussed in the second chapter, and the role and relevance of the ideological parties discussed in the third chapter. Additionally the impressionistic experience of travelling Sudan, both when I first visited in 2000, as well as during my research, including an extended trip on the Nile by barge from Kūstī to Juba, were central for my ability to understand regional political parties, as discussed in the fourth chapter.

In the selection of archival sources, I followed the aim to use sources, which so far in the literature are either under represented, or would contribute to the understanding of a specific aspect of developments. The use of American archival material helped to look at the issue and understanding of sovereignty in the first democratic period. To get a better understanding of the networks of southern Sudanese politicians, I looked at the archive of the Missionare Comboniare in Rome. For the public perspective on northern regional parties in the 1960s, I looked at the newspapers at the National Archives in Khartoum. I attempted to look at the sources in the National Archive in Cairo, to get a better understanding of the Egyptian role during the independence period, but failed to get access. Early on during my research I spent some time in Durham looking at British sources, reading mostly through letters and reports covering the period leading up to independence, as well as letters from the period of the so-called White Flag League. These documents informed my understanding of the colonial perception of events and culture and its impact on knowledge production. While these documents were central to my first encounter with my topic, they did not

contribute specifically to any of the arguments and therefore no archival sources from Durham are explicitly quoted in the thesis. I looked at the documents in London through the means of the collection of British Documents on the End of Empire published by Douglas Johnson. Otherwise I prioritised spending my research time on other archives, because the areas where the London sources would have been most helpful –especially in regards to the British administration and the decolonisation– are covered excellently and comprehensively through secondary sources by various authors.

Finding secondary literature published in Sudan, and especially finding theses written by Sudanese authors, is slightly more complicated than in European universities. The University of Khartoum library and the library of the Center for Afro-Asian Studies in Khartoum and the library of the Oxford University Sudan Studies Center, all have indices, which I consulted. Additionally I relied on expert interviews with professors, as well as lengthy discussions with the librarians at all institutions, and the staff at the three most important academic bookstores in Khartoum, to get a good overview of the available material. Lastly I looked through the bibliographies of other titles, to see which titles they referenced. For PhD theses published abroad, I broadly consulted EThOS of the British Library and the American ProQuest.

The thesis is divided into five main chapters. The first chapter focuses on the historical and political background. In this chapter I discuss the geography, peoples and cultures of Sudan, outline the colonial history, illuminate the emergence of the young political elite, and finally give an impression of the three-cities of Khartoum. This chapter, being a background chapter and an introduction to Sudanese history, is nearly completely based on secondary sources.

The subsequent three chapters are all research-based and focus on the different political parties. The second chapter, revolves around the big two political parties and their cleavages along the traditional-modern, religious-secular, and capitalist-non-aligned divides. The third chapter looks at the ideological parties; the

communists and the islamists. It discusses how the two developed co-jointly and how they became dominant within the political discourse without being dominant in parliament. The fourth chapter tackles the regional parties in the southern and northern Sudan. In this chapter I ask where these parties came from and look at the emergence of the Arab-African identity divide as driving force in politics.

All three chapters are structured in the same way to make it easier for readers to follow the argument. Firstly they present a part of the general Sudanese historical narrative. Secondly they discuss the specific histories of the political parties relevant to that chapter. And thirdly, they analyse and compare these political parties. Thanks to this structure, each chapter presents the parties in their own right and also in comparison. While it might have been possible to integrate the histories of the parties with the analysis for the people's parties, such an approach would have been confusing for the ideological parties and basically impossible for the regional parties. Therefore I decided to keep these sections separately.

The second decision was to have a separate section on the general historical developments distinct from the histories of the parties. This was done for both practical and analytical reasons. On the practical side, to have a general history presented separately makes it easier for readers who are not totally familiar with Sudan, as the history is presented in one strand instead of being dispersed in bits and pieces throughout the text as a whole. This also allows readers to quickly flip back to something, as it is more obvious which events are presented where in the thesis. Analytically, the understanding of history by the specific parties and their prioritisation, which events were important and which were not, was relevant for their perception of the nation. Presenting the party histories separately from the general history makes these different perceptions more apparent.

Following the three chapters on political parties, the fifth chapter discusses the connections between all the issues discussed in the previous chapters. First it covers the various attempts to write a Sudanese constitution, then I discuss more explicitly the ideas of nation from the different parties and how they influence their ideas for the constitution and how this led to the failure of the constitution

writing process. The aim of this chapter is, to demonstrate the connection and inter-dependence between the lack of one coherent nation story, the failure to write a constitution, and the instability of the political system as a whole. The thesis closes with a brief conclusion.

I. Previously on…

Jean-Luc Godard once said, that a good story should have "a beginning, a middle and an end but not necessarily in that order." I will be traditional and keep to the usual order, but what exactly is the beginning? In this chapter I will try to set the stage and build the background and base for the events and developments which are discussed later on. This simultaneously introduces the most important groups and individuals who played a role in the political events of the 1950s and 60s. Furthermore, this historical background allows interpretation of the history of the different groups, which directly impacts on their understanding of the nation story. This chapter is mainly based on secondary literature, with the major exception of the census data and some illustrative quotes from primary sources interspersed in the text. The geographic descriptions are mostly based on personal experience travelling around Sudan. The chapter is divided into four parts. The first part discusses the geography and the people of Sudan, ranging from climate to languages to religion. In the second part I discuss the creation of the so-called Anglo-Egyptian condominium from 1898 onwards, touching on issues such as the legal structure, the early history and the internal division of the territory. In the third part the focus is on the emergence of the urban elite and their role in forming the early nationalist movement and the Graduates' Congress. In the fourth part I will speak about the three cities of Khartoum as both the centre and simultaneously the exception of Sudan.

The Land and its People

Bilād al-Sūdān, the Land of the Blacks, was the term used by Arab geographers to describe the area south of the Sahara. In modern history it has been used both to describe that whole region, or individual parts of it, such as the French Sudan in West Africa. The area of the Republic of Sudan was first unified during the Turco-Egyptian occupation in the 19th century and finally got its precise borders during the Anglo-Egyptian occupation in the first half of the 20th century. Since July 2011 it is now divided into two countries, the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan. Whenever I use the term Sudan, I mean the Republic of Sudan as it existed from independence in 1956 until 2011.

At independence Sudan was divided into nine provinces, six in the north and three in the south. The north, northwest and the Nile north of Khartoum were part of the Northern province. The north-eastern area along the Red Sea and the borderlands to modern Eritrea were unified as Kassalā province. The central belt of Sudan was divided into the Dār-Fur in the west, Kurdufān in the middle and the smaller, but agriculturally very important Blue Nile province in the east. Finally, the three towns –Khartoum, Khartoum Baḥrī and Omdurman– were joined as Khartoum province. The whole southern borderlands of southern Sudan were part of Equatoria and the area north of Equatoria was divided into Baḥr-al-Ġazāl in the west and Upper Nile in the east.

The Sudan is very large. It is in fact so vast, that the sentence has become a cliché, but does not even begin to describe the vastness adequately. Of course today, with the budget of an average aid organisation with access to planes and a small fleet of four wheel drive vehicles, one can reach every Sudanese hamlet within two or three days. But this is a mirage from the perspective of the majority of Sudanese. For most, travelling is hard and means long and tiring journeys by land. In recent years the Chinese-built highways have made travelling easier but this was not true even ten years ago, not to mention the time of independence.

At that time, travelling in the North was only possible by lorry and then only with experienced drivers, who knew the tracks through the desert. Karīmah, the city famous for its pyramids, was a three-day trip from Khartoum and the towns further north were another day or two away from Karīmah and lorries would often only pass through once a week. A trip to Dār-Fur could easily take a week, even to more central locations within the province and travelling to places within Dār-Fur could take another week, but going south was always the most difficult. The journey on the steamer to Juba from Khartoum took two to three weeks. To get to other places strenuous journeys on foot were the usual order. During the rainy season many places would get cut off completely, maybe serviced by a boat once or twice during the summer.

The geography is both diverse and entirely monotonous. In the most parts Sudan is completely flat and lined by hills only on its borders. The few hills within the country are often famous, their names known even to children. Many are revered in songs and double as popular destinations for honeymooners. Ǧabal-Barkal is rising behind the pyramids in Karīmah. Taka Mountain is towering over Kassalā town and is known for its mountainside cafés and a fertility spring. The Ǧabal-Marrah region was famous for being the most beautiful place in Sudan with fruit orchards growing on its slopes. Today it is more famous for its deadly battles between the government troops and the Dār-Furī rebel fighters. The Ǧabal-Nuba region, that is the southern part of Kurdufān province, took its name from the distinctive hills. In between, however, the country is entirely flat for hundreds and hundreds of kilometres.

Sudan stretches nearly 2,000 kilometres from the north to the south, comparable to the distance between Oslo and Rome. Over this distance the country is ever-changing from one climatic zone to the next. The very north is characterised by a sand desert with dunes and large sandy planes. South of Khartoum begins an area of seasonal grasslands. The southern Sudan is mostly covered by grasslands, swamps and rain forests. The year is divided into the rainy season and the dry season. A normal rainy season can be as long as eight months in the very south and as short as two months around Khartoum. Along the border between

northern and southern Sudan the rain allows seasonal, rain fed agriculture. It also determines the paths of the cattle nomads and the migration of wild life. Before the war in the south, some animals like giraffes would migrate as far north as the Nuba Mountains.

The Nile is Sudan's most defining geographical element. Its tributaries come from Uganda and Ethiopia. In the south the river is called the River of the Mountain, or Baḥr-al-Ǧabal. It is navigable by barge from Juba onwards. North of Juba the river flows into and forms the Sudd, the world's biggest marshland. During the dry season this sea of reeds is about as big as Belgium and the area quadruples during the rainy season. North of the Sudd the River of the Gazelle or Baḥr-al-Ġazāl flows into the Baḥr-al-Ǧabal. From here onwards the river is known as the White Nile. From Ethiopia in the east comes the Blue Nile. The two rivers form a triangle known as the island, the Ǧazīrah. It is Sudan's most important agricultural area, home of the enormous Ǧazīrah cotton scheme. The capital Khartoum lies at the point where the two large tributaries, the Blue Nile and the White Nile, flow together. From there the Nile curves for another 1,400 kilometres through more and more arid areas, being the only source for life and agriculture, until it reaches the Egyptian border.

Even more diverse than the country, are the people living in Sudan. The first population census of Sudan, conducted and published in 1955–56 counted 10.3 million people and differentiated them into eleven different groups.[99] These categories partially reflect language groups, partially origins, partially ethnicities. Among themselves, the Sudanese usually differentiate by talking about peoples (often as sons, ʾabnāʾ) and divide them into tribes (in Arabic qabīlah, qabāʾil). Tribal affiliation is one important identity marker for many Sudanese. The biggest of these groups in the census were the Arabs with nearly four million people.

But who are the Arabs in Sudan? What does Arab mean in the Sudanese context? Basically, everyone who speaks Arabic as mother tongue is considered as an Arab.

99 All population numbers in the thesis, if not otherwise remarked, are quoted according to: The Republic of Sudan, Ministry of Social Affairs, Population Census Office, *First Population Census of Sudan 1955/56, Last (9th) Interim Report* (Khartoum, May 1958).

As a working definition, I suggest to differentiate between three different groups: first, the Arabs who live along the Nile, the so-called Sons of the Land or ʾAbnāʾ al-Balad; second, the Baqqārah Arab cattle and camel nomads who mostly live in Kurdufān and Dār-Fur; third, the Rašāydah who live in the eastern Sudan.

The riverain Arabs consider themselves as members of different tribes, which trace their origins to groups who migrated to Sudan from Arabia. However, even if one assumes that this migration actually took place, the numbers were relatively insignificant and ethnically the so-called Arabs are the descendants of the people who had lived along the Nile before Arab immigration. Therefore the term Arab should always be read with quotation marks. According to the census, the Ǧaʿaliyīn were, with one million people, the largest of the Arab tribes. They claim to be descendants of al-ʿAbbās bin ʿAbd-al-Muṭṭalibs, the uncle of the prophet Muḥammad.[100] Other important riverain tribes are the Šāyqiyah and the Danāqlah. The riverain Arabs were most affected by the colonial state and most integrated into the modern money economy.

The Baqqārah Arabs of the centre and the west also have stories linking them to immigration from Arabia. While the riverain Arabs are probably mostly descendants of previously Nubian and south Egyptian populations, the Baqqārah are descendants of Chadic and Fulanic speakers. The census did not differentiate between different Baqqārah groups and quoted their number at 569,289. The most important tribes among the Baqqārah are the Rizayqāt and Taʿāīšah in Dār-Fur and the Missīriyah in Kurdufān. The third group among the Arabs are the Rašāydah. They migrated from Arabia in the mid 19th century and were therefore often considered as foreign or non-Sudanese. This is an interesting twist, as some Sudanese groups as the Ǧaʿaliyīn strongly insist to be both, Sudanese and immigrants from Arabia and use their status as Arabs to legitimate their claim to be the real Sudanese.

100 One of my interviewees proudly showed me his family tree, which traced his family back all the was to the time of the Prophet. ʿAbd-Allāhi Muḥammad ʾAḥmad, *Personal Interview* (Omdurman, 15 January 2011).

After the Arabs, the census next gave the population numbers of the Nuba, the Beja and the Nubians. The Nuba were a group who lived in southern Kurdufān. The term did not refer to a single tribe or ethnicity, but a geographical grouping of various non-Arab speaking people. They were a group who "though sharply differentiated among themselves, stand out as differing from surrounding tribes."[101] The Nuba were partially Christian and partially Muslim and they spoke various non-related languages. The census counted 572,935 Nuba in Sudan. The Beja were a group of tribes who lived in the east along the Red Sea. They were mostly Muslim and spoke mostly various Beja dialects. The census counted a total of 645,703 Beja and listed the Hadendowa and the Beni Amer as being the biggest tribes among them. Traditionally the Beja were a nomadic people but they later also made up a large part of the population of Port Sudan, Sudan's only deep sea harbour. The Nubians were a group of people who lived in southern Egypt and northern Sudan. They were part Coptic Christians and part Muslims and spoke various Nubian dialects. The census did not differentiate among them and gave their number as 330,032. While the Nuba and Beja were quite peripheral, the Nubians were more strongly integrated into the colonial system and had much better access to education than the other non-Arabic speaking groups.

The next three groups the census listed were the central, western and eastern southerners. The biggest tribes among the nearly two million central southerners were the Dinka and the Nuer. The biggest groups among the half a million eastern southerners are designated as "Bari speaking" and "Latuka speaking" and the biggest tribes among the nearly half a million western southerners were the Zande and the Moru-Madi. There were over 60 ethnic groups living in the southern Sudan, most of which spoke various Nilo-Saharan languages. At the time of independence the majority of Sudanese in the south belonged to local religions and only about ten per cent had converted to Christianity and around one per cent to Islam.[102] Culturally and politically the south was as diverse as the numbers of ethnicities and spoken languages suggested. Values, livelihoods and legal systems

101 Roland C. Stevenson, *The Nuba People of Kordofan Province* (Khartoum, 1984), p. 4.

102 Republic of Sudan, Commission on Inquiry into the Disturbances in the Southern Sudan during August 1955, Report of the Commission of Enquiry (Khartoum, 1956).

differed from group to group and power distribution ranged from the relatively decentralised power structure among the Dinka to the absolute monarchy of the Shilluk.

After the southerners, the census listed the westerners. In this category the census collated the "Tribes of Western Darfur," "French Equatorial Tribes" and "Nigerian Tribes." The tribes of Dār-Fur were numbered at 902,798. These were the various non-Arab speaking groups living in Dār-Fur who were considered as original Dār-Furī and not as immigrants from western Africa. The most important groups among them were the Fur and the Zaghawa. The Fur were the rulers of the Dār-Fur sultanate, a small state which was independent from the early 17th century until 1874 and again from 1898 until 1916 when the region was incorporated into the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. It is important to remember, that in addition to the Westerners listed here, a large number of Baqqārah Arabs lived in Dār-Fur as well.

Besides those eight categories, the census listed foreigners with and without Sudanese status and miscellaneous groups, mostly people with "No Tribe." Among the foreigners with Sudanese status the largest group were Sudanese of West-African origin with 41,744. Among the foreigners without Sudanese status the West-Africans were also the largest group with 165,227. Additionally there were 97,065 westerners of French Equatorial and 298,040 westerners of Nigerian origin. While some West-Africans have arrived in Sudan relatively recently, others have been there for many generations. All these groups together form a Sudanese minority usually known as Fallātah and Sudanese say that the Fallātah speak Rūtānā Fallātah, the dialect of the Fallātah. In fact it is a highly diverse group with Hausa, Wolof and Songhai speakers among others.

I have listed the various Sudanese populations in some detail to give an impression of the immense diversity of Sudan in the various regions. Basically three out of ten Sudanese were southerners, four Arabs and another three non-Arab northerners. Besides that, the census showed that the Sudanese population was relatively young, with 43% under the age of puberty. The largest

province was Blue Nile with two million people, followed by Kurdufān with 1.7 and Dār-Fur with 1.3 million. Khartoum province had only half a million inhabitants. The large majority of Sudanese, 80% of all adult males, were working as farmers, shepherds or animal owners.

One of the most important identity markers for many Sudanese besides tribe was their religion. As pointed out, the majority of all Sudanese in the north were Muslims, while the majority in the south adhered to local beliefs. The Islam practiced by the majority of Muslims in the north was some form of Sufism, in Arabic taṣawwuf. Islam had spread slowly in the Christian kingdoms of the northern Sudan, mostly through intermarriage and contacts with Arab merchants and settlers. In the 16th century the Funj Sultanate of Sennar appeared and quickly expanded its area of influence. It was during this time that Islam became the widely dominant form of religious practice in northern Sudan. The predominant type of Islam during the whole Funj period was the autonomous Ṣūfī order, which was based on the *ḫalwah*, Sudanese Arabic for an individual religious school.[103]

Sufism is often understood as the Islamic form of mysticism. Ṣūfīs believe that only part of the truth of god was transferred by the prophet Muḥammad through the exoteric or openly accessible meaning of the Qurʾān, but most was not. According to Ṣūfī belief there is an esoteric knowledge between the lines. While god could be studied and abstractly approached through studying the texts, he should better be experienced and directly seen through ritual and trance. On his search for god the Ṣūfī student is guided and instructed by his teacher, the sheikh –as was the sheikh when he was a student. This chain of transmission of knowledge, in Arabic *silsilah*, eventually finds its source in the prophet himself. Important sheikhs are often believed to be holymen who have *barakah*, literally translated as blessing, a force of happiness, protection and prosperity that flows from god.

103 John Obert Voll, 'A History of the Khatmiyyah Tariqah in the Sudan' (Harvard Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1969), p. 129.
For a general overview of the spread of Ṣūfī orders in Sudan, see: Ali Salih Karrar, *The Sufi Brotherhoods in the Sudan* (Illinois, 1992).

The central importance of the teacher led to a structure where groups of students and followers flocked around one sheikh to instruct them on their path. These orders or brotherhoods were called *ṭarīqah* in Arabic, literally path or way.[104] While various ṭarīqahs were different to each other, one core element in all Ṣūfī practice was *ḏikr*. Ḏikr, literally remembrance, was a ritual in which one line of the Qurʾān or specific word or group of words were repeated over and over. Specific forms of ḏikr could involve singing and dancing. Another important element of Ṣūfī ritual was the pilgrimage to the graves of famous and especially pious sheikhs. While ṭarīqahs often played an influential role within their communities, they "could exert at best an indirect political influence. The main objective of Sufism is to achieve holiness (...) The pursuit of political power (...) is regarded as a distraction from the Ṣūfī path and hence an obstacle to the achievement of holiness."[105]

In the early years of the 19th century, that is the late days of the Funj sultanate, new ṭarīqahs started to enter Sudan, which were no longer organized around individual ḫalwahs. The Samānīyah and the Ḫatmīyah ṭarīqahs attempted, for the first time, to build larger geographic networks of followers. The Ḫatmīyah was first brought to Sudan from the Ḥiǧāz, the area on the Red Sea coast of modern Saudi Arabia, in 1817-1818 by its founder Muḥammad ʿUṯmān al-Mīrġanī[106] who was travelling around the country. In 1821 the Funj sultanate, which had become increasingly weakened, was incorporated into the Ottoman empire by ʾIsmāʿīl, the son of the Egyptian Khedive Muḥammad ʿAlī. This led to a first unification of a large area which eventually became Sudan and brought with it improvements in communication and transportation. The Samānīyah and the older Maǧḏubīyah ṭarīqahs were able to make use of these improvements and expand their organisation. The Ḫatmīyah however was the only ṭarīqah which made full use of the new socio-political environment. Muḥammad ʿUṯmān al-Mīrġanī sent his son Ḥasan as permanent local representative of the ṭarīqah to Sudan. Ḥasan was able

104 I mostly use the term "ṭarīqah" and the English formed plural "ṭarīqahs," instead of the correct Arabic "ṭuruq."

105 Alexander Solon Cudsi, 'Islam and Politics in the Sudan' in James P. Piscatori (ed.), *Islam in the Political Process* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 36-7.

106 John Obert Voll, 'A History of the Khatmiyyah' (Harvard Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1969), p. 128 onwards.

to build a good relationship with the Egyptian rulers and in consequence the Ḫatmīyah was "the first popular religious organisation to become influential throughout virtually all of (northern) Sudan."[107]

The biggest challenge to Ḫatmīyah predominance came however from a completely new entrant into the religious landscape of Sudan in 1881. At the age of 36 Muḥammad ʾAḥmad, the son of a boat builder and student of the Samānīyah order, declared himself to be the awaited Mahdī. According to popular Islamic believe, a Mahdī is a spiritual and temporal leader who will rule before the end of the world and restore religion and justice.[108] The concept exists in both Sunnī and Šīʿī Islam and is relatively common in Ṣūfī belief. The Mahdī is often believed to come to remove some sort of foreign rule. It is in this context that Muḥammad ʾAḥmad declared himself. Many Sudanese religious families and Ṣūfī orders decided to join him. The Ḫatmīyah however did not believe his claim to be a true Mahdī and did not see any strategic profit in doing so. Muḥammad ʾAḥmad led a military campaign against the Turco-Egyptian administration and less than four years later he successfully occupied Khartoum and killed the British General Gordon. The Ḫatmīyah leadership left Sudan for exile in Egypt. The Mahdī himself died soon after of typhoid fever and was succeeded by Ḫalīfah ʿAbd-Allāhi as leader of the state and the new religious order, the *ʾAnṣār*. ʾAnṣār literally means helpers.

The ʾAnṣār partially took over multiple older and smaller ṭarīqahs. They had the structure of a ṭarīqah with a leader and followers and people representing the sheikh in different areas. They continued to practice basic Ṣūfī elements like ḏikr. Nevertheless the ʾAnṣār were also something else. Cudsi argued that "unlike Sufism, Mahdīsm is an activist movement; direct involvement in a political struggle to set up a reformed Islamic state is therefore consistent with its ideology."[109] Mahdīsm was an islamist and depending on the definition of terms, a

107 Ibid., p. 181.
108 According to the digital edition of the Oxford English Dictionary.
109 Alexander Solon Cudsi, 'Islam and Politics' in James P. Piscatori (ed.), *Islam* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 37.

nationalist project. But the dream of an expanding mahdīst state came to a quick end.

In 1896 the British began a campaign for the reconquest of Sudan under the leadership of Lord Kitchener. Two years later the capital was retaken with the legendary battle of Omdurman in which supposedly 10,000 ʾAnṣār soldiers were killed. A further year later the last remnants of the mahdīst forces were defeated. After this defeat, and with most leaders of the movement killed, it took the ʾAnṣār well into the period of the Anglo-Egyptian administration to restructure their organisation under the leadership of the Mahdī's son ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān. The Ḫatmīyah leadership on the other hand, which had opposed the Mahdī, now returned from exile in Egypt. Many of their mosques and centres had been destroyed during the Mahdīyah, the period of the Mahdī's rule from 1885 to 1898, and they too needed to restructure their networks and hierarchies. However, they did have the advantage of the new administration being friendly towards them. This antagonism between the Ḫatmīyah and the ʾAnṣār would have its impact on Sudanese politics even well after independence.

Entering the Anglo-World

When the Egyptian Khedive invaded Sudan in 1820, he was formally still a vassal of the Ottoman Empire and therefore the resulting administration in Sudan was known as the Turco-Egyptian administration or Turkīyah. During the 19th century Egypt fell more and more under the influence of France and Britain. In 1882, three years before the Mahdī took Khartoum, Britain invaded Egypt to gain larger control of Egyptian affairs. Nominally however Egypt remained part of the Ottoman empire until 1914, when it became a British protectorate. Soon after, in 1922, Britain unilaterally declared Egypt's independence. All these technical details are important to understand how Sudan ended up with its own unique legal structure. When Kitchener invaded Sudan and defeated the forces of Ḫalīfah

ʿAbd-Allāhi, he did so not in the name of Britain, but in the name of Egypt. Kitchener reinstated Egyptian sovereignty over Sudan. However, because it was the British doing so and Egypt was formally not part of the British Empire, only a limited sovereignty was reinstated. Sudan became a so-called Anglo-Egyptian condominium, a territory under the shared sovereignty of both Britain and Egypt.

The condominium agreement of 1899 created a system in which Sudan was ruled by its own local government under the leadership of a governor general. The governor general was proposed by the British and instated by the Egyptian king and led an administration of both British and Egyptian nationals, with the British usually in the more senior positions. The cost of the administration and its early programmes, such as the expansion of communication and railways as well as the construction of Port Sudan, were mostly shouldered by the Egyptians who infused 6 Million Egyptian Pound in the first 15 years of the condominium.[110] The administration was at first dominated by British officers of the Egyptian army. The governor general was also the sirdār or commander-in-chief of the Egyptian army in Sudan. Most higher ranks of the administration were dominated by army-men and Sudan was governed under martial law until 1926.[111] Overall the system could be characterised, as MacMichchael described it, as an "autocracy on military lines for civil purposes."[112]

In 1905, in order to govern the condominium more efficiently, an informal consultative body of high-ranking British administrators was formed. This body was formalised as the governor general's council in 1910.[113] The creation of the council was a result of the shift of emphasis from pacification to construction and therefore the position of the governor general was transformed from the position of a "virtual dictator" to something more comparable to the British prime minister, with a "machinery of government (…) along professional lines."[114] While Khartoum's administration started to evolve in this manner, within the provinces

110 Mohamed Omer Beshir, *Revolution and Nationalism* (London, 1974), p. 27.
111 Muddathir 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Imperialism and Nationalism* (London, 1969), pp. 40-1.
112 Sir Harold Alfred MacMichael, *The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (London, 1934), p. 108.
113 Mohamed Omer Beshir, *Revolution and Nationalism* (London, 1974), p. 46.
114 Muddathir 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Imperialism and Nationalism* (London, 1969), p. 43.

the province governors ruled supreme, with little interference from the centre. A province was, as Muddattir put it, "in effect, an *imperium in imperio*."[115] Even the district commissioners were often relatively free in their action. Below them however, the Egyptian *māmūrs* were controlled vigorously and in the same manner they controlled the Sudanese chiefs and sheikhs below them.

Lord Cromer, who was at the time the British consul-general of Egypt, was not too impressed by the soldier-administrators, who treated populations, as he put it, as "inanimate pawns on a chess-board." General Reginald Wingate who replaced Kitchener, realised that administrators recruited from the army were prone to stay only briefly in Sudan and that therefore it would be advantageous to recruit civilians.[116] As a result, from 1901 onwards, small numbers of civilians were recruited from British elite schools, not necessarily focusing on the students with the highest academic brilliance however but following the "principle of *mens sana in corpore sano*."[117] Nearly three quarters of the men recruited into the *Sudan Political Service* (SPS), as it became known, were previously students at Oxford or Cambridge and many were members of the so-called *blues*, the university sports teams. This was such a dominant phenomenon, that, as Collins wrote, "(t)he legend is still current that the Sudan was a country of 'blacks' ruled by 'blues'."[118]

Possibly even more important than physical qualities, Cromer, when outlining the hiring policies for the service in 1902, was looking for a specific character and class. Cromer objected clearly to ruling the "subject races" with "third-rate Englishmen" or "low-class Europeans."[119] Collins describes the members of the Sudan Political Service:

> "Almost to a man the members of the Political Service came from country families, or from the families of members of the imperial civil service or professional classes who had their roots and traditions in the English countryside. Born and reared in the atmosphere of the country gentry, if not actually a member of that class, they were imbued from birth with a

115 Ibid., p. 50.
116 Both according to: Ibid., pp. 42-3.
117 Ibid., p. 43.
118 Robert O. Collins, 'The Sudan Political Service', *African Affairs*, No. 284 (Jul. 1972), p. 297.
119 Muddathir 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Imperialism and Nationalism* (London, 1969), p. 45.

> sense of the duties, responsibilities, and privileges of the gentry. The devotion to duty, the love of the out-of-doors, the paternal feelings of responsibility toward the lower classes within the village community, and even the enthusiasm for village cricket shaped those attitudes of mind and created that confidence to rule which were later merely sustained and confirmed by education at public school and university."[120]

This very specific background and education shaped the relationship between the Sudan Political Service and the Sudanese. The process of replacing soldier-administrators with civilians was however very slow and "thus it was not until 1909 that the first civilian Province Governor was appointed, and in 1912 there were only two civilian Governors."[121] In the first seven years only a total of 37 civilians were recruited and the pace of replacement only accelerated with World War I.[122]

When the British arrived in Sudan, their primary aim was to stabilise the country and to secure their position. The Mahdī revolt had taken them by surprise. The idea that some "tribesmen" under the leadership of "lunatic," as they saw it, were able to defeat troops under the command of an English gentleman was both preposterous and incomprehensible. Therefore the only solution at hand was to suppress all kinds of religious appearances. The early 20th century in Sudan saw a number of new self declared Mahdīs and Nabī ʿĪsā, prophet Jesus, and the British decided to confront each of these with the full force of the gun. The administration, both on a national and on a regional level, developed an "obsession (…) with the resurgence of Mahdīsm,"[123] as Ḥasan ʾIbrāhīm called it.

In consequence, the relationship between the British and the ṭarīqahs became difficult. The ṭarīqahs were seen as the source of these potential threats and simultaneously as the only means to recognise threats early and to mediate extremism. Ḥasan ʾIbrāhīm showed how, with the beginning of World War I, two schools of thought emerged on how to deal with the ʾAnṣār and other ṭarīqahs, with one opinion which was suggested by Willis, the head of intelligence, that

120 Robert O. Collins, 'The Sudan Political Service', *African Affairs*, No. 284 (Jul. 1972), p. 300.
121 Muddathir 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Imperialism and Nationalism* (London, 1969), p. 43.
122 Robert O. Collins, 'The Sudan Political Service', *African Affairs*, No. 284 (Jul. 1972), p. 295.
123 Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim, *Sayyid ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī* (Leiden, 2004), p. 33.

"Endemic fanaticism may only, if ever, be eradicated from the Sudanese character after generations." But he continued by saying that, only with the cooperation of more moderate forces such as Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī, the Mahdī's son, could the immediate danger of this fanaticism be banned.[124]

Furthermore during the war the Ottoman sultan called for a ǧihād against the infidels, which the British feared might be taken up by the Sudanese. To guarantee the support of the Sudanese in the war, the British tried to get the ṭarīqah sheikhs to tour their areas and speak in favour of the allied powers. Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān however was only allowed to tour the Ǧazīrah and not allowed to go to the west, because the government simultaneously feared potentially adverse effects of these tours.[125] After the war, a delegation of Sudanese notables and tribal leaders, including the three sheikhs of the Ḫatmīyah, the ʾAnṣār and the Hindīyah, were invited to London to congratulate King George V on the victory of the allied forces. Besides the three sheikhs, the delegation included three Islamic scholars –the grand mufti, the head of the board of ʿulamāʾ and the qāḍī of Dār-Fur–[126] and four important tribal leaders.

From this point onwards the three main ṭarīqahs –the Ḫatmīyah, the ʾAnṣār, and the Hindīyah– were more or less accepted as pillars of the colonial administration. Nevertheless the administration simultaneously kept a close eye on the activities of the ṭarīqahs and tried to make sure no single one would gain too much influence. The ṭarīqahs were still seen as the organisations with the highest impact on politics and the obsession with them continued. This strong focus on the ṭarīqahs was important, because it shaped the later thinking of the condominium administration and with it the early academic literature on Sudan. The story of Ṣūfī domination of the Sudanese political system became, in part, a self-fulfilling

124 Ibid., p. 71.

125 Ibid., p. 74.

126 The grand mufti was the highest official religious authority in Sudan and head of the Islamic court system. The ʿulamāʾ were the religious scholars who had studied Islam at al-ʾAzhar university. The qāḍī of Dār-Fur was the highest religious judge in the province.

prophecy, with the ṭarīqahs becoming increasingly important because the British favoured them in consultative processes.[127]

With the end of the World War I in 1918, the nationalist movement in Egypt started to become more and more vocal. In 1919 the British pre-emptively arrested the Wafd Party leader Saʿd Zaġlūl and "(t)he result was revolution," as James Jankowski put it.[128] What followed was a mission by Lord Milner to determine the cause of the unrest and suggest potential solutions. In his report, which covered the situation in Egypt and Sudan, he recommended that Egypt should become independent. However the British and the Wafd Party failed to agree on the terms of this independence, as the British wanted to exclude a number of issues. As a result Britain unilaterally declared Egyptian independence in 1922, exempting certain aspects of sovereignty which were to remain as *status quo*, one of which was the administration of Sudan. The Egyptian nationalists were dissatisfied with this exemption and started to spread anti-British propaganda in the Egyptian press. As a reaction the British coordinated an anti-Egyptian campaign in the only Sudanese newspaper in Arabic language al-Ḥaḍārah –a newspaper owned by the same three religious leaders who had been invited to London in 1919.[129]

Due to these developments in Cairo, the government in Sudan started to feverishly replace Egyptian officials of the administration with newly trained Sudanese. By 1924 there were 102 Sudanese sub-māmūrs and only 35 Egyptians and one Syrian. The Kitchener School of Medicine was founded, the military school increased its intake and Sudanese engineers, agriculturalists, and telegraphists were trained.[130] However, especially among the graduates of Gordon College and the military school –the young low-ranking Sudanese administrators

127 Berman and Lonsdale argued that in other African countries the focus of the colonial state on ethnicities and accordingly "moulded the political choices that shaped ethnic politics in relation to other social cleavages." The same might be true for the Sudanese peripheries, but in the centre the focus on ṭarīqahs, following a similar procedural logic, shaped what the British called sectarian politics. Bruce J. Berman and John Lonsdale, 'Nationalism in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa', in: John Breuilly, *The History of Nationalism* (Oxford 2013), p. 312.

128 James P. Jankowski, *Egypt* (Oxford, 2000), p. 112.

129 Mohamed Omer Beshir, *Revolution and Nationalism* (London, 1974), p. 68.

130 Muddathir 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Imperialism and Nationalism* (London, 1969), p. 64.

and army officers– nationalist ideas fell on a fertile ground.[131] These nationalist ideas developed along the lines of Egyptian nationalism and the Egyptian stance on Sudan encouraged the young movement, nevertheless it would be a simplification to see this simply as an Egyptian inspired phenomenon.[132]

In 1920 a group called the *Sudanese Union Society* was established in Omdurman. Many of the early members of the society should later rise to prominence, such as the later Prime Minister ʿAbd-Allāh Ḫalīl, the High Court Judge Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-Šinqaytī and the first Minister of Defence Ḫalaf-Allāh Ḫālid. The organisation was based on a cell-type structure and its activities were primarily to write and distribute memoranda and leaflets. In 1922 one of the members of the organisation, ʿAlī ʿAbd-al-Laṭīf, asked al-Ḥaḍārah to publish an article of his, which demanded Sudanese self-determination.[133] As a result ʿAbd-al-Laṭīf was arrested and convicted to imprisonment for one year. Once released he unsurprisingly "was generally acclaimed as a national hero and became the acknowledged leader of the opposition" to British rule in Sudan.[134] As a consequence of this experience, he decided to create a new organisation, similar in structure to the Sudanese Union Society and taking over many of its members. On 20 May 1924 the *White Flag League* was formally inaugurated.[135]

ʿAlī ʿAbd-al-Laṭīf was the son of two slaves, a Nuba father and a Dinka mother. His father had been fighting for the troops of the Mahdī, from which he deserted. He later served in the Egyptian army. Some when in the 1910s ʿAbd-al-Laṭīf, who had come with his father to Khartoum, was adopted by an Omdurman shop owner and then, in 1914, enlisted into the military school.[136] He was later dismissed from the army after he clashed with an English officer, whom he felt had treated him arrogantly.[137] It was this man from an extremely low-class

131 Mohamed Omer Beshir, *Revolution and Nationalism* (London, 1974), pp. 70-1.
132 Ibid., p. 72.
133 Ibid., pp. 72-4.
134 Muddathir 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Imperialism and Nationalism* (London, 1969), p. 105.
135 Ibid., p. 105.
136 Mohamed Omer Beshir, *Revolution and Nationalism* (London, 1974), p. 73.
137 Muddathir 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Imperialism and Nationalism* (London, 1969), p. 104.

background who became the leader of the nationalist movement in Sudan in the 1920s.[138]

In the following months the White Flag League organised a number of initiatives to underline the Sudanese loyalty to Egypt and its wish to remain a part of the Egyptian crown. A Sudanese delegation, which was supposed to be sent to Cairo, was arrested in Halfā and sent back to Khartoum. "Their arrival triggered off the first political 'demonstration' in the history of the Sudan."[139] A few days later ʿAbd-al-Laṭīf was once again arrested and now he was convicted to three years imprisonment. The trial was followed by a period of heated emotions and demonstrations in various parts of the country in solidarity with ʿAlī ʿAbd-al-Laṭīf. Some of these demonstrations were held by members of the army.

On 19 November 1924 the Governor General of Sudan Sir Lee Stack was shot in Cairo and this triggered the key moment of the White Flag uprising. Lord Allenby, British consul in Cairo, immediately requested that all Egyptian troops in Sudan should withdraw to Egypt. What followed was a political standoff between the Egyptian government and Lord Allenby in Cairo. Simultaneously the Sudanese battalions of the Egyptian army in Sudan mutinied in support of their Egyptian colleagues. On 27 November, one Sudanese battalion attempted to cross the bridge from Khartoum to Khartoum North to join the Egyptian troops who were stationed there. British forces stood in their way and in the resulting battle more than a dozen mutineers and over twenty of the government troops, three of whom were British officers, were killed.[140] The Egyptians who had promised the Sudanese to come to their help, decided to remain in their barracks and soon after withdrew to Egypt. This event ended up influencing Sudanese history, not only

138 As Elena Vezzadini has shown in her thesis, this was not necessarily so unusual for the 1920s, it became however very remarkable considering the later development of race-relationships in Sudan. Elena Vezzadini, 'The 1924 Revolution; Hegemony, Resistance and Nationalism in the Colonial Sudan' (Bergen Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 2008).

139 Muddathir 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Imperialism and Nationalism* (London, 1969), p. 106.

140 Hasan Abdin, *Early Sudanese Nationalism* (Khartoum, 1985), p. 94.

because of the impact it had on the British, but also because it changed the attitude of many Sudanese towards the Egyptians.[141]

The British reaction to the uprising was immediate and drastic. The government, as Muddattir put it, "took fright and proceeded to react with unprecedented violence. (…) (T)he small class of educated Sudanese (…) were now seen as the collective enemy of the British."[142] The British believed that the educated Sudanese had become a threat and maybe the most telling consequence was that in the decade following the White Flag rebellion, not a single school was opened in the northern Sudan.[143] The administration in the country was re-directed. Whereas administration by educated Sudanese was the aim before, *indirect rule* became the "prevalent administrative slogan" thereafter.[144]

The idea of indirect rule was that supposedly original and authentic tribal leaders would take over far-reaching tasks, including the local judiciary and even have some sort of financial independence. The tribal courts and institutions would largely function by whatever was considered as the traditional rules and laws of the tribe. The implementation of indirect rule had already been proposed in the Milner report, but after, and as a result of the White Flag uprising, it started to be implemented more systematically.[145] As in other places where indirect rule was implemented, originality or authenticity of tribal structures was pretty much only a paper claim. The merger of smaller tribes into larger units was encouraged and tribal courts were even established in areas where urbanisation and intermixing of peoples had led, according to the administration's own description, to

141 Muddathir 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Imperialism and Nationalism* (London, 1969), pp. 107-8. For a much more detailed analysis see: Mohamed Omer Beshir, *Revolution and Nationalism* (London, 1974), pp. 81-101.

142 Muddathir 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Imperialism and Nationalism* (London, 1969), p. 65.

143 Ibid., p. 109.

144 Sir James Currie, 'The Educational Experiment in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan', *African Affairs*, No. 134 (1935), p. 49.

145 Muddathir 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Imperialism and Nationalism* (London, 1969), p. 67.

"detribalisation."[146] The newly implemented structure of administration was the dominant *modus operandi* well into the 1930s.[147]

Also a result of the White Flag uprising and the Egyptian revolution of 1919 was a new policy and perspective on the three southern Sudanese provinces. The Milner report had already suggested that Muslim influence in southern Sudan should be restricted. After the White Flag uprising, which was led by a man the British saw as a "younge savage"[148] misled by the Egyptians, the idea to cordon off the southern provinces from the northern provinces more systematically, gained momentum. From 1921 onwards the southern provinces were administratively and legally separated from the north step by step, by curtailing freedom of movement into these areas and limiting trade in these areas by people who were not indigenous to said regions. Simultaneously the government started to financially support mission schools, not necessarily to support the christianisation of the south, but rather to increase the output of the schools to replace northern clerks and administrators with newly trained southerners.[149] All these steps became collectively known as the *southern policy*.

Nevertheless, although the *Closed District Ordinance* and other new laws did restrict the freedom of movement to a certain degree, overall policy changes were small. After all, administration in the southern provinces and attempts at development had been extremely limited before 1924 and remained extremely limited afterwards. While the primary focus before 1924 was to pacify the population and establish clear international borders with the neighbouring countries and territories, the primary focus after 1924 was to keep that peace and maintain the *status quo*.

146 Ibid., pp. 69-70.

147 For a detailed look at the Milner report and the implementation of indirect rule, see: Karamalla Awad, 'Native Administration and the Evolution of Local Government in the Sudan', (Univ. of Manchester MA thesis, 1964), pp. 95-120.

148 The Ewarts Report on the uprising quoted according to: Mohamed Omer Beshir, *Revolution and Nationalism* (London, 1974), pp. 73-4.

149 Mohamed Omer Beshir, *The Southern Sudan* (London, 1968), pp. 41-3.

But arguably more important than the laws which were connected to the new southern policy, were the limited and local attempts to recreate authentic local culture and customs and, if that failed, to encourage westernisation instead of arabisation. For example, in 1930 the civil secretary encouraged the use of interpreters to replace the use of Arabic, when officials did not speak the local language and the locals did not speak English. In the same year the governor of Baḥr-al-Ġazāl instructed a district commissioner to avoid the use of terms like sheikh or sultan and replace them with the Dinka equivalents. In 1930 the civil secretary instructed the governors to encourage chiefs to see that their people should return to their supposed traditional tribal custom in regard to clothing and other matters. In areas where traditional meant nudity, then if people decided they wanted to wear clothes, they should dress in European styles. In 1935 a district commissioner in Raja instructed a local Greek merchant that from this point onwards the sale of Arab clothing was illegal.[150]

The Sudanese historian Bašīr argued that it was the aim of the British to create a South Sudan which was separate from the northern Sudan.[151] But as Sir Harold MacMichael explained in his memorandum on the southern policy, its primary principle was to create "a series of self-contained racial or tribal units."[152] Had the British really planned to create a separate South Sudan at this point, they would have needed a clear vision and would have had to follow this vision much more energetically. Arguably, the aim of the British at that point was much simpler; they wanted a manageable unit with low risk of instability at minimal cost. They lacked the vision to see what would happen with the region 20 years later, especially at a time when the idea of an independent Sudan was still completely outside their frame of reference. Nevertheless, the southern policy and its effects were real, and being the *modus operandi* well into the 1940s, it did affect the north-south relationship in post independence Sudan.

150 All examples according to: Muddathir 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Imperialism and Nationalism* (London, 1969), pp. 77-9.

151 Mohamed Omer Beshir, *The Southern Sudan* (London, 1968), p. 45.

152 Ibid., p. 46.

In the northern Sudan the direct aftermath of the Egyptian revolution and the White Flag League was a lull in nationalist and political activity. This lull was only broken, once again, by outside developments, this time the rise of fascism in Europe and the occupation of Abyssinia by Italy, forcing a change in the Anglo-Egyptian relationship and a reconfiguration of administrative policy inside Sudan.

The Youth and the System

Following the White Flag uprising open political activities became taboo. The young educated Sudanese elite took what has been described as a cultural turn. In many places where Sudanese Union Society and White Flag branches had been active, former members came together in reading and study groups. The first forms in which they began to re-articulate their positions were poetry and song.[153] Heather Sharkey argued that "in the years between 1924 and 1938 (… l)itarary activity became the political ground *par excellence*," and pointed towards meetings in homes, clubs, and salons as the fermentation ground for new visions of a Sudan without colonial rule.[154] Additionally the Ṣūfī sheikhs started to play a larger role in political affairs and began to link themselves to the young educated elite.

From 1926 onwards Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī started to establish closer contacts to the educated elites in Khartoum, first by supporting institutions, such as the Omdurman Mosque School, which were connected to the graduates. Tim Niblock argued that Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān did so, partially because the turn of the British towards tribal leaders lessened the relevance of the Ṣūfī sheikhs in the

153 Muddathir 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Imperialism and Nationalism* (London, 1969), pp. 110-3.

154 Heather J. Sharkey, 'Colonialism and the Culture of Nationalism in the Northern Sudan', (Princeton Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1998), p. 240.

administration and also because the events of 1924 had convinced him of the political significance of the graduates.[155]

In the following years he developed what Niblock called a *coterie*. A group of graduates would come to his house where Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān would entertain them, offering both advice and support. The district commissioner of Omdurman described the occasions: "He held court like an Abbasid Khalif."[156] One of the most prominent members of this coterie was the secretary of the Omdurman Graduates' Club, Muḥammad ʿAlī Šawqī.

With the beginning of the great depression in 1929, the financial pressure on the Sudan government became increasingly apparent. As a result, the government decided to lower the wages for newly employed graduates by nearly a third. The Omdurman Graduates' Club formed a commission to negotiate with the British and, after the students of Gordon College increased the pressure by going on strike, the British were ready to talk. However instead of meeting the Club's commission as a whole, they decided to speak to individuals. As a result the various groups in the Club started to suspect each other of making deals under the table. A compromise, proposed by Šawqī, was rejected by younger graduates who grouped around ʾAḥmad al-Fīl. This division between the Šawqīsts and the Fīlists burdened the Omdurman Graduates' Club for the years to come. Perhaps even more importantly, it gave Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī the head of the Ḫatmīyah ṭarīqah who was always competing with Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān for political influence, an inroad to the graduates. By supporting the position of al-Fīl, he was able to build up his own coterie and compete with al-Mahdī.[157]

In the same period, two reading and discussion groups became influential in the Sudanese nationalist sphere; the ʾAbū-Rūfians and the ʾAwlād al-Mawradah (literally, boys of Mawradah), also sometimes referred to as the Hāšimāb or the Fağr group. The two groups were both founded by a new generation, which had

155 Tim Niblock, *Class and Power* (Basingstoke, 1987), pp. 176-7.
156 Ibid., p. 178.
157 Ibid., p. 179.

not been active in the 1924 events. Even though they were generally critical of the older graduates and opposed to the influence of the ṭarīqahs on politics, they did eventually divide along the lines of the Šawqīst-Fīlist division. The ʾAwlād al-Mawradah supported the Šawqīsts and the ʾAbū-Rūfians supported the Fīlists.[158]

These groups were interlinked with cultural journals, which started to appear after the post-1924 crackdown on Sudanese publishing was slightly eased. The first of these journals, al-Nahḍah, had been originally produced in handwritten form and without permits, but eventually the administration encouraged the publishers to go public with proper registration. The journal was eventually published in printed form between 1931 and 1932. Al-Fağr, the most famous journal of this period, was published between 1934 and 1937.[159] Important political points which were taken up by al-Fağr, included demands for a larger role in governing the country for the educated elites and an expansion of education in the northern Sudan.[160]

Niblock argued, that the ʾAbū-Rūfians and the ʾAwlād al-Mawradah, while being divided on a few points, were more similar than usually described. He stated that both groups expressed "socialistic and egalitarian-oriented" views and that they believed that the educated elite should "take the lead and guide Sudanese society towards a more enlightened future (… in which) backwardness and traditionalism (…) would be eliminated through (…) education."[161]

In the 1930s various developments outside the Sudan had an impact on the political developments. After Hitler took over power in Germany in 1933 and Mussolini's Italy invaded Abyssinia in 1935, the attitude of both Britain and Egypt became once again more constructive as the fear of invasion in Sudan became a factor. In 1936 the co-domini agreed on a new treaty, which also covered Sudan. The primary impact of the treaty was that the Egyptians were to participate again

158 Ibid., pp. 181-4.
159 HeHeather J. Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism* (Berkley 2003), p. 108.
160 Muddathir ʾAbd al-Raḥīm, *Imperialism and Nationalism* (London, 1969), pp. 116-7.
161 Tim Niblock, *Class and Power* (Basingstoke, 1987), p. 182.

in the administration of Sudan. The treaty provoked a reaction by the Sudanese elite, both because it stated that the condominium was in place for the welfare of the Sudanese and therefore somehow legitimised them making demands and because neither of the co-domini had bothered to consult Sudanese opinion on its contents.[162]

The treaty was rejected by the pro-Egyptian and the pro-British Sudanese. The first rejected it because the Egyptians had basically not supported the Sudanese cause and because they were only nominally re-admitted to the Sudanese administration. The latter rejected it, because the question about Sudanese sovereignty was "to be shelved for twenty years," which was supposed to be the duration of validity of the treaty. As a result of these frustrations, the various factions within the elite came to the conclusion that they needed to organise into a common body. The various factions disagreed however on a clear path forward.[163]

As Ǧaʿfar Baḫīt pointed out in his thesis, with the arrival of Sir George Stewart Symes as new governor general in 1934, the British administration in Sudan was beginning to reassess its cooperation with the local elites and began to work with the Sudanese intelligentsia instead of with the tribal leaders. Therefore the administration actively encouraged the Sudanese intelligentsia to form the *Graduates' General Congress* in 1938. Baḫīt argued that Symes and his administration followed this policy to prevent an anti-government coalition between the neo-mahdīsts and the intelligentsia and to strengthen the moderate element within the graduate grouping. However by doing so, they aided the start of a nationalist political organisation.[164]

The Congress was created under the leadership of ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī and Makkī Šibaykah, both of whom were teachers at the time and both graduates from the University of Beirut. The name was chosen in reference to the Indian Congress. News about Indian politics and Gandhi's writings were widely followed in Sudan

162 Peter Woodward, *Condominium and Sudanese Nationalism* (London, 1979), pp. 14 & 16.
163 Muddathir 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Imperialism and Nationalism* (London, 1969), pp. 120-4.
164 Gaafar Mohamed Ali Bakheit, 'British Administration and Sudanese Nationalism', (Cambridge Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1965), pp. 236-323.

at the time and the Sudanese elite felt inspired by the Indian anti-colonial struggle. The official purpose of the Congress was to "serve the public interest of the country and of the graduates." The government accepted the formation, of which it was officially notified in March 1938, as long as the Congress would not attempt to formally register as a political body and it would limit itself "on matters which come within its purview."[165]

The Congress was supposed to have a general meeting once a year, at which the participants elected a council of sixty, basically a structure which was modelled on a parliament. The council should then elect an executive committee with fifteen members, which took the role of the graduates' shadow cabinet. From this outline it is clear, that the graduates had more in mind than just matters of direct relevance to the graduates themselves. Nevertheless the relationship between the Congress and the government remained relatively amicable within the first couple of years. Notes by the Congress on the expansion of education and the formation of an institute for Islamic studies were welcomed by the government.[166]

The graduates as a section of society were one of the most important political forces in Sudan at the time and for a good number of years to come. The shared experience of having at least secondary education was the common trait within the group. Muddattir argued that the focus on education was in the nature of society as a whole, because Islam traditionally attaches great importance to learning.[167] Nevertheless there was a specific graduate identity. The British called the members of the graduate class, which were often serving the colonial administration, the "effendiya" a term meant to be more critical than positive. Arguably, it was more than just the shared experience of learning and of having been members of the colonial administration which defined the graduate class.

The nationalist reading groups after the White Flag created a first nexus between reading, culture and nationalism. As much as this might have been partially

165 Muddathir 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Imperialism and Nationalism* (London, 1969), pp. 125-6.
166 Ibid., pp. 126-7.
167 Ibid., p. 111.

motivated by Islamic tradition, the texts which were read, were not. Their idea of a society was a future modernity guided by education, overcoming sectarian and tribal divides. A second element which probably contributed to the evolvement of the graduates as a group, was the relevance of clubs for the social life. One of the important clubs for educated Sudanese was the Omdurman Graduates' Club. This was then strengthened by the creation of the Congress, an institution which for a short period succeeded to bring together all shades of opinion. Thanks to this, the Congress was established as a common point of reference and indeed many of my interviewees, when talking about specific individuals of this period, explicitly pointed out that they were members of the Congress or members of the council of sixty.

Most of the graduates came from Gordon College and even when in later years the college was transformed into a university, only three secondary schools in northern Sudan educated the bulk of the young elite. Most of the members of the nuclei of the various political groups, e.g. the ʾAbū-Rūfians or the ʾAšiqqāʾ, which I will discuss later, came from the same generation, which meant they were in Gordon College together. Their ideas of a new and modern Sudan were strongly shaped by their common experience and knowledge. In consequence their ideas of modernisation were highly bookish and theoretical, but being so, they were based on a common understanding, viewing themselves as the future elite.[168] This link between education, intellectual thought and politics was at the core of many events in Sudanese political developments and I will point some of them out in the appropriate chapters. The first time this link was fully concretised in an institution was with the creation of the Congress.

168 Benedict Anderson described this phenomenon of a nationalist nucleus of colonised societies, which emerged as a result of the centralised education systems. Anderson called these new elites the "lonely, bilingual intelligentsia", disconnected from the people due to language. While Anderson's reference to educational pilgrimages rings true also in connection to Sudan, the idea that the bilingual intelligentsia was "lonely," seems more questionable. Firstly Arabic always remained an important language, also among the English educated intelligentsia, and because of their connection to the ṭarīqahs, in contrast to Anderson's description, they were attached to sturdy local bourgeoisies. It is possible that Anderson's concept of a "lonely, bilingual intelligentsia" is more precise in regard to university-educated southerners, Nuba, Beja and Fur after independence, than in regard to the early nationalist movement in Khartoum. For Anderson's analysis, see: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London 2006), p. 140.

The relative stability of the relationship between the Congress and the government in the early years can be seen mainly as the effect of two factors; firstly, in the early years the Congress was dominated by the more senior members, and secondly, the fascist threat, especially after the Italian invasion of Abyssinia, limited the scope of direct political action. As Niblock pointed out, the membership of the executive committee was balanced out between members of the al-Mahdī and the al-Mīrġanī coteries, with the most important posts, that is the general secretary, the assistant secretary, and the treasurer being filled by men who were deemed to be neutral. The president in the first two years was ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī, the first treasurer in 1938 was al-Dardīrī Nuqud, a member of the ʾAwlād al-Mawradah and the other positions were filled by members of the ʾAbū-Rūf group. In 1940 however ʾAzharī lost the presidency and all positions were then held by ʾAbū-Rūfians.[169]

The 1940 elections resulted in the formation of a new alliance between Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī and his coterie, ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī, and the ʾAšiqqāʾ. The ʾAšiqqāʾ were a group which had formed a little later than the ʾAbū-Rūfians and the ʾAwlād al-Mawradah in 1935 and were first known as the Mid-Omdurman Group. As Niblock explained, the group was founded by "three sets of *ashiqqah*" or blood brothers: Yaḥyā and Maḥmūd al-Faḍlī, ʾAḥmad and Ḥasan Yasin, and Ḥasan and al-Ḥāǧ ʿAwaḍ-Allāh.[170] They were less culturally minded, more politically interested, and more pragmatically organised than the ʾAbū-Rūfians and the ʾAwlād al-Mawradah.[171]

The ʾAšiqqāʾ decided to work with ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī as a figurehead. ʾAzharī had the necessary seniority to give weight to the position of the ʾAšiqqāʾ and the group through its skilful political manoeuvring was able to rally support for him. By cooperating with al-Mahdī they gained the support of the Mahdī coterie and graduates who were members the ʾAnṣār. Sayyid al-Mahdī, on the other hand,

169 Tim Niblock, *Class and Power* (Basingstoke, 1987), pp. 188-90.

170 According to an alternative interpretation the name pointed towards the commitment of unity between Sudan and Egypt as blood brothers. Hasan Abdin, *Early Sudanese Nationalism* (Khartoum, 1985), p. 115.

171 Tim Niblock, *Class and Power* (Basingstoke, 1987), p. 184.

was able to regain the direct influence on the Congress, which he had previously had on the Omdurman Graduates' Club.

Once their alliance was formed, they took issue over the cooperation of the Congress with the government in regard to the creation of a radio broadcasting station. They were able to force the Congress leadership to step down and elect a majority of their own into the executive and re-elect ʾAzharī as president. Through a massive membership drive in 1941, a new alliance between the ʾAbū-Rūfians and the ʾAwlād al-Mawradah was able to gain control of the 1942 committee. After sending a memorandum, which I will discuss below, to the government, which the governor general in turn rejected, the executive once again split.

The ʾAwlād al-Mawradah decided to take a more cautious approach, while the ʾAbū-Rūfians opted for confrontation. The ʾAšiqqāʾ and al-ʾAzharī joined sides with the ʾAbū-Rūf group. Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī however decided to side with the moderates. In consequence, Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī began to support the ʾAšiqqāʾ.[172] This confrontation and resulting reconfiguration of alliances appeared to be predominantly strategic and born out of the moment, however the effects were momentous and the new arrangement of forces became more or less permanent.

In 1942 seemingly more important however, was the content of that memorandum which the Congress sent to the governor general. Based on its own growing popularity and pushed by its younger members, the Congress submitted a memorandum which was partially inspired by the Atlantic charter and partially due to the fact that Sudanese troops were fighting for the Allies outside of Sudan. The memorandum was sent on occasion of the visit of Sir Stafford Cripps, a member of the British War Cabinet and the leader of the House of Commons, who

172 Ibid., pp. 189-94.

was on his way back from India where he had negotiated with Gandhi and Jinnah on behalf of Churchill.[173]

In the memorandum the Congress made a whole range of demands, but most importantly it asked for a joint declaration by Britain and Egypt which would grant Sudan full self-determination immediately after the war. Secondly, it demanded the formation of a body of Sudanese to approve both the budget and ordinances, that is in effect an assembly with at least partial legislative powers. Among further points the memorandum touched on the division of the executive and the judiciary, and demanded the abolishment of the closed districts, as practised in southern Sudan.[174]

The authorities and the Governor General Symes already had been considering a closer affiliation of the administration with the Sudanese before the memorandum. Cripps also strongly encouraged the creation of some sort of advisory council. Nevertheless the British were not yet ready to accept that the Congress could play an openly political and nationalist role. In consequence, the Civil Secretary Sir Douglas Newbold replied to the president of the Congress, threatening to stop cooperation and possibly even to withdraw recognition. Furthermore, the letter stated that the government was indeed considering when and how to involve the Sudanese more closely in the direction of their affairs, but that it did not welcome any meddling of Congress in these issues.[175]

While sternly rebuking the Congress, the government moved quickly on the issue of closer affiliation. In 1943 the *Advisory Council for the Northern Sudan Order* was promulgated and then, in 1944, the Advisory Council met for the first time. The Council was headed by the governor general and the civil secretary was the vice-president. The Council was supposed to have 28 regular members out of which 18 would represent the regions –i.e. three each– and 10 would represent important social and economic interest groups. Additionally Sayyid

173 Muddathir 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Imperialism and Nationalism* (London, 1969), p. 127.
174 Ibid., pp. 127-8.
175 Ibid., pp. 128-9.

ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī and Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī were invited as honorary members.[176]

The powers of the Council were severely limited, as the council could only advise and then only on matters which the government sought advice on. Discussions could be interrupted by the president or vice-president at any point. It was the decision of the president if members were to pass a resolution or if a question was to be debated merely, without a resolution.[177] Additionally, as Niblock showed, the majority of the members of the Advisory Council were affiliated to the traditional local administration; they were nāẓirs, makks, sultans and sheikhs.[178] Last but not least, the Council met only twice a year.[179] Over all, the Advisory Council was controlled to a very large degree by the government, fulfilling the purpose of the government.

Unsurprisingly, the ʾAšiqqāʾ and the Congress felt that the newly created council failed to satisfy their aspirations and decided to boycott the institution. They complained that the Council was too strongly regulated, did not really represent the Sudanese and, by covering only the northern provinces, pre-empted a division of the country.[180] Muddaṯṯir paraphrases ʾAḥmad Ḫayr, an influential member of the ʾAbū-Rūf group:

> "(T)he Council (…) was an instrument for serving the imperialistic objectives of the British Government of the Sudan: by giving it an appearance of legitimacy which it did not and could not, in fact, possess; by seducing the weaker brethren among the intelligentsia and providing them with a semblance of justification for their 'collaborationism'; and by undermining the unity of the Congress and thus arresting the progress of the Sudan towards self-determination and genuine self-government."[181]

176 Ibid., pp. 137-8.
177 Ibid., p. 139.
178 Tim Niblock, *Class and Power* (Basingstoke, 1987), pp. 61-2.
179 Muddathir 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Imperialism and Nationalism* (London, 1969), p. 139.
180 Ibid., pp. 140-5.
181 ʾAḥmad Ḫayr quoted according to the translation in: Muddathir 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Imperialism and Nationalism* (London, 1969), p. 145.

Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī, the members of his coterie and the followers of his ṭarīqah on the other hand did cooperate with the council, following the notion that true progress towards self-determination could come only through work within the constitutional framework and that secondly the support of the British would be needed to guarantee full independence, i.e. independence from both Britain and Egypt. That does not mean that the group around Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān believed that the concessions offered by the British were ideal or sufficient, but they preferred to work with the instruments available instead of opting for confrontation.

The result of these differing perspectives determined the set-up of the political system for the following years, with the tribal leaders and Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān cooperating with the government and working inside the institutions. This group, often known as the independence front, stood for full independence of Sudan and used the slogan "Sudan for the Sudanese." On the other side the ʾAšiqqāʾ, most of the younger graduates and Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī's coterie opposed the government and boycotted the institutions. This group, known as the unionists, stood for some sort of cooperation or unity with Egypt and they rallied under the slogan "Unity of the Nile Valley."

From 1945 onwards the Egyptians and the British attempted to renegotiate their treaties regarding Sudan. The Sudanese briefly managed to find a common formula and sent a delegation to Cairo. In Cairo however the delegation broke apart and the members associated with Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān returned. In October 1946 the British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin and the Egyptian Prime Minister ʾIsmāʿīl Ṣidqī managed to agree on a draft for an agreement which also discussed the Sudan question. The protocol basically did not change the *status quo*, as it mentioned both "the framework of the Unity between the Sudan and Egypt under the common Crown of Egypt" and the objective of preparing the Sudanese for full self-government and the right to determine the status of Sudan.[182]

182 Ibid., pp. 154-5.

In Cairo, ʾIsmāʿīl Ṣidqī claimed to have returned from London with sovereignty over Sudan. Britain rejected this claim and in the aftermath of the ensuing discussion, Ṣidqī stepped down. In Sudan all sides were dissatisfied with the events and felt that once again a decision had taken place, effectively without proper consideration of Sudanese interests. The protocol was followed by violent demonstrations in Sudan, which also resulted in clashes between the different parties and hardened the personal and political cleavages. After this failed attempt at finding a new Anglo-Egyptian agreement, the Egyptians took the case to the United Nations Security Council, but the Council failed to find a solution as well. Muḥammad ʿUmar Bašīr argued that, as a reaction to the failed revision of Sudan's legal status, the British were forced to speed up the internal constitutional development and in consequence the Legislative Assembly was created in 1948.[183]

Already in April 1946, the government had established a *Sudan Administrative Conference* which was supposed to think up a framework for greater Sudanese self-government. Once again the independence front, at this point in time unified under the umbrella of the ʾUmmah Party, participated, while the unionists abstained. The Conference submitted its report on 31 March 1947, proposing that Sudan should aim at a parliamentary government with a responsible cabinet. The members of this new *Legislative Assembly* were to be elected by direct elections wherever possible, by indirect elections otherwise and be nominated only if unavoidable. For the first time, it was supposedly possible for Sudanese to become full secretaries of the cabinet, the newly formed *Executive Council*. Still, the final word on all legislation, budgetary questions and other decisions was to be with the governor general.[184]

With all its limitations, the Legislative Assembly as proposed, was still a big step forward. With it came one important difference to the previous system. The Sudan Administrative Conference agreed that the Assembly should represent all Sudan

183 Mohamed Omer Beshir, *Revolution and Nationalism* (London, 1974), pp. 167-72.
An alternative view held that the Sudan Government has to be seen as a separate actor from the British Foreign Office and that the Sudan Government intentionally sabotaged the Ṣidqī-Bevin protocol and prevented the British government from sacrificing Sudan for its other interests in Egypt. Afaf Abdel Majid Abu Hasabu, *Factional Conflict* (Khartoum, 1985), p. 157.

184 Muddathir ʾAbd al-Raḥīm, *Imperialism and Nationalism* (London, 1969), pp. 159-66.

and therefore also have members from the southern provinces. This caused considerable debate among administrators in the south and the few, better educated southern Sudanese. Eventually at a conference in Juba, a small number of selected southerners, under heavy guidance from the administration and with a lot of pressure from the represented northern Sudanese, decided that the south should indeed participate in the Assembly. I will return to the issue of the Juba conference later in the chapter on regional political parties.

The unionists remained critical of the newly constructed Assembly, especially as the ordinance which established it, had not been approved by Egypt. Polling day was accompanied by violent protests during which ten people died and again on the day the Assembly was formally opened on 15 December 1948 demonstrations took place.[185] But this was not the only problem of the Assembly. In November 1949 the civil secretary complained that the low level of education of many of the tribal leaders in the Assembly made the legislative work difficult and slow. The administration tried to bring in Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī, and with him the members of the Ḫatmīyah ṭarīqah, but the sayyid was hesitant to act against the wishes of the Egyptians or the popular mood in the country. The men around Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān also started to become restless and began to demand immediate self-government.[186]

In this context the legal secretary suggested in a confidential memorandum in February 1950 to move to a system of full "home rule," that is with a fully elected assembly and a fully Sudanese cabinet, only exempting foreign affairs and defence. This period should last for ten years, to be followed by a referendum on the status of Sudan. The governor general however felt that the time was not yet ripe, for such far reaching self-governance in Sudan.[187] The end of the war in Europe also brought changing structures to world politics and power and with it Sudan changed much more substantially and quickly than the British were able to imagine at the beginning of the decade.

185 Ibid., pp. 178-9.
186 Mohamed Omer Beshir, *Revolution and Nationalism* (London, 1974), pp. 173-4.
187 Ibid., pp. 174-5.

As shown, at this point different Sudanese groups in the north opposed each other fiercely, while the south was just being slowly reintegrated into the country as a whole. It is not surprising that in the six feverish years until independence, as discussed in the next chapter, these groups failed to form one unified nationalist movement and therefore had different experiences and expectations for independence. I will comment on the specific perception of this history in the sections dedicated to each party and will elaborate on the argument as to how this differing experience led to contradictory nation stories and finally, what I call nation failure, in the fifth chapter.

Khartoum, Khartoum

During the whole of the 20th century Khartoum was the undisputed centre of Sudan. It was the stage for politics, the hub of student life and activism and an economic hotspot. Any study of Sudanese national politics is to a certain degree a study of the politics of Khartoum. Sometimes from texts, but also in interviews, I felt as if the existence of Sudan outside Khartoum was not really that relevant. An imaginary Sudan of course was always there as a reference point, but the practicalities of political life happened within the close boundaries of Khartoum province. This has always created the temptation for researchers to use Khartoum as the only unit of analysis and I have tried hard not to fall into this error. Nevertheless it is important to set the stage and give an impression how to imagine Khartoum in the early 1950s, as the city and its urban geography and its exceptional position within Sudan are all so relevant for the political events in that city.

To call Khartoum a city, is, to be precise, not correct. Khartoum is in fact three cities; Khartoum, the centre of the Anglo-Egyptian condominium, Omdurman, the bustling urban centre of the Sudanese, and Khartoum North, or Khartoum Baḥrī as it is called in Arabic, with its industries and harbour, but also its villas and its

more tranquil living areas. The three cities lie at the confluence of the White Nile and the Blue Nile. The White Nile comes to Khartoum from the south with its sources in Uganda and the Blue Nile from the southeast from Ethiopia. Khartoum itself is the city between the two, surrounded by rivers on three sides, but with its longest shore on the Blue Nile north of the city centre. Khartoum North is north of the Blue Nile and Omdurman West of the White Nile and, more importantly, the Nile after the confluence.

Being at the confluence of the Nile, and thanks to a number of movies depicting the famous battles of and against the Mahdī, most importantly the legendary *Khartoum* with Charlton Heston as General Gordon and Laurence Olivier as the Mahdī, Khartoum has always had a special place in the European imagination of Africa, akin to Timbuktu and Dakar. In the 1950s, the city did not compare to its fantasy image though, being a relatively small, sleepy and dusty backwater on the banks of the Nile. Additionally, from an outside perspective, Khartoum was far away and difficult to get to. Husayn Ḍū-al-Faqār Ṣabrī, an Egyptian officer who was stationed there in 1949 remembered how he felt dispirited when he was transferred to Khartoum, a place he considered as "such a forlorn station!"[188]

The topography of the city resulted strongly from its tumultuous history. The capital of Sudan during Turkish or Ottoman rule was Khartoum.[189] When the city fell to the troops of the Mahdī, he raised the city to the ground, rejecting its European structure and architecture. He built his capital in Omdurman, which had previously existed, but was greatly expanded in this period. After the British defeated the Ḫalīfah's armies at Karrarī, they relocated the capital to Khartoum, which they rebuilt according to a newly drawn up master plan. The new city was built on the banks of the Blue Nile, stretching approximately 4,5 km from east to west and 1,5 km from north to south, with the railway line marking the limits of the city to the east and the south and the Sunut forest, a large thorn bush forest –a central stopping point on bird migration routes–, west between the city and the

188 Hussein Zulfakar Sabry, *Sovereignty for Sudan* (London, 1982), p. 12.

189 For an extensive appreciation of Khartoum's history in the 19th century see: Shamil Jeppie, 'Constructing a colony on the Nile, circa 1820-1870' (Princeton Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1996), pp. 200-76.

White Nile. The city was connected with two bridges, one at its eastern end, also serving the railway and the tram line, crossing over to Khartoum North, the other outside but close to the city to the north-west, crossing over to Omdurman.

The structure of the city followed a basic grid with a few diagonal roads in between. The city was basically divided into an English and an Egyptian part, with the eastern half of the city being dedicated to the English or more broadly Europeans. In that half were the Anglican church, which now houses the Republican Museum, and the Catholic cathedral, the British Club, the Blue Nile Sailing Club and the Greek Club with its large Greek Orthodox church. Directly after independence, most European embassies were set up in this part of town and still today the British, French and German cultural centres bare witness to the European character of this area in the past. At the eastern end of the city were Gordon College, which later became Khartoum University, and the student houses.

Close to the university was also the palace of Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī, a magnificent house, clearly built to represent. It later temporarily housed the National Archives and was recently demolished. The building and its terrace were slightly higher than it's surrounding gardens. Inside a series of consecutive salons divided visitors into those who were close to the sheikh and other less favoured visitors. The floors all had intricately patterned tiles and many of the windows were stained glass. For the family there was in addition the first floor, which could be reached by stairs or by elevator, possibly by that time the only one in the country.

Just west of the Anglican church, right in the middle of the city's west-east axis on the Nile, was the palace of the governor general. Palace road ran south from the palace, passing through the market area with its Sūq-al-ʿArab where the Syrians and Egyptians had their shops and the Sūq-al-Šaʿab for the Sudanese. The buildings of the Sūq-al-ʿArab gave Khartoum its characteristic look, with its arcades in front of most of the stores. The Sūq-al-Šaʿab, on the other hand, were

small stands which were put up in the large empty areas around the central mosque, usually known just as the big mosque.

The western side of the city was the home to the Egyptian institutions. Here was the large building of the Egyptian consul, the Coptic church and the Coptic Club, and the small, but beautifully decorated Muḥammad ʿAlī Mosque, which was a gift by the Egyptian king. Later when the Egyptians started to support education in Sudan more systematically, the buildings of Khartoum branch of Cairo University, which is today known as Nilein University, were placed here. On the Western side were also the national museum, the zoo, which was removed for a hotel owned by the Qaḏḏāfī clan, and the nowadays rarely visited and somewhat hidden botanical garden.

The tram way ran from east to west on the second parallel street south of the Nile, first along the student housing area, where today the so-called UN library is placed, then past the palace of the Mahdī into Khartoum's most chic street with the shops of the Sūq-al-ʾAfranǧ, the foreigners market, and past the main bank building, the post office, the Egyptian consulate, the Muḥammad ʿAlī mosque towards Omdurman. It was a neat, representative and through and through colonial city. Few people lived in Khartoum proper. However those who did, had a relatively high standard of living. Husayn Ḏū-al-Faqār Ṣabrī remembered how the city "abounded with luxurious villas, surrounded on all sides with neatly hedged gardens. The impeccable green lawns looked so cool and elysian under the shady trees."[190] Elysian that is, from the viewpoint of someone living in a more common neighbourhood in Khartoum North. Bābikir described Khartoum proper:

> "As it was planned as a city of the elite, the population size was intentionally and selectively kept second to that of Omdurman. Hundreds of photographs, pictures and plans of that period show Khartoum, in contrast to the native city, as a neat model colonial town with two steel bridges spanning the two rivers, a railway station, an airdrome, modern river ways with steamers and amphibious planes, a tramway, an electric power plant and a modern water supply system. It was a town with a race

190 Hussein Zulfakar Sabry, *Sovereignty for Sudan* (London, 1982), p. 14.

> course, a college, modern schools with wide tree-lined and well-lit avenues as well as several public squares complete with statues and monuments."[191]

According to Sikainga the three cities had approximately 175,000 inhabitants in 1944. Sixty per cent of those lived in Omdurman and about a third in Khartoum, with the rest in Khartoum North.[192] South of the neatly organised Khartoum, popular neighbourhoods started to spread, the so-called dayms. The dayms were working class neighbourhoods without services or much official infrastructure. They were where migrants moved when arriving in Khartoum. The structure of the dayms vaguely revolved around an ethnic or regional pattern, with people moving to a specific area because other residents from their town or region lived there. This was and still is a relatively common pattern in many African countries and it serves to create support networks for migrant communities. The dayms were relatively simple shantytowns and local culture revolved around the anandi; local bars, usually owned and run by women, who brewed their own alcohol. The places often doubled as pick-up places for prostitutes.[193]

In the 1950s most of the dayms were demolished and rebuilt in a more structured and organised fashion. Nevertheless the dayms retained a distinct character, as the plot sizes were a quarter the size of those in other areas in the city. In the same period Khartoum proper also started to spill over the railway line, creating Khartoum 1, 2, and 3, three areas numbered from east to west. According to one of my interviews though, the construction of these neighbourhoods was a slow process in the beginning. ʾIbrāhīm al-Muftī, a Minister in the first cabinet, was asked by his family after he bought a lot in Khartoum 1, why he would want to move into the country side.[194]

Omdurman on the west side of the Nile was a completely different city. Sikainga described Omdurman as a "'traditional' African city (… and) mainly (…) residential (…). Most residents engaged in petty trading and made traditional

191 Bushra Babiker, 'Khartoum: Past, Present and the Prospects for the Future', *Sir William Luce Paper*, No. 1 (March 2008), p. 16.
192 Ahmad Alawad Sikainga, *Slaves Into Workers* (Austin, 1996), p. 155.
193 Ibid., p. 160.
194 Hišām al-Muftī, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 10 December 2009).

handicrafts."[195] Maybe even more importantly, during the Mahdīyah, the Mahdī's successor had attempted to settle many of his tribesmen from the West in and around Omdurman. From this period on Omdurman was dominated by what the population statistics referred to as westerners, which included mainly people from Dār-Fur and Kurdufān, but also Nigerians and other immigrants from West Africa and Chad. Omdurman was characterised by its more organic structure and curved roads.

Omdurman also was the home of various markets, including the fish market. The markets of Omdurman were mostly organised around streets which specialised in specific products. Sikainga pointed out a few examples, including Šāriʿa al-Sāqah (goldsmiths street), Šāriʿa al-ʿAnāqrayb (beds street), and Šāriʿa al-Munağidīn (street of the mattress and pillow-makers).[196] He also pointed out that Šāriʿa ʾAbū-Rūf was known for its perfume sellers and, of course, it was the street in which the ʾAbū-Rūfian cultural and political group formed. Additionally Omdurman, being the residential town for the Sudanese, also housed some of the most important mosques, including the Mahdī's mosque and his tomb with its signature egg-shaped metal roof, which was rebuilt in 1947 after it had been destroyed by the British when entering Khartoum at the turn of the century. The large square in front of the Mahdī's tomb has also been a traditional centre of the Ṣūfī celebrations of Mawlid al-Nabī, the birthday of the prophet.

When, after independence, a new parliament building was erected, it was built in Omdurman, just after the bridge coming from Khartoum. A number of government institutions were also sited in Omdurman and not in Khartoum, including the radio and later the TV building, but also, and more cynically, Kūbar prison, which became a centre for political prisoners under many consecutive regimes in Sudan. Another important institution in Omdurman was the girl's school by Bābikir Badrī, which was later transformed into a university for women.

195 Ahmad Alawad Sikainga, *Slaves Into Workers* (Austin, 1996), p. 155.
196 Ibid., p. 158.

Khartoum Baḥrī, or Khartoum North how it is usually called in English, was predominantly a newer residential city, which had grown out of a number of villages which had previously been located there. It attracted immigrants particularly because of the availability of jobs at the workshops of the steamers department and Sudan railways. Additionally, the Egyptian troops in Sudan had their base in Khartoum North. In later years Khartoum North was the first area dedicated to industries and many of Sudan's most famous companies have or had their production facilities in Khartoum North.

Otherwise Khartoum North is not very remarkable, maybe with the exception that Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī lived here. Generally speaking Khartoum North had little to offer. Ṣabrī retold in his autobiography how his family had to cross the bridge to get to any of the better markets and that at night, the bricks of the densely built neighbourhood would release the heat, so that they could hardly breathe, and there was nowhere to go, but to walk down "the tortuous roads" to Khartoum proper, just to be confronted afterwards with a "journey back, through an unholy darkness."[197] This description was of course written by an officer who came to Khartoum from Cairo, but still there must have been a stark contrast between the relative glamour of Khartoum and the seediness of Khartoum North, but also between the hustle and bustle of Omdurman and its many markets and the stillness of Khartoum North on the other side.

An important change to the city came with the end of the closed district policy, first in the Nuba Mountains and later in the southern provinces. This led to a rapid increase in inhabitants from both regions in all three cities, with many southerners moving to Khartoum and many Nuba moving to Khartoum North. As Sikainga pointed out "Their presence in the capital was viewed as constituting a 'real and growing problem' and the government made serious attempts to repatriate them."[198] These attempts however were doomed to fail.

197 Hussein Zulfakar Sabry, *Sovereignty for Sudan* (London, 1982), p. 13.
198 Ahmad Alawad Sikainga, *Slaves Into Workers* (Austin, 1996), p. 156.

Conclusion

There are a couple of important points to take away from these developments, which proved to be relevant for the later history of Sudanese politics. To begin with, it is essential to stress that whenever one thinks about Sudan, one always needs to attempt to keep the vastness of the country, the diversity of its cultures, languages, geographical zones, and flora and fauna in mind. Indeed Sudan was so large, that most Sudanese only knew from stories about other parts and cultures of Sudan, if they knew anything at all, and this limitation was equally true for a Bari fisherman in Juba, or a Beja camel nomad in Arkawit, or an Šāyqī Arab parliamentarian in Khartoum.

It was the previous colonisation of Sudan by the Ottoman Empire which served as a legitimisation for the British to invade Sudan in the late 19th century and it was as a result of that reasoning that they created in Sudan not a British protectorate or colony, but an Anglo-Egyptian condominium. The vagueness of the legal base of this structure and the contradictory interests of the co-domini resulted in a number of stand-offs, and their shaky relationship caused both a cleavage within the Sudanese national movement, and an opportunity for the Sudanese nationalists to bargain for more rights and more participation. The shaky legal beginnings of the condominium foreshadowed a problematic constitutional history, which I will expound systematically in the second section of the fifth chapter.

When the Ottomans were thrown out of Sudan by the Mahdī, this new religious and political leader was supported by many, but not all Sudanese. Most importantly, one of the largest Ṣūfī ṭarīqahs in Sudan, the Ḫatmīyah, did not support him and their leadership went into exile in Egypt and only returned with the British conquest. This division between the ʾAnṣār and the Ḫatmīyah in the late 19th century led to continued suspicion and dislike between the leaders of the two ṭarīqahs, Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī and Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī. This created a lasting cleavage within the Sudanese elite and was at times used by the

British in the sense of *divide et impera*. This moment became a starting point for the diverging nation stories of the two ṭarīqahs.

When the Mahdī attacked Khartoum, the defence of Khartoum was organised by General Gordon. The death of Gordon caused a medial uproar in Britain, which led to calls to defeat the Mahdī's armies. More importantly, the fact that the Ottoman rulers had been thrown out by a religious figure, cast the British relationship to the ṭarīqahs in Sudan for the years to come. It created a situation where the British were both overly suspicious of and overly focused on the role of the Ṣūfī groups. In effect the British increased their relevance, especially the political influence of the Ṣūfī sheikhs, by giving them an elevated position in national politics

With the end of World War I and the struggles of the nationalist movement in Egypt under Saʿd Zaġlūl, Sudan also witnessed the emergence of a nationalist elite under the leadership of young, educated and urban Sudanese. Eventually they launched a movement called the White Flag League, interestingly under the leadership of a non-Arab, ʿAlī ʿAbd-al-Laṭīf. The British cracked down massively on this emerging anti-colonial resistance and, in the same period, removed Egyptian influence from Sudan. The Egyptians who had first made promises to the White Flag but then acceded to the British demands, were afterwards seen much more critically by many young Sudanese, who had before believed in a common cause. In many ways these events were the beginning of a rift between pro-Egyptian and pro-British groups in Sudan.

The direct aftermath of the White Flag uprising saw a ban of all political activities and as a result the young elite turned to literature and poetry, both as a form of internal exile and as a means to express nationalist ideas in a more subtle form. Eventually the Omdurman Graduates' Club and later the Graduates' Congress, played an increasingly important role in Sudanese politics. In consequence the idea of education and, maybe more importantly, many ideas transmitted as part of western education, such as theories about statehood and society, became intricately linked to Sudanese nationalism and politics. This linkage marks the

beginning of the idea that political legitimacy may be acquired through qualifications and actions, instead of being a religio-traditional birth right. This idea eventually created a division in the two largest political parties. I will return to this in detail in the next chapter.

Another consequence of the White Flag was an increased attempt of the British to block Muslim and northern Sudanese influence in the southern provinces. The idea was to generally protect traditions and traditional religions and spread English instead of Arabic and Christianity instead of Islam. In practice however, the continuing lack of resources meant that implementation of policies in the south inevitably remained slow. In consequence education levels remained low and the number of educated southern Sudanese, even in the late 1940s, was minimal. It was this low degree of development in the south compared to the north, that meant that the south was completely unprepared to be reintegrated into Sudan once the southern policy was abolished. The southern policy meant that northerners and southerners throughout the colonial period had vastly different historical experiences, which shaped their respective nation stories. I will return to this in detail in the fourth chapter.

From the early 1940s onwards the British started to affiliate a part of the Sudanese elite into the process of decision-making. However only the pro-British section linked to the ʾAnṣār and Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān cooperated and other groups, who were more pro-Egyptian, boycotted the councils and assemblies. Those outside the council, especially the ʾAšiqqāʾ, put constant pressure on those working with the British administration, who in turn had to push the British for further concessions. The British on the other hand wanted to keep at least the support of a part of society and to do so had to give in to this pressure, at least to a certain extent. It was this dynamic process which eventually led to the creation of the Legislative Assembly, the Executive Council, the conduct of elections for the former, and the abolishment of the southern policy, all in the late 1940s.

This is a rough picture of how Sudan entered the 1950s. The British by this point still believed to be more than a decade away from full Sudanese independence,

but the events first in Egypt and then in Sudan were rapid, in many ways surprising and highly momentous, also from a global perspective. The events as discussed in this chapter, built the basis for the self-perception of many groups such as the ʾAnṣār, the Ḫatmīyah, and the graduates, as well as their perception of other groups and individuals. These perceptions influenced their understanding of Sudan and partially led to the cleavages within and between the parties, in which they participated. In the next chapter I will discuss the development of Sudan in the 1950s and I will look at the Sudanese people's parties, and those different cleavages.

II. The Big Two

In the following chapter I will focus first on the events which led to independence and on the period of democratic rule until the coup of ʾIbrāhīm ʿAbbūd in 1958. Secondly, follows an analysis of the two large parties, or blocs, which led Sudan to independence. One key aspect is why and how they divided and re-united. Using the history of independence as context, the cleavages between the two sides and within each bloc are discussed. These cleavages also relate to the differing concepts of nation proposed by both sides. The nation stories of the two parties as discussed in this chapter will later merge into the comparison of different nation stories in the fifth chapter, where I argue that the nation stories of the different groups are mutually exclusive.

The title of the chapter is intentionally ambiguous. It refers to the phenomenon that, at many times in Sudanese political history, there were or seemed to be two antagonistic groups or leaders. In this sense it could and indeed does refer to either or all of, the ʾUmmah Party – Unionist Party divide, the Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī – Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī divide, the ʿAbd-Allāh Ǧalīl – ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī divide, and later the al-Ṣādiq al-Mahdī – ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī divide. One key argument of the chapter is that the setting of the anti-colonial struggle against a condominium was a key factor in how political parties in Sudan were originally structured. Once Sudan had achieved independence, new considerations had to come into play and the political system was reconfigured.

The thesis as a whole argues that the nation stories of the different parties were contradicting each other and the particular configuration of political parties in Sudan led to an inability to overcome this challenge. This chapter shows that

hidden behind the ʾUmmah Party – Unionist Party divide were cleavages on political issues within the parties. Attempts to compromise on issues with other parties endangered the unity of each of the two "people's parties"[199] and as a result complicated attempts by them to seek out true compromises or an inclusive national vision.

The historiographical section of this chapter is predominantly based on a wide range of secondary sources and sources from NARA in Washington DC. The contribution of the historiographical section lies mainly in the appreciation of the precarious status of sovereignty between 1956 and 1958. It was specifically the NARA documents, which demonstrated how central this issue was for Sudanese politicians in that period.

The section on the unionist parties is predominantly based on secondary sources, most importantly the books by Bechtold, Niblock, and Woodward. I added some material from the oral history interviews conducted by the Centre for Afro-Asian Studies in Khartoum. The section on the ʾUmmah is mostly indebted to the books by ʿAbd-al-Salām and Ḥasan. ʿAbd-al-Salām's thesis, although critical of the ʾUmmah in many regards, was explicitly recommended to me by Rabāḥ al-Ṣādiq al-Mahdī, who managed the library at the house of al-Ṣādiq al-Mahdī. As far as I was able to verify events and developments, ʿAbd-al-Salām's thesis is coherent with what I learned in my own interviews, and what I found in the interviews by the Centre for Afro-Asian Studies.

The analysis is based on the used and quoted materials, and on a large number of discussions with the descendants of the early nationalist leaders. It was predominantly these interviews which convinced me to review the material and to question the idea that the two people's parties were overall one modern, nationalist movement, with minor, mostly personal differences.

199 I am using the German inspired term "people's parties" (*Volksparteien*), as they are broader coalitions, representing large parts of the population, maintaining the claim of being national parties which potentially would like to represent the people as a whole, while however being constrained by acting within a multi-party system. The term might not be optimal, but it helps to distinguish between the different types of Sudanese parties.

While the chapter is heavily indebted to the analyses and ideas by authors such as Niblock and Bechtold, it provides a number of different perspectives. Firstly it focuses on the question of sovereignty in the later 1950s, which was not taken seriously by other authors. Secondly it shows how the perception of Sudan as a two party system emerged and why that perception is wrong. Thirdly and most importantly it shows the cleavages within the political parties and their consequences.

Independence Stumbled Upon

In November 1950 the Egyptians announced that they would abrogate the condominium agreement. The British reacted by instituting a constitutional commission to redefine the Sudan's legal status. Based on the findings of the commission, the governor general proposed the *Self-Government Statute* in May 1952. This statute would have given the Sudanese more rights, but at the same time eliminated the remaining Egyptian checks and balances. The statute submitted also proclaimed a deadline of November 1952 for counter-suggestions from the Egyptian government, otherwise it would automatically go into effect. As David Sconyers argued, the Sudan Political Service attempted to outmanoeuvre the Egyptians and to "transition (Sudan slowly) to self-rule (… under) pro-British Umma Party rule." However, this attempt was overseen by an unimaginative, overworked and undermanned administration.[200]

What followed was another deadlock in negotiations. The impasse of Sudanese politics was broken by the *Free Officers* revolution in Cairo on 23 July 1952. The Free Officers were a group of young army men who overthrew the Egyptian monarchy. To be able to project the necessary authority, they designated the older and more experienced General ʿAlī Muḥammad Naǧīb as leader or figurehead. In

200 David Sconyers, 'Servant or Saboteur?', *Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies)*, No. 1 (1987), pp. 46-7.

the beginning, all important decisions were taken by the officers together in their council. Later Ǧamāl ʿAbd-al-Nāṣir managed to take over the leadership role. Besides Nağīb and Nāṣir, Ṣalāḥ Sālim played the most important role in regards to Sudan, as he managed the Sudan portfolio from 1952 until 1956.

The revolution shattered many long held truths of Egyptian foreign politics and allowed for a new and innovative strategic thinking. The Free Officers re-evaluated their position in Sudan and recognised that getting the British out of Sudan was strategically more important than saving the unity of the Nile valley. The Egyptians gained Sudanese popular support and pressured the British to accept a highly ambitious timetable for Sudanese independence. This timetable scheduled elections for 1953, followed by a short transitional period in which positions which were held by British or Egyptians should be given to Sudanese to create a neutral atmosphere for the Sudanese to freely decide their fate: full Sudanese independence or unity with Egypt.

While the parties were still in Cairo in 1952, the Egyptians managed to convince the various unionist leaning parties to merge into one common party, the National Unionist Party (NUP) under the leadership of ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī, founder of the Graduates' Congress and later figurehead of the ʾAšiqqāʾ. Partially thanks to Egyptian propaganda and financial support, partially thanks to superior organisation, the NUP won the parliamentary elections in 1953 and was able to form a government. The British were convinced that now they had lost Sudan to Egypt. It is one of the ironies of history that Sudan achieved her full independence under the leadership of a party, which officially fought for the unity of the Nile valley.

The reasons for this were fourfold: first of all in Sudan ʿAlī Muḥammad Nağīb was the most popular of the Free Officers and on 25 February 1954 he was removed from power and in November completely dismissed. In the same period Ǧamāl ʿAbd-al-Nāṣir became increasingly hostile towards the Muslim Brotherhood and it became more and more apparent that the regime in Egypt was

not going to govern democratically. All this made union with Egypt less attractive for a large part of Sudanese society, including the educated elite.[201]

Second, the ʾUmmah Party ran a campaign against the idea of unity with Egypt by organising demonstrations all around the country, which created a credible threat to al-ʾAzharī who was now prime minister of Sudan.[202]

Third, the position of al-ʾAzharī and other members of his party had always been ambivalent as to the extent and shape of union with Egypt. At least some unionists had always understood the slogan "Unity of the Nile Valley" as a tactical tool directed against the British.[203] Once it was clear that the British would leave, Egyptian support was no longer necessary.

Fourth and last, there are reasons to argue that Nāṣir was himself not a great supporter of unity, and that he was not dissatisfied to see Sudan become independent.[204] As an added bonus, Sudanese independence weakened the position of Ṣalāḥ Sālim. Thanks to these four factors the pendulum eventually swung towards full independence, which brought this chapter of the Sudanese-Egyptian relationship to an end.

---

201 I was told about the change of attitude towards Egypt because of the removal of Nağīb and the growingly dictatorial style of ruling by the Free Officers in interviews with members of all parties and sides of the social and political spectrum.

202 The importance of these ʾUmmah activities was suggested to me by various party members in interviews including: Al-Ṣādiq Al-Mahdī, *Personal Interview* (Omdurman, 20 January 2011).

ʾIbrāhīm al-Muftī also mentioned that ʾAzharī changed his views after having travelled around the country, seeing that the general opinion was united against unity. ʾIbrāhīm al-Muftī, *Oral History Interview* (no date and place), according to: Maʿhad al-Dirāsāt al-ʾAfrīqiyah wa al-ʾAsiyūiya, Ğāmiʿah al-Ḫarṭūm, *Muqābilāt Ruwād al-Ḥarakah al-Waṭaniyah* (Khartoum 1985), Vol. 1, p. 101.

Also see: Peter Woodward, 'Nationalism and Opposition in Sudan', African Affairs, Vol. 80, No. 320 (July 1981), p. 386.

203 William H. T. Luce, *Note on Conversation with ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī on 16 February 1954*. Quoted according to: Douglas Johnson (ed.), *British Documents on the End of Empire, Sudan* (London, 1998) Vol. 2, pp. 309-11.

204 Muḥammad Nağīb, *Kuntu raʾīsan li-Miṣr, Mudhakkirāt* (Cairo, 1984), pp. 278 and 289.

A contrary view is held by: Rami Ginat, 'Egypt's efforts to unite the Nile Valley', Vol. 43, No. 2 (March 2007), p. 217. Similarly Woodward argued that Nāṣir was a supporter of unity but did not say so for strategic reasons: Peter Woodward, *Sudan, 1898-1989: The Unstable State* (Boulder, 1989), pp. 86 & 91.

The path to independence was however not completely smooth. When the ʾAzharī administration declared the result of the sudanisation –the process in which jobs which were previously held by British and Egyptians were given to Sudanese–, only very few jobs were given to southerners. What followed was a series of what Bašīr called blunders by new northern administrators in the southern provinces.[205] The atmosphere in the southern provinces started to grow tense. After a plot by some southern army officers had been discovered, who planned to kill their northern Sudanese superiors, the second company of the southern corps ignored an order to move to Khartoum, where they were to participate in the celebration for the evacuation of foreign troops. "The Torit mutiny spread quickly into violence throughout Equatoria and (… s)ome 260 northern officials and merchants and their families were killed."[206] The mutineers were possibly financially supported by Ṣalāḥ Sālim in an unsuccessful last minute attempt to stall Sudanese independence and by that save his position among the Free Officers in Cairo.[207] The mutiny died down soon after and only a small number of mutineers continued to roam the jungle, more as armed bandits than as a force of resistance.[208] Nevertheless this event is often seen by southerners as the beginning of the civil war –the day of the Torit mutiny, is even celebrated as the Day of War Veterans in South Sudan.[209] Even though this continuity is mostly just a story of the heroic struggle of the southerners, the mutiny should have been a loud warning to the northern politicians that the southern question would be a central problem.

ʾAzharī managed to bypass these issues, and to rally unanimous parliamentary support for independence. Following a vote in December 1955, the Republic of Sudan finally became independent on 1 January 1956. ʾAzharī, however, was not

205 Mohamed Omer Beshir, *The Southern Sudan* (London, 1968), p. 72.

206 John Howell, 'Political Leadership and Organization in the Southern Sudan' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1978), p. 133.

207 Gabriel R. Warburg, *Historical Discord in the Nile Valley* (London, 1992), pp. 74-6. Similar opinions were expressed in discussions with Egyptian academics at Cairo University. However, due to the inaccessibility of the Egyptian archives, this point cannot be investigated any further for now.

208 Øystein Rolandsen, 'A False Start', (Univ. of Oslo Ph.D. thesis, 2010), *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (March 2011), pp. 111-2.

209 See: SPLM, *SPLM honors South Sudan war veterans*, 20 August 2010 (http://www.splmtoday.com/index.php?view=article&id=507:splm-honors-south-sudan-war-veterans).

able to enjoy his role as prime minister of an independent Sudan for very long. His party, which had been a shaky alliance since 1952, finally broke apart. The more conservative members and the devout followers of the Ḫatmīyah formed a new party, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) under the political leadership of Sheikh ʿAlī ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān. The PDP then became the junior partner in a new government coalition with the ʾUmmah Party and they elected ʿAbd-Allāh Ḫalīl as new prime minister on 5 July 1956. This coalition was known in Sudan as the coalition of the two sayyids, Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī and Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī, because it combined two parties closely aligned to the two large ṭarīqahs. It was in many ways an unexpected alliance, as the two religious leaders had been fiercely competitive and critical of each other for decades. Most Sudanese believed that the two sayyids were able to find common ground only because they both felt threatened by the growing influence of ʾAzharī and his peers.[210]

Shortly after the House had elected Ḫalīl and the parliament adjourned for the summer break, Ǧamāl ʿAbd-al-Nāṣir nationalised the Suez canal, which was followed by a short but momentous armed conflict. In the aftermath of the Suez crisis US President Dwight Eisenhower made a speech to Congress on 5 January 1957 where he outlined a new policy under which Middle Eastern nations would be able to request economic and military aid "to secure and protect the territorial integrity and political independence of such nations (…) against (…) any nation controlled by international communism."[211]

Ḫalīl's government had been considering requesting aid from the United States,[212] but the *Eisenhower doctrine* was unpopular in Sudan as it was widely seen as a form of imperialism by the United States.[213] Ḫalīl signalled to the American Ambassador that his government was going to request aid, but would currently

210 This view is also shared by: NARA, 745W.00/5-457 (American Embassy Khartoum, Memo to Department of State, 4 May 1957).

211 Dwight D. Eisenhower, 'Special Message to the Congress on the Situation in the Middle East', *Speeches by the U.S. president* (5 January 1957).

212 NARA, 745W.5 MSP/1-757 (American Embassy Khartoum, Cable to Department of State, 8 January 1957).

213 NARA, 320-Sudan (American Embassy Khartoum, Memo to Department of State, 17 January 1957).

not make a public statement in this regard.[214] They even entered informal talks, but the PDP, the smaller of the two coalition parties, was opposed to American aid and at this point in time the ʾUmmah Party was determined to keep the coalition alive at all cost. The Parliament had to pass a number of important laws in the upcoming session, including the election and nationality laws. On 30 June 1957 the present Parliament was to expire and until the newly elected Parliament would convene, the country was going to be run by a cabinet government. Therefore Ḫalīl was not going to rock the boat.[215]

In early February 1958, only weeks before the elections for a new parliament in Sudan were to take place, the Egyptian-Sudanese relationship entered a new period of drama. Nāṣir wrote to Ḫalīl, reminding the Sudanese that the true Egyptian-Sudanese border coincided with the 22nd parallel. Right in the middle of this period Nāṣir had announced his newest project, the unification of Syria and Egypt in the United Arab Republic. In view of the creation of the United Arab Republic Nāṣir intended to reintegrate an area north of the 22nd parallel, which had been long administrated by Khartoum, the Ḥalāʾib Triangle. In the following weeks both sides moved their troops towards the border[216] and after negotiations failed, Sudan deferred the conflict to the Security Council.[217] By 22 February the Egyptians decided to let the matter be and declared the crisis to be over.[218]

Whatever Nāṣir had intended with this move –his foreign policy was famously hard to analyse, as one British observer remarked, Nāṣir remained "an enigma, which he cannot penetrate"–[219] the incident set the mood for politics in Khartoum, especially considering the rumours that Nāṣir also had been financially

214 NARA, 745W.5 MSP/2-2057 (American Embassy Khartoum, Cable to Department of State, 20 February 1957).

215 NARA, 745W.00/5-457 (American Embassy Khartoum, Memo to Department of State, 4 May 1957).

216 NARA, 645W.743/2-1758 (American Embassy Khartoum, Cable to American Embassy Cairo, 17 February 1958).

217 NARA, 645W.743/2-2058 (American Embassy Khartoum, Cable 643 to Department of State, 20 February 1958).

218 NARA, 645W.743/2-2258 (American Embassy Cairo, Cable 2181 to Department of State, 22 February 1958).

219 NARA, 645W.743/2-2058 (American Embassy Khartoum, Cable 643 to Department of State, 20 February 1958).

supporting the NUP and the PDP against the ʾUmmah during the election campaign.[220] Once the elections were over, Ḫalīl started to negotiate the finishing touches of the aid agreement, which had been in progress. The agreement was eventually finalised on 31 March, but the government was reluctant to put the agreement to a vote in parliament, being unsure of its own majority. When the agreement was finally debated in parliament in late June, the discussion had to be adjourned because it suddenly appeared that the PDP would not vote in line with the other government coalition members.[221] A few days later the ʾUmmah was able to convince the PDP to change its mind and on 3 July the aid agreement was ratified by parliament.[222]

However, even with the ratification of the aid agreement completed, Sudan was not steering towards calmer political waters. On 15 July the US president reacted to the instability in Lebanon and initiated *operation Blue Bat*.[223] While America was intervening in Lebanon, the political cards in the Arab world were also reshuffled in Iraq as a result of the 14 July Free Officers revolution. The Iraqi revolution and its relevance for the Arab League and Arab nationalism attracted a lot of attention among Sudanese politicians and in Sudanese media.[224]

While the Arab world was in uproar, the Sudanese political situation was likewise confused, with observers being unsure if the government coalition would be able to remain in power.[225] Egyptian propaganda,[226] as well as attacks by the Sudanese

220 NARA, 745W.00/2-858 (American Embassy Khartoum, Memo to Department of State, 8 February 1958).

221 NARA, 745W.5 MSP/6-2558 (American Embassy Khartoum, Cable 1132 to Department of State, 25 June 1958).

222 NARA, 745W.5 MSP/7-158 (American Embassy Khartoum, Cable 2 to Department of State, 1 July 1958).

223 The mission outlined in the plan was to support or, if necessary, to re-establish the authority of the Lebanese Government. A subsidiary mission was to protect US and British nationals and national interests. The concept of operations was limited to Lebanon and the use of the minimum force necessary to re-establish effective control over the country by the Lebanese Government. The initial objective of the operation was the Beirut area. The primary assumption of the plan was that US Marines would secure a beachhead in the Beirut area as a base of operations, and British land forces would be deployed in the area thereafter. (FRUS XI, 40, Foreign Relations of the United States, Editorial Note.)

224 NARA, 350-Sudan (Department of State, Memo to American Embassy Cairo, 20 July 1958).

225 NARA, 745W.5 MSP/7-2058 (American Embassy Khartoum, Cable 80 to Department of State, 20 July 1958).

226 NARA, 350-Sudan (American Embassy Khartoum, Memo to Department of State, 18 August

press on the government and the aid agreement became more pronounced again.[227] Simultaneously Khartoum was brimming with rumours. The Saudi ambassador claimed that the Egyptians were financing the mutineer activity in Southern Sudan.[228] The Saudis also claimed that Nāṣir was buying Sudanese parliamentarians for 5,000 Pounds per head to make a move against the government.[229] Eventually rumours of a coup started to make their rounds, including press reports that Ḫalīl himself was planning a coup d'état. Soon this actually became reality as the US embassy cabled to Washington: "Coup initiated 0300 hours November 17, 1958, by Army. (…) Coup conducted quietly, courteously and effectively. Discipline of troops impressive. Public reaction generally one of moderate surprise with growing evidence enthusiasm for change."[230]

To summarise, it was the Egyptian revolution of 1952 and with it a change in priorities in Cairo that quickened the Sudanese path to independence. Following the same dynamic as earlier, the two opposing Sudanese nationalist factions, now in form of the NUP and the ʾUmmah, competed with each other, and by that forced their patrons to make concessions. In consequence, when Sudan declared her independence on 1 January 1956, this was not the achievement of a strong or even unified independence movement, but primarily the result of her peculiar structure as a condominium. In many ways, the cleavages of the condominium between Britain and Egypt had their parallels in the nationalist movement and the troubles of the Anglo-Egyptian relationship continued after independence as internal Sudanese problems. This fuels the over-all argument of the thesis that the

---

1958).

227 NARA, 745W.00/10-2558 (American Embassy Khartoum, Cable 581 to Department of State, 25 October 1958).
NARA, 745W.00/10-2558 (American Embassy Khartoum, Cable 582 to Department of State, 25 October 1958).
NARA, 745W.00/10-2558 (Department of State, Cable 542 to American Embassy Khartoum, 25 October 1958).

228 NARA, 350-Sudan (K.P.T. Sullivan, Memo to Ambassador Moose, 13 June 1958).

229 NARA, 645W.86/5-2158 (American Embassy Khartoum, Cable 992 to Department of State, 21 May 1958).

230 NARA, 745W.00/11-858 (American Embassy Khartoum, Cable 689 to Department of State, 8 November 1958).

fragmentation of the nationalist movement led to a fragmentation of the nation story.

When in mid 1956 ʿAbd-Allāh Ḫalīl took over power in Sudan, his government and the opposition were divided over conceptions of sovereignty and the question if Sudan should align with the west, the east, or be non-aligned. I will discuss these issues in detail later in this chapter. Ḫalīl's coalition partner, the PDP, was not completely on the same line as the Ḫalīl's ʾUmmah Party and as result the government was always close to breakdown. In consequence of the divisions of the co-domini before independence, distrust between various Sudanese nationalist groups even after independence was rampant. It was this distrust, which eventually caused Ḫalīl to hand over power to the army, to avoid a potential government by ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī. As a result, a military government was formed under ʾIbrāhīm ʿAbbūd, which governed Sudan until 1964, and which is discussed in the next chapter. Ḫalīl believed that ʾAzharī forming a government would be a threat to the sovereignty of Sudan. As I will argue in detail in the final chapter, Ḫalīl excluded ʾAzharī from this nation in his understanding of the nation and therefore he felt that the coup was in essence a legitimate act.

In the period between 1950 and 1958, the two (or indeed three) Sudanese people's parties took shape. In the next two sections of this chapter, I will first discuss the Nationalist Unionist Party of ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī and their splinter, the PDP, and then the ʾUmmah Party. In the last section the focus lies on the issues which divided those parties, including as mentioned, questions of sovereignty and alignment.

Divided Unionists

In the mid 1940s there were two political groups in Sudan, which were divided over a number of questions regarding the future nature or alignment of Sudan, or over the strategies necessary to achieve that future. Although the two sides were far from being homogenous, nevertheless there was a relatively clear difference between them. All those who wanted some sort of unity with Egypt, a future alignment with Egypt and the larger Arab world, or at least a temporary strategic alignment with Egypt to oust the British, were part of the Unionist camp. Everyone who focused on a completely independent Sudan, a Sudan primarily independent of Egypt, a Sudan aligned with Britain eventually within the framework of the Commonwealth, and lastly everyone who believed that independence from Britain and Egypt could only be achieved with the agreement of Britain or through constitutional means, were part of the Independence camp.

The Unionists consisted of a number of different groups, which had varying and overall low levels of organisation. They employed the Graduates' Congress as a platform, which was organised, had elections and was registered and since they rejected the constitutional path and therefore were not primarily seeking British approval, the need for a closely-knit organisation did not really arise. In Sudanese literature the different unionist groups are often referred to as parties, but it would be more fitting to speak of cliques or circles. As that may be, four groups are usually differentiated; First, the ʾAšiqqāʾ which I will return to in the next paragraph, wanted some sort of unity between Sudan and Egypt, but did not really specify this. Second, the Unionist Party which grew out of the ʾAbū-Rūf group, led by Ḥamād Tawfīq, ʿAbd-Allāh Mīrġanī and Ḫiḍr Ḥamad. They believed Sudan's link to Egypt should be similar to Britain's dominions. They opposed the influence of Ṣūfī ṭarīqahs on politics. Third, the Liberal Unionist Party supported confederation between Egypt and Sudan. Fourth, the Nile Valley Party of ʾAḥmad ʾIsmāʿīl wanted the complete integration of the two states.[231]

231 Mohamed Omer Beshir, *Revolution and Nationalism* (London, 1974), p. 202.

The ʾAšiqqāʾ were the most important of these groups. Bašīr claimed that they were founded in 1944,[232] but Niblock's claim that they were indeed founded in 1935 rings true.[233] The ʾAšiqqāʾ were originally a relatively small group of young men who in 1940 eventually began to cooperate with ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī. As mentioned earlier, working together they were able to increase their influence in the Graduates' Congress.[234] This coalition between the ʾAšiqqāʾ and ʾAzharī was so stable and so lasting, that in my interviews the two were rarely distinguished and ʾAzharī was most often referred to, as the leader of the ʾAšiqqāʾ.

Originally in 1940 the ʾAšiqqāʾ had taken control of the Congress, in an alliance with Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī, but after the memorandum of the Congress to the British and the decision of the ʾAšiqqāʾ to side with the authors of the memorandum, the sayyid severed this link. As mentioned earlier Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī took this opportunity to expand his influence. As Niblock pointed out, he first tried to side with the ʾAbū-Rūfians, but they were unwilling to compromise on their anti-sectarian stance. In consequence Mīrġanī turned to ʾAzharī.[235] At this point, this cooperation was not based on shared values. As Manṣūr Ḫālid pointed out ʾAzharī and Mīrġanī, "(b)oth saw the other as a useful tool."[236] It is important to note that, while Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī often got very directly involved into politics and made his point of view well known, Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī officially abstained from politics and only expressed his views and support indirectly, either through people who were standing supposedly close to him, or by granting or not granting public meetings to specific politicians.

In 1943 ʾAzharī travelled to Cairo to discuss potential ways to work together with various party and government officials.[237] Viewed as the primary opposition to the British, helped the ʾAšiqqāʾ to get increasing Egyptian financial, material, and

---

Tim Niblock, *Class and Power* (Basingstoke, 1987), pp. 196-7.

232 Mohamed Omer Beshir, *Revolution and Nationalism* (London, 1974), p. 202.

233 Tim Niblock, *Class and Power* (Basingstoke, 1987), p. 184.

234 Ibid., pp. 189-90.

235 Ibid., p. 194.

236 Mansour Khalid, *The Government They Deserve* (London, 1990), p. 83.

237 Tim Niblock, *Class and Power* (Basingstoke, 1987), p. 195.

propaganda support. The ability to channel and distribute these resources, enabled the group to entrench its position –even if Egyptian support in part was also disreputable and incriminating, as Ṣabrī pointed out.[238]

There is another level of historical depth to this link between the Ḫatmīyah and Egypt from the period of the Mahdīyah. The Mahdī had ousted the Egyptians in the first place and his movement, the ʾAnṣār, might also be construed more generally as anti-colonial, but specifically it was also clearly anti-Egyptian. When Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī began to work together with the British, this decision was partly opportunistic, but it remained within the anti-Egyptian frame of reference of his father. This meant, that the Egyptians needed to work with someone else, if they wanted to get a foothold in Sudanese politics. The Ḫatmīyah and the Mīrġanī clan were equally anti-ʾAnṣār and the family had been in Egyptian exile during the Mahdīyah. Since Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān was working more and more on to the good side of the British, linking up with the Egyptians was a logical card to play for Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī.

The Unionists, as discussed earlier, abstained from the Advisory Council and the Legislative Assembly; for them it was not necessary to find a more systematic or unified structure. However this changed with the Egyptian revolution in 1952. During talks in Cairo in late 1952 Ṣalāḥ Sālim tried to convince the various groups to join together. According to Ṣabrī, he did so mostly through the lure of huge subsidies.[239] This was not an easy task, partially due to infighting within the ʾAšiqqāʾ between ʾAzharī and his deputy Muḥammad Nūr-al-Dīn –a conflict which was also intensified by Egyptian bribes in the first place–[240] and partially due to the Ḫatmī aristocracy "haughtily look(ing) down on the Ashigga leaders as mercenary demagogues only fit to incite the rabble."[241] Nevertheless the attempt succeeded and the *National Unionist Party* (NUP) was formed.

238 Hussein Zulfakar Sabry, *Sovereignty for Sudan* (London, 1982), p. 40.
239 Ibid., p. 99.
240 Ibid., pp. 41-2.
241 Ibid., p. 99.

The new party was primarily based on a common desire to end British control of Sudanese affairs and to do so, without handing over power to the ʾUmmah Party and Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī. Additionally, many members of the party really hoped for some sort of unity with Egypt, while others used this primarily as a strategic instrument. In most other points, differences within the party were pronounced, especially between the progressive party members affiliated with the ʾAšiqqāʾ and the more traditional and religious members affiliated with the Ḫatmīyah. Nevertheless, with the quick election schedule, the NUP was able to remain united. To the surprise of the ʾUmmah and the British, they managed to win an absolute majority in the 1953 elections, a feat no other party managed in any democratic election in Sudan in subsequent years. Peter Bechtold succinctly summarised the reasons for the NUP election victory:

> "(T)he NUP landslide victory may be attributed to (…) a platform attractive to Sudanese at this particular juncture in time, a superior organization based on superior talent in terms of education both at the top and in the medium ranges of the party structure, solid financial backing and good coaching in application of these resources, an opponent who overestimated his own strength and underestimated the size of the task, and a clean image in the independence movement."[242]

The new parliament elected ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī as prime minister and he formed the first all-Sudanese government, with nine members from the north and three members from the south. The task of the government was to bridge a transition period, after which there was supposed to be a referendum about independence or unity. The key task of the government before the referendum was to create a free and neutral atmosphere, that is to sudanise positions so far held by British and Egyptians. Additionally the new government had to deal with civil unrest in the north, especially in regards to demonstrations by the ʾAnṣār against potential unity with Egypt and civil unrest in the south connected to the Torit mutiny.

Soon after the elections, the connections between the various wings of the NUP started to become more fragile. Firstly, once elected the party needed to be more specific about what it meant by union with Egypt. ʾAzharī tried to retain Egyptian

242 Peter K. Bechtold, *Politics in Sudan* (New York, 1976), p. 184.

support, but eventually expressed the view that union was primarily a tool to oust the British, not an end in itself. Secondly, independence from Britain started to become a certainty and therefore lost its value as common ground for the party; and thirdly, with the ʾUmmah having lost the elections, the threat of an ʾAnṣār dominated government or even some sort of monarchical position for Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī receded.

As a result, in December 1954 three prominent Ḫatmī Ministers –Mīrġanī Ḥamza, Ḫalaf-Allāh Ḫālid, and ʾAḥmad Ǧaylī– were ousted from the cabinet, after Egyptian pressure, supposedly due to their stance on union with Egypt and their opinion regarding the Sudanese share of the Nile water.[243] Woodward also speculated that this was at the same time connected to a power struggle between Ḥamza and ʾAzharī, which Ḥamza also alluded to in an interview. After that, the three former ministers –the press referred to them as the three musketeers as Ḥamza proudly remembered–[244] left the party and founded the *Independent Republican Party*. The new party however did not develop much traction, especially as Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī kept publicly silent on whether he supported the new party or remained in support of the NUP.[245]

What followed was an extended power struggle in the party and its executive, during which ʾAzharī purged various pro-Egyptian and pro-Ḫatmīyah rivals. Most importantly the conflict between ʾAzharī and Muḥammad Nūr-al-Dīn re-emerged. As a reaction to ʾAzharī slowly shifting his public position on unity with Egypt, the Egyptians increased their support to Nūr-al-Dīn, at that time NUP vice-president. Nūr-al-Dīn attempted to maintain the unionist stance of the NUP and eventually went as far as to insinuate that ʾAzharī had a secret pact with Britain. He claimed that his position to support unity was backed by Sayyid ʿAlī – a claim that could neither be proven nor disproven, due to the Sayyid's insistence

243 Mīrġanī Ḥamza, *Oral History Interview* (no date and place), according to: Maʿhad al-Dirāsāt al-ʾAfrīqiyah wa al-ʾAsiyūiya, Ǧāmiʿah al-Ḫarṭūm, *Muqābilāt Ruwād al-Ḥarakah al-Waṭaniyah* (Khartoum 1985), Vol. 3, pp. 394-5.

Peter Woodward, *Condominium and Sudanese Nationalism* (London, 1979), p. 138.

244 Mīrġanī Ḥamza, *Oral History Interview* (no date and place), according to: Maʿhad al-Dirāsāt al-ʾAfrīqiyah wa al-ʾAsiyūiya, Ǧāmiʿah al-Ḫarṭūm, *Muqābilāt Ruwād al-Ḥarakah al-Waṭaniyah* (Khartoum 1985), Vol. 3, p. 394.

245 Peter Woodward, *Condominium and Sudanese Nationalism* (London, 1979), p. 138.

to keep publicly silent on political matters. In spring 1955 the NUP issued a statement in favour of Sudanese independence and with that Nūr-al-Dīn was *de facto* defeated. In June, he was removed from the government.[246]

All of these developments led to an increased personal rift between ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī and Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī. As Niblock pointed out, before the dismissal of the three musketeers, ʾAzharī had still obtained Sayyid ʿAlī's consent. When he dismissed Nūr-al-Dīn, he did so against the explicit request by the Ḫatmīyah sheikh.[247] When in 1955 it became increasingly clear that there was widespread support for independence, the question concerning the exact procedure emerged. Theoretically the Anglo-Egyptian agreement stipulated that once sudanisation was completed a constituent assembly was to be elected, which should then decide on the future status of Sudan and write a constitution accordingly. After that the condominium would come to its end. This procedure was seen by many as too complicated and too time consuming and therefore Sayyid ʿAlī suggested a plebiscite, a suggestion that was taken up positively by parliament. Yaḥyā al-Faḍlī however, speaking for the ʾAšiqqāʾ, suggested the decision could be taken by the existing parliament. By October ʾAzharī sided with the latter opinion.[248]

Niblock argued that this decision "provoked considerable bitterness – possibly because Sayyid ʿAlī saw the plebiscite as a means of avoiding any impairment to his relations with the Egyptian government."[249] In consequence Sayyid ʿAlī lost confidence in ʾAzharī and when ʾAzharī began discussions with the ʾUmmah Party regarding Sudanese independence, he was increasingly afraid of losing his political influence. Therefore he initiated a meeting with Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī, which was held on 10 October 1955. It was the first meeting between the two in twenty years.[250] The two sayyids agreed that ʾAzharī had become too much of a challenge to their traditional influence on society and politics. Following their

246 Ibid., pp. 139-41.
247 Tim Niblock, *Class and Power* (Basingstoke, 1987), pp. 207-8.
248 Peter Woodward, *Condominium and Sudanese Nationalism* (London, 1979), p. 161.
249 Tim Niblock, *Class and Power* (Basingstoke, 1987), p. 208.
250 Ibid., p. 209.

agreement, Sayyid ʿAlī persuaded a number of Ḫatmī members of government to step down and ʾAzharī lost the following vote of confidence.[251]

But the two sayyids had misjudged the popular mood and violent demonstrations in support of ʾAzharī broke out. When the parliament reconvened to elect a new government Mīrġanī Ḥamza, who was backed by the religious leaders, lost by 49 to 45 votes against ʾAzharī.[252] Learning from their experience, they instead called on ʾAzharī to form a national government "so that stability and security, which are essential in the present grave circumstances, can prevail."[253] The NUP however rejected this idea, arguing that it was "inconsistent with the constitutional procedure and democratic practice."[254] ʾAzharī was able to preserve his government into the new year, after he came to an agreement with Muḥammad ʾAḥmad Maḥğūb, the leader of the opposition, to vote for independence in parliament. And so, it was ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī who was prime minister on 1 January 1956, when the flags of Britain and Egypt were lowered and the Sudanese tricolour[255] was raised for the first time.

After independence, as Bechtold pointed out, "time and political intrigues march(ed) on."[256] A number of cabinet ministers including Sheikh ʿAlī ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān increased their pressure on ʾAzharī to accept a national government and on 2 February 1956 he gave in and reformed the cabinet by including members of all major parties and groupings. Nevertheless in May a new party formed, breaking away from the NUP. The *People's Democratic Party* (PDP) brought together the remaining Ḫatmī members of NUP, the Independent Republican Party of Mīrġanī Ḥamza and the unionists of Muḥammad Nūr-al-Dīn. The new party had the open blessing of Sayyid ʿAlī and was led by Sheikh ʿAlī

251 Peter Woodward, *Condominium and Sudanese Nationalism* (London, 1979), p. 163.
252 Tim Niblock, *Class and Power* (Basingstoke, 1987), p. 209.
Peter Woodward, *Condominium and Sudanese Nationalism* (London, 1979), p. 163.
253 Declaration by the two Sayyids according to: Ibid., p. 164.
254 The NUP executive according to: Ibid., p. 164.
255 The independence flag of Sudan, which was used until 1970, was a blue, yellow and green tricolour.
256 Peter K. Bechtold, *Politics in Sudan* (New York, 1976), p. 188.

ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān.[257] Judged on its policy, the new party was a strange body. What had brought all those men together was their link to the Ḫatmīyah.

The recently formed party entered a new coalition with the ʾUmmah, and ʾAzharī became the leader of the opposition. Being freed of the compromises of government and *realpolitik*, and, of course, being freed from having to compromise with Sayyid ʿAlī and Ḫatmīyah interests, the NUP developed a more radical stance against US policy in the Middle East under the leadership of its old ʾAšiqqāʾ core. They were in favour of Arab nationalism, of civil liberties, and most importantly were against the influence of the ṭarīqahs on politics. In the 1958 elections, one of their main slogans was "Lā qadāsah fi al-siyāsah!", which means "No holiness in politics!". In October 1958 the NUP formed a national front against the ʾUmmah–PDP government coalition, comprising with the *Sudanese Communist Party*, the *Sudan Workers Trade Union Federation* (SWTUF), various tenants' and farmers' unions, the student unions, and the *Southern Federal Party*.[258]

Nevertheless it would be a mistake to see the division between NUP and PDP as too fundamental. Sheikh ʿAlī ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān said about his coalition with the ʾUmmah that the influence of the PDP in the coalition was large, because the PDP's opinions were often supported by the NUP. "It always comes down to the parliament. Whatever the disputes were between us and our colleagues of the NUP, we shared the same views and aims. Our disputes were mostly superficial and partially personal, but in regard to specific issues, our opinions aligned."[259] Indeed, when the ʾUmmah attempted to negotiate an aid agreement with the US, the PDP line was as critical of this as the NUP agitation. Furthermore the PDP supported an opening towards the communist bloc with a policy which would be in line with Sudan's *positive neutrality*.

257 Tim Niblock, *Class and Power* (Basingstoke, 1987), pp. 209-10.

258 Ibid., p. 210.

259 ʿAlī ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān, *Oral History Interview* (no date and place), according to: Maʿhad al-Dirāsāt al-ʾAfrīqiyah wa al-ʾAsiyūiya, Ǧāmiʿah al-Ḫarṭūm, *Muqābilāt Ruwād al-Ḥarakah al-Waṭaniyah* (Khartoum 1985), Vol. 1, pp. 16-7.

By 8 November 1958 ʿAbd-Allāh Ḫalīl believed that the PDP would leave the coalition and once again work together with the NUP. He also believed that this was fostered by Egyptian bribes and that such a government would act in the interest of Egypt. The American Embassy cabled about a discussion with Ḫalīl: "Prime Minister considers Ali Abdurrahman and Ismail Azhari hopelessly lost to Egyptians. (…) Prime Minister says army and other forces at his disposal ready for instant effective action if required. (…) Use of force by Khalil would lead to unpredictable consequences, but might nevertheless be preferable to the certain disaster which would befall western interests if Ali Abdurrahman and his ilk were (to) come to power."[260] Nine days later Ḫalīl staged a coup against his own government in which he handed power to the military.

After the end of the military regime in 1964, when approaching new elections in 1965, the PDP briefly entered into an alliance with the Communist Party who was opposed to elections. The NUP, on the other hand, worked with the islamists and the ʾUmmah. The 1965 election resulted in a ʾUmmah victory, with the ʾUmmah taking 44% of the seats and ʾAzharī's NUP 31%. The PDP won only three seats in parliament, due to their decision to boycott the elections. Over the following years the government was held by a ʾUmmah–NUP coalition. When new elections approached in 1968, ʾAzharī was worried about once again loosing to the ʾUmmah. Therefore he decided to push for a re-unification of the NUP and the PDP. On 12 December 1967 the two parties eventually formed the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). As Bechtold pointed out, this move was however not entirely popular with his own rank and file, who saw the move as purely opportunistic.[261]

The decision to unify, was mostly a deference to the electoral system, which gave, as explained later, an advantage to larger, unified voting blocks. By this point in time however, many members of the parties did not really see the wisdom in the decision, especially those members of the NUP which had been opposed to the

260 NARA, 745W.00/11-858 (American Embassy Khartoum, Cable 689 to Department of State, 8 November 1958).
261 Peter K. Bechtold, *Politics in Sudan* (New York, 1976), p. 246.

involvement of the ṭarīqahs in politics. The unification was primarily directed against Ṣādiq al-Mahdī, not so much due to a common platform. The fact that the new party contested 196 seats with 299 candidates[262] showed that, in many cases, the party was probably only united on paper and seats were contested by the original DUP candidates and the original PDP candidates. The strength of the DUP in the 1968 elections was probably primarily a result of the weakness of the ʾUmmah and not of the unity of the DUP. Nevertheless the lesson for the DUP was that they could win elections as long as they were unified as a party, which meant the party leadership would avoid any decisions that could potentially lead to a renewed splitting of the party. I will return to this point in the next section.

To conclude, the unionist parties were a number of loosely organised and institutionalised peer-groups, which all stood for some sort of union with Egypt and were all opposed to Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī. Because they boycotted the colonial institutions, they had no need to formalise their structures. The 1952 Free Officer's revolution in Egypt created a new situation in Sudan, in which the parties opposed to the British administration entered institutional politics for the first time. In preparation for the election, the various unionist parties came together to form the NUP. The unity of this group was very fragile from the beginning, as it was based on one specific issue. After Sudan declared independence under a unionist government, not only did the government act in contradiction to its own name, but also the question on which the party had previously unified was answered once and for all.

In consequence, it is hardly surprising that the NUP eventually broke into two parts –that they became "divided unionists." The two parties could never really establish a clear relationship and define relative strength however, as the period after the 1957 election was too brief. Once ʿAbd-Allāh Ḫalīl started to fear that ʾAzharī and ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī might find too many common interests, he handed over power to the army. In 1965 the PDP boycotted the election and by the time of the 1968 election the two parties had already reunited. As a result, the two factions never really clearly defined their differences when they had broken apart and

262 Tim Niblock, *Class and Power* (Basingstoke, 1987), p. 230.

never discussed their common ground before they merged. The NUP had formed in opposition to Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī, and in parallel the DUP formed in deference to the voting system and as an opposition to Ṣādiq al-Mahdī.

The institutional history as discussed in this section builds the basis for the unionist nation stories as discussed in the fifth chapter and it constitutes the context in which the unionists related to the independence bloc. In the following section I discuss the parallel developments in the independence bloc and will then analyse the framework of the big two as a whole.

A Family Affair

When in 1942 the Graduates' Congress confronted the British administration with its memorandum and in return the administration rebuked the demands of Congress, while ensuring verbally that the administration was thinking about forms of closer association of the Sudanese with the governance of Sudan, Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī sided with the moderates who were ready to work within the constitutional framework. When the Advisory Council was established in 1943 Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān gave his support to the organisation and encouraged the members of his coterie to participate fully. At the same time the so-called moderate forces increasingly lost influence in Congress.

As a reaction to this weakening position, a number of young ʾAnṣār from the youth wing, the *šabāb*, in early 1945 began to deliberate about the creation of a political party. According to ʿAbd-al-Salām, Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān gave his blessing to this, but at first took no direct influence. ʿAbd-Allāh ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān Nuqd-Allāh was tasked by the group to act as an intermediary between them and the Sayyid and to keep the Sayyid informed about all decisions. Eventually Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān instructed the šabāb to coordinate their efforts with the ʾAnṣār members of the Advisory Council, who used to meet at Muḥammad ʿAlī Šawqī's

house. At first the young men were reluctant, as they were afraid to enlarge the existing rift with Congress, but eventually the two groups joined forces.[263]

Nuqd-Allāh recalled in an interview, that one day they met with Sheikh ʾAḥmad ʿUṯmān al-Qādī, Yaqūb al-Hilū and Sheikh Sūrur Ramlī and eventually the only disagreement was on the name. The young men preferred *The Sudan Congress*, which showed that they understood that the party was going to be in direct competition with the Graduates' Congress. However eventually the group around al-Qādī was able to convince Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān to name the party *Ḥizb al-ʾUmmah*, a name that had a clear religious connotation.[264] Al-Qādī remembered in an interview that they founded the party, because they believed that:

> "the time had come for the responsible indigenous Sudanese opinion to organize itself and make the real wishes of the vast majority of the Sudanese known to the world, so that the foolish and irresponsible clamour of a minority that had been won over by propaganda from outside the Sudan should not be taken as an expression of genuine Sudanese feeling, and exploited as such by Egypt."[265]

ʿAbd-Allāh Ḫalīl, a respected retired army officer, was chosen as secretary general of the new party. The presidency remained vacant, with the general understanding that Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān was the undeclared president.[266] In the following years, in continuation of this inter-linkage, politics were decided and executed within the triangle of first, Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī, his family and his family foundation, the *Dāʾira al-Mahdī*, second, the ʾAnṣār and its leadership, and third, the ʾUmmah Party and its leadership. It was not at all times clear where the borders were between these three corners of the independence bloc. For example, after the Ṣidqī–Bevin protocol, the ʾUmmah Party and its press organs objected and called for resistance: The ʾAnṣār went onto the streets to

263 El Fatih Abdullahi Abdel Salam, 'The Umma Party 1945 – 1969' (Univ. of Khartoum M.Sc. Thesis, 1979), pp. 91-2.

264 Ibid., p. 92. This is also in line with statements by Nuqd-Allāh in another interview. ʿAbd-Allāh Nuqd-Allāh, *Oral History Interview* (no date and place), according to: Maʿhad al-Dirāsāt al-ʾAfrīqiyah wa al-ʾAsiyūiya, Ǧāmiʿah al-Ḫarṭūm, *Muqābilāt Ruwād al-Ḥarakah al-Waṭaniyah* (Khartoum 1985), Vol. 3, p. 253.

265 Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim, *Sayyid ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī* (Leiden, 2004), p. 167.

266 El Fatih Abdullahi Abdel Salam, 'The Umma Party' (Univ. of Khartoum M.Sc. Thesis, 1979), p. 93.

protest violently under the leadership of Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān's son al-Ṣiddīq al-Mahdī. The sayyid himself travelled together with ʿAbd-Allāh Ḫalīl, Muḥammad ʿAlī Šawqī and Muḥammad al-Ḫalīfah Šarīf –the first being the secretary general of the ʾUmmah, the latter two being key members of the ʾAnṣār– to London to personally express his grievances to the British government.[267]

It was exactly this interconnectedness of the ʾUmmah, the ʾAnṣār and the Mahdī family that caused criticism and that made both the unionists and the British believe that Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān was seeking to establish a monarchy in Sudan with himself as king. In an article published in the unionist paper *Ṣawt al-Sūdān* Yaḥyā al-Faḍlī asked "In Whose Interest Are These Men Working?" In the article he accused the ʾUmmah leaders of being "instruments to secure a crown for Sayyid ʿAbd al-Raḥmān as a puppet King under the British."[268] Even Ḥasan ʾAḥmad ʾIbrāhīm, who himself said that he admired the work of Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān greatly, assumed that the Sayyid was attempting to become king.[269]

The influence of the ʾAnṣār and Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī on the ʾUmmah Party and the Sayyid's wish to gain the Sudanese crown started to worry the British. Additionally the ʾUmmah began to take a more confrontational stance. In late 1950 the ʾUmmah tabled a motion in the Legislative Assembly asking for self-government. Possibly at the instigation of the colonial authorities Yūsif al-ʾAgāb, a tribal leader from Dindar, tabled a counter motion, praising the British for the progress achieved in regard to self-government.[270] In the aftermath of this event, a new party formed, the *Socialist Republican Party* (SRP), which unified groups which were critical of the ʾAnṣār and supportive of Britain. Many of the members were traditional tribal leaders, like Yūsif al-ʾAgāb, Babū Nimir and Muḥammad Ḥāmid ʾAbū Sin.

267 Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim, *Sayyid ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 182-7.
268 Ibid., p. 171.
269 Ibid., pp. 165 & 204-5.
270 El Fatih Abdullahi Abdel Salam, 'The Umma Party' (Univ. of Khartoum M.Sc. Thesis, 1979), pp. 217-20.

The SRP was many things to many people. Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān believed that it was a British creation, directed against him and his interests. Some British believed it was a true opportunity to overcome religious influences on Sudanese politics. Other British thought the party had good chances, due to support by traditional local leaders.[271] ʿAbd-al-Salām pointed out the irony of the situation – the founders of the party were neither socialist, nor republican in attitude. That was most certainly true for some members; on the other hand Husayn Ḏū-al-Faqār Ṣabrī's discussions with ʾIbrāhīm Badrī reveal that at least some members of the party were very sincere about their beliefs.[272]

The party eventually failed in the elections of 1953 and by 1954 had basically disappeared; but for what it was worth, its appearance demonstrated a first crack in the unity of the ʾUmmah. The second such crack, which ʿAbd-al-Salām discussed in detail,[273] was the attempt between 1956 and 58 by some members of the Ḫalīfah ʿAbd-Allāhi family to regain influence in politics. The conflict over the leadership of the ʾAnṣār between the family of the Mahdī and the Ḫalīfah, and later his descendants, reached back into the late 19th century, but it took on a new, institutionalised form in the 1950s.

Muḥammad Dāwūd al-Ḫalīfah, one of the leaders of the new party, explained in an interview that they were opposed to the direction and leadership of the ʾUmmah. Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān did not rely primarily on members of distinguished ʾAnṣārī families. Instead he brought in "intellectuals from all shades of life", such as Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-Šinqaytī and ʿAbd-Allāh Ḫalīl. Seen from Muḥammad Dāwūd's perspective, these men were "intruders."[274] There was additionally a regional element to the new party, which I will mention later when returning to Dār-Furī politics. The important point to take away here is the

271 Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim, *Sayyid ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī* (Leiden, 2004), p. 210.

272 Hussein Zulfakar Sabry, *Sovereignty for Sudan* (London, 1982), pp. 118-20.
For a good overview of the emergence and role of the SRP, also see: Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk, 'The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan: From Collaboration Mechanism to Party Politics, 1898-1956', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (June 2010), pp. 218-27.

273 El Fatih Abdullahi Abdel Salam, 'The Umma Party' (Univ. of Khartoum M.Sc. Thesis, 1979), pp. 226-33.

274 Ibid., p. 229.

division, based on the question, where authority comes from and who should be allowed to rule. The party disappeared soon after, mainly because its members were branded as traitors to the ʾAnṣār for breaking their oath of allegiance to Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān, the religious leader of the movement.[275]

Even though the religious movement and the party were highly unified and centred on Khartoum, the campaign in the 1953 elections was weak and in many electoral districts the ʾUmmah was running with multiple candidates, thus reducing its own chances of success. The party briefly contemplated withdrawal from parliament, but in the end remained nevertheless. From 1954 to about mid 1955, it was the ʾAnṣār who occupied the political centre stage, not the party. The most important events were violent demonstrations during the visit of General ʿAlī Muḥammad Naǧīb and, later, a show of force during a visit of ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī to Kurdufān and Dār-Fur.

In late 1955, as mentioned above, the two sayyids met to curb ʾAzharī's power, but at first they failed. The ʾUmmah then supported ʾAzharī's move to declare independence in parliament and from early 1956 the party participated in a national government. In the middle of 1956, when the NUP fell apart, the ʾUmmah formed a coalition with the PDP and led the government under the leadership of the new Prime Minister ʿAbd-Allāh Ǧalīl. At last Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān had succeeded in his aims: Sudan had gained her independence and the ʾUmmah was leading the country. The success of his politics relied on one hand on the intellectuals and "intruders" of the ʾUmmah, and on the other on the constant potential of the ʾAnṣār to stage protests. Until Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān's death, one could characterise the structure of his movement as being divided into two main parts: the "brain" of the ʾUmmah and the "brawn" of the ʾAnṣār, both united under the patronage of the sayyid.

As many troubles as the Ǧalīl government struggled with, the instability of the government was not caused by internal problems of the ʾUmmah, but by the PDP and differences between the two parties. The first substantial rift within the

275 Ibid., p. 232.

ʾUmmah Party itself surrounded the coup of ʾIbrāhīm ʿAbbūd. Many details of the events of 17 November 1958 remain unclear, but we know for sure that this was not a coup of ʿAbbūd against Ḫalīl. In later statements, Ḫalīl explained to William Cole, a Counsellor at the American embassy, that he was the "guiding spirit (of the) November 17 coup (…) he and army officers decided on coup because (the) regime (was) ineffectual and (the) country (was) succumbing to subversive efforts (of the) Egyptians aided by Communists. British-type democracy which may work well in England proved unsuited (for the) needs (of) Sudan."[276] In a discussion with ambassador James Moose he expanded: "Drastic action was required to eliminate obstructionism any venality of Parliament and irresponsibility of press to enable government actually to govern."[277]

The question, which remains, is what was the role of Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān and his family?[278] ʿAbbūd told the *Committee of Inquiry behind the Reasons of the November Coup* that two months before the coup he had a meeting with Ḫalīl and ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān's son al-Ṣiddīq al-Mahdī among others, who discussed the volatile political situation in Sudan. Supposedly one possible solution discussed, was to appoint a Minister of Defence from the army. However the meeting ended "after much deliberations" but without "concrete results."[279] Ṣiddīq himself wrote that they had met more than once to discuss a potential army intervention, which was however eventually discarded as impractical, he said, and they agreed to keep the army out of politics.[280] After this Ṣiddīq left for Switzerland for medical reasons and Ḫalīl started to take to the idea of a military coup. According to one

276 NARA, 745W.00/6-1259 (American Embassy Khartoum, Cable 1760 to Department of State, 12 June 1959).

277 NARA, 745W.02/7-3159 (American Embassy Khartoum, Cable 110 to Department of State, 31 July 1959).

278 One alternative version of these events, which is often referred to by the ʾUmmah, is that Ḫalīl handed over power because he was afraid that Ṣiddīq had agreed on a new government with ʾAzharī, in which Ḫalīl was to be excluded. The other version is however much better supported by the sources and therefore this version must be seen as an attempt to exonerate Ṣiddīq and with him the Mahdī clan.

ʿAbd-Allāhi Muḥammad ʾAḥmad, *Personal Interview* (Omdurman, 15 January 2011).

Al-Ṣādiq Al-Mahdī, *Personal Interview* (Omdurman, 20 January 2011).

279 El Fatih Abdullahi Abdel Salam, 'The Umma Party' (Univ. of Khartoum M.Sc. Thesis, 1979), pp. 133-4.

280 Al-Ṣiddīq al-Mahdī, *Ǧihād fī Sabīl al-Dimuqrāṭiyah* (Omdurman, 1965), p. 30.

of my interviewees, Ṣiddīq expressed his discontent with the coup after his return.[281]

Nevertheless after the coup Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān supported the action of the army, calling on the Sudanese: "Rejoice at this blessed revolution and go to your work calmly and contentedly, to support the men of the Sudanese revolution."[282] All the sources seem to indicate that the coup was indeed masterminded by Ḫalīl and executed by ʿAbbūd without previous support by the Sayyid or Ṣiddīq, however after the coup they chose the path of least resistance and attempted to arrange themselves with the new leaders. Politics were now taken up by the newly created *Supreme Council of the Armed Forces* (SCAF). Opposition to the SCAF from the side of the ʾUmmah only began after Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān's death and Ṣiddīq's ascent as new ʾimām of the ʾAnṣār.

The ʿAbbūd period and the resistance against him will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, but I will touch upon some elements, which are relevant to the developments within the ʾUmmah now. The resistance against ʿAbbūd was organised in a broad coalition of political parties called the *National Front*. One of the most important leaders of the Front was al-Ṣiddīq al-Mahdī. Ṣiddīq was now the ʾUmmah Party president and the ʾimām of the ʾAnṣār. For a while it seemed that he would be able to retain the unity of the movement established under his father, but the period of Ṣiddīq's leadership turned out to be only an interlude when he died only two years after his father on 8 October 1961.

Ṣiddīq's death threw the ʾUmmah and the ʾAnṣār into a long crisis. Ṣiddīq's oldest son al-Ṣādiq al-Mahdī was a mere 25 years old when his father died. Many people at the time believed, that he should have become the next ʾImām, but it was Ṣiddīq's brother al-Hādī al-Mahdī –later generally known as ʾImām al-Hādī– who was declared the new leader of the sect. Ṣiddīq had chosen a trusteeship council to run political and religious affairs after his death. According to ʿAbd-Allāh Nuqd-Allāh, the chairman of the council ʿAbd-Allāhi al-Fāḍil unilaterally chose al-Hādī

281 ʿAbd-Allāhi Muḥammad ʾAḥmad, *Personal Interview* (Omdurman, 15 January 2011).
282 Tim Niblock, *Class and Power* (Basingstoke, 1987), p. 219.

as the new ʾimām, because he believed that this would be to his advantage because al-Hādī was his son-in-law.[283] As ʿAbd-al-Salām pointed out, Ṣādiq never placed this issue in the centre of his struggle, but nevertheless it positioned the two men against each other.[284]

After Ṣiddīq's death the members of the National Front met with ʾImām al-Hādī and they agreed to continue the same lines of resistance. The ʾimām was supposed to give an address on occasion of the sixth anniversary of Sudanese independence. A committee wrote the speech, but when the day came, ʾImām al-Hādī changed the text and, as with his very first public announcement, he tried to appease the military rulers.[285] This event became known as the "Independence incident" and according to ʿAbd-al-Salām "helped to crystalize the dichotomy between Saddig and Imam El Hadi, and although the rift between the two remained acquiescent and behind the scenes, yet it smouldered underneath."[286]

From early 1962 onwards there were a number of attempts to broker a lasting reconciliation. A meeting presided by the ʾimām initiated a supreme council to manage the affairs of the ʾAnṣār. The council was composed of 17 members of important ʾAnṣārī families and chaired by the ʾimām, but soon after its first meeting in September 1962 the ʾimām decided to dissolve the council unilaterally and was unwilling to discuss his decision.[287] In the following two years Ṣādiq dedicated himself towards organising the ʾUmmah Party and the political programme, while ʾImām al-Hādī seemingly stayed aloof from politics. In a large

283 El Fatih Abdullahi Abdel Salam, 'The Umma Party' (Univ. of Khartoum M.Sc. Thesis, 1979), pp. 233-5.
Andrew Vincent disagreed with this view and argued that the decision was mainly due to Ṣādiq's youth. It is well possible, that both aspects played a role. Andrew Vincent, 'Religion and nationalism in a traditional society: Ideology, leadership and the role of the Umma Party as a force for social change in the northern Sudan', (Univ. of Pennsylvania Ph.D. thesis, 1988)., p. 147.

284 El Fatih Abdullahi Abdel Salam, 'The Umma Party' (Univ. of Khartoum M.Sc. Thesis, 1979), p. 234.

285 Ibid., pp. 139 & 235.

286 Ibid., p. 236.

287 Ibid., pp. 236-8.

meeting on ʾĀbā Island, Ṣādiq hammered out the ʾĀbā Declaration, a fourteen point protocol discussing a Sudan post-military rule.[288]

In this declaration which was signed by most ʾUmmah and ʾAnṣār notables in Khartoum on 26 September 1964, Ṣādiq attempted to modernise and "secularise" the ʾUmmah. Primarily the declaration sought to establish a perspective on politics which was neither guided by tribal, nor ṭarīqah affiliation. It also included some "progressive"[289] points, such as a call for nationalisation of banks and insurances and the sudanisation of foreign trade and most industries. Parts of the ʾĀbā Declaration were directed towards all Sudanese political parties, but were afterwards rejected by them.[290] In late September and early October some ʾAnṣār dignitaries attempted to push the ʾimām to agree to a division of the religious and the political leadership, which he however rejected off hand.[291]

Only few days later a popular uprising broke out against the military. Again the two men disagreed; Ṣādiq openly supporting the events and the ʾimām taking a more cautious approach. With the military out of the way, Ṣādiq threw himself full force into the modernisation and restructuring of the ʾUmmah. During a large party conference in November Ṣādiq was elected as president, ʿAbd-Allāh Nuqd-Allāh became secretary general and many members of the newly elected politburo were staunch supporters of Ṣādiq. Some groups were not happy with the new course and grouped themselves around ʾImām al-Hādī, including some who had cooperated with the ʿAbbūd regime, some who had failed to be elected into the politburo including important members of the al-Ḫalīfah family and Muḥammad ʾAḥmad Maḥǧūb, and some conservative forces, who viewed Ṣādiq as a communist. With this support the ʾimām confronted Ṣādiq and, in a subsequent agreement, the position of the ʾUmmah Party patron was institutionalised through which the ʾimām had the final say in most party affairs.

288 Ibid., pp. 238-240.

289 I use the term progressive as denoting reform oriented tendencies, which within one party are considered as left-leaning compared to the rest of the party. In a discussion Ṣādiq referred to his policy at the time a "radical." Al-Ṣādiq Al-Mahdī, *Personal Interview* (Omdurman, 20 January 2011).

290 El Fatih Abdullahi Abdel Salam, 'The Umma Party' (Univ. of Khartoum M.Sc. Thesis, 1979), pp. 238-240 & 242.

291 Ibid., pp. 240-1.

Additionally he nominated his father-in-law ʿAbd-Allāhi al-Fāḍil as deputy patron. The politburo was changed and the party programme was adapted.[292]

After the 1965 elections, which the ʾUmmah won, the ʾimām chose Muḥammad ʾAḥmad Maḥğūb to become the new prime minister. Not everyone in the party was happy with this choice. A number of unilateral decisions, which Maḥğūb did not discuss with the party politburo, resulted in first calls for his removal, already in 1965. By 1966 the frustration with Maḥğūb had even reached al-Hādī's wing of the party. Maḥğūb reacted by launching the slogan that "the downfall of Mahgoub is the downfall of the Imam."[293] At the same time the ʾimām started to make more and more use of his powers as patron of the party. In July 1966 ʾAzharī, who also had quarrelled with Maḥğūb and whose NUP had been the ʾUmmah's coalition party, withdrew his confidence from the prime minister. As a consequence Maḥğūb was removed and Ṣādiq was elected in his stead. In 1956 the ʾUmmah had catalysed the breaking apart of the NUP by forming a coalition with the PDP. In a similar fashion ʾAzharī now used the "coalition weapon" to break apart the ʾUmmah.[294]

Once elected, Ṣādiq started a relatively progressive programme, which alienated some of the more traditional members at the base of the ʾUmmah Party. For example, his attempt to restructure agriculture was opposed by the owners of pump schemes –usually dignitaries who had used British support to build these pump schemes in the first place. In a similar fashion, his attempt to talk to the workers unions and to broaden his political support by talking to regional movements, strengthened the conviction of some ʾUmmah members that Ṣādiq was influenced by the communists. As a reaction to Ṣādiq's new approach, the ʾimām declared in an address, that Ṣādiq's wing were dissidents who questioned the union of religion and state –dīn wa dunya– in mahdīsm.[295] Ṣādiq remembered his situation at the time:

292 Ibid., pp. 242-7.
293 Ibid., p. 251.
294 Ibid., pp. 248-57.
295 Ibid., pp. 257-61.

> "When I became prime minister in 1966 my radical and new ideas created a lot of shock amongst the political parties. First of all there was my uncle and there was ʾAzharī and they seemed to think that I was making them irrelevant because I led a kind of new politics which they were very unfamiliar with and this made them very unhappy and uneasy. And they were creating parliamentary problems for me as prime minister. I thought that I should challenge them and I did challenge them. I was then allied with some independents, William Deng, some southerners, Turābī and his faction, some Beja groups. I was then able to acquire support outside my party from other quarters. But I was aware that ʾAzharī and my uncle were unhappy, very unhappy with this radical administration of politics and they were conspiring to overthrow me."[296]

In May 1967 Ṣādiq lost a vote of confidence and once again the ʾimām's wing of the ʾUmmah came to power and Muḥammad ʾAḥmad Maḥğūb became prime minister again. Ṣādiq, on the other hand, became the leader of the opposition. The conflict between the two party wings became so pronounced that in July, during a rally where Ṣādiq and his right-hand man Nuqd-Allāh spoke, ʾAnṣārī militias attacked the gathering and Nuqd-Allāh suffered a head wound. Two days later Ṣādiq made a "Proclamation on Faith and Politics," in which he questioned Hādī's right to the imamate due to his –as Ṣādiq saw it– lack of competence, which he argued was the primary prerequisite to be ʾImām of the ʾAnṣār.[297] In the proclamation he argued:

> "Some persons are mutilating our Mahdist faith by claiming imaginary spiritual sanctity which had no existence after the pass(ing) of Abdel Rahman, the truthful, the seal of all Mahdist Imams. The baraka (charisma) status which they lay claim to has no existence in our faith. They use that to intimidate the Ansar to ensure their lasting allegiance. There is no room for intimidation in our tradition, Imam Abdel Rahman named his bi'a as bi'a't al Rida (oath of allegiance by consent)."[298]

The resulting division went so deep, that supporters of Ṣādiq were regarded by more conservative members of the ʾAnṣār as satans (shaytān). Nevertheless, there were attempts to negotiate a re-unification of the two wings, but ʾImām al-Hādī demanded, among other things, that the position of party president was to be abolished and that he should have the right to cleanse the party of all members

296 Al-Ṣādiq Al-Mahdī, *Personal Interview* (Omdurman, 20 January 2011).

297 El Fatih Abdullahi Abdel Salam, 'The Umma Party' (Univ. of Khartoum M.Sc. Thesis, 1979), pp. 261-5.

298 Translation according to: Ibid., p. 265.

who insulted the imamate. When this attempt at reconciliation failed, the ʾimām unilaterally implemented various changes to the constitution and structure of the party, which resulted in the institutional division of the ʾUmmah into two parties – previously only the parliamentary group had been divided into two, but the party itself had technically remained intact. In consequence, when early elections were called for in 1968 the ʾUmmah participated as two distinct parties.[299]

From the perspective of the ʾUmmah, the elections ended up being primarily a fight between one wing and the other. Muḥammad Dāwūd al-Ḫalīfah, who was at the time in the ʾimām's wing, said about the elections that their primary aim was to beat the leadership of Ṣādiq's wing, so that the deputies of Ṣādiq's wing would go into parliament like "a body without a head."[300] Overall, the inner ʾUmmah competition proved negative for both wings. While the party had had over forty per cent of the seats in the 1965 elections, all ʾUmmah groups –members who ran as ʾUmmah-ʾImām, ʾUmmah-Ṣādiq and ʾUmmah– won only a third of the seats in the 1968 elections. Ṣādiq's wing won more seats than the ʾimām's wing, but the ʾimām's strategy to beat Ṣādiq's leadership was successful and even Ṣādiq himself lost his seat.[301]

Only after this wake-up call did the two sides attempt a reconciliation and began discussing reunification in late 1968. In April 1969, after long and complicated negotiations, the ʾUmmah Party announced that their rift was healed and celebrated their unity. It is unclear however, how genuine that rapprochement indeed was, as only one month later another military coup, this time by Ǧaʿfar Muḥammad al-Numayrī, ended party politics.[302]

The ʾUmmah Party was a result of three different processes and purposes. Firstly it was the institutional arm of Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī, aimed at implementing his political vision. Secondly, it was an attempt by younger members of ʾAnṣār families to counteract the ʾAšiqqāʾ influence in the Graduates'

299 Ibid., pp. 261-72.
300 Ibid., p. 273.
301 Ibid., pp. 273-8.
302 Ibid., pp. 279-81.

Congress and lastly it was an attempt to unify ʾAnṣār and non-ʾAnṣār forces against Egypt and later pan-arabism.[303] Nevertheless, the ʾAnṣār and especially the Mahdī clan had dominant control in the ʾUmmah.

Therefore the tradition of the ʾAnṣār as a political movement was consequential for the ʾUmmah. The revolutionary aspect of the Mahdī's movement, the regional element of the Ḫalīfah's period and the reactionary protection of the interest of ʾAnṣār notables in the neo-mahdīst renaissance of Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī, were all relevant to the structure and politics of the ʾUmmah Party. Each of these positions could become influential if represented by members of the Mahdī clan. Outsiders, even if at times in important positions, such as ʿAbd-Allāh Ḫalīl and Muḥammad ʾAḥmad Maḥǧūb, were dependent on patronage from the inner circle and even during the attempted reforms of Ṣādiq, the ʾUmmah in essence remained "a family affair."

Nevertheless, the differences between the different family members were primarily about substantive issues and only secondarily personal. The various substantive issues pointed towards differing understandings of the nation, which I will return to in the next section and again in the fifth chapter. Similarly to the DUP, the ʾUmmah recognised the strategic importance of a unified party without being able to find a common party line on key issues. I will return to this point in the next section.

Sovereignty & Legitimacy

In the following section I will look at "the big two," the two Sudanese people's parties, from an analytical perspective and discuss what divided and/or unified them, both between the two parties as well as internally. These rifts and cleavages

303 The ʾUmmah was opposed to political pan-arabism as represented by nāṣirist Egypt. Nevertheless they did support the suggestion that Sudan was an Arab nation and they were in favour of Islamic unity.

are one aspect of the differentiation or fragmentation of the Sudanese political systems and they reflect on the questions of Sudanese identity and the Sudanese nation.

When looking at Sudanese history and politics, there has been a tendency to analyse the structures through the prism of dichotomies. In the early 20th century the British had occupied Sudan as a reaction to a religious uprising and, in consequence, they paid great attention to the religious movements in the country. They indeed paid so much attention to the religious movements, that they did not pay much attention to anything else for most of the existence of the condominium. Whenever they did notice groups outside the religious spectrum, first as result of the White Flag League, later thanks to the Graduates' Congress, these groups were seen as a nuisance or necessity, but not as potential partners.[304]

The religious spectrum itself was dominated by two groups with their two respective leaders. The two sayyids as they were often referred to –Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī or SAR as members of the Sudan Political Service would often call him, and Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī or SAM– were seen as forever divided poles of a spectrum. In point of fact, the Ḫatmī leaders had decided not to recognise Muḥammad ʾAḥmad as the Mahdī and in return he had declared them to be collaborators with the foreign occupiers. As result the Mīrġanī clan went into exile in Egypt and only returned with the British forces. In the meantime the ʾAnṣār ransacked Ḫatmī mosques and places of pilgrimage.

The second duality was a result of the occupation or re-occupation of Sudan and her resulting status as condominium. The two colonial powers, or co-domini, were soon after pitted against each other. At first they were trying to strengthen their interests by working together with specific Sudanese groups on the ground. But the 1952 revolution in Cairo changed that situation dramatically. Now for the first time, thwarting the other co-domini became the primary interest for both sides. Ǧamāl ʿAbd-al-Nāṣir wanted a Sudan free of British troops or involvement. The

304 This was demonstrated by the events both in 1924 and 1946, when both times the British missed the opportunity to work with the intellectual elite instead of the religious leaders.

British wanted an Arab world as free of nāṣirist governments as possible. As a result, the Sudanese gained their independence.

However, the Sudanese gained their independence under a divided nationalist movement –a nationalist movement which followed the two other divisions, the two sayyids and the two co-domini. On one side, aligned with Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī and Egypt were the unionists of the NUP, and on the other side, aligned with Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī and Britain was the independence bloc or the ʾUmmah. In consequence Sudan was analysed or characterised as a two-party-system. In fact between 1954 and 1956, with some creativity and ignoring the South, one can identify such a two-party-system. The two parties were however temporary coalitions. Ṣādiq Al-Mahdī described the parties:

> "Both formed a political party, which is like a front, with a graduates' contingency, with a religious contingency and a tribal contingency. So you got two major parties in the country which are really themselves formed by coalitions in the party because there was a graduate's wing, there was a religious organisation, there were also affiliations by tribal groupings. "[305]

In mid-1956 however Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī and his followers broke away from the NUP and formed a new party, the PDP. The PDP formed a new government together with the ʾUmmah –a government known in Sudan as *al-Ḥukūmah al-Sayyidayn*, the government of the two sayyids. In this new arrangement, neither were there only two parties, nor was every party affiliated with a Ṣūfī ṭarīqah. Nevertheless Sudan was characterised as a two party system, dominated by religious movements –or to use the term preferred by the British, dominated by a "sectarian" divide. The fact that a Ṣūfī dominated, two party, independent Sudan existed merely for six months did not stop this perspective from gaining a dominant place in political analysis.[306] I argue that the two elements, that is sectarian domination and the two-party character, although both gross over-simplifications, reinforce each other as analytical perspectives.

---

305 Al-Ṣādiq Al-Mahdī, *Personal Interview* (Omdurman, 20 January 2011).

306 To refer to just one prominent example: Gabriel R. Warburg, *Islam Nationalism and Communism in a Traditional Society* (London, 1978), p. 88.

There are four reasons why this interpretation of Sudanese politics was so renitent. Firstly, because of the perspective of the British Sudan Political Service and their impact on the research literature; secondly, for theoretical reasons in a "first past the post system" of elections, one expects a two party dominance to emerge; thirdly, because the religious domination of the political scene coincides with orientalist notions and pre-conceived ideas; and fourthly, because one tends to think in dichotomies and dualities –good versus evil, liberal versus conservative, capitalism versus communism, red versus blue, etc.– and when one is allowed to do so, this is strangely comforting. I will elaborate on the first two points.

The British members of the Sudan Political Service observing Sudanese politics were biased in favour of a particular perspective. The Sudan was occupied in reaction to an uprising led by a religious movement. The SPS was biased by their education, the society they came from and the time they lived in, to regard Sudan with an orientalist perception. When it came to party politics, two party systems seem to have a nearly God-given quality in the British society. The fact that until mid-1956 there actually was, at least on a superficial level, some sort of unstable two-party domination meant that the observed reality corresponded to expectations. It is no surprise that the resulting analysis was in accordance with this.

The views held by the members of the Sudan Political Service found their way into the early academic literature on Sudan in three ways. Firstly the literature was based on documents by these men and few women,[307] secondly the literature relied heavily on interviews with former members of the Sudan Political Service and thirdly a good number of former SPS members continued into academia or wrote books on Sudan in other capacities.[308] Thus the views, perspectives and

307 To the best of my knowledge the SPS itself was completely male, but nevertheless a small number of British women played a relevant role in Sudan, especially in the field of education. A prominent example was Lady Margery Freda Perham, who later became a founding fellow of Nuffield College in Oxford.

308 Some examples are the previously mentioned:
J.S.R. Duncan, *The Sudan's Path to Independence* (California, 1957).
K.D.D. Henderson, *Sudan Republic* (New York, 1965).

opinions about Sudan held by the members of the colonial administration had a dominant impact on the early academic analysis. The British and, more importantly, colonial story of Sudanese politics became the dominant story, or to use Adichie's term,[309] the single story, about Sudanese politics.[310]

The second aspect as to why this became such a dominant view, is the theoretical expectation.[311] Sudan has a so-called *first-past-the-post* voting system (FPTP).[312] In every electoral district only one candidate was elected to parliament as the candidate with a simple majority won the seat. In a FPTP system social groups are expected to form large alliances to compete successfully in elections, because it is to their advantage. For example, if there would be two left-wing candidates each winning 30% and one right-wing candidate winning 40%, the right-wing candidate will win the seat, even though the political left has a clear majority over all their candidates. Therefore, after a series of electoral defeats, theoretically it is to be expected that the left-wing parties will merge and nominate only one candidate per district.

According to the theory FPTP systems eventually become relatively stable two-party systems in which the two parties are both approximately the same size. The United States and Britain are the classical examples for such a case. Since Sudan has a FPTP system, the theory tells us to expect a two-party system which breaks down along a single dichotomy, or a set of relatively broad and overlapping dichotomies. Now, looking at the 1953 election, one could understand

309 Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, 'The danger of a single story', *TED Global 2009*.

310 This single story could have broken to a certain degree by early Sudanese authors such a Muḥammad ʿUmar Bašīr. However being themselves products of the colonial education, they often failed to break the colonial knowledge constructions. Accordingly Bašīr argued that the major political parties were dominated by "the two religious sects". The use of the term sects is revealing, as it mirrors the British perception of religion in Sudan. Mohamed Omer Beshir, *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan* (London, 1974), pp. 202-3.

311 E.g.: F.M. Hayward (ed.), *Elections in Independent Africa* (Boulder, 1987).
S.I. Lindberg, *Democracy and Elections in Africa* (Baltimore, 2006).
J. Daniel, R. Southall and M. Szeftel (eds.), *Voting for democracy* (Fernham, 1998).

312 Sudan primarily had a FPTP system, not because it was particularly suitable for the country, but, as Woordward pointed out, because the system was modelled on the British parliament. The shortcomings of the system, which he argued were already apparent before independence, were accordingly overlooked. Peter Woodward, 'Sudan's Fragile State, 1956–1989', in: John Ryle, Justin Willis, Suliman Baldo and Jok Madut Jok (eds.), *The Sudan Handbook* (London 2012) p. 150.

the results within this framework –especially if one categorises independents, the southern party and the communists, as exceptions to the rule. Therefore one can come to the conclusion that the model of "the big two" is accurate.

The problem is, the model of the big two is a gross simplification. Voting system theory tells us that such effects of the voting systems are only to be expected after a series of elections[313] and Sudan never achieved an uninterrupted series. There are three separate indicators that the big two in the 1953 election were predominately a temporary figment and not a result of FPTP: firstly, the existence and impact of the ideological parties, which I will focus on in the next chapter; secondly, the massive role and even parliamentary representation of the regional parties discussed later; and thirdly, the fact that the two people's parties themselves were much more divided than the model suggested.[314] Therefore, in the remainder of this chapter, I will look at the various issues which define the cleavages both between and within the ʾUmmah and the NUP.

There are four questions which were most relevant to define the cleavages of the Sudanese people's parties in the 50s and 60s. The first question had to do with a general foreign policy outlook, alignment and issues of sovereignty; the second question revolved around the structure of the state, being either presidential or parliamentary; the third question was about the role of religion in politics and connected to this the issue of legitimacy; and the fourth question covered the classical left-wing, right-wing issues of economical and social policies. These cleavages pointed towards different and often contradictory nation stories, but more importantly, as I will argue later, the differences within each of the two parties inhibited efforts to seek true compromises.

313 Daniel Cohen has dubbed the approach of treating each election as major political event in itself the "Nuffield approach," which he criticises as too narrow. He proposed to look at a series of elections within the context of the democratic system instead. D.L. Cohen, 'Elections and Elections Studies in Africa', in Y. Barongo (ed.) *Political Science in Africa* (London, 1983), pp. 76-79.

314 The opposite view has been argued by various authors, but maybe most prominently by Gabriel Warburg. Warburg insisted that "political power remained in the hands of the religious leadership" and that the view that the rise of the ʾAšiqqāʾ led to a decline in power for the two Sayyids was logical but "mistaken." Gabriel R. Warburg, *Islam Nationalism and Communism* (London, 1978), pp. 87-8. Similarly Warburg argued in his most recent book: Gabriel R. Warburg, *Islam, Sectarianism, and Politics* (London, 2003), p. 151.

The dogma in Sudanese foreign politics was *positive neutrality* –from a linguistic perspective a rather strange term. All parties officially adhered to this policy, which meant that the *de facto* space to deviate in foreign policy was relatively limited. Nevertheless there were two large perspectives, which were a direct continuation of the unionist-independence bloc divide. The NUP had officially supported unity with Egypt and, even though it then carried Sudanese independence, it still favoured a strong relationship with Egypt and a friendly if distant relationship with Britain. ʾAzharī and the ʾAšiqqāʾ were inspired by the Congress in India and later nāṣirist ideas about Arab nationalism. ʾAzharī had attended the Bandung conference in Indonesia in 1955. In 1958 he travelled to Iraq to congratulate ʿAbd-al-Karīm Qāsim for his coup against King Fayṣal II.

The ʾUmmah on the other hand, had worked with the British and Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī admired the British monarchy.[315] Ḫalīl feared Nāṣir's policies of Arab nationalism, thinking Nāṣir would attempt to reoccupy Sudan. The ʾUmmah had a good relationship to the monarchies in Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia and Iraq. The Ḫalīl government sought a cooperation with the United States and believed that an active role of the United States in the Middle East was desirable, particularly as it could balance the influence of Egypt. When America applied the Eisenhower doctrine for the first time in practice by intervening militarily in Lebanon in July 1968, Prime Minister Ḫalīl, in an immediate reaction, supported the American intervention. UK Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd described this statement as stout at heart, however not completely wise.[316] After being strongly criticised for his support by other Sudanese and Arab politicians, Ḫalīl claimed that he had been misquoted.[317]

In line with this general perspective on foreign policy and alignment, when Ḫalīl took over power in 1956, he started to negotiate an aid agreement with the United

315 Ḥasan discussed the so-called sword incidence in some detail, after which, he argued, Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī felt "a linkage to the British monarchy." He even presented Queen Elizabeth with a diamond ring on her wedding. Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim, *Sayyid ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī* (Leiden, 2004), p. 204.

316 NARA, 745W.00/7-1858 (Department of State, Memorandum of Conversation, 18 July 1958).

317 NARA, 350-Sudan (American Embassy Khartoum, Memo to Department of State, 19 July 1958).

States. Ḫalīl believed that Sudan would only be truly independent if it were a strong country and only an economically developed country could be a strong country. To get there, Ḫalīl believed aid was a necessity and American aid was to him clearly preferable to Russian aid. The NUP –and with it to a great degree the PDP– believed that aid always had strings attached and therefore the aid agreement would encroach on Sudanese sovereignty. Their idea of sovereignty was inspired by the idea of the Non-Aligned Movement, for whom sovereignty was dependent on not being bound by treaties to the interests of superpowers.[318]

On the issue of foreign politics and sovereignty, the ʾUmmah and the NUP were relatively clearly divided and even when the two parties split, each wing stayed in line with previous policy. Although the PDP eventually agreed to the US aid agreement, it did so only after nearly shattering the coalition government over the issue. And on the ʾUmmah side, even Ṣādiq's supposedly communist-leaning wing continued the classical ʾUmmah foreign policy with its ʾĀbā declaration and other foreign politics decisions.

The second issue, which showed similar fault lines as the foreign policy and sovereignty question, was related to the structure of Sudan as a political system. When Sudan gained her independence, the state had an unusual structure. This was because it continued the condominium set-up, without rewriting the constitution. In the original condominium setup the final decision on most issues rested with the governor general. With consecutive steps towards self-government and, especially from 1954 onwards, the role of the governor general was reduced. From 1954 onwards most of the powers of the governor general were taken over, either by the new Sudanese-run government or by an international commission. After independence this role was taken over by the so-called Supreme Council of State; a council of five, which until mid-1965 had a rotating chairmanship.

318 This point has been made multiple times by members of parliament during parliamentary debates. For example Ḥasan ʿAbd-al-Qādir, a parliamentarian from al-ʾUbayyiḍ argued that "the Government internal and external policy did not aim at the maintenance of the independence of the country nor to secure the prosperity of the people. The government was throwing the country into the arms of a new imperialism." Republic of Sudan, House of Representatives, *Minutes of the Sudanese House of Representatives* (Sitting on 21 May 1958).

One of the issues which a new constitution was supposed to discuss was, whether the system should be continued as it was, if the system should become more parliamentary or if the system should become more presidential. The ʾUmmah Party had a clear position on this, already before independence. They clearly preferred a presidential system. Originally Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī had probably been hoping for some sort of monarchical arrangement. Once he had to give up this dream, the ʾUmmah backed a presidential model. Ṣādiq's wing of the ʾUmmah originally hoped to nominate Ṣādiq for president, but after the re-unification of the ʾUmmah, the party agreed that ʾImām al-Hādī would be the ʾUmmah candidate.

The NUP and the PDP opposed such a model, probably on two accounts. Firstly they were afraid of an ʾAnṣār presidency and secondly, their own structure lent itself more to a parliamentary system. The ʾAšiqqāʾ core of the NUP was basically a collective with ʾAzharī as nominal leader, but in theory seen as *primus inter pares*. The Ḫatmīyah core of the PDP had a clear leader in Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī, but with the Ḫatmī sheikh being officially and superficially absent from politics, a president would have been a competitor to the power of the Ḫatmī leader, instead of a direct addition.

Two other primary issues divided the ʾUmmah and the NUP within the parties. The more important issue was the role of religion and the role of the nobility of the ṭarīqahs in politics. The ʾAšiqqāʾ believed that they were qualified and deserved to govern Sudan, due to their education and political work and sacrifices. The Ḫatmī nobles in the PDP, on the other hand, believed that due to their position and the role of their families, they should be governing Sudan and that the ʾAšiqqāʾ were primitive demagogues who served a specific purpose whenever a bit of populism was useful. The PDP believed that their legitimisation came from Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī, whereas the NUP proclaimed the slogan "Lā qadāsah fi al-siyāsah!" or "No holiness in politics!". It is important to note that ʾAzharī among others was a quite religious person. ʾAzharī actually was the

descendant of the founder of the ʾIsmāʿīlīya ṭarīqah, but he never used that connection to bolster his religious or political credibility.[319]

The division within the ʾUmmah followed similar lines. The ʾimām's wing of the ʾUmmah supported the connection between religion and politics. ʾImām al-Hādī explicitly defended the link between "dīn wa dunya" or religion and state in mahdīst doctrine. Ṣādiq, on the other hand, argued against that connection. It is said that Ṣādiq's argument was not genuine, as he is today both the leader of the ʾAnṣār and jealously keeps control over the ʾUmmah, but I think that misses the point. There were a number of people in the Ṣādiq wing, probably including Nuqd-Allāh, who genuinely believed in a "secularisation" of the ʾUmmah Party in this period. It is important to point out, that "secular" in this case referred to the source of authority, not the content of politics. As discussed later, both Ṣādiq and ʾAzharī supported the idea of an Islamic constitution.[320]

These differences of legitimisation within the two parties can be read within the model of legitimacy, as proposed by Max Weber.[321] According to Weber there are three ways to achieve legitimacy in a political system; traditional, charismatic and rational-legal. While the young leaders such as Ṣādiq and the ʾAšiqqāʾ attempted to build a modern state based on rational-legal legitimacy, the two sayyids and later ʾImām al-Hādī believed that they had traditional legitimacy to rule. In this sense the Sudan might have had one nationalist movement, which was aiming at an independent state, because this was the only path to overcome British and Egyptian colonisation, but not the whole nationalist movement was actually aiming to create a "modern state".

A second division, which followed the same pattern, at least in the case of the ʾUmmah Party, was the left-right spectrum in regards to socio-economical questions. It is hard to see a large difference between the NUP and the PDP,

319 This might very well be different if one looks specifically at NUP campaign events in al-ʾUbayiḍ, where the ʾIsmāʿīlīya is based. But when it comes to national politics and debates in Khartoum, the affiliation to the ʾIsmāʿīlīya had no visible impact.

320 For different aspects, of "secular" and / or "islamist" politics, see: Panayiotis J. Vatikiotis, *Islam and the State* (London, 1987), pp. 28-9.

321 Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Tübingen, 1976), p. 124.

except maybe that the NUP was more popular in urban areas and therefore was more strongly connected to the worker unions than the PDP. The two parties were further left than the ʾUmmah of Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī. Again, this was more due to the ʾUmmah being supported by large scale land and pump scheme owners. Up to the 1960s, there was little disagreement over economic or social policies. This changed when Ṣādiq's wing of the ʾUmmah proposed economic reforms, which were clearly more progressive than anything the ʾimām's wing was ready to accept. These reforms also changed the economic structure and distribution more substantially than anything previously suggested or implemented by the NUP.

Where did this second face of the ʾUmmah come from? While Ṣādiq was young and Oxford educated, he was not the only politician who had studied abroad. In competition with his uncle, Ṣādiq needed to differentiate himself, but it seems improbable that he could have done so if the ideas would not somehow have been present in the party before his time. I can only offer a speculation here, but arguably the Mahdīyah essentially was a revolutionary movement, which created a conservative legacy. The Mahdīyah created a new establishment which was based on family ties and argued along religio-political lines, which were inherently reactionary, in the sense that they attempted to maintain this position of power and its underlying structure. However when the Mahdīyah originally appeared, it overthrew a foreign occupation, a previous economic structure and shook up the existing religio-political establishment. In a sense, while Ṣādiq always referenced his grandfather Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān as inspiration and role model, his politics were indeed a recourse to the revolutionary ideas of his great-grandfather, the Mahdī.

These differences within the two people's parties were eventually the breaking-lines along which they split into two factions. Nevertheless, as shown in the historical discussion on the people's parties in the previous two sections, both parties eventually re-united. The decision to re-unite was mostly a result of the electoral system, which favoured large blocs instead of more specialised small parties. That meant that both ʾUmmah and the NUP and later DUP were

interested in maintaining their large coalitions.[322] Any compromise with other parties on issues which divided the party itself could have potentially ruptured the party. This inherent instability meant that the parties were strongly inhibited from making any true compromises with others on substantive matters and were forced to content themselves with weaker, mainly strategic, temporary arrangements. As I will argue in the fifth chapter, this was one of the elements which prevented Sudanese politicians from overcoming the threat of nation failure.

While the Sudanese political groupings were structured and differentiated along the four axes outlined above, it is important to keep in mind that they also a lot in common. All of these politicians were clearly part of the Sudanese establishment. The absolute majority were native Arabic speakers and came from a small number of tribal groups which originally settled along the Nile and in the Ǧazīrah, the so-called ʾAwlād al-Balad. Most of these politicians had been educated in English schools in Sudan and later at Gordon College. And lastly, nearly all members of the establishment were Muslims. And if one focuses on the various generations, members of one generation, no matter their political or religious affiliations, had very similar experiences growing up.

Another level of division was added by what Bechtold, among many other observers, described as personal rivalries. The role of personal interest and rivalries has even been at the core of some writings including ʿAfāf ʾAbū Ḥasabū's excellent book on Factional Conflict[323] and of course Manṣūr Ḫālid's seminal *The Government They Deserve*.[324] There are however two constraints I want to put forward here: firstly, one should not forget that everywhere else in the world personal links and quarrels are equally important in politics and secondly, one should differentiate between individual conflicts and factional divisions between groups. For example, the struggle between the Ḫatmīyah and the ʾAnṣār

322 Woodward also argued this relationship between the electoral system and the dominance of the two large parties or alliances. Peter Woodward, 'Is the Sudan governable?', Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies), Vol. 13, No. 2 (1986), pp. 138-9.

323 Afaf Abdel Majid Abu Hasabu, *Factional Conflict* (London, 1985).

324 Mansour Khalid, *The Government They Deserve* (New York, 1990).

might be concretised in the figures of Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī and Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī, but it would be a misrepresentation to call it an individual or personal rivalry.

This is demonstrated quite clearly by the fact that personal rivalry was first used to explain why Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī and Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī could not work together before 1956, and then the rivalry with ʾAzharī is used as an explanation why the sayyids did suddenly work together. If anything, the history shows that Sudanese politicians were ready to work across the gaps of personal conflicts, if they felt that it was necessary within a greater strategic framework. This means that the fact that, at times, political divisions overlapped with personal differences has relatively little explanatory power in itself.

On the other hand factional divisions meant that different groups had different histories and heroes of independence –and equally later events such as the 1964 revolution were framed and interpreted differently. No matter if in records of the 1960s and 70s or in interviews conducted recently, members of the ʾUmmah see Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī as the true *ʾabū al-ʾistiqlāl* or father of the independence.[325] Simultaneously they believe that without the efforts of the ʾUmmah, ʾAzharī would have handed Sudanese sovereignty to the Egyptians. Inversely the ʾAšiqqāʾ thought that Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān was a traitor who would have settled for a crown under English suzerainty. Similar divisions are even found between the NUP and the PDP members, with ʾIbrāhīm al-Muftī referring to members of the PDP only as "the others" or "them" or "those".[326]

These different histories were then interwoven with the respective ideas and perspectives as discussed above. The ʾAšiqqāʾ combined their belief to be the true nationalists of the independence period, with their idea of the importance of modern education and qualification combined with a non-aligned and Arab

325 El Fatih Abdullahi Abdel Salam, 'The Umma Party' (Univ. of Khartoum M.Sc. Thesis, 1979), p. 163.

326 ʾIbrāhīm al-Muftī, *Oral History Interview* (no date and place), according to: Maʿhad al-Dirāsāt al-ʾAfrīqiyah wa al-ʾAsiyūiya, Ǧāmiʿah al-Ḫarṭūm, *Muqābilāt Ruwād al-Ḥarakah al-Waṭaniyah* (Khartoum 1985), Vol. 1, pp. 103-4.

nationalist outlook. This meant that they had an idea what Sudan was, who achieved her independence and therefore who are the true Sudanese, who should lead Sudan in the future and how that future should be shaped. In consequence they ended up with one idea of sudaneseness or Sudanese identity and one story about the Sudanese nation.

The ʾUmmah on the other hand had their ʾabū al-ʾistiqlāl. Power, in their understanding, came from traditional sources with the sheikh of the ʾAnṣār being the patron of the ʾUmmah and their choice for the first prime minister being a former military officer. Their outlook on the world and the future was more conservative, aligned with Britain and the United States, following the same lines of economic development as during the condominium. Their idea of who the Sudanese were and should be was entirely different and, in consequence, they had their very own story about the Sudanese nation. This story however was not just more conservative, or more religious; it was entirely rooted in the history of the Mahdīyah and was therefore also different from the story of the Ḫatmīyah.

To summarise, there are five important points, which help to answer my global questions: Firstly, as a direct result of Sudanese history, this itself was regarded in the shape of dichotomies, which led to the concept of the Sudanese two party system. Secondly, the Sudanese political system was in reality much more diverse and was indeed a multi party system, even when one looks exclusively at the big two. Thirdly, the key cleavages could be found both between and within the big two, and the cleavages within the parties inhibited attempts to reach any true compromises with others. This aspect is central to the argument in the last chapter, why the Sudanese could not find a way to overcome the challenge of contradictory nation stories. Fourthly, while personal rivalries were important, they should be differentiated from factional rivalries. And fifth, the factional rivalries combine historical perceptions with political cleavages and therefore resulted in different nation stories. These differences in the nation stories are the basis for the argument in the final chapter, why Sudan eventually experienced nation failure.

Conclusion

The 1952 revolution in Egypt transformed the political game in Sudan. Before it had been one group under the guidance of Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī playing within the system and one group under the leadership of ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī playing outside. With the revolution in Egypt and the following Sudanese elections in 1953 everyone played the same game for the first time. As a consequence of this transformation, the parties who newly entered the game unified under one banner as the NUP, while on the other side, the ʾUmmah remained what it had been since its foundation in 1945.

The patronage of the two co-domini aligned with the patronage of the two sayyids and, as a consequence the big two dominated the period between 1954 and 1956. It was however a marriage of convenience. Eventually, for one fleeting moment, all interests aligned: The British were ready to leave Sudan as long as the Egyptians would too. The Egyptians were ready to leave Sudan as long as the British would. The ʾUmmah had been in favour of independence all along. Sayyid ʿAlī was as cryptic as ever and ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī saw a chance to salvage his government and become the father of independence. In consequence from one day to the next Sudan gained her early independence –actually more than one year before Ghana. The quick transition to independence meant that the Sudanese nationalist movement was never forced to unify.

Independence led the end of the patronage of the co-domini and with it came the end of the NUP as a unified party. The Ḫatmī wing of the party created the PDP and entered an uneasy alliance with the ʾUmmah –an alliance so uneasy that eventually Prime Minister ʿAbd-Allāh Ḫalīl did what he thought was necessary to protect Sudan's sovereignty and economic development and handed over power to the military. The division between the NUP and the PDP was eventually superficially bridged in 1967, when the two parties re-united as the DUP. But the merger was predominantly a strategic move and not motivated by actual agreement on political issues.

In the 1960s, after the death of Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī and his son al-Ṣiddīq al-Mahdī, the ʾUmmah experienced its own round of divisions, caused as much by ideological differences as disagreements within the Mahdī family. This too, led to the creation of two separate parties, which eventually re-united. The recreation of one single ʾUmmah Party came in 1969, just shortly before the coup of Ǧaʿfar Muḥammad al-Numayrī, but they too had continuing disagreement, at least if Manṣūr Ḫālid is to be believed.[327]

That meant, that the perceived two-party structure of Sudan came to a clear end only months after independence, resulting eventually in a matrix of four wings or parties with one more progressive or secular and one more conservative or religious wing of both, the previously unified Unionists and the previously unified ʾUmmah. The differences between and within the two people's parties were defined by mainly four cleavages. Firstly the issue of alignment and perspectives on sovereignty, secondly the question of the parliamentary versus the presidential model, thirdly the debate over the role of religion and ṭarīqahs in politics and connected to this the question of legitimacy and fourthly differences over socio-economic questions.

While the cleavages within parties made them uneasy coalition partners, unable to discuss and compromise on substantive matters, the cleavages between the parties were overlaid with individual rivalries as well as factional alignments. These factional alignments and differences were actually rooted in a long historical process and this caused different factions to understand history differently and to suggest different heroes. Based on their understanding of the history, of the heroes of Sudanese history and their alignment according to the outlined substantial cleavages, they developed an idea of what Sudan and Sudanese had been, was at the time and should be in the future. Accordingly they developed different and contradicting stories of the Sudanese nation. I will return to these points, in comparison to the ideological and regional parties, in the fifth chapter.

327 Mansour Khalid, *The Government They Deserve* (London, 1990), p. 226.

III. Marx vs. Muhammad

The previous chapter covered the events leading up to the coup by ʾIbrāhīm ʿAbbūd in the historiographical section and then looked at the traditional Sudanese peoples' parties. In this chapter I first discuss the period of military rule after the coup, the Sudanese October revolution in 1964 which led to the removal of the military and the transitional period until elections in 1965. Then follows a discussion of the two Sudanese ideological movements, communist and islamist. Both groups already existed before this period, but the October revolution changed their movements and their roles within society. The two movements, for all their ideological differences, developed as two sides of the same coin, with the islamists mostly mirroring the development of the communists. I will then discuss the ideas the two groups had for the Sudanese society and why they were able to exert considerable influence, although they did not succeed in gaining many seats in parliament.

The key argument of the chapter is that both the islamists and the communists were inherently modern parties, with progressive policies, at odds with the aims of the traditional people's parties. Furthermore, I will argue that primarily both parties were able to exert authority because of their influence on the elites, from which a large part of the administration was recruited. This institutionally weakened the people's parties and put pressure on them to adapt their positions.

The ability of the ideological parties to sway the political debates is the key contribution of this chapter to the overarching argument regarding the inability to form stable coalitions and to come to a greater social agreement on the Sudanese nation story. Additionally the story of the islamists serves as a lens to look at the

role of Islam in the Sudanese nation stories of different groups and the story of the communists serves as a lens for majority-led processes excluding political minorities from political spheres and the nation.

The most important sources for information on the communist party were books and articles by Warburg and ʾAmīn. In the section on the islamist movement, I am heavily indebted to the excellent thesis by ʿUṯmān. Additionally I conducted more than a dozen interviews with founding and leading members of both movements. While the historiography is mostly based on secondary sources, the analysis is mostly based on the interviews and discussions. All the interviews were conducted in Khartoum and as one-on-one interviews. Most interviews were conducted at the offices or homes of the interviewees, with the exception of some members of the communist party, whom I interviewed at the premises of the party. All interviews were conducted in English.

The contribution of the chapter is two-fold: on one hand it clearly shows how the islamist and communist movements emerged as two sides of one coin. This perspective is not new within the Sudanese debate, but is relatively new to academic literature in English. Secondly this chapter fully acknowledges the role and the impact of these parties in the 1960s and attempts to explain why the two parties had so much influence. The challenge in doing this was to not overestimate the role of the ideological parties, knowing that they were able to gain much greater influence later; the communists temporarily under al-Numayrī and the islamists in the current regime – and to not underestimate the communists, knowing that communism as a political project more or less failed in 1990.

Transitions to Nowhere

The coup of ʾIbrāhīm ʿAbbūd in 1958 and the takeover of government by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), brought a hitherto unknown stability to the Sudanese political system, with only a few cabinet changes and relatively little public unrest –in part due to strikes and demonstrations being outlawed. This relative stability brought a period of economic growth and many Sudanese experienced a previously unknown standard of living.[328] Nevertheless, the Sudanese were increasingly dissatisfied with the army. The early resistance however which had been partially organised by Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī's son al-Ṣiddīq collapsed after his sudden death in October 1961.

The regime tried to allow some participation to rally public support, first by creating a new form of local government in 1961, which according to Bechtold was modelled on the Pakistani concept of *basic democracy*.[329] The regime also created an elected Central Council, a set-up which, according to the regime, "suits the Sudanese environment and protects it against hurriedly imported systems."[330] These elections were however boycotted by most important parties and groups, except a number of prominent PDP members and the communists, and those who did participate were seen by the general public as collaborators. Bechtold believes that ʿAbbūd "intended sincerely to permit some measure of democracy but was unsure in defining appropriate parameters."[331]

The biggest difficulty for the ʿAbbūd regime was however not in the northern Sudan, but the increasingly violent uprising in the southern provinces. Already during the decades before independence the northern elite had believed that the British were trying to separate the southern Sudan from the north.[332]

---

328 Peter K. Bechtold, *Politics in Sudan* (New York, 1976), pp. 200-2.

329 Ibid., p. 205.

330 Tim Niblock, *Class and Power* (Basingstoke, 1987), p. 222.

331 Peter K. Bechtold, *Politics in Sudan* (New York, 1976), p. 205.

332 There are many examples for these ideas, see e.g.: ʾIbrāhīm al-Muftī, *Oral History Interview* (no date and place), according to: Maʿhad al-Dirāsāt al-ʾAfrīqiyah wa al-ʾAsiyūiya, Ǧāmiʿah al-Ḫarṭūm, *Muqābilāt Ruwād al-Ḥarakah al-Waṭaniyah* (Khartoum 1985), Vol. 1, p. 105.

Consequentially they saw British policies as the root of the Torit mutiny in 1955. Basically, the northern elite believed that their "southern brothers" would not ask for federalism, if they too were Muslims and could speak Arabic.

The ʿAbbūd regime, being a military regime, made a straightforward analysis of the whole problem. If they could convert southerners to Islam and make them speak Arabic, the problem would be solved. As Nabīl ʿĀbid argued: "The conflict in the south escalated because ʿAbbūd tried to negate the identity of the southerners, that was his idea of unifying the country."[333] Policies, which were adopted in this period, included opening of qurʾānic schools, moving the day of rest from Sunday to Friday in 1960 and the expulsion of all foreign missionaries in 1964. Additionally, the army believed that they needed to deal with the armed uprising, although this was extremely minor in scale at that time, with full force.

It is not surprising, that the ʿAbbūd policies had the opposite effect of that intended and the southern conflict increased in intensity. During this period many southerners went into exile, predominantly in Uganda, and the armed resistance became increasingly well organised and staffed, mostly thanks to these new exiles. The armed movement inside Sudan eventually became known as *Anya-Nya*, which was distinct from, but connected to the political movement in exile. The politicians in exile, predominantly in Uganda, were organised under the umbrella of the *Sudan African National Union* (SANU). By September 1964 the regime recognised that its southern policy had failed. The regime started an enquiry commission to find solutions for the southern problem and allowed public debates on the issue.

On 9 September 1964 a forum was convened at the University of Khartoum. One of the primary speakers was Dr Ḥasan ʿAbd-Allāh al-Turābī, a university lecturer and member of *al-ʾIḫwān al-Muslimūn*, the Muslim Brotherhood, who had just returned from the Sorbonne where he had written his dissertation. In his speech he drew a line between the conflict in the south and the undemocratic nature of the government and demanded regime change. The ʿAbbūd regime was alarmed

333 Nabīl ʿĀbid, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 8 February 2011).

about the new direction of the debate and banned any further meetings at Khartoum University. The *Khartoum University Students Union* (KUSU) felt they needed to defend their independence and called for another debate on the evening on 21 October.

On that evening, the students assembled on a square close to the student housing. The police arrived and demanded that the students should disperse. Soon after, all hell broke loose. The police attempted to disperse the students with tear gas and the students tried to hold their ground throwing rocks, bricks and bottles. Eventually the police began to shoot into the crowd with live ammunition. Many students were wounded and one student, ʾAḥmad al-Qurašī, died in the night. The funeral on the next day was followed by demonstrations. Tens of thousands of citizens from in and around Khartoum took to the streets. Eventually the demonstrations gave way to a general strike, which brought the regime to downfall. On 26 October ʿAbbūd dissolved the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces and handed over power to a transitional government, headed by the educator and Oxford alumni Sirr-al-Ḫatim al-Ḫalīfah al-Ḥasan.[334]

What was it, that brought the regime to its end?[335] I believe Bechtold argued correctly, that it was not a general aversion to military governments. Both ʿAbbūd and later Numayrī were at first welcomed by the population. Also it was not primarily the situation in the southern Sudan, which was more or less unfamiliar to most northern Sudanese, who had never been in that part of the country and had no or only limited contact with people from there. Arguably, Bechtold is right that the public uprising was caused by the increasingly repressive policies, cracking down on freedom of expression, by ʿAbbūd's "tough-minded and

334 While the details in different accounts of the October revolution vary, these key aspects can be considered as generally accepted and established.

335 There are various explanations for why the October revolution happened. Some authors stress economic reasons, some the situation in the south, and others believe it was an effect of international communism, but none of these arguments explains the specific sequence of events. It seems most fruitful to argue, that the combination of these aspects created an atmosphere where revolution was possible, but it was the death of a student, which actually sparked the events.

humorless lieutenants, whose ideas of public information seemed to be a steady release of congratulatory telegrams to themselves."[336]

In the beginning the demonstrations were led by university professors and the students' union, as well as the professional societies of judges and lawyers. Soon after they were joined by representatives of workers and peasants and other professional societies. Together they formed the *National Front of Professional Organisations*. At the same time, the traditional political parties were relatively weak. They had been banned under ʿAbbūd and their structures largely disintegrated.[337] The first cabinet under Sirr-al-Ḫatim reflected this new balance in power, which included seven members of the Professional Front, two members of the Southern Front and one member each of the ʾUmmah, NUP, PDP, the newly formed *Islamic Charter Front* (ICF) of Turābī, and the *Sudanese Communist Party* (SCP).

Thanks to their extensive involvement in the professional organisations and in the struggle for worker rights over the years, most of the leading members of the Professional Front were members of the SCP or sympathised with the communists. Accordingly, the transitional government set out on a very leftist course, planning for a reform of local administration and agriculture, as well as granting women the right to vote, among other things. The new government was a cause of concern within the Sudanese establishment, and also in the United States. As a reaction Sudan was put on the so-called counter-insurgency list of the CIA.[338]

The ʾUmmah, NUP, and the ICF called for elections at the earliest possible date, hoping to oust the Professional Front from the political scene. The Front, with the support of the SCP and the PDP, rejected these calls, arguing that it was impractical to hold elections while the southern Sudan was still under a state of emergency. The parties modified their call for elections to cover only the northern

336 Peter K. Bechtold, *Politics* (New York, 1976), p. 213.
337 Ibid., p. 216.
338 See for example: NARA, CIA Files (Central Intelligence Agency, Intelligence Memorandum, Developments in the Countries on the Counterinsurgency List, 26 January 1965).

provinces, and Ṣādiq called the ʾAnṣār to stage a demonstration in Khartoum to support the call of the political parties. The Front decided to superficially give in to the call for elections, but stated that elections should be held along professional lines with representation for separate professional classes. The parties, fearing a perpetuation of the *status quo*, again called for demonstrations.[339] These developments feed the argument in the last section of this chapter, that the ideological parties were able to shape events, especially in the direct aftermath of the October revolution, but they lacked the numbers to maintain control over the outcome.

In consequence, on 18 February 1965 Sirr-al-Ḫatim handed in his resignation, but a few days later he formed a new government composed of the ʾUmmah, NUP, ICF, and the Southern Front.[340] The new government called for elections in April 1965. The graduates' constituencies, which had existed in 1953, but were abolished in 1958, were revived as a token compromise to the Professional Front. In the graduates' constituencies all graduates of secondary schools and above were allowed to cast an additional vote for an additional member of parliament who represented graduates as a social class. In 1965 fifteen graduate seats were contested in the elections. The elections were won by the ʾUmmah Party, who however failed to achieve an absolute majority.

During the transitional period, shortly before the elections, northern and southern Sudanese politicians met at the *Round Table Conference* in Khartoum to discuss, how to end instability in the southern provinces. Since the October revolution had technically started due to the southern problem –ʿAbbūd had first allowed and then forbidden debates on the issue– tackling the problem was a natural task of the transitional government. The conference was however doomed to fail before it started. Firstly, northern politicians in their general ignorance of the southern provinces had believed the issue would solve itself once the military regime was defeated. Secondly, northern politicians did not see the need to make concessions and thought they could get their way by playing divide and conquer with the

339 Peter K. Bechtold, *Politics in Sudan* (New York, 1976), pp. 218-9.
340 Tim Niblock, *Class and Power* (Basingstoke, 1987), p. 228.

southerners. Thirdly, the looming elections meant that northern politicians at the conference used the event for election propaganda, instead of constructively engaging with their southern counterparts.[341] Fourthly, the divisions among the southern politicians and the lack of control the politicians had over the Anya-Nya rebels, meant that they too could not make any concessions. Howell summarised the southern dilemma succinctly:

> "For SANU the Conference could only serve as a sounding-board for northern intentions and a forum for southern demands. SANU had become stridently secessionist in its propaganda, and stood to damage its case and further exacerbate growing internal frictions by playing any part in the Conference."[342]

Lastly, none of the northern politicians had the necessary patience to see that the Round Table Conference could, at best, be a beginning, and would not solve the southern question at one sweep. The *Twelve-Man Committee* which was established by the Round Table Conference to continue the discussions, consequently failed to play a constructive role.[343] I will return to this in detail in the next chapter.

The military take-over under ʿAbbūd had been an attempt to safeguard Sudanese sovereignty and to expand the Sudanese economy. The regime did not fail because Sudanese were generally opposed to military rule at that time, but because the regime did curtail personal freedom to a growing degree and because it reacted uncreatively to various challenges including the problems in the south. Eventually the anger with the regime boiled over after a student was killed during

---

341 Peter K. Bechtold, *Politics* (New York, 1976), p. 227.

Bašīr on the other hand argued that the northern politicians were serious in their attempt to find a solution. As proof he pointed to the appointment of Clement Mboro as Minister of Interior, which he arguably was right to say, was not a token gesture. That some in the transitional government were well intended, does however not change the fact that most northern politicians knew little to nothing about the south and had no understanding of the southern needs and demands. Mohamed Omer Beshir, 'The Sudan's Twenty-Five Years of Independence: The Continuing Search for Systems', *Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies)*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (1982), pp. 122-3.

342 John Howell, 'Political Leadership' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1978), p. 205.

343 For a very balanced view on the Round Table Conference see: Marit Magelssen Vambheim, 'Making Peace while Waging War; A Peacemaking Effort in the Sudanese Civil War, 1965-1966', (Univ. of Bergen MA thesis, 2007), pp. 60-81.

For an analysis of the Twelve-Man Committee see: Marit Magelssen Vambheim, 'Making Peace while Waging War; A Peacemaking Effort in the Sudanese Civil War, 1965-1966', (Univ. of Bergen MA thesis, 2007), pp. 82-105.

clashes with the police, the regime stepped down and a fragile transitional government took over.

When the British and Egyptians agreed on Sudanese self-government, the Sudanese in theory were meant to use the transitional period to establish where they wanted to go with Sudan. In fact that did not happen and Sudan hurriedly declared her independence. Similarly after ʿAbbūd the transitional period would have offered a window of opportunity to figure out where to take the country. But the traditional forces felt threatened by the left-leaning sectors of society and hurried into elections.[344] The lack of a national project and a shared story about Sudan destabilised the political system during the first democratic period. The transition after the military regime was, however, not used to solve any of these problems and in essence when a new government was elected in April 1965, this government struggled with the exact same basic issues as the government in 1956. The transition had proven to be a "transition to nowhere."

The details of the second democratic period are discussed in the historiographical section of the next chapter. The next two sections focus on the ideological parties, which played a key role in the October revolution and were transformed by it. First I will look at the communists, then at the islamists, followed by an analysis of their role within the Sudanese political framework.

344 The obvious counter-argument, which also was used at the time by the established parties, was that the transitional government was itself not democratically legitimised and that only an elected government would be in a position to legitimately write a constitution and make actual concessions in negotiations with the southern provinces. In essence it was a debate whether revolutionary legitimisation or democratic legitimisation were the better basis to solve the imminent problems.

A Spectre on the Nile

The *Sudan Communist Party's* (SCP) moment of greatest direct influence, at least before 1969, was probably the transitional period following the revolution against ʿAbbūd. The party had existed in various guises since the 1940s. Its influence on the Sudanese political system was not always direct, but often through other parties or even by serving as an example for its enemies. In this part of the chapter I will discuss the history of the SCP.

As Muḥammad Nūrī al-ʾAmīn pointed out, the Sudanese communist movement came into organisational existence in Cairo, a couple of years before it did so in Khartoum.[345] In 1943 Henri Curiel, a Jew of Italian descent, founded the *Egyptian Movement for National Liberation* or *al-Ḥarakah al-Miṣriyah li al-Taḥarrur al-Waṭani* (HAMITU). HAMITU had from its very beginning a number of Sudanese members, which soon formed a dedicated core, the Omdurman group, which also had its own publication. The Egyptians liked to give more dangerous tasks to Sudanese students because if they were caught, they usually were only sent back to Sudan, while Egyptians were imprisoned and often tortured.[346]

In the same period a young British army conscript in Khartoum, Herbert Storey, wooed a number of students of Gordon Memorial College to the cause of communism, with the plan to establish a local organisation to function under the umbrella of the *Communist Party of Great Britain* (CPGB). Curiel, who was decidedly anti-British, reacted to this by creating a Sudanese wing of HAMITU, *al-Ḥarakah al-Sūdāniyah li al-Taḥarrur al-Waṭani* (HASUTU)[347] first in Cairo and then, in 1945 or 1946, as an independent organisation in Sudan.[348] To counter any

345 Mohammed Nuri El-Amin, 'The Sudanese Communist Movement – I', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (Jul. 1996), p. 22.

346 Muḥammad Rifaʿat al-Saʿīd, *Personal Interview* (Cairo, 3 August 2009).

347 The movement is commonly known by the English abbreviation SMNL, in line with the Egyptian EMNL. I use the Arabic abbreviations primarily because I feel that they are friendlier to the reader.

348 On the details of the debate when, where and how exactly HASUTU was founded, check: Mohammed Nuri El-Amin, 'The Sudanese Communist Movement – I', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (Jul. 1996), pp. 28-32.

potential attempts by the CPGB to control the Sudanese communists, HAMITU and HASUTU were strongly interlinked in regard to membership and leadership.[349]

The first leader of HASUTU was Muḥammad ʾAmīn Husayn, an advocate and journalist, but he left the party after a couple of months and joined the unionists.[350] He was succeeded by the physician ʿAbd-al-Wahhāb Zayn-al-ʿĀbdīn. During the leadership of ʿAbd-al-Wahhāb the movement paid great attention to secrecy. Members were even advised not to parade their communist opinions. ʿAbd-al-Wahhāb himself went as far as to wear "his *tarbush*, so as to look as non-radical, and as old-fashioned, as possible."[351] In these early years there were clear connections between the communists and the ʾAšiqqāʾ and the Graduates' Congress, although the communists rejected unity with Egypt, especially as long as Egypt was governed by what they considered a feudal system.[352] The biggest success of this cooperation strategy was achieved when, briefly in 1946, ʿAbd-al-Wahhāb became the secretary of the Congress, and Ḥasan ʾAbū-Ǧabal, another communist, treasurer.[353]

There was however a growing divide between the older members of the party around ʿAbd-al-Wahhāb and younger members, who felt that this secrecy and discreteness was counter-productive. Two issues were especially relevant in this regard. Firstly, the discussions around the creation of the Legislative Assembly in 1947 were accompanied by partially violent demonstrations, in which the young communists played a leading role, but the leadership abstained. Secondly, in 1947 the tenants of the Ǧazīrah scheme, a giant pump based irrigation scheme the British had developed for cotton production in the area between the White Nile and the Blue Nile, and the railway workers both successfully organised their first large scale strikes, in which the communists were not involved at a higher institutional level. These two points, combined with a relatively poor relationship

349 Ibid., pp. 25-7.
350 Ibid., p. 24.
351 Mohammed Nuri El-Amin, 'The Sudanese Communist Movement, the First Five Years – II', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Oct. 1996), p. 254.
352 Ibid., pp. 251-2.
353 Ibid., p. 254.

to HAMITU, as ʿAbd-al-Wahhāb strongly argued for HASUTU's institutional independence, and a "suspiciously" good relationship to the "bourgeois" unionists eventually undermined ʿAbd-al-Wahhāb's position and, according to different versions, he either left or was removed from the party.[354] He later joined the NUP.[355]

ʿAbd-al-Wahhāb was succeeded by ʿAwaḍ ʿAbd-al-Rāziq. ʿAbd-al-Rāziq followed a more confrontational strategy, reaching the public via circulars, which mostly covered either issues of imperialism or more specifically worker rights.[356] Interestingly, the connection between worker rights and the national question was in part provoked by the British, when the management of the Sudan railways rejected negotiations with the *Workers' Affairs Association* (WAA) –the union of the railway workers founded in 1946– stating that the railway was part of the civil service and therefore all negotiations had to take place directly with the Sudan government.[357] Thus all labour negotiations became automatically politicised. Additionally, in this period members started to discuss their views in papers and the party took a more confrontational approach towards both the ʾUmmah and the ʾAšiqqāʾ.[358]

Overall, the leadership of ʿAbd-al-Rāziq marked a successful time for the party, nevertheless his days were numbered. The two main reasons were probably that Curiel preferred ʿAbd-al-Ḫāliq Maḥğūb, as a leader of the party, and some of the more ideologically strict members of the party were opposed to certain of ʿAbd-al-Rāziq's policies with which he attempted to "(safeguard) the interest of the national bourgeoisie."[359] In consequence, in early 1949, ʿAbd-al-Rāziq was dismissed from the leadership of HASUTU and ʿAbd-al-Ḫāliq took over and remained leader of the party until he was killed by the Numayrī regime in 1971.[360]

---

354 Ibid., pp. 256-61.

355 Mohammed Nuri El-Amin, 'The Sudanese Communist Movement – I', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (Jul. 1996), p. 24.

356 Ibid., pp. 128-32.

357 Gabriel R. Warburg, *Islam Nationalism and Communism* (London, 1978), pp. 96-7.

358 Mohammed Nuri El-Amin, 'The Sudanese Communist Movement – I', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Jan. 1997), pp. 132-3.

359 Ibid., pp. 134-8.

360 Quoted according to: Ibid., p. 136.

During his first years of office, ʿAbd-al-Ḫāliq focused on clarifying the positions of the party, especially in relation to other political players and on streamlining the organisation. Both the ʾUmmah and the ʾAšiqqāʾ were attacked with venom. The new leadership also remodelled the idea of the so-called *National Fronts*, which mainly served as platforms to join with other groups on certain issues, without having to compromise on general points of the party line. Additionally, there was a renewed focus on peasants, which ʿAbd-al-Ḫāliq said was inspired by developments in China. Over all, as ʾAmīn summarised, the movement became "professedly communist, staunchly anti-imperialist, unashamedly anti-bourgeois political parties, proudly independent and vehemently combative."[361] In October 1951 the party held its first fully-fledged conference at which the new policies of ʿAbd-al-Ḫāliq were confronted by ʿAbd-al-Rāziq and some of his supporters, but ʿAbd-al-Ḫāliq prevailed and ʿAbd-al-Rāziq's supporters left the party. They founded a new party, which however did not last.[362]

When it came to the elections in 1953 the communists participated as part of the *Anti Imperialist Front* (AIF). Only one member of the front, Ḥasan al-Ṭāhir Zarrūq was successful. He was elected on one of the graduates' seats. Zarrūq focused mainly on issues of civil liberties and freedom of expression and, by doing so, succeeded in getting the support of many journalists and others, who were not necessarily communist inclined. In late 1954 ʾAzharī attempted, for the first time, to introduce a law directed against the communists, but the communists managed to rally wide support against this law.[363]

In early 1955, they then organised the broad-based *Independence Front*, which included parties ranging all the way from the ʾUmmah to the AIF, to oppose ʾAzharī and the idea of unity with Egypt. The front was relatively short lived, with the AIF breaking away by September, but such fronts as political tools became a common phenomenon in later Sudanese politics.[364] After independence and after the ʾUmmah had taken over the leadership of the government, the AIF

361 Ibid., pp. 138-44.
362 Ibid., pp. 145-7.
363 Gabriel R. Warburg, *Islam Nationalism and Communism* (London, 1978), pp. 99-100.
364 Ibid., pp. 99-100.

tried unsuccessfully to convince the PDP and the NUP to join a front of the progressive forces in Sudan against the ʾUmmah. The AIF was furthermore involved in the organisation of demonstrations against US aid and against the Eisenhower doctrine, and was supporting the new Southern Liberal Party in its demands for a federal constitution. But overall the impact of the AIF in the period after independence and before the coup of ʿAbbūd was limited –especially since the NUP as an opposition party, freed of the constraints of daily politics, was now loudly propagating leftist and reformist policies. Working on similar issues as the communists and, as the bigger political player, the NUP was able to monopolise a lot of the public attention.[365]

Now, before looking at the role of the communists during and after ʿAbbūd, I want to briefly digress and look at three movements in which the communists played a substantial role and with whom they often worked in cooperation. These three are the workers' movement and unions, the students' movement, and the women's movement. The beginning of labour unionism in Sudan was in ʿAṭbarā, which is relatively unsurprising, as the city was the centre of Sudanese railway workers –a professional group which tends to be strongly unionised all around the world– and additionally ʿAṭbarā was a colonial foundation where the workers who had migrated there, depended on self-organised structures for social affairs and protection, as the normal structures of the tribe, family or village were not present.[366] Worker's clubs had existed in ʿAṭbarā since the 1930s and, in 1946, artisans of Sudan Railways who were members of the *Old Boys of Technical School Club* founded the *Workers' Affairs Association* (WAA).[367]

What followed was a year of struggle between the government and the WAA, although in the beginning the WAA was rather cautious and avoided confrontation.[368] In July 1947 the WAA organised a march in ʿAṭbarā, which eventually led to a scuffle between the police and the workers, and the police

365 Ibid., pp. 100-6.

366 For a complete appreciation of the history of Aṭbarā and the role of the unions in the city, see: Ahmad Alawad Sikainga, *"City of Steel and Fire"* (Oxford, 2002).

367 Ahmad Alawad Sikainga, *Slaves Into Workers* (Austin, 1996), pp. 104-5.

368 For all the details of this struggle, check: Saad Ed Din Fawzi, *The Labour Movement* (Oxford, 1957), pp. 43-57.

ended up using sticks and tear gas to disperse the crowd. The WAA reacted by calling for a general strike, which brought the complete Sudanese Railways to a halt.[369] The strike ended with the recognition of the WAA by the government. In 1948 the government published the *Trade Union Ordinance,* which allowed further unions to register, the first of which was the *Sudan Medical Association* in 1949. In the following six years, over a hundred unions registered.[370] In 1950 the *Sudan Workers' Trade Union Federation* (SWTUF) was established.

Another important element of organised labour were the cotton farmers and tenants. A strike by the tenants of the Ǧazīrah scheme, led to the acceptance by the *Ǧazīrah Board* of the need for representation of the tenants. This first led to the formation of the *Tenants Representative Body* in 1947. The tenants became increasingly politicised and accordingly, in 1952, with a new constitution, the organisation became the *Ǧazīrah Tenants' Association* and after an internal victory of the radical tenants against the established tenants, finally in 1953 the *Ǧazīrah Tenants' Union* was formed.[371] Also, in 1953, the cotton cultivators of the Nuba Mountains established a union at their congress.[372] The role of organised labour cannot be overstated and its importance is a result of many factors. Here I only want to point to one. Most foreign currency coming into Sudan at the time was income from the sale of cotton. Therefore the cotton farmers, and also everyone involved in transportation, from the railway to the harbours, had a potentially direct and massive leverage on the state budget.

The *Khartoum University Students' Union* (KUSU), as it became later known, was established in 1940 as the *Higher Schools' Union*. The first president was ʾAḥmad Ḫayr who was followed by Mubārak Zarrūq, whose secretary was Mīrġanī Ḥamza. In 1945 the union gave itself its second and more elaborate constitution, which ʾAzharī, who was a teacher at Gordon Memorial College at the time, helped to write. In 1946 the union started its first magazine and began to involve itself in political activities, despite the warning of the principal of Gordon College.

369 Ahmad Alawad Sikainga, *Slaves Into Workers* (Austin, 1996), pp. 105-6.
370 Peter K. Bechtold, *Politics in Sudan* (New York, 1976), p. 113.
371 Tim Niblock, *Class and Power* (Basingstoke, 1987), pp. 122-5.
372 Gabriel R. Warburg, *Islam Nationalism and Communism* (London, 1978), p. 98.

In 1950 Gordon College became a university level college and in 1956 it became University of Khartoum and with it the union became KUSU.[373]

KUSU played a key role in the resistance against the ʿAbbūd regime and in the 1964 revolution, and especially after 1964, KUSU was seen as an important player in national politics. From 1948 onwards, the union's elections were fought on political lines and more or less for the whole period the union was dominated by the communists and islamists. An organised representation of southern Sudanese students was founded in 1958 and, after the October revolution, the established parties attempted to extend their youth wing activities to the university campus. However, between 1966 and 1970 the communists and islamists had always at least two thirds of the seats in the KUSU council of 40.[374] KUSU's relevance had three bases: Firstly, the Sudanese national movement had grown out of the Graduates' Congress and KUSU could claim to unite a group of people comparable to the members of Congress in the mid 40s. Secondly, the educated class in Sudan was still very small and naturally every batch of new graduates of Khartoum University left their mark. Thirdly, the October revolution of 1964 had demonstrated the practical impact of university strikes and demonstrations and the organisational capabilities of KUSU.

From 1944 onwards there were a number of attempts to organise women in Sudan, including the *Wad Madanī Women's Club* in 1944, the *Omdurman League of Cultured Girls* in 1947, the government inspired *Union of English Speaking Women* in 1949, and the Mahdī family's *Association for Women's Promotion* also in 1949. In 1951 the ten girls studying in the final year of the only girl's secondary school went on strike against the school's administration. Generally activity in regards to women's' issues increased in that year; the subject was discussed in a number of high-profile newspaper articles and the nurses' professional union was established. All these activities concluded with the establishment of the *Sudanese Women's Union* in January 1952. The organisation faced a lot of opposition from traditional and religious quarters of Sudanese society, but was able to defend itself

373 Salah El Din El Zein El Tayeb, *The Students' Movement* (Khartoum, 1971), pp. 1-12.
374 Ibid., pp. 17-18 & 39-50.

with the support of workers' and the students' unions, as well as the communist party.[375]

The Women's Union, like all other such societies, was liquidated by decree under ʿAbbūd and only restarted its activities after 1964. One of the key advancements of women rights during the post ʿAbbūd transition was the introduction of the right to vote. This was mostly thanks to the communists and, after that, all political parties who had not yet created committee's for women affairs and women wings followed suit. But, as Ḥāǧā Kāshif Badrī argued, the other parties were not as involved in women issues and primarily created women wings to attract women voters in the elections. In consequence, it was the Sudan Communist Party, who in 1965 successfully fielded Fāṭimah ʾAḥmad ʾIbrāhīm in the elections, to become the first female member of the Sudanese parliament.[376] The women's movement took its relevance mainly from two aspects: firstly women voters had a potentially massive impact on elections, and secondly the role of women in society was a key political question, especially considering the intertwined nature of religion and politics in Sudan and the on-going debate about the Sudanese identity and nation.

When, in 1958, ʿAbbūd came to power, the communists immediately positioned themselves as anti military rule. Indeed, they had published their opposition to a military coup, already before the coup had actually happened. By December the leading members of the communist party were arrested and the trade unions were banned. Over the following year the communists systematically pressured the regime to allow certain activities of the unions, partially with success, and supported the unions organisational capacity. As a result the communists gained a strong base within the leadership of the unions as demonstrated by the SWTUF elections in summer 1964, in which the communists gained 45 of the seats of the council of sixty.[377]

375 Haga Kashif Badri, *Women's Movement* (Omdurman, 2009), pp. 163-79.
376 Ibid., pp. 195-202.
377 Gabriel R. Warburg, *Islam Nationalism and Communism* (London, 1978), pp. 106-15.

At the same time, when in 1960 the other political parties started to move in an anti-military direction, the communists played an important role in setting up the *Front of Opposing Parties*. While it was headed by al-Ṣiddīq al-Mahdī, the front as such was a communist instrument and they had the most experience in clandestine organisation and activities, setting up oppositional fronts of parties and organising the production and distribution of leaflets. However with the death of Ṣiddīq the activities of the front more or less subsided and in January 1963 the communists left the front. They even participated in ʿAbbūd's experiment of limited democracy, as they believed that this it was "useful to exploit any loophole offered by the military, in order to fight against it."[378]

Ironically, when eventually the revolution happened, it was not the communists who had sparked it off. But when the *National Front of Political Parties* and the *National Front of Professionals* came together after 26 October, to organise a general strike, the communists were able to put their blueprint of a strike on the table – after all, they had been arguing for such a strike since 1963.[379] Additionally, the high level of organisation of the professionals was at least partly thanks to communist capacity building and again, the concept and instrument of the front which was so important for the October revolution, was a communist brain child. Lastly, since the communists had been functioning underground for the whole period, they immediately were able to take full advantage of the new developments.

As a result of these activities, the professional front and with it the first transitional government, was dominated by communists and pro-communists. The new situation allowed the communists to act more openly, and they organised under the umbrella of the *Sudanese Communist Party* (SCP). The professional front, which was the backbone of the new government, was trying to bolster its support among students and women, partially by enfranchising them. Nevertheless the traditional parties were able to regain ground and in reaction the front became more extreme in its pronouncements. The traditional parties reacted

378 Ibid., p. 112.
379 Ibid., pp. 114-15.

with an all out confrontation, especially with the ʾUmmah calling for the ʾAnṣār to demonstrate in Khartoum. Eventually the government collapsed and the traditional parties took over.[380] Warburg summarised it succinctly: "(W)hile the SCP was strong enough to exploit a revolutionary situation, it was too weak to lead the revolution towards the realisation of its own aims."[381]

The SCP opposed the elections of 1965 on grounds of principle, but nevertheless participated. The SCP was too weak in the geographical constituencies to win any seats, due to the FPTP system. As mentioned, there were however also fifteen graduates' seats. SCP-supported candidates won eleven of these fifteen seats, two went to the NUP and another two to the *Islamic Charter Front* (ICF). While, on one hand, this meant that the communists had won less than seven per cent of the 173 seats of parliament, it also revealed the massive support for the communists among educated Sudanese. The election result was nothing less than a shock to the other political parties. The result meant that the NUP and the ʾUmmah might control the government, but a majority of the members of the administration and ministries were personally sympathising with the communists. This point is essential to understand the importance of the ideological parties.

The elections were followed by a witch-hunt. After a Syrian communist declared in a speech in Omdurman, that religion was an anachronistic superstition, the Muslim Brotherhood organised a rally on 8 November 1965, calling for communism to be outlawed. The NUP and ʾUmmah were happy to pick up on this demand. On 15 November the parliament called on the government to outlaw communism and the SCP, and to confiscate all the party's property. In early December, the assembly amended the constitution accordingly. Additionally all communists were expelled from parliament.

The SCP took the case to the Supreme Court and after numerous postponements the court decided, a year later, that the government's action against communism in general and the SCP in specific was illegal. In the meantime however the

380 Peter K. Bechtold, *Politics in Sudan* (New York, 1976), pp. 217-9.
381 Gabriel R. Warburg, *Islam Nationalism and Communism* (London, 1978), p. 115.

government had imprisoned leading communists, expelled communists from the army and dismissed them from public services, such as the railways. When the Supreme Court announced its decision, the constituent assembly decided to stand by its decision and to overrule the court, an act which in itself was again not constitutional by most interpretations. The crisis which followed, led to the resignation of the chief judge. The communists, on the other hand, had formed a new political umbrella for their activities, the *Socialist Party of the Sudan*. When the graduates' constituencies were cancelled once again in 1968, they won only a single seat in the elections –ʿAbd-al-Ḫāliq Maḥǧūb gained the seat in the election district Omdurman South.[382]

When the communist movement was established in Sudan in the mid-1940s, it was about an idea, rather than about people. The people eventually gathered around that idea and contested the leadership of the movement. This was in marked difference to the NUP and the ʾUmmah, where at the core were a number of people, and as one could say, the ideas gathered around the parties and struggled for realisation. Like independence, which won the day in the NUP, ʿAbd-al-Ḫāliq Maḥǧūb won the day in the SCP. The communists established a horizontally linked movement with a highly effective party apparatus. They involved themselves in the organisation of society as a whole by supporting the women's movement and farmer, students, and worker unions. Significantly, they were politically innovative in the use of organisational tools and propaganda, partially by importing methods such as the front from the international communist movement.

In consequence the communists were able to put their stamp on the October revolution, although it had not been started by them, and they were able to garner wide support within the modern sections of Sudanese society. The position of the SCP was in direct competition to the NUP, who had previously dominated the graduate class, and it was simultaneously an attack on the ʾUmmah and PDP by

382 On the islamist campaign against the communists, see: Eltigani Abdelgadir Hamid, 'Islam, Sectarianism and the Muslim Brotherhood' (SOAS London Ph.D. thesis, 1989), p. 235.
Gabriel R. Warburg, *Islam Nationalism and Communism* (London, 1978), pp. 116-120.

questioning and rejecting the traditional make-up of Sudanese society. Thus the traditional parties used every constitutional and non-constitutional instrument at their disposal to rid Sudan of the spectre of communism once and for all –a move which was obviously doomed to failure.

The attempt to outlaw the communists was the moment when the exclusion of certain groups in northern Sudan from the nation became the most explicit. It is this act, which becomes central in the final argument on how an exclusionary definition of the nation can become destabilising for the political system as a whole. Simultaneously the pressure, which the communists were able to put on the NUP and later DUP is a key to understand the inability of the unionists to come to any grand compromise in regards to the nation. Both arguments will be discussed in detail in the fifth chapter.

Islam and -ism

Similar to the communists, the islamist movement became a more relevant political player with the October revolution. At that point the movement was transformed into a political party, the *Islamic Charter Front* (ICF) under the leadership of ʿAbd-Allāh al-Turābī. Like, and as a reaction to the communists, the islamist movement had developed first in schools and universities and soon after became a larger social movement. In the following section I will trace the historical development of the ICF.

In 1948, two years after the HASUTU was established in Sudan, al-Zaʿīm Muḥammad ʾIbrāhīm, a former intermediate schoolteacher who had gone to Cairo for further studies, visited Ḥantūb secondary school to see some of his former students. Ḥantūb, Ḫūr Ṭaqat and Wādī Sayidnā were the three secondary schools established in northern Sudan after Gordon College was transformed from a secondary school into a university college in 1945. All of them were boarding

schools, roughly modelled on Eaton college.[383] In Cairo ʾIbrāhīm had been part of the *League of Sudanese Students*, an organisation which had been set-up because the Egypt based *Sudanese Students' Union* had fallen under the control of the communists. The members of the League were mostly unionist and anti-communist, many of them sympathised with the ʾIḫwān al-Muslimūn, the Muslim Brotherhood, or were themselves members.[384] The ʾIḫwān are the world's oldest islamist movement, founded by Ḥasan ʾAḥmad ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Bannā in Egypt in 1928.[385] The ʾIḫwān were decidedly anti-imperialist and cared for the disenfranchised classes. The ʾIḫwān –unlike the contemporary salafī movement– aimed at bridging the gap between Islamic tradition and modernity and were in method and outlook a distinctly modernist movement.

During his visit to Ḥantūb ʾIbrāhīm encouraged his former students to form a branch of the League at their school. The most important of this group were Bābikir Karrār and Muḥammad Yūsuf Muḥammad. Karrār had briefly joined a communist group at Ḥantūb, but had left in anger when told that communism entailed the rejection of the existence of god. In consequence Karrār was intrigued by what ʾIbrāhīm had to say, also about the danger of communism, but when they received actual documents about the League, the students were disappointed. However when, in the following year, they graduated and enrolled at Gordon College, they found that student politics were controlled by the communists and therefore they conceived the idea of an anti-communist organisation. Eventually

383 Ǧaʿfar Šayḫ-ʾIdrīs, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 28 November 2010).

384 Abdelwahab A. M. Osman, 'The Political and Ideological Development' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1989), pp. 90-1.

385 The term "islamism" is relatively vaguely defined and, especially since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, it has become a catch-all term for anyone from moderate Muslims to the Taliban and al-Qāʿidah terrorists. Anthony Johns and Nelly Lahoud proposed that "'Islamism' broadly refers to those who are committed to applying an ideological vision of Islam in the socio-political sphere." (Anthony H. Johns, and Nelly Lahoud, 'The World of Islam and the challenge of Islamism', in Nelly Lahoud, and Anthony H. Johns (eds.), *Islam in World Politics* (London, 2005), p. 14.) However this definition does not distinguish between islamist and Islamic politics. Panayiotis Vatikiotis argued that "There is a difference between Islam serving as (...) inspirational ideal of authority (...) and the sharia, being the constitution of the state." (Panayiotis J. Vatikiotis, *Islam and the State* (London, 1987), p. 30.) When I use the term, I mean political groups, which want to create a legal order which explicitly states that laws should be based on an Islamic logic. This is to be distinguished from politicians who base their individual voting decisions on a moral informed by Islam and from basic references to religion and religious law, as they were the practiced in countries such as Egypt in the period of Mubarak, where however otherwise practically no Islamic laws were implemented.

the *Islamic Liberation Movement* (ILM) was founded, which was to work for the "the revival of Islam and the establishment of a new world order transcending the prevalent East-West dichotomy."[386]

The movement started in secret, but soon the communists found out about their existence, but not their name. They then started a campaign against the "terrorist Muslim Brotherhood Group," because of which the ILM denied any affiliation to the ʾIḫwān. At the same time Sudanese students in Cairo, but also other inhabitants of Khartoum and other cities, gradually became familiar with the ideas of the ʾIḫwān, in part because the movement sent preachers to Sudan, in part because Egyptians and Sudanese, who had become members of the ʾIḫwān in Egypt, came to work in Sudan and spread their creed. As a result multiple loosely organised groups appeared from the mid-1940s onwards, which had some allegiance to the ʾIḫwān. By 1950 the most important of these groups was led by ʿAlī Ṭalb-Allāh, who had been selected as general supervisor of the ʾIḫwān in Sudan by Ḥasan al-Bannā.[387]

In the same time the ILM started to become more closely affiliated with the ʾIḫwān. In 1950 the student ʿAbd-al-Bāqī ʿUmar ʿAṭiyah who returned from Egypt joined the ILM and introduced some of the organisational methods and instruments of the Egyptian ʾIḫwān. In 1951 Muḥammad Yūsuf and some other ILM members travelled to Egypt and, as part of their trip, visited the ʾIḫwān headquarters in Cairo. What followed was a gradual and informal integration of the ILM and various ʾIḫwān currents outside the university. In 1952 Bābikir Karrār temporarily left the movement to protest against the increasingly close connection to the Egyptian ʾIḫwān. In summer 1953 he returned, called a meeting

386 Abdelwahab A. M. Osman, 'The Political and Ideological Development' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1989), pp. 91-2.
Gabriel Warburg credited Muḥammad ʾIbrāhīm not only for inspiring, but for founding the ILM. Gabriel R. Warburg, 'The Muslim Brotherhood in Sudan: From Reforms to Radicalism', *Report of the Islam in Africa Research Project*, PRISM (2006), available on: http://actveng.haifa.ac.il/PDF/article/Muslim_BROTHERS_fin.pdf, p. 1.

387 Abdelwahab A. M. Osman, 'The Political and Ideological Development' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1989), pp. 92-98.
According to al-Tiǧānī more than 20 centres of the ʾIḫwān were established and collected under Ṭalb-Allāh's leadership. Eltigani Abdelgadir Hamid, 'Islam, Sectarianism and the Muslim Brotherhood' (SOAS London Ph.D. thesis, 1989), p. 97.

which was strongly attended by his supporters, and pushed through a resolution in favour of the original name, that is ILM, and the "Islamic socialist" line. Karrār was opposed by a faction led by Yūsuf Ḥasan Saʿīd. Eventually a compromise to hold a general conference was reached. Besides the two ILM factions, there were factions around ʿAlī Ṭalb-Allāh, who boycotted the conference, and a fourth group affiliated with the Omdurman Cultural Club.[388]

During this period many rank and file members of the movement quit, as they were repelled by the struggle between the different factions. Nevertheless in August 1954 the so-called ʿĪd Congress took place and resolved to adopt the name ʾIḫwān al-Muslimūn, but to keep the movement Sudan-based with no direct link to the Egyptian organisation, and lastly to remain independent of all political parties.[389] Ṭalb-Allāh was removed as the figurehead. It was decided that the movement should become fully public and to campaign for an Islamic constitution. Finally Muḥammad Ḫayr ʿAbd-al-Qādir was elected as leader.

The conference failed to establish unity however, as Karrār broke away to form a new movement and Ṭalb-Allāh kept attacking ʿAbd-al-Qādir, who eventually had to step down to make way for al-Rašīd al-Ṭāhir in 1955. Ṭāhir had been elected as the first islamist to become leader of the Gordon College student union in 1953 and he had used this platform systematically to establish relationships with both the Egyptian ʾIḫwān and the officers of the Egyptian revolution.[390]

One of the reasons for the general shift in Sudan away from union with Egypt to a stance in favour of independence, was the prosecution of the ʾIḫwān in Egypt after they were accused of being involved in an attempted assassination of Nāṣir. Nevertheless, by late 1955, the ʾIḫwān were seen by most Sudanese as a religious

388 Abdelwahab A. M. Osman, 'The Political and Ideological Development' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1989), pp. 99-102.

389 Gabriel Warburg argued that the conference should be understood as the establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood in Sudan. Gabriel R. Warburg, 'The Muslim Brotherhood in Sudan', *Report of the Islam in Africa Research Project*, PRISM (2006), p. 1.

390 Abdelwahab A. M. Osman, 'The Political and Ideological Development' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1989), pp. 102-7.
On the career of Ṭāhir, see: Gabriel R. Warburg, *Islam, Sectarianism, and Politics* (London, 2003), pp. 178-9.

group within the traditional context of Sudanese religious groups and ṭarīqahs. They were not yet understood as a group calling for modernisation of religion and a change of religious allegiance. Politically the movement was primarily anti-communist and favoured setting up a society based on an Islamic order. Ṭāhir understood that he needed to find a way to get a more prominent position in society for the ʾIḫwān, by pushing for a specific cause. Copying the communist model of the front, the ʾIḫwān set up the *Islamic Front for the Constitution* (IFC), demanding, as the name implied, a constitution based on the šarīʿa.[391]

The IFC was to act as a pressure group and included a number of small organisations besides the ʾIḫwān. The IFC even wrote a model constitution, proposing a parliamentary model in a federal but unitary state. It also suggested land reform, public ownership of natural resources and the nationalisation of banks. This was completed with genuine Islamic elements, such as the prohibition of interest rates in banking. The IFC managed to attract substantial attention and support –more than the number of members or the available resources would have implied. This was, as ʿUṯmān pointed out, especially thanks to the fact that it was pushing for an idea that had "powerful emotional appeal (…) which few people could dare resist in a political system where the legitimation of the two major parties was decidedly religious."[392]

In February 1957 the constitutional commission, however, rejected the idea of an Islamic constitution. While the two government parties, the ʾUmmah and the PDP voted against the Islamic constitution, the supposedly secular NUP voted in favour. The IFC reacted with a fierce campaign, eliciting support for an Islamic constitution from ʾimāms, Ṣūfī sheikhs and traditional leaders. This campaign was

391 Eltigani Abdelgadir Hamid, 'Islam, Sectarianism and the Muslim Brotherhood' (SOAS London Ph.D. thesis, 1989), pp. 224-5.
Abdelwahab A. M. Osman, 'The Political and Ideological Development' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1989), pp. 111-3.
It is important to keep in mind, that šarīʿa is a very vague term, which can mean anything from a personal contract with God to a specific and defined codex of Islamic law, as applied in countries such as Saudi Arabia. The ideas of the islamist movement became more defined and generally more strict over time. The IFC was at the time of independence aiming for a constitution with relatively vague references to Islam.

392 Abdelwahab A. M. Osman, 'The Political and Ideological Development' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1989), p. 113.

so successful, that the two sayyids came out with a communiqué in favour of "the heavenly Shari'a (… as the) source of legislation."[393] Prime Minister Ḫalīl, al-Ṣādiq al-Mahdī and others followed suit. According to ʿUṯmān, the sayyids had previously been "pleading difficulties emanating from secularist opposition within their own parties or inopportune circumstances (… while) encourag(ing) the IFC activists to carry on and even contribut(ing) funds to the IFC."[394] This points to the general argument of this section that the IFC was successfully connecting islamism with Islam, which made it difficult for any group of Islamic appeal to reject islamist ideas.

When the elections of 1958 came up, a split started to develop within the IFC. ʿUmar Baḫayt al-ʿAwād, the secretary of the IFC, was arguing that the front should field its own candidates in the election on a ʾUmmah Party ticket. The leadership of the ʾIḫwān on the other hand opposed this, arguing that the IFC should be non-partisan and that a failure to win the contested seats could be used by opponents as a popular vote against an Islamic constitution. The IFC did eventually not field any candidates, but al-ʿAwād decided to leave the ʾIḫwān and the ʾIḫwān withdrew partially from the IFC. This conflict however was prevented from being fully played out by the army coup in 1958.[395]

When ʾIbrāhīm ʿAbbūd took over power, at first the ʾIḫwān welcomed the move of the army. However, soon after their newspaper was shut down and their headquarters were later disbanded. Quickly ʾIḫwān support turned to hesitant resistance. In late 1959 Ṭāhir co-organised a counter coup attempt, which failed and Ṭāhir, who pleaded guilty, was jailed for five years. Ṭāhir had however acted to a large degree in secrecy, without informing the rest of the ʾIḫwān leadership. As a result, as ʿUṯmān put it, "the movement was left in disarray by the loss of its

393 Ibid., p. 114.

394 Ibid., p. 115.
According to al-Tiğānī the two Sayyids did rebuke the demands of the ICF. This however contradicts all other available sources. Eltigani Abdelgadir Hamid, 'Islam, Sectarianism and the Muslim Brotherhood' (SOAS London Ph.D. thesis, 1989), p. 229.

395 Abdelwahab A. M. Osman, 'The Political and Ideological Development' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1989), pp. 116-7.

leader and the controversy which engulfed it."[396] In the following years the role of the ʾIḫwān was marginal at best. When in 1961 ʿAbbūd had twelve leading opposition leaders arrested, none was a member of the group and when in July 1961 Ṣiddīq called for a meeting of the Front of Opposing Parties, the ʾIḫwān were not even invited.[397]

It was in this period when Turābī started to play a more important role. Turābī had joined the movement in college and had become the leader of the university branch in 1954. In 1955 however he went to read for a Masters degree in London. He briefly returned from 1957 to 1959, but then left to write a doctoral thesis at the Sorbonne in Paris. In 1962 he stayed in Sudan for an extended vacation, but he only returned permanently in 1964. In May 1962 he participated in the fifth congress of the constituent assembly of the movement. Turābī made a number of proposals, including the idea to transform the movement into something akin to the *Fabian Society* and to work in and through all political parties.[398] The suggestion was rejected. Equally a proposal to open up the structures of the movement, and to focus less on secrecy and indoctrination of individual members was rejected. Finally, a memorandum outlining the role of the movement in the struggle against ʿAbbūd was however approved.[399]

The Congress also resolved to remove Ṭāhir from the leadership and to install a collegial leadership, instead of an individual leader. ʿUṯmān showed at length how, in the early period of the movement, it was ridden by factionalism, but at the same time very few individuals were actually vying for the position of leadership and most were quick to give it up when challenged.[400] Over the following two years the ʾIḫwān continued their anti-regime activities, predominantly in the

396 Ibid., p. 122.

397 Ibid., pp. 124-5.

398 The Fabian Society was a socialist grouping, which attempted to reach a socialist society by a gradual and reformist approach instead of following a revolutionary path. The Fabian Society played an influential role in the foundation of the British Labour Party. Fabian ideas also strongly influenced the creation of the Baʿaṯ Party.

399 Gabriel R. Warburg, *Islam, Sectarianism, and Politics* (London, 2003), p. 180.Abdelwahab A. M. Osman, 'The Political and Ideological Development' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1989), pp. 125-8.

400 Ibid., pp. 129-31.

universities. In summer 1964 Turābī returned and the sixth Congress of the ʾIḫwān was held, at which a policy of escalation of resistance was adopted. Leaflets signed by the *Islamic Labour Movement* were distributed all over the country. In the same period the ʿAbbūd regime decided to allow public forums to discuss the issues in southern Sudan and on 9 September 1964, Turābī made the above mentioned speech at one such forum organised by the *Social Studies Society* at University of Khartoum. Turābī argued that the responsibility was clearly with the regime and only a democratisation of the government and, in essence, a regime change could lead to an end of conflict.[401] The regime decided to ban any further debates which, as discussed above, resulted in confrontation on 21 October. Turābī played an important role in the early hours of the disturbances, as ʿUṯmān succinctly summarised:

> "(He was) ferrying the wounded students in his car, advising the students to hold to the body of the dead student so as to prevent the government from taking it away to stop the 'political' funeral, and talking the reluctant family of the dead student into co-operating. Also on that same night Turabi visited leading politicians in their homes and lobbied them to participate in the funeral."[402]

Over the following days the situation escalated and more and more groups joined the protests. On 26 October the various professional groups met for the first time and formed the nucleus of the aforementioned Professional Front. The participants of this meeting were still predominantly members of the ʾIḫwān, but over the following days they were step by step sidelined by communists. The confrontation with the communists led the ʾIḫwān to side with the traditional parties.[403]

When Turābī returned in 1964, he was one of the first Sudanese to have received a PhD degree and his role in the October revolution increased his political standing. This allowed him to take control within the ʾIḫwān. In November 1964 Turābī succeeded in re-creating the position of the secretary general of the ʾIḫwān and to be elected as such. Turābī, who in 1962 had still preferred the model of an

401 Ibid., pp. 132-8.
402 Ibid., p. 140.
403 Ibid., p. 132-8.

intellectual pressure group, now pushed for the creation of a political party. Consequentially, on 6 December the formation of the *Islamic Charter Front* (ICF) was announced. Turābī was elected as secretary general of the ICF. The ICF was still distinct from the ʾIḫwān, but all public activities were to go through the ICF. The Front was able to muster limited support outside the movement, including some ʿulamāʾ, some ʾAnṣār al-Sunnah, and some Ṣūfī sheikhs from smaller Ṣūfī ṭarīqahs. With the ICF, Turābī finally had an organisation free of the constraints he had battled against among the ʾIḫwān; mainly rigid secrecy, cell structure and the high focus on individual indoctrination.[404]

The ICF ran in the elections as a political party whose primary demand was the call for an Islamic orientation of the country. The party was quite confident about its chances and fielded a hundred candidates, including fifteen candidates for the graduates' constituencies. The party eventually succeeded in two graduates constituencies, one of which was won by Turābī, and five geographical constituencies.[405] That meant that, on one hand, the ICF was overall weaker than the SCP, but on the other hand it succeeded in winning geographical constituencies, where the SCP all but failed.[406]

When, after the elections, the ʾUmmah and the NUP formed a government under Muḥammad ʾAḥmad Maḥğūb, the ICF like most small groups were sidelined and became a part of the opposition. The opposition was however neither united, nor ready to be so. When Ṭāhir, who had by that point been rehabilitated and had succeeded in winning the geographical seat in Qaḍārif, proposed a common opposition platform with the communists, he was forced out of the party and joined the NUP instead.[407] It was at this point in time that the ICF made its attempt

404 Ibid., pp. 147-51.

405 Niblock and Bechtold say that the ICF won three geographical constituencies, but Sudanese sources list five or even six. The precise number is however not extremely relevant for the argument.

406 Eltigani Abdelgadir Hamid, 'Islam, Sectarianism and the Muslim Brotherhood' (SOAS London Ph.D. thesis, 1989), p. 233.

Abdelwahab A. M. Osman, 'The Political and Ideological Development' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1989), p. 152.

407 Ibid., pp. 153-5.

to outlaw communism and to remove the SCP from the parliament, as I discussed above.

The ʾIḫwān's behaviour to the communists by that point in time resembled, as ʿUṯmān put it, paranoia. The ICF declared the battle with the communists to be their number one priority and launched a nation wide campaign against their ideology. They even managed to get a ruling from al-ʾAzhar University in Cairo, stating that all communists were to be considered as non-believers or *kuffār*. ʿUṯmān argued that even the ʾIḫwān assumed that they had little chance to ban the communists and that when they actually succeeded to get such a motion through parliament, this was "a victory beyond their wildest expectations."[408] When the Supreme Court decided that the action of parliament was unconstitutional, the Supreme Council of State asked a panel of three experts for advice, one of which, ironically was Turābī, the man who had provoked this constitutional crisis in the first place.[409] This clearly demonstrated the over-proportional impact of the islamists on the political debate, a point essential for the general argument of the chapter how and why the ideological parties were able to develop such relevance.

When the conflict between Ṣādiq and his uncle started to boil over, the ICF quickly chose sides and supported Ṣādiq. This support was motivated by three factors: Ṣādiq and Turābī had studied together in London, Ṣādiq had supported the call for an Islamic constitution in the 50s, and generally Ṣādiq seemed more open to the ideas of the ICF. Additionally Turābī was married to Ṣādiq's sister and at times lived at his house. The ICF support for Ṣādiq had at first only limited effects. The new government decided to outlaw prostitution and took some other minor steps which had long been demanded by the ʾIḫwān, more importantly, Ṣādiq's government formed a constitutional commission, in which the ICF was represented.[410]

---

408 Ibid., p. 162.
409 Ibid., pp. 161-70.
410 Gabriel R. Warburg, *Islam, Sectarianism, and Politics* (London, 2003), p. 181.
Abdelwahab A. M. Osman, 'The Political and Ideological Development' (Univ. of Reading

The constitutional debate was the second most important battleground for the ICF in the late 1960s. The important observation to make here is that the ICF managed to dominate the outcome of the discussions, without having anything close to a majority within the commission. This was mainly due to two aspects: firstly Turābī was a member of the *Technical Committee for Constitutional Studies,* which managed most of the practical work of the *National Commission for the Constitution*. Thanks to his academic merits he had over-proportional impact on the Technical Committee. Secondly the ICF tried everything possible to make the proceedings of the Commission more transparent and used that transparency to pressure members of the Commission in the press to take a more pious stance on issues.[411] This point also feeds into the argument regarding the influence of the islamists.

When, in May 1967, Ṣādiq's government was once again replaced by Maḥğūb, Ṣādiq's wing of the ʾUmmah, the ICF, and SANU, one of the Southern Parties, which I will discuss in the next chapter, formed the so-called *New Forces Congress*. In this context Turābī was ready to offer decentralisation to the southern Sudanese –and other regions in Sudan– in exchange for an Islamic constitution. Before the Commission for the Constitution could come to any decisions however, new elections were called. In these elections the graduates' constituencies were abolished and as a result the ICF won only five seats in the new parliament.[412] An even more important sign of the ICF's decline was that Turābī lost his home constituency.[413]

The election results were a blow for Turābī, who had already seen increasing opposition to his leadership since the relatively poor election result in 1965. The strange dual structure, with the ʾIḫwān on one side and the ICF on the other, increased potential friction. The organisational problems were increased by the creation of islamist organisations in the realm of the student, women and union movements, which were at least partially acting independently from both the ICF

Ph.D. thesis, 1989), p. 156.

411 Ibid., pp. 157-61.

412 Niblock gives the number as three.

413 Abdelwahab A. M. Osman, 'The Political and Ideological Development' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1989), pp. 170-3.

and the ʾIḫwān. After the 1965 election Turābī lost his position as leader of the ʾIḫwān and only remained secretary of the ICF.[414]

After the poor showing in the 1968 election Ǧaʿfar Šayḫ-ʾIdrīs and Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ ʿUmar, at the time leader of the ʾIḫwān, expressed their unhappiness with the ICF and ICF policies in the name of the ʾIḫwān. They belonged to the old-guard of the ʾIḫwān, who believed that political activity was not a priority issue and generally produced too few results. They wanted to focus on education and indoctrination instead. In April 1969 the General Congress of the ʾIḫwān was supposed to find a solution. As ʿUṯmān wrote: "The Congress was characterised by bitter exchanges, said by many to have been unprecedented in Ikhwan history."[415] Turābī's faction argued that open political activism was the only way forward. Eventually Turābī was able to convince the majority of his point of view, which ʿUṯmān put down to his charisma. The so-called educationalist school was purged from the movement and Turābī was reinstated as leader of the ʾIḫwān.[416]

There was however also a slightly different interpretation of these events. Some of the ʾIḫwān leaders actually argued that the Sudanese movement had been political from the start and that the political element was an integral element. Ǧaʿfar Šayḫ-ʾIdrīs himself argued:

> "I think from the atmosphere in which the movement was started, it was from the beginning political. Many people believe it was Turābī who changed the movement and made it political but this is false. It was political from the beginning."[417]

The transformation was not a politicisation but a change in character of the politics. ʾAḥmad ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān described this transition: "It was our concern (after the October revolution) to transform the party into a community party, because earlier it had been an elite party."[418] ʿAbd-al-Raḥīm ʿAlī described the consequences of this change:

414 Ibid., pp. 173-6.
415 Ibid., pp. 177-9.
416 Ibid., pp. 176-9.
417 Ǧaʿfar Šayḫ-ʾIdrīs, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 28 November 2010).
418 ʾAḥmad ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 26 December 2010).

> "In order to make it (the islamist movement) a popular movement of course meant the rules and the manners, even the philosophy, had to change in some ways and this was not taken easily by some members."[419]

According to this argument then, what the so-called educationalists were opposed to was not the politicisation of the movement as such, but the transformation of a political vanguard movement into a political mass movement, especially since this transformation seemed to have only limited success.

Similarly to the communists and as a reaction to their ideas, the islamist movement appeared in Sudan in the 1940s. Like the communists, the movement was first inspired from Egypt. Like the communists, it first spread among students. Like the communists, the movement formed around a central idea and leadership changed often. While not being recognised as sufficiently "anti-bourgeois" was the biggest threat to a leader in the communist party, not being sufficiently anti-communist was the issue for the islamists. Both movements were horizontally structured, knew how to operate in secrecy and at times acted through other parties, organisations and fronts.

The islamist movement, even more clearly than the communists, started their political project primarily as a pressure group. The aim of the movement was to influence the constitution writing process. The strength of the movement was a direct result of their skilful connection of Islam and islamism. Their political project was a transformative, theory-based endeavour, which was not necessarily compatible with the ideas and the interest of the ṭarīqahs. The two sayyids were nevertheless unable to publicly renounce the call for an Islamic constitution. The ʾIḫwān had succeeded in merging "Islam and -ism." Turābī believed that the movement would be even stronger as a party, but the results of this new approach were not as rapid as some had hoped and Turābī's position was briefly threatened. Eventually the politically minded members of the ʾIḫwān successfully took control of the organisation and Turābī's powers were confirmed.

419 ʿAbd-al-Raḥīm ʿAlī, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 2 February 2011).

The ability of the islamists to merge the perception of islamism and Islam is central in understanding how they were able to pressure other northern Sudanese groups, in particular the ʾUmmah. In the fifth chapter I argue that the contradictions of nation stories led to the inability of Sudanese parties to overcome the challenge of differing visions. From the moment the ʾUmmah decided or was forced to compromise on islamist ideas, it was no longer able to compromise with the regional parties discussed in the next chapter, as they diametrally opposed the vision of the islamists.

Counter Transformations

Both the communist and the islamist movements had a relative small presence in parliament, but had a high impact on political debates and developments. They were able to have such an impact because they managed to gather together a highly motivated and educated group of members, who took control over certain sectors of society. Both groups became vanguards of society, pushing the nation into two contradictory directions. But how did this happen? How did communism, and later islamism, become such a dominant ideology in Sudanese schools and universities? How could a book by a bearded German intellectual have such an attraction on young Sudanese nearly a century later? It is a question one can hardly answer by asking a communist. For a communist, very similar to the islamists, the attraction of communism is its fundamental truth. I argue that there are three aspects of communism, which made it attractive for Sudanese students; communism was academic, anti-colonial and international.

Communism as an ideology is highly academic. Marx argued that one could understand the laws of history and built an ideology on that understanding.[420]

420 The detailed idea of the *historical materialism* as it was developed by Marx and Lenin on the basis of Hegelian dialectics, is of course much more complex, but for the purpose of the argument here, this very brief summary is sufficient. Marx has elaborated in detail on his approach to history in many of his works, including *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* and *Das*

Therefore progress within a society is not dependant on luck or external factors, it is seen as inevitable. Young Sudanese grew up in a world of trains and steamships, radio and telegraph, international news and culture –a world vastly different from the world their parents had grown up in. The ṭarīqahs were the core of the social structure and the source of knowledge for their parents –in this new and modern world, they lacked actuality. Communism promised to describe society as precisely as mechanics describe a steamboat. The attraction of such a promise was arguably enormous. Additionally, it changed the way the structure of society was seen. In a ṭarīqah the sheikh was supreme and his ḫulafāʾ were the next level of authority. All these positions were filled by old men, who received these positions in consequence of a birth right. In this new movement however, authority could be achieved by knowledge, understanding, skill, and to a certain degree audacity. A man of twenty-five could be a leader and an authority for others, much older than him. Again it is clearly apparent why this would have been attractive for a young Sudanese eager to shape his or her society. Lastly, communism, being academic, values indoctrination, debate, learning, and comprehension. A young pupil in Ḥantūb may have been geographically removed from society for the time being, but he was able to prepare himself for the task ahead. Reading the texts and understanding the theory was already a political act, helping others even more so. Suʿād ʾIbrāhīm, one of the most influential women in the early communist party, explained: "You do not look at the oppressor as the only target. You first have to understand why and how oppression came about."[421] This means that communism could offer a student a meaningful role, even while still in secondary school.

Communism as an ideology was anti-colonial. Communism offered a theory of the exploitation of imperialism and held the promise that eventually the exploitation would end.[422] It furthermore discussed the role of the collaborating classes within the colonies and it was absolutely uncompromising in its

Kapital.

421 Suʿād ʾIbrāhīm, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 22 February 2010).

422 Woodward also stressed that the anti-imperial aspect of communism was the key which made it popular in Sudanese schools and universities before independence: Peter Woodward, *Sudan, 1898-1989: The Unstable State* (Boulder, 1989), pp. 82-3.

anti-colonial stance. All of this was fascinating to young students at a time when their politicians were cooperating with one or the other co-domini. Muḥammad ʾIbrāhīm Nuqud, who later became the secretary general of the SCP, remembered about his time as a student: "We were influenced by what the communists said about imperialism (… and) we (… became) affiliated with the communist party because (… it) put forward very clear slogans about national independence."[423] Furthermore as a result of its academic and anti-colonial stance, communism appeared as free of race. All men and all nations were supposed to be equal, which was a powerful idea at a time when Britain saw herself in her interactions with Sudan as a strict, but well-meaning mother, dealing with a child.

Lastly, communism was international. As a communist, no matter where you were and how old you were, you were part of something larger than life, an international movement. You were part of a brotherhood reaching from China to Chile and people like Che Guevara and Mao were your comrades in arms. Therefore communism was able to give the individual Sudanese and Sudan as a nation a role and value in the international struggle.

Additionally communism offered a solution to Sudanese questions, such as the inequality between the centre and the periphery and the inequality between the land-owning elites and the rest of the population.[424] For all these reasons communism spread at Sudanese schools and at the university like wildfire, soon the communists dominated student politics. It was in this context that students who came from the villages entered the schools. These students were strongly rooted in tradition and Islam and they rejected the areligious or atheist nature of communism. As Ǧaʿfar Šayḫ-ʾIdrīs remembered:

> "The beginning of the communist movement was a real challenge for a person like myself with a religious background. When they started, later they changed, but when they started they used to talk about atheism and so on."[425]

423 Muḥammad ʾIbrāhīm Nuqud, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 14 February 2010).

424 Nuqud mentioned those two aspects explicitly as additional reasons why he joined the communist party. Muḥammad ʾIbrāhīm Nuqud, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 14 February 2010).

425 Ǧaʿfar Šayḫ-ʾIdrīs, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 28 November 2010).

The religious students from the rural areas did however quickly grasp that traditional Sufism was not a potent answer to the challenge of communism.

The students began to look around and relatively early on they were exposed to some of the ideas of the ʾIḫwān in Egypt. They did not immediately join the movement, but slowly absorbed ideas until they eventually took up the name, without formally joining the Egyptian organisation. It is not the details, which matter most in this context, but the general notions of islamism. The ʾIḫwān and those inspired by them attempted three things: religiously, a rejection of the ritualistic nature of Sufism and its focus on holymen. The ʾIḫwān preached a religion, which was rationally based on the texts of Islam. Socially, they tried to update religious understanding to the realities of the present and find a way to make contemporary life and the contemporary world in general, including nation states and other phenomena, compatible with Islam. Politically, they tried to find a basis for a strong, independent and self-reliant nation. ʿAbd-al-Raḥīm ʿAlī summarised that:

> "People saw (… the Ṣūfī ṭarīqahs) as a classic, sort of unmodern thing. The ʾIḫwān were the modern expression of Islam –like communism was the modern expression of secularism."[426]

This resulting ideology fulfilled the same criteria, which made communism popular among the students. Religion was suddenly free of tradition, its understanding was academic. Comprehension of the texts and indoctrination became key aspects. Islamist students also read communist literature, such as Marx, and anti-communist books, in order to be able to debate with the communists at eye level. Dafʿ-Allāh al-Ḥāǧ, who joined the movement very early on in the 1950s, told me that they read a book called *The GOD that failed*,[427] which collected six essays by ex-communists, discussing their disillusionment with and abandonment of communism.[428] As with communism, authority among the islamists was based on individual qualities, not on age and birth rights. The

426 ʿAbd-al-Raḥīm ʿAlī, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 2 February 2011).
427 Richard Crossman (Ed.), *The GOD that failed, A Confession* (New York, 1949).
428 Dafʿ-Allāh al-Ḥāǧ, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 9 February 2011).

ideology was clearly anti-colonial and while communism claimed to be race free, islamism could additionally claim to be rooted in the Arab world. Thirdly islamism too was an international project. ʿAbd-al-Raḥīm ʿAlī shared with me the memory how they read texts by the Pakistani author ʾAbū-al-ʾAʿlā Mawdūdī, published in a magazine called al-Muslimūn by the Egyptian scholar Saʿīd Ramaḍān, at the time based in Switzerland.[429] Similar to communism, islamism was a calling with a global outlook.

In essence, Sudanese islamism in its nature and outlook was more similar to communism than to the traditional Ṣūfī ṭarīqahs and parties.[430] Sudanese islamism was a transformative movement with a vision of the future, which was trying to overcome traditional rituals, beliefs and social structures. Both movements were rooted in a strong theoretical base, which made them very different even from the ʾAšiqqāʾ. Both movements understood themselves as small groups which were trying to push the society as a whole forward. They represented the vanguards on the respective ways forward, it was just that the groups had very contradictory visions how that future should have looked like.[431]

As vanguard movements they were similarly structured and they influenced society by similar methods. As movements, they were organised around a central set of ideas and indoctrination was key. When the idea spread, the movement grew. In effect, each member was, to a certain degree, able to act in the name of

429 ʿAbd-al-Raḥīm ʿAlī, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 2 February 2011).

430 The Sudanese islamists resembled islamist movements elsewhere in this regard. As Fred Halliday argued, "the Islamist movements (in the Arab world) were beneficiaries and inheritors of the secular nationalist agenda." For a more detailed account see: Fred Halliday, 'Nationalism in the Arab World since 1945', in: John Breuilly, *The History of Nationalism* (Oxford 2013), p. 445.

431 Of course this perspective is very Sudan-centric. Neither authors who wrote on Sudan in the 1960s or early 1970s, nor authors who write about Sudan today, usually subscribe to this view. For example for both Bechtold and Niblock, the frame of analysis was the Cold War. As a result the communists were important, no matter how many seats in parliament they had, while the islamists seemed to be a relatively obscure movement. With the implementation of Islamic law in the 1980s, this changed, and since 11 September 2001, the global frame of reference has been completely re-calibrated. Therefore, from a perspective of Warburg in his most recent work, the communists were irrelevant and the islamists were key. While Bechtold and Niblock saw certain policy parallels between the communists and the NUP, as well as Ṣādiq's ʾUmmah, Warburg pointed at parallels between the islamists and the NUP and the ʾUmmah. Even if one admits to all these parallels, nevertheless when it came to their emergence, structure and impact on the political debate, the islamists and communists were similar to each other and clearly different to the traditional parties.

the movement, because the final source of truth was not the leadership of the party but the text, be it *Das Kapital* or *al-Qurʾān*. Loyalties were connected to the ideology, not some old men.[432] The resulting organisations were horizontally stratified, which meant they were more flexible, had more strongly committed members, and could more easily mobilise than the traditional movements.

The communists additionally learned from the communist parties outside of Sudan. They created similar structures, with a *politburo* at the centre. They also brought in the idea of the political front, which allowed them to cooperate with others, without compromising their own ideas. Even the cell structure, in which new members were indoctrinated, was imported from outside.[433] The islamists copied most of this quickly and effectively, especially the idea of the front. While the communists had the *Anti Imperialist Front*, the islamists had the *Islamic Front for the Constitution*. The islamists also adopted a cell-type structure. Muḥammad ʿUṯmān, who had been a member of the movement since the early 1950s, remembered how all members were organised into so-called families of five or six, in which reading and discussion would take place, multiple families were connected in so-called departments.[434] The impact of the communist model of organisation was however even more far-reaching than that. Even the traditional parties soon recognised the superiority of communist organisation and eventually even the ʾUmmah had a politburo.[435] Nabīl ʿĀbid, who was a member of the

432 It appears that in the case of the communists the loyalty to the movement nearly cancelled out the role of the individual, at least on the level of relating about events. In my interviews I had great difficulties to convince old communist leaders to speak about their personal experiences. References were always made to the collective "we," either as in "we, the communist party" or "we, the communists in the school." While in the case of the communists this was striking, with the islamists this was less the case.

433 The cell structure had before also existed during the White Flag uprising and it is of course possible that the inspiration for the communists came from this period rather than the cell structure of the communists in Egypt. However the latter is arguably more probable. The cell structure of the White Flag was also possibly inspired by the communists. "The secret cell system which both Leagues employed as a base for political organization was, undoubtedly, an innovation in Sudanese politics (…). It cannot be stated definitely whether the idea of the cell was conceived locally or 'diffused' to the Sudan through or form Egypt. But, it is possible that the examples of the Turkish nationalist organization, the Society of Union and Progress and the Egyptian Communist Party, both of which operated on the basis of clandestine cells, had been emulated by the Sudanese nationalists." Hasan Abdin, *Early Sudanese Nationalism* (Khartoum, 1985), p. 112.

434 Muḥammad ʿUṯmān, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 3 February 2011).

435 When exactly the ʾUmmah introduced the politburo and why it was called this, still remains unclear to me. It might have been a result of the reforms after the death of Ṣiddīq al-Mahdī. Woodward also pointed to this date: Peter Woodward, 'Parties and parliaments', in Muddathir

communists in the 1950s and 60s, argued that the communists were the only party with an effective organisational structure in the formative years of political parties in Sudan. For this reason, other parties emulated the communist model to create their own organisational structures.[436]

Without doubt, the most important decision of the communists was to get involved directly in all kinds of social organisations from workers' unions, students' and women's organisations and so on. As Tiğānī al-Ṭayyib Bābikir pointed out, this did not mean that all union members were communists, but the unions happily used the experience of the communists, especially when entering periods of worker struggles. "Whenever there were demands for better conditions, they would bring in the communists, and whenever they thought it was better to cool down, they brought in the others."[437] The islamists followed the communists in this endeavour and sometimes outdid them. This engagement of the islamist movement in the unions was unique and in part due to their development as a counter movement to the communists. Ğaʿfar Šayḫ-ʾIdrīs remembered:

> "We are different from other Islamic organisations and again this is because of the influence of the communists, because there was competition between us and the communists. We were I think the first Islamic organisation that had activities in the unions, in the trade unions. This was not the case in Egypt or Pakistan. But because of the competition between us and the communists we used to compete with them in every field that they entered."[438]

Especially at the universities the islamists were a serious challenge to the communists. Other parties failed to do this and, as a result, the communists and islamists had a very strong influence on certain social sectors. Additionally the specific issues tackled by each of the groups, granted them influence with specific

---

Abd Al-Rahim, *et al.* (eds.), Sudan Since Independence (Hants, 1986), p. 54. Arguably, after the communist model had served as the model for political parties *per se*, the term politburo was not considered as communist anymore, but as standard terminology. The ʾUmmah politburo had existed at least since the mid 1960s, according to: Sārah Nuqd-Allāh, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 3 February 2011).

436 Nabīl ʿĀbid, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 8 February 2011).

437 Tiğānī al-Ṭayyib Bābikir, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 11 February 2010).

438 Ğaʿfar Šayḫ-ʾIdrīs, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 28 November 2010).

sections of the elite.

Two good examples of how the different groups were able to use their networks are related to the constitution. When, in the 1950s, ʾAzharī attempted to outlaw the communists, they successfully rallied journalists and many legal professionals and state employees to their cause as well. They could do so partially by relying on their own members and supporters, but more importantly the communists were seen as the strongest defenders of civil liberties and could easily argue that this was an attack on exactly those liberties. Essentially, they managed to connect their case and civil liberties in general in the public perception and ʾAzharī eventually gave up.[439] The islamists on the other hand, during the various constitutional debates, used their impact on ʾimāms and the muftī to pressure the sayyids and various political leaders. They rallied them to their ranks partly thanks to their supporters and partly because they were generally seen to be the most Islamic of the political forces. Essentially, they managed to connect islamism and Islam –or being a good Muslim– in general in the public perception. Eventually the sayyids and a number of others came out in support of an Islamic constitution.[440]

1964 was the revolutionary moment both of these organisations had been waiting for. They could not have made it happen without help though. The ʿAbbūd regime had weakened itself with the conflict in the south and, due to many of its policies, the junta was becoming increasingly unpopular. While a speech by Turābī marked the beginning of the events, it was not him but more the heavy-handed reaction of the police, the raiding of the girls' dormitories and finally the death of a student, which unleashed the public uproar. A professor of University of Khartoum, who was a student in 1964, told me, that she was not interested in politics at the time, but "on 22 October we were all on the streets." It did not matter if you were in the NUP or the ʾUmmah or if you were a

439 Gabriel R. Warburg, *Islam Nationalism and Communism* (London, 1978), pp. 99-100.
440 Abdel Salam Sidahmed, *Politics and Islam in Contemporary Sudan* (Surrey, 1997), pp. 64-5.

communist. This was not about politics, "it was a revolution."[441]

The two ideological movements were quick to move. They had maintained their organisations underground. Their cell structure had helped them to do that. In addition, the horizontal stratification meant that people could be mobilised quickly. The traditional parties had lost their offices and institutions and needed to regroup first before they were able to apply any sort of pressure on anyone. The following months proved that, at least for the present, the communists were still the masters of the game and the islamists had only copied them, not improved on their practices. But once the traditional parties had rebooted, they were again stronger than the communists and, after the immediate revolution was over, the communists lost control. It is interesting to note though, that the primary pressure came from the ʾUmmah via the ʾAnṣār, which at least in parts had certain parallels to the two transformative ideological movements.

The communists were strong among a certain stratum of society, but the educated class, the labourers and others who participated fully in the monetised economy, were still a minority of the population as a whole. The islamists, as they learned in the 1965 election, were in a similar, weak position. Many people might have superficially agreed with their platform, but still voted according to tribal or ṭarīqah allegiance. Especially because of the FPTP voting system, the ability of small parties to gain direct parliamentary influence was limited.

Nevertheless the ideological parties were destabilising factors for the ʾUmmah and the NUP. While the islamists primarily posed a challenge to the ʾUmmah, the communists were a problem for the NUP. The challenge of the communists was threefold: Firstly, because of FPTP voting, if NUP gave up ten per cent of the votes to the communists in a constituency, they could easily lose that electoral district to the ʾUmmah; secondly, because the communists attracted young, well educated people who would have otherwise been natural supporters of the NUP, the communists reduced the campaign strength of the NUP considerably; and thirdly,

441 Personal discussion.

the NUP's vision of a modernised Sudan, with high levels of education created a society where counter-intuitively more people would support the communists and less the NUP, since the communists were stronger than the NUP among the new graduates.

This challenge was problematic for the NUP, primarily because the NUP understood itself as the party representing the sector of society integrated into the monetised economy. As Nabīl ʿĀbid argued: "ʾAzharī was against the communists because he was aware that they were addressing very much the same constituencies (as NUP)."[442] The NUP was not communist, but in part socialist in outlook. It was more open to development aid from Russia and it generally supported a stringent non-alignment policy. The communists could claim to take the NUP platform to its logical conclusion. In consequence the NUP had to sharpen their profile in regard to civil liberties, worker rights and social support systems. Doing so, they alienated the more conservative section of the PDP. While early on the NUP worked together with the communists in certain areas, soon after they attempted to deal with communists by banning them. Such an attempt by ʾAzharī failed in the 1950s. It explains why ʾAzharī so quickly supported the call by the islamists to ban the communists in the 1960s.

The challenge by the islamists to the ʾUmmah functioned similarly. In the combination of the ʾUmmah with the ʾAnṣār, the party had a clear religious characteristic. The demand by the islamists for a state organised on Islamic rules, an idea that had, in a slightly different form, also been proposed by the Mahdī in the late 19th century, was an idea the ʾUmmah could not reject off-hand. The problem for the ʾUmmah was that firstly, the ʾAnṣār as a religious group were not going to get any gains from an Islamic constitution and secondly the ʾUmmah as a party had attracted many conservative, but in essence secular members. That meant that, had it propagated a strictly Islamic constitution, the party stood to alienate many of its members. On the other hand, it would have potentially risked

442 Nabīl ʿĀbid, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 8 February 2011).

its religious credibility, had it moved too explicitly against the islamists.[443]

During the period of Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān, the reaction was two-pronged. On one hand, the leaders of the ʾAnṣār declared their support for the islamists and, to a degree, even supported them financially, but the members of the party voted in favour of a secular constitution in the constitutional committee. Ṣādiq later on moved his wing of the ʾUmmah closer to the islamists and supported their cause in the constitutional committee. This decision might have been a result of the conflict between himself with his uncle, the ʾimām, and therefore aligning himself with the islamists gave him and his wing the religious credibility, which the ʾimām and his wing had *per se*. These examples show how the splits in the NUP and the ʾUmmah were aggravated when they attempted to shift their own positions to react to the political challenges posed by the ideological parties. This point supports the argument in the fifth chapter as to why Sudanese politicians failed to overcome the danger of contradictory nation stories.

The revolutionary moment gave the ideological parties an opportunity to influence politics concretely. Before and after this brief window of opportunity, their influence was more indirect. One key reason for their relative weakness was that they were often pitted against each other. Al-Ṭayyib Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, who had been a member of the islamist movement since the 1950s, argued, that the islamists' primary focus was not to gain influence themselves, but to reduce the influence of the communists, which they saw as their "anti-thesis."[444] The islamist movement had been founded as a reaction to the communists; it was the anti-islamist campaign by the communists which forced the islamists out in the open. At the university, and in other places, both sides could not exploit their full strength regarding shared issues, such as their anti-colonialist stance, because they were focused on fighting each other. The fact that their two transformative visions were in many ways diametrically opposed, prevented them from cooperating.

443 Al-Tiğānī discussed the inherent logic of this challenge of the islamists to the ʾUmmah in detail: Eltigani Abdelgadir Hamid, 'Islam, Sectarianism and the Muslim Brotherhood' (SOAS London Ph.D. thesis, 1989), pp. 223-6.

444 Al-Ṭayyib Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 24 January 2011).

Nevertheless both had to react to the vision of the other, which weakened their own position. The communists were drawn into the religious debate, which they attempted to avoid by de-emphasising marxian atheist statements. Nevertheless, it was this debate which led to them being banned in 1965. The islamists on the other hand, were stringently anti-communist, but needed to be open to workers, students, farmers, and women's issues. This forced them to toe the line of being simultaneously socialist and anti-communist. The difficulties of doing this are demonstrated in the role of al-Rašīd al-Ṭāhir, who was first in the leadership, was then removed, rehabilitated once more and finally removed once again. As it was difficult for the people's parties to shift their positions, it was difficult for the ideological parties to compromise on their main beliefs, which further supports the argument in the fifth chapter why no grand deal could be achieved.

Nevertheless they remained players within the political game, and played a role much greater than their membership numbers would have suggested. The communists, even though outlawed, fought back so fiercely and successfully, that they aggravated the constitutional crisis. The islamists started to play such an important role in the constitutional commission, that finding an agreement, especially with the southerners, became increasingly difficult. The ideological parties might have not appeared to be big factor from the electoral results, but they remained influential in the shadows –the communists and islamists were both spectres haunting Sudanese politics.

There are four points to take away from this in regard to my over-arching questions: firstly, the communists and the islamists were both transformative vanguard movements; secondly, both movements were strong in certain sectors and, thanks to superior mobilisation, were able to strongly impact on public debate; thirdly, both movements, thanks to their horizontal organisation, were able to make use of revolutionary moments but were at a disadvantage in direct parliamentary competition, because of the FPTP system; and fourthly, the effect of both movements can clearly be seen in how they disturbed the traditional parties and forced them to react.

In regards to the formulation of a nation story, the vanguard movements specifically activated the elites, which played a large part in this process. Neither of the projects however was truly rooted in broader society. The communist project had started to influence organised labour and farming, but the average farmer in the Nuba Mountains was still worrying about much more basic things. Similarly, the islamist project was gaining some support among Islamic scholars and ʾimāms, but in the villages religion was lived as ritual and beyond that, life followed local custom, and was more or less opposed to the academic religiosity of the ʾIḫwān. In consequence the vanguard movements induced a schism between the elites and the average population, which added to all the other fragmentations of the political system and the nation story.

Conclusion

When ʿAbbūd took over power in 1958, the military argued that sovereignty was under threat, parliament was ineffective, and that the economy was in shambles and therefore the military had to move in to save the day. During the first years the military's effectiveness fostered a more productive economic policy. Economic growth seemed to prove the military right. At the same time however, the military started to lose control in the south and, once economic growth started to slow and the civil war in the south became more and more expensive, public opinion turned against the generals. After a night of battles between the police and students at the dormitories of Khartoum University, the people took to the streets and the junta stepped down.

At first it was the islamists, in particular Turābī, who tried to shape events, but soon after the communists were able to take control, not through their party, but instead through the unions and trade federations, which controlled the majority in the new transitional government. It is possible that the islamists recognised the potential of the events before the communists did, but the communists were still

more closely engrained in the various organisations of the modern sectors of society and, in this struggle between these two counter transformations, they won this round.

The control of the communists over the unions and trade federations was not direct. While the traditional parties with their vertical organisation, had institutions under their direct control, such as the ʾAnṣār or the youth wings, the unions were not part of the communists. Their aims were parallel to those of the communists and therefore members of the SCP were able to take leading positions within the unions. It was in essence an allegiance to an idea, not a structure or an individual. This horizontal and more organic structure survived underground more effectively and was therefore perfectly suited for such a revolutionary moment.

The traditional groups reacted quickly, revived their organisations, reopened their offices and reconstructed their hierarchies. Once they had successfully done so, they used their full organisational capacity to fight back. The ʾUmmah brought the ʾAnṣār in from the villages to stage street protests in Khartoum. Eventually they succeeded in shoving the communists out of the cabinet. In the following elections, which are discussed in detail in the next chapter, the ideological parties only won a small number of seats. However, it would be a mistake to believe that these parties were therefore negligible. Their role was simply not as apparent; they were the "spectres" of the political discourse.

Both movements had developed primarily at schools and Gordon College, based on ideas imported from abroad. They also were able to learn methods and structures from their counterparts abroad. Both organisations experienced many changes in leadership, which showed that ideas were relatively more important but people less important than in the traditional NUP and ʾUmmah. This type of organisation and the attractiveness of the transformative ideology allowed the two movements to get virtually exclusive control over the university and strong control in other unions and organisations.

In essence they gained widespread influence within certain parts of the elite. This in turn reflected on the Sudanese nation story, as it introduced a primary focus on religion, with the communists being in clear opposition to an Islamic constitution and the islamists being in favour. It also forced the traditional parties to re-orientate. The ʾUmmah and the NUP reacted quite differently to this challenge. The NUP tried to outlaw the communists, whereas the ʾUmmah tried to embrace the islamists. This of course produced additional pressure on the already fractured nature of the big two. The debate about an Islamic constitution also added an additional dimension to the regional conflict discussed in the next chapter. In conclusion, the counter transformations proposed by the ICF and the SCP fragmented the nation story on yet another level, by proposing two contradictory ways forward.

IV. Everywhere Periphery

This chapter focuses on the role of regional movements in the southern Sudan, most importantly the *Southern Front* and the *Sudan African National Union* (SANU), and northern Sudan, mainly the *General Union of the Nuba Mountains* (GUN), the *Beja Congress*, and the *Dār-Fur Development Front* (DDF). Regional parties are especially relevant in my context, as they present another type of political party, which further diversified the political system. Their primary demand was some sort of decentralisation or federalism and therefore, they added an additional dimension to the constitutional debate. Additionally, they played a role within the debate about a Sudanese identity. They represented conceptions of heterogeneous identity, without one singular dominant cultural theme, by adding and underlining regional and ethnical affiliation as identity markers.

The main theme of the chapter is that, due to the failure of the political elites to propound an inclusive Sudanese identity, every region outside of the capital had the potential to be or to perceive of itself as marginalised and peripheral. The regional movements emerged due to the monopolisation of power in the centre and the lack of an inclusive national identity. At the same time these various movements failed to come together to form a real challenge to the centre, because they too failed to propose a coherent national vision. These movements were triggered by decolonisation and counter-intuitively were a result of the transformation of subjects into citizens. Lastly I will argue, that it was William Deng's populist attempt to propose a shared African identity for various Sudanese groups, which coincided with the creation of Ṣādiq's New Forces Congress, which triggered the emergence of the concept of an inclusive Arab identity in a political context.

While the emergence of regional parties as a group is specifically relevant in regards to the about nation stories, their inability to form one unified front is relevant when looking at the issue of coalition politics and the failure of Sudanese politicians to confront the challenge of disparate nation stories.

This chapter is mainly based on interviews and previous research. To complement those, I used material from the Comboni Mission archives in Rome. John Howell's seminal thesis on southern Sudanese politics is the basis for the section about southern regional parties. Interviews and the documents in Rome were mainly used to understand the conflict between SANU and the Southern Front, and to understand motivation, communication networks and the element of trust and distrust.

In the section about northern regional parties, the books by ʾAḥmad ʿUṯmān Tolanab and Muḥammad Adarob Ohaj are the base of my material for the Beja history. In the Nuba mountains the theses by Babiker and Battahani were helpful for the colonial history and the immediate postcolonial context. Relatively little has been written on the DDF. I attempted to conduct as many interviews as possible and I was particularly successful in regards to the GUN and the DDF. As in the case of the southern parties I used newspaper articles from this period to verify my sources as much as possible.

The interviews with southern Sudanese were all conducted one-on-one, partially in public places, partially in their homes or offices, in Juba, Khartoum, London and Oxford. Most of my interviewees remain politically active and the interviews were conducted around the times of elections, and then shortly before the referendum. Accordingly I have attempted to account for the fact that certain personal conflicts might be more affected by current political events than what has happened in the 50s and 60s. The interviews with members of the northern regional movements were conducted in London, Bonn, Khartoum, Port Sudan and Kadugli. Again most interviews were conducted as one-on-one, except for the interviews with members of GUN, which were conducted at Yūsif Ǧibrīl's house, who supported me as a facilitator. As all of these regions have experienced heavy

periods of fighting after the 60s, it is to be expected that certain ideas about identity have hardened. I have attempted to account for that mostly by using newspaper articles.

The contribution of the chapter is threefold. First of all, it is the first broad analysis of northern regional groups in the 1960s, which I am aware of. Secondly the chapter analyses the links and lack of links between the northern and southern regional movements. Lastly the chapter tries to evaluate southern politics in Khartoum on their own merit, instead, as has usually been done, looking at southern politics in Khartoum specifically in the context of the southern civil war and potential southern secession.

The chapter has the same basic structure as the previous ones. The first part continues the discussion of the historical narrative. The preceding chapter covered the regime of ʾIbrāhīm ʿAbbūd, the October revolution and the transitional period. In this chapter I will look at the elections at the end of the transitional period in April 1965 and discuss the democratic governments of the following four years, until the coup of Numayrī in 1969. During this period regional parties had their greatest impact yet. In the second part of the chapter, I will discuss the southern political movements and parties, starting from their emergence before independence to their full institutional development in the 1960s. The third part focuses on the three most important northern regional movements. This is followed by an analysis in the fourth section and the conclusions.

Back to the Future

The new parliament that was elected in 1965, had unclear majorities and, due to the lack of elections in southern Sudan, an unclear legitimacy to deal with one of the country's most pressing problems. The parliament had 173 seats, 15 of which were elected as part of the graduates' constituencies. The ʾUmmah won

seventy-six seats and became the strongest party in the new parliament. It was just seven seats short of a majority. The NUP gained fifty-four seats and together all other parties and independents gained forty-three seats. The new parliament had, for the first time ever, sizeable contingencies from both the communists and the islamists. Most astonishing however, was probably the large number of seats gained by the Beja Congress and the General Union of the Nuba Mountains in their respective regions.

While the ʾUmmah probably could have formed a coalition with one or more of the smaller parties or independents, they chose to form a grand coalition with the NUP, which controlled three quarters of the seats in parliament. The formation of this coalition was probably mostly motivated by the wish for stability, directly after the end of the post-ʿAbbūd transition. The two parties agreed that the ʾUmmah should hold the premiership, for which it nominated Muḥammad ʾAḥmad Maḥğūb, and in return ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī was elected as member of the Supreme Council of State. The constitution was also changed, so that ʾAzharī could become the permanent chairman of the Council, a position which had previously rotated. The Supreme Council was a council of five, which was to take the place of what is the queen in Britain or the president in Germany, with closely defined and limited constitutional powers, mostly representative in practice.

ʾAzharī however was not ready to retire from day-to-day politics. Soon after Maḥğūb and ʾAzharī clashed over who should represent Sudan at an African summit conference in Accra in October 1965. Maḥğūb forced his will through and as a result the NUP ministers in his government resigned. The way ʾAzharī used his position in the Supreme Council and the way his party's ministers resigned from the government, when he could not get what he wanted, showed, as Bechtold pointed out, how the Supreme Council became politicised. The once diffuse nature of power of the Council, was now centralised in the hands of ʾAzharī.[445] At the same time a growing number of Sudanese from all parts of the political spectrum were dissatisfied with the leadership of Maḥğūb. As mentioned earlier, this went hand in hand with a growing conflict between Ṣādiq and his

445 Peter K. Bechtold, *Politics in Sudan* (New York, 1976), p. 242.

uncle and as a result Maḥǧūb and ʾImām al-Hādī increasingly bound together their political futures.

During Maḥǧūb's first term the ICF motioned to outlaw communism in Sudan, as already discussed earlier. When eventually the Supreme Court decided that this was unconstitutional, the government, with the support of the Supreme Council of State, decided to overrule the court. In the same period when parliament outlawed communism, discussions began about outlawing all kinds of secessionist ideas and organisations. The regional political parties in the southern and northern provinces, discussed later in this chapter, believed that this law was directed against them or could potentially be used against them.[446] This perception was probably not completely wrong, considering that the prime minister called on the media not to report on regional movements any more.[447] Eventually nothing came of it, but it is nevertheless a strong indicator of the political atmosphere at that time and how the constitution was increasingly being used as a political weapon. This point is essential in regard to the argument in the final chapter, how groups stopped recognising each other as part of the nation and then tried to push the other out of the political playing field.

After another couple of months of political bickering, in June 1966 the NUP removed their confidence from Maḥǧūb and elected Ṣādiq as the new prime minister. As a result the majority in parliament decreased, as Ṣādiq was only supported by one part of the ʾUmmah, with the ʾimām's wing being practically part of the opposition. As Bechtold pointed out, during his brief first premiership, Ṣādiq tried to build an effective government and to follow through with an ambitious political programme.[448] Due to the instability inside the ʾUmmah and the ʾAnṣār mentioned earlier, and due to ʾAzharī's attempt to constantly maximise his influence, Ṣādiq's government remained unstable. He tried to solve this by rallying additional support by holding by-elections in the South, but the result was not decisive enough.

446 Al-Sūdān al-Ǧadīd, 24 May 1965, p. 1.
447 Al-ʾAyām, 20 June 1965, pp. 1 & 8.
448 Peter K. Bechtold, *Politics in Sudan* (New York, 1976), p. 245.

Since the election of Maḥǧūb as prime minister in 1965 the situation in the southern provinces had increasingly spun out of control. After the round-table negotiations had all but failed, Anya-Nya rebel activity increased continuously, and Maḥǧūb believed that the only way to deal with the southern issue was by force. Only months after the formation of the Maḥǧūb government, the army committed two massive massacres in the two southern cities Juba and Wau. In Juba a large number of people were killed indiscriminately, and at the same time members of the southern elite were deliberately sought out and shot. In Wau, a wedding party at which many southern government officials were present, was raided and many well-known and important southern leaders were killed. Nearly every one of my interviewees in southern Sudan, from the older generation, mentioned that family members or friends were killed at that time in Juba and Wau.[449] These two incidents, probably more than any other, destroyed any trust between the southern and the northern politicians, which had just started to be regained after the October revolution. These incidents were central for the hardening of networks of trust and distrust, which lead to the inability of the southern parties to fully enter negotiations with the north.

Ṣādiq's government was probably slightly more popular in southern Sudan than Maḥǧūb. Ṣādiq worked together with William Deng and SANU, one of the southern parties. Nevertheless they failed to bring peace. It was in this context that the 1967 by-elections in southern Sudan were held. The Southern Front, the other southern political party, decided to boycott the elections due to continuing instability. As the Southern Front had actually feared, a large number of the elected were northern Sudanese, which was mostly due to the way the elections were held and the instability of the area. The southern politician Hilary Logali commented on this election:

> "The simple explanation why a large number of Northerners were elected was that in many constituencies the army and the police were virtually the only people on the electoral rolls. In other areas, e.g. government resettlement schemes, the Southern voters were so dependent on the

449 One example for this was Ambrose Tiik, who during our interview called in his wife, who was one of the survivors of the Wau massacre, but not all of her friends and family survived. Ambrose Tiik, *Personal Interview* (Juba, 29 November 2010).

security forces for protection, food etc. that they voted in the way they were told."[450]

Shortly after these by-elections, on 15 May 1967, Ṣādiq lost a vote in parliament and once again Maḥǧūb was elected as prime minister, now supported by a coalition of NUP, PDP, some of the southern parliamentarians and the ʾimām's wing of the ʾUmmah.[451] The second government of Maḥǧūb was even less stable than the first one as he himself admitted.[452] The opposition, under the leadership of Ṣādiq, launched two unsuccessful attempts to unseat the government. After that Maḥǧūb and his supporters decided to hold new elections, hoping to establish a more clear-cut and stable situation. By now ʾAzharī had succeeded to re-unite the NUP and the PDP to form the new *Democratic Unionist Party* (DUP). Therefore he was positive that new elections would be in his favour. In consequence, the Supreme Council of State under ʾAzharī's leadership dissolved the assembly.[453]

The elections of 1968 were a fierce battle between factions. The ʾUmmah of ʾImām al-Hādī fought against the ʾUmmah of Ṣādiq, the two southern parties battled against each other. Even within the newly united DUP, often former candidates of the NUP and former members of the PDP were running against each other. In the end, the election was a success for ʾAzharī. The DUP took 101 of the 227 seats, the ʾUmmah of Ṣādiq won 36, the ʾUmmah of the ʾImām 30, and a number of undeclared general ʾUmmah won 6 seats. The northern regional parties lost some of the seats they had gained in 1965, the two southern parties won 15 and 10 seats respectively.

In the direct aftermath of the election, the government remained more or less as before with Maḥǧūb as prime minister, but this time his party was in a clear

450 Justin Willis, Atta el-Battahani, and Peter Woodward, *Elections in Sudan* (London, 2009), p. 20.

451 Peter K. Bechtold, *Politics in Sudan* (New York, 1976), p. 245.

452 Mohamed Ahmed Mahgoub, *Democracy on Trial* (London, 1974), p. 201.

453 The constitutionality of this act was questionable and the opposition tried to stop elections in the courts, but after the previous constitutional crisis, the courts were not eager to be drawn once again into daily politics: Muddathir Abdel-Rahim, 'Changing Patterns of Civilian-Military Relations in the Sudan', *Research Report of the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies*, no. 46 (1978), pp. 22-3.

minority to its coalition partner and the Southern Front joined the coalition. The following months various changes of coalitions and parties were discussed between the different groups and many rumours were flying around Khartoum,[454] but none of these came to anything. In the following year the government did little in practical terms for the Sudanese. Maḥǧūb himself admitted that he was focused on Arab affairs in context with the Six Day War and the crisis in Yemen, although he also pointed out some of the successes of his government.[455] Manṣūr Ḫālid on the other hand, described the events more critically: "Once again the leading politicians exhausted their energies in the intra- and inter-party feuds, neglecting, in the process, an ailing economy, a divided country and an escalating civil war."[456] This point feeds the argument in the fifth chapter, how the political system was destabilised by failing to deliver real policy outcomes to the citizens.

In April 1969, just after the re-unification of the two wings of the ʾUmmah, the party managed to gain the support of the two southern parties, many independents and some dissatisfied members of the DUP, with the plan to change the government. On 24 April the prime minister handed in his resignation, while agreeing to stay on until a new government would be formed. On 7 May the ʾUmmah and the DUP announced that they had found an agreement both for the formation of a new government, but more importantly also on the deadlock regarding the constitution. It remains unclear however if this new arrangement would have been any more successful and would have indeed produced any tangible results. On 25 May 1969 the second Sudanese democracy was ended by a military coup under the leadership of Ǧaʿfar Muḥammad al-Numayrī.

The period between 1965 and 1969 was in many ways a return to the politics before ʿAbbūd, but in an aggravated form. Arguably this was the case because in the 1950s Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī and Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī had played a stabilising role. Additionally the real or felt threat from Egypt at different times might have added to that. More importantly, the intensity of the

454 Mansour Khalid, *The Government They Deserve* (London, 1990), p. 227.
455 Mohamed Ahmed Mahgoub, *Democracy on Trial* (London, 1974), p. 203.
456 Mansour Khalid, *The Government They Deserve* (London, 1990), p. 226.

constitutional crisis had escalated year by year and this crisis was now the main cause of the political instability. What had begun with the search for a constitution and a basic disagreement between northern and southern Sudanese, had escalated into a civil war in the south. In the north the outlawing of the communists and the following struggles between the constitutional court and the government shook the foundation of the state.

If in the 1950s the question of sovereignty was supreme, in the later 1960s the question of constitutionality reigned. As a result the distrust between parties and within parties grew even stronger and only being in power promised protection from power itself. This growing distrust led to an increased shuffling of allegiances, which in turn led to an increased cost to maintain alliances. Politicians became increasingly occupied by this, instead of being able to focus on actual political actions and political outcomes. To say it with the words of Abraham Lincoln, the Sudanese democracy increasingly was only "government by the people," but not anymore "government for the people."[457]

This last point is central for the argument in the fifth chapter, why the Sudanese political system became so unstable. This looks, on one hand, at the relationship between parties, where the issue of constitutionality plays a role, but also at the perception of the system by the constituents, which is at least partly determined by the ability of the system to take actual policy decisions and to disperse services.

Guerrilla Politics

In this section I will present a historical overview of the southern political movements in Sudan, from the late colonial period until the end of the second democracy. The main focus of the section is on southern Sudanese politics in Khartoum. In consequence local politics, exile politics and the armed struggle are

457 Abraham Lincoln, *The Gettysburg Address,* 19 November 1863.

only discussed briefly. The discussion is roughly divided into three parts: first, the emergence of southern Sudanese politics; second, the new southern voices emerging in the late 1950s; third, southern Sudanese politics after ʿAbbūd. A large number of people and many movements and splinter groups have left their mark on these issues. The discussion attempts to strike a balance between completeness and comprehensibility.

After the British defeated the Mahdī, they extended their administration into the southern Sudan. This was the first systematic attempt to administer the region. The British aim was primarily to keep the peace and secure the borders at minimal cost. In effect, the administration was also minimal, with low expenditure on infrastructure or services such as schooling. In an attempt to protect the supposedly original cultures of the southerners and to stop Islam from spreading south, the British implemented a policy which closed the southern region to northern Sudanese influences. Christian missions were present but not particularly encouraged. The area was divided into separate zones, where always only a single missionary society was allowed to be active. Administration followed the basic principles of indirect rule and most local administrative tasks were performed by "traditional" authorities, mostly men with no formal education. By 1940, only few clerks had been trained and most southerners with any formal education worked for the missionary societies.

In early 1947 the British started a new initiative in Khartoum, to associate the Sudanese more closely with the central government. They planned to create a Legislative Assembly, through which elected Sudanese representatives could debate and approve government policies and voice discontent. The question arose, should all Sudanese be included in this assembly or only northern Sudanese. The Sudan Administrative Conference in Khartoum, which set the framework for the new assembly, came to the conclusion that the southerners should be fully associated. As a response, fourteen British administrators in the south wrote a letter opposing this decision, on the grounds that the southerners had had no say in it. In consequence the civil secretary agreed to organise a conference in Juba, at which southerners were able to voice their opinion and

discuss the situation with a delegation from the north. During the conference, the chosen southern representatives voiced their fear of northern domination, but eventually agreed for the south to be represented in the Legislative Assembly.[458] John Howell argued that the Juba conference marked the beginning of southern politics in Sudan.[459]

After the Free Officers coup in Egypt, the south once again came into the spotlight of national Sudanese politics, as it was one stumbling block in the negotiations between the British and the Egyptians. The British first hoped they would be able to implement some safeguards for the south during the period of self-rule. This was eventually overturned, partially thanks to Major Ṣalāḥ Sālim's memorable visit to the south. Sālim, who was responsible for Sudanese affairs among the Free Officers in Cairo, travelled to southern Sudan to rally support. He met with notables in different areas and on one occasion at a large gathering he stripped to his underpants and danced with a number of Dinka around a fire. Ṣabrī believed that "Salah Salem won them over, then and there. A long-lost brother! A true son of the river (…) How very different he was from the stand-offish British officials, with (…) their aloof, reserved manners."[460] Sālim was clearly aware of the political implications of this act, as demonstrated by the fact that he insisted that the pictures taken at that moment would be published in Egyptian newspapers.[461]

In the direct run-up to independence it was three events, which influenced the later development of the north-south relationship. First, during the sudanisation process, that is when positions in the administration which were held by British were given to Sudanese, only a few of these were given to southerners and as a result southerners felt that they exchanged one group of foreign rulers for another. I will get back to this issue in more detail in the theoretical discussion in the third part of this chapter. Secondly, in August 1955, a group of southern Sudanese soldiers mutinied in Torit. Even though it is stretching the imagination to see a

458 Mohamed Omer Beshir, *The Southern Sudan* (London, 1968), pp. 65-6.
459 John Howell, 'Political Leadership' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1978), p. 106.
460 Hussein Zulfakar Sabry, *Sovereignty for Sudan* (London, 1982), pp. 109-11.
461 Samir Sobhi, 'Salah Hilal: Luminary in the Shadow', *Al-Ahram Weekly*, Issue No. 490 (13 - 19 July 2000), http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2000/490/profile.htm.

direct link between the Torit mutiny and the Anya-Nya uprising a few years later, the Torit mutiny should have been a clear reminder to northern elites that southern grievances mattered.[462] Thirdly, in the direct run up to independence, the northern members of the parliament convinced the southerners to vote for Sudanese independence, by promising that a federal constitution would be duly considered. After independence, this promise was quickly forgotten. These events were rather representative of the political role of southern politicians at the time. While southern grievances and the worry of being dominated by the north were expressed many times, at the Juba conference, after sudanisation, in Torit and in the parliament, none of this led to concrete actions or results.

The first generation of southern politicians was mostly men handpicked by the British. In the Legislative Assembly between 1948 and 1953, the south was represented by 13 men, elected by the province councils. Six of them were government officials, four of them chiefs, one a school headmaster, one a trader and one an army officer. Of the 21 members of parliament and the 11 members of the senate between 1954 and 1958, more than half were government officials, most others being teachers and chiefs.[463] These men were usually junior administrators with a low level of education and little authority. After all, the first southern secondary school stream graduated in 1948 and, only in 1951, did two southerners graduate from the *School of Administration* in Khartoum and were therefore eligible to be promoted to the level of sub-māmūr.[464]

The first group of southern parliamentarians represented little but themselves. Even if a British report, describing southerners as "unaware or apathetic, and only interested in their cattle,"[465] was an exaggeration, the majority of southerners were not yet engaged and participating constituents in the political process. While the southern representatives did raise the issue of southern backwardness in

462 Øystein Rolandsen argued, that it was indeed the policies of the central government implemented after the Torit mutiny which created the impression for many southern Sudanese that the crisis continued. Øystein Rolandsen, 'A False Start', (Univ. of Oslo Ph.D. thesis, 2010), *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (March 2011), pp. 105-6.

463 Tim Niblock, *Class and Power* (Basingstoke, 1987), pp. 161-81.

464 John Howell, 'Political Leadership' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1978), p. 104.

465 British report according to: Ibid., p. 109.

parliament, Howell argued that one should not mistake that for a "militant regional movement in the vanguard of a southern political consciousness."[466] But, maybe even more importantly, there was not yet a clear group identity of these men as southerners, distinct from the northerners. Howell mentioned that Buth Diu, one of the most prominent southern politicians of this first generation, always considered himself more as a Nuer, than as a southerner and Paysama, another prominent member of this group, supported a closer association of north and south in the 1940s and 50s.[467]

The timid defence of the south by the first generation, the divisions among the parliamentarians, and cases of corruption inspired a younger, more radical group of leaders to run in the 1958 elections. The elections were a disaster for the incumbent candidates, especially in Equatoria province. Only a small minority managed to secure re-election. A number of those who were re-elected, did eventually fill Ministerial posts, but overall they were not the influential members of the new southern caucus.[468] Nevertheless, Howell argued that 1958 was not a watershed for a new southern leadership. The new southern members of the House of Representatives were of similar social background to the previous and most of them had still not received any secondary education. Only a few of the parliamentarians of 1958 were re-elected in the 1960s. Nevertheless, some of the new members from Equatoria did play an important role in the exile movement later on.[469]

The members of the first parliament had attempted to create a southern Sudanese party called the *Liberal Party*. Its structures had always been weak and the party was prone to divisions and leadership conflicts, but even so most of the candidates who were successful in 1958 claimed some sort of affiliation.[470] For the younger parliamentarians the old name was too strongly connected to corruption, political "flip-flopping" and generally weak representation. Abel Alier said that

466 Ibid., p. 109.
467 Ibid., p. 110.
468 Ibid., p. 168.
469 Ibid., pp. 167-9.
470 Ibid., p. 166.

"there was a feeling that southern political leaders were not strong enough, not well informed enough, to defend positions of the south."[471] Therefore they created a new structure under the leadership of the Catholic priest Saturnino Lohure, called the *Federal Bloc* which soon after incorporated the old Liberal Party. By March 1958 the new party leadership was set up. As Howell pointed out, these were changes which were at that point only consequential in Khartoum and had no real effect in the south itself.[472]

The new grouping took a clearer stance on the issue of federation, as already expressed in the name. It was however equally unable to unify the southern vote in parliament or to achieve a stable leadership. Most importantly, during the vote on the US aid package the members from Equatoria province supported the government and the others opposed it. These divisions were so stifling to progress that they even prompted a failed mediation attempt by the southern students at Khartoum University, prominent among them the later parliamentarian Abel Alier.[473] It is impossible to tell if the Federal Bloc could have eventually overcome its relatively weak start, as the army coup by ʾIbrāhīm ʿAbbūd in November brought party politics in Sudan to a halt and marked the end of the existence of the Federal Bloc.

During the whole period since independence there had been a quiescent instability in southern Sudan, as a result of the 1955 mutiny in Torit. When the army took over power it tried to pacify the south more systematically, partially through an islamisation and arabisation campaign. When, in 1960 the junta decided to move the day of rest in the south from Sunday to Friday, this marked a new start in southern politics. After a wave of demonstrations at the schools in the south, they were closed down and a number of students and the Sudanese priest Paolino Doggale were thrown into prison. Doggale's recollection of the events showed clearly how the army over-reacted to this rather minor challenge to its rule.[474] Overall dealings of the regime with southern students were harsh. Paul

471 Abel Alier, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 26 February 2011).
472 John Howell, 'Political Leadership' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1978), p. 171.
473 Ibid., p. 175.
474 ACR, A/102/1/2 (Paolino Doggale, Short recollection of the events of 1960 and his arrest and

Marial Dot who joined Rumbek secondary school at the height of student politics remembered that: "Any protest was considered as political and as something to be punished."[475] As a direct consequence of the closure of southern schools, hundreds of students left Sudan to continue their education elsewhere, many of them later joined the exile movement.[476]

During the same period, many of the former parliamentarians also left for exile, including the priest Saturnino Lohure and Joseph Oduho. In 1961 they were joined by the administrator William Deng who was followed one year later by Dominic Murwel and Ezboni Mundiri, both of whom had just been released from prison.[477] They first organised themselves under the umbrella of the *Sudan Christians Association* in Uganda, in February 1962 they founded the *Sudan African Closed Districts National Union* (SACDNU), the "Closed Districts" of which was dropped in 1963 and SANU became the commonly used name.[478] In 1962 students in southern Sudan demonstrated once again and again the schools were closed. After this the number of refugees grew steadily and an increasing number of former policemen, prison warders and soldiers went to Uganda.[479] According to Joseph Lagu's memoirs, who later became one of the leaders of the armed resistance, the exiled politicians also contacted individuals inside Sudan to encourage them to leave as well.[480]

In late 1963 a consensus seems to have evolved within SANU that it was time to take more explicit military action against the ʿAbbūd regime. Localised armed resistance, which evaded any central control, had existed before, but on a very small level.[481] Severino Fuli, who was an active member in SANU by that time, and Lagu presented the details slightly differently in their respective memoirs.

---

conviction).

475 Paul Marial Dot, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 23 December 2010).

476 John Howell, 'Political Leadership' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1978), p. 185.

477 The two former Members of Parliament had been imprisoned, like four of their former colleagues. Joseph Oduho and William Deng claimed that in total over 5'000 southerners were imprisoned under ʿAbbūd for political crimes. Joseph Oduho, and William Deng, *The Problem of the Southern Sudan* (London 1963), pp. 40-1.

478 John Howell, 'Political Leadership' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1978), pp. 190-1.

479 Ibid., p. 192.

480 Joseph Lagu, *Sudan, Odyssey Through a State* (Omdurman, 2006), pp. 83-4.

481 John Howell, 'Political Leadership' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1978), pp. 193-4.

Both indicate that Lohure, who was the patron of SANU at the time and Oduho, who was the president, although being divided otherwise, agreed to create an armed wing called Anya-Nya, a local term for a snake venom.[482] Anya-Nya began small scale activities in September 1963. The reaction of the army was rather clumsy and heavy-handed. They attacked villages, burned huts, and terrorised the civilian population.[483]

While SANU tried to organise the refugees and raise money for the armed resistance, local internal political resistance grew to support SANU in exile. The primary functions of the movement inside Sudan were to send messages, gather information about troop movements and collect money. Of course the control measures of the army made these endeavours difficult. Isaiah Kulang Mabior, working at the time as a wildlife officer in Western Equatoria, was a member of this underground organisation. Other members of the organisation were found amongst administrators, headmasters, and army officers who were spread over the various towns and villages. Mabior recalled:

> "I was the one who had a car, and as an officer in wildlife, I had to move from Tombora to Yambio, to Meridi, all this, making the connections. Meeting was very dangerous. Some of our members were frightened to meet, but I was the link. I was transporting verbal messages. And I was collecting money, radios, clothes, shoes for the rebels."[484]

In essence Mabior worked as a runner and finance officer of the movement. He also described that because of the constant fear of being discovered, few messages were written, most were oral, and no receipts or books were kept for the collected funds. Additionally there was a certain level of organisation among southerners in Khartoum, but again it is hard to establish the precise details, the extent of that network, or its functions.[485]

---

482 Joseph Lagu, *Sudan, Odyssey Through a State* (Omdurman, 2006), pp. 102-7.
Severino Fuli Boki Tombe Ga'le, *Shaping a Free Southern Sudan* (Loa, 2002), pp. 234-41.
483 John Howell, 'Political Leadership' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1978), p. 195.
484 Isaiah Kulang Mabior, *Personal Interview* (Juba, 5 December 2010).
485 Both Ambrose Tiik and Abel Alier mentioned this, but without discussing the details.
Ambrose Tiik, *Personal Interview* (Juba, 29 November 2010).
Abel Alier, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 26 February 2011).

In October 1964 the ʿAbbūd regime was overthrown by a popular uprising. The uprising was a direct result of discussions held at Khartoum University on the situation in southern Sudan. In this sense the end of ʿAbbūd was directly connected to what became to be known as the "southern question." At the same time, the groups involved in the revolution were predominantly northern Sudanese, especially the members of the Khartoum University Student Union. The separate student association for southern students did not play any direct role. Therefore the southern Sudan was simultaneously both central and peripheral to the events in 1964. In a sense, the uprising was carried out by northerners in the name of the southerners and, in its aftermath, northerners even wanted to solve the southern question in the name of southerners; an endeavour doomed to fail.

The revolutionary cabinet was dominated by the so-called Professional Front under the leadership of the educator Sirr-al-Ḫatim al-Ḫalīfah. He nominated a number of southerners for the cabinet, but the southerners who had been organised underground were dissatisfied with candidates who were chosen for them. Southern leaders had held meetings since the early days of the revolution and, as a reaction to the Professional Front, which claimed to represent all Sudanese against the military, they created the *Southern Front* to represent all southerners. The Southern Front by that point in time was a mix between a label, a platform and a pressure group. They lobbied the prime minister to recall his southern nominees, to let the southerners choose for themselves who should represent them. Abel Alier remembered:

> "One of the things people in the Southern Front did not like was northern Sudanese political leaders selecting southern representatives, without consultation of the groups in the south. They would say, Abel Alier is going to be a minister and it is better we tell him that he has been picked and tomorrow or tonight you would hear my name on the radio as a minister representing the south. We said, this is to be stopped. Whoever is interested should go through this front, this front of the south. (...) Therefore the Southern Front took two vital decisions here in Khartoum: one no one who did not go through the Southern Front, should be chosen by any northern political party or the proposed prime minister as a minister; two, all those who are residents in Khartoum from the south, are not qualified to become ministers."[486]

486 Abel Alier, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 26 February 2011).

As a result Clement Mboro became minister of interior in the new transitional government and Ezboni Mundiri took the post of minister of communication. Luigi Adwok became a member of the five-man Supreme Council which replaced ʿAbbūd. Later on Hilary Logali was included as minister of works. When Mundiri resigned in April 1965, Gordon Muortat joined the cabinet.

The Southern Front was able to push for these nominations, because it represented a relatively united position, if one disregards some of the first generation southern politicians who were opposed to the relatively young leaders of the Front. In theory the Southern Front was not a party but a representation of all southerners, including the southerners in the north and in exile and the armed movement. In practice however the movement in exile was itself divided after conflicts between its founders; William Deng, Joseph Oduho and Father Saturnino Lohure. William Deng, who had just been removed from the SANU leadership in his absence, proclaimed himself the true leader of SANU and declared he would take the movement back into the country by returning to Khartoum. This move, while technically originating in a division of the movement in exile, led to a division of the representation of southerners in Khartoum.

The division between William Deng and the leaders of the Southern Front allowed the northern politicians to play them off against each other. They welcomed Deng as the true leader of the south and accused the Front of working with the rebels of the Anya-Nya –an accusation which was not absolutely wrong, after all Clement Mboro once described his role as Minister of Interior by day and Anya-Nya by night.[487] After some political manoeuvring the various groups, including SANU in exile, met with the northern politicians for the round-table conference in Khartoum. The divisions among the southerners, which were intentionally exacerbated by the northerners, prevented the southerners from exerting true pressure. This however did not lead to a solution of the problem in line with a northern Sudanese vision, but just deferred the problem by continuing the *status quo*. In addition to demonstrating the divisions of the southerners, the conference

487 Scopas Sekwat Poggo, *The First Sudanese Civil War; Africans, Arabs, and Israelis in the Southern Sudan, 1955-1972* (New York, 2002) p. 120.

revealed the ignorance of the northerners regarding the south and the views and demands of the southerners.[488]

The democratic leaders of northern Sudan felt betrayed by the result of the roundtable conference. They felt that the bad relationship between the north and the south was due to the army and that they had overthrown the army also in the name of the south. They had believed that, with the end of ʿAbbūd, it would be easy to solve the remaining disputes. As a result, when in 1965 Muḥammad ʾAḥmad Maḥğūb came to power, he decided to solve the problem of the Anya-Nya insurgency militarily. Yāsir ʿArmān compared the two in a discussion: "The islamisation and arabisation strategies of Abboud were a picnic compared to what was going to come later on."[489] In the following year the army began to use more and more ruthless methods in their battles, including the systematic targeting of educated southerners who were believed to sympathise with the rebels. As mentioned earlier, during two incidents in Wau and Juba in July 1965 over 1,000 people were killed and many killings were targeted when soldiers went to the houses of educated southerners and shot them on sight.

Nevertheless southerners in Khartoum, who were now clearly divided into two camps, with the Southern Front on one side and SANU on the other, attempted to continue their political work. The Southern Front reported the Juba and Wau incidents in their newspaper *The Vigilant* and when the government tried to sue the paper for misinformation, the case was decided in favour of the Southern Front. The political room for manoeuvre, which was lacking in the south itself, existed to a certain degree in Khartoum. But even in the north, southern politicians were targeted by security services, their mail was read, meetings monitored and travel permits denied. The Vigilant gave an example of this:

> "The government of Sayed Saddik El Mahdi seems to have reversed to the policies of Prime Minister Mohamed Ahmed Mahgoub in letter and practice. The government is implementing the policy of the restriction of

488 The various opening speeches given at the roundtable conference give a clear impression of this. They are reproduced in: ACR, A/85/17 (Sudan Informazioni, Round-Table Conference on the Southern Sudan).

489 Yāsir ʿArmān, *Personal Discussion* (Khartoum, 7 April 2010).

movement on Southern political leaders. At least this has started with the leaders of the Southern Front."[490]

Politics happened in a constant atmosphere of fear and distrust. Given these circumstances it is all the more surprising that the Front managed to keep up communication with the movement in exile, as well as supporters in Europe. One of the most important communication channels was the Comboni Mission, which had long been active in both northern and southern Sudan. Priests would take letters to Rome, where typewritten copies were made and sent onwards with other priests to the designated recipients. The mostly handwritten originals were kept in Rome. Additionally individual fathers of the Comboni Mission supported the efforts of the southern political leaders, partially by supporting the cause financially. The letters deposited at the archives of the Comboni Mission in Rome show that contact was regular. In one of these letters Clement Mboro writes to Padre Frison "For three months now we have not been able to communicate with you and other friends of ours elsewhere. This is because of the closing of the safe channel from us."[491] The letters show how precarious the situation must have been. Names were encoded and even events were referenced indirectly. As a result letters were written by "Barocco" who was Enrico Bagho, the treasurer of the Southern Front in Khartoum, to "Danto" in exile, who was actually Paolino Doggale, the priest who was arrested after the demonstrations over Friday as day of rest. Clement Mboro was referred to as "the uncle" and when discussing financial support for *The Vigilant*, the letter spoke about "the sick man."[492]

The relationships between the various politicians functioned like a network of trust and distrust. Trust could not be earned in this situation, but was a necessity *a priori*. Therefore the networks which had evolved in schools were important and after that only people who were introduced by someone who was already trusted, would be included. The letters in Rome however also show, that especially due to the divisions outside Sudan, relationships of distrust were also important for the

490 The Vigilant, 25 January 1967, as reproduced in: Sudan Informazioni, *The Vigilant, an Independent Newspaper, 1965; Arabs versus Africans in the Sudan.*

491 ACR, A/104/29/18.

492 See for example: Letters by Danto (Paolino Doggale) to Barocco (Enrico Bagho) and vice versa: ACR, A/104 / 9 and ACR, A / 104 /15.

shaping of the network as a whole. Under all these circumstances, with all the pressure applied to the links of trust, it is surprising how stable many of these relationships were, even though the people writing to each other could not meet and often had not met for many years. This situation made it difficult for any part of the group to negotiate a compromise with outsiders, as it could easily be misunderstood as breach of trust due to the fragility of the network.

Similar to the Southern Front, but without the elaborate network in Europe and links to the exiled movement, SANU continued its political work in Khartoum and William Deng began to cooperate with al-Ṣādiq al-Mahdī. Deng believed that Ṣādiq was the politician most ready to make concessions to the southern Sudanese. Deng in turn, was usually seen as the southern politician who was most accessible and made the most believable promise to end the conflict in the southern provinces. But even Deng's position was too extreme for many northern Sudanese. The newspaper Rāʾī al-ʿĀm wrote during the Roundtable Conference: "Aggrey Jaden and the Southern Front demanded separation while William Deng demanded a kind of federation which is just as bad as separation." The article went on to allege that the southerners were working in the interest of the colonialists.[493]

The Southern Front in turn started to work with the ʾimām's wing of the ʾUmmah and Maḥğūb. These links were often seen as attempts to gain patronage and get well-paid jobs, but they were also the only ways for southerners in Khartoum to attain some room for manoeuvre. Ministers could travel more easily and were able to channel support to people in the south. Nevertheless these links between the southern politicians and the northern elite are today often interpreted as a betrayal by South Sudanese and as a reflection of the weakness of the early southern Sudanese leaders.

The two parties were relatively similar in outlook and platform; the biggest difference was probably in their *modus operandi*. The Southern Front was

493 Rāʾī al-ʿĀm, 17 March 1965, as reproduced in: ACR, A/85/17 (Sudan Informazioni, Round-Table Conference on the Southern Sudan)

organised around a group of young men, who had all studied together and who had chosen Clement Mboro as their elder leader, in many ways comparable to the ʾAšiqqāʾ and ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī. SANU, on the other hand, was centred on William Deng and most decisions in the party were made by him. This personality cult enraged even SANU members and eventually led to six important SANU leaders forming their own faction, known as SANU-Alfred, while the main wing was then known as SANU-William. Although the loss of "The Big Six," as they were usually called thanks to their tallness, was definitely a setback for SANU-William, the new splinter never managed to truly establish itself as an alternative, as the 1958 elections demonstrated.

Additionally, while both the Southern Front and SANU worked for southern autonomy, they did so differently. Lwal Diing Wol, who became a parliamentarian for SANU in 1968 explained: "The difference between us and the Southern Front was that we said, independence was very difficult to achieve and the best compromise we can get was a federal system of government."[494] Arop Madut Arop, who was a regional Southern Front leader in Port Sudan, described their position as follows:

> "Southern Front supported self-determination, which means, that it was to be up to the southern Sudanese to determine their own future. Southern Sudanese would organise a referendum in which they have to choose from a number of options. But it was not up to the party Southern Front to decide in the name of the people. We were only mobilisers of the people. We were fighting to give the southern Sudanese their rights."[495]

This position however was not at all acceptable to northern Sudanese, as it envisaged the possibility of full southern secession.

SANU and Southern Front participated in the 1968 elections and SANU was able to win more seats than the Southern Front. This was mainly due to the fact that Equatoria Province, the strong base of the Southern Front, was especially unstable. The most momentous element of this election was however not the result, but the

494 Lwal Diing Wol, *Personal Interview* (Juba, 2 December 2010).
495 Arop Madut Arop, *Personal Interview* (Juba, 2 December 2010).

fact that William Deng was killed during the campaigning period. It was never established how William Deng really died, but many of my interviewees agreed that Deng was probably killed by the Sudanese army.

After the elections the Southern Front changed its strategy and decided to participate in government. Ambrose Riiny Thiik, who was at the time leader of the Southern Front youth wing, remembered a meeting with Hilary Logali in which Logali explained the decision:

> "He was telling us that they had come to the realisation that the politics of boycott were not serving the interest the people, as they came to realise that the Anya-Nya was not a formidable force. It was a pressure group, but it would not be able to protect the people. So we called for national reconciliation and rehabilitation. And under this policy Clement Mboro became minister of industry and Hilary Logali became minister of labour. But they were criticised for this."[496]

This new policy confused the movement in exile and the supporters abroad. Letters show that the politicians in exile were worried that the Southern Front had betrayed them.[497] Joseph Lagu argued later that the Southern Front joining the government had no positive effect for southerners inside southern Sudan.[498]

By that point the political movement in exile had lost nearly all of its relevance. After William broke off from SANU to form SANU-Inside, the movement outside disintegrated after the simmering conflicts between its leaders, including Saturnino Lohure, Joseph Oduho, and Aggrey Jaden, came to the surface. Oduho formed his own *Azania Liberation Front* (ALF), while Jaden renamed SANU as *Sudan African Liberation Front* (SALF). Various other transitional governments, splinter groups and spokespeople appeared over the years and eventually all attempts to unite the movement in exile, a demand which was made by both the Southern Front in Sudan, and the supporters in Europe, failed. The last unifying element had been Saturnino Lohure, even if at times he was part of the conflicts

496 Ambrose Riiny Thiik, *Personal Interview* (Juba, 29 November 2010).

497 Letters by Danto (Paolino Doggale) to Barocco (Enrico Bagho) and vice versa: ACR, A/104 / 9 and ACR, A / 104 /15.

498 Joseph Lagu, *Personal Interview* (London, 14 June 2010).

and divisions, or even their reason. In January 1967 however, Lohure was killed trying to enter southern Sudan. Lagu argued that: "After the death of father Saturnino the political movement in exile more or less disappeared."[499]

For the armed wing of the movement the years between 1965 and 1969 were more successful. The Anya-Nya fighters were able to increase their fire power and tactical ability, partially thanks to supplies from friendly nations. Nevertheless, nearly all the time there were divisions between different wings of the rebel movement and multiple attempts to unite all armed groups under one command failed. As long as the various groups were effective in their respective areas, this did not matter so much. With all their shortcomings, the rebels still managed to put substantial pressure on the government. They were however, unlike the SPLA later, never able to control larger areas and to actually protect southern civilians from the northern Sudanese army.

Southern Sudanese resistance and the call for a federal system began as a cause of some dispersed individuals and was expressed in some minor actions and events in southern Sudan and Khartoum. In that sense, the Sudanese civil war began with the Torit munity in 1955. Therefore the beginnings of the problems in southern Sudan were indeed rooted in the colonial history of administration and the closed district policy. It was however the disproportionate reaction towards these events, the ignorance of northern politicians regarding the situation in the southern provinces, the arrogance of northerners who believed that their culture was supreme, and their lack of ability to look for a compromise, partially based on a lacking prioritisation of the southern issue, which step by step created a southern Sudanese political and armed movement and a southern Sudanese identity. The emergence of the movement was thus the direct consequence of the constant pressures and violence southern Sudanese were subjected to, not only in

499 Joseph Lagu, *Personal Interview* (London, 14 June 2010).
Peter Woodward summarised the situation: "The Anya Nya tended to live in the bush in relatively autonomous bands, unwilling to accept any attempts at an overall structure of command. In 1969 there were no less than five governments in exile, and probably some of the Anya Nya groups recognized none of them." Peter Woodward, 'Nationalism and Opposition in Sudan', African Affairs, Vol. 80, No. 320 (July 1981), p. 382.

southern Sudan, but also in Khartoum and even in exile. These experiences shaped their idea of the nation.

The movement was borne by individuals who were connected to each other via an intricate web of trust and distrust. In a situation where the possession of a letter, or even your name being mentioned in a letter, could mean imprisonment, trust became quintessential. Additionally, in a situation, where leading northern politicians were actively buying other politicians and votes, distrust, and the constant impression that the other is selling out the cause, was ubiquitous. As a result, conflicts between individuals led to fracturing of the movement, both inside and outside Sudan. It has often been said that southern politicians of that time were prone to personal conflict and mainly led by self-interest and that therefore the movement was grossly disunited. I argue that this judgement is unfair. On the contrary I believe, that considering the pressure on the networks of trust, it is astonishing how stable and united the movement managed to be, especially inside the country. Nevertheless this network of trust and distrust made it additionally difficult to participate in a real national dialogue, as any attempt to reach a compromise with one party, might lead to a breaking of trust with others who were not at the negotiation table and might feel that the compromise was primarily at their cost. I will pick up on this point in the fifth chapter.

Vote GUN, Vote Beja!

In this section I will look at the regional parties in the northern Sudan. Three movements were particularly relevant in the 1960s: the *Beja Congress*, the *General Union of the Nuba Mountains* (GUN), and the *Dār-Fur Development Front* (DDF). All three of these succeeded in winning seats in the parliament. I will show in this sub-chapter, how these three movements emerged and developed. For each of the three groups I will first give some brief geographical and historical background and then discuss the movement itself.

The eastern Sudan used to be unified as the Kassalā province during the colonial period. Kassalā Province began just east of Khartoum and was slightly smaller than Germany in area. The province included Sudan's complete shoreline to the Red Sea. The capital of the province was Kassalā town, which lies 420 kilometres east of Khartoum. More than half of the inhabitants of the province were Beja. Another quarter belonged to various Arab groupings. The Beja were a people living mostly in Sudan, but also in Egypt and Eritrea.[500] The Beja were divided into clans, including the Hadendowa, the Beni Amer, the Amarar, and the Bisharin among others. A total of 650,000 Beja lived in Sudan in 1956. The Hadendowa were, with 260,000 members, the biggest group among them. Most Beja speak a dialect of Beja, with the exception of the Beni Amer who speak a dialect of the Eritrean Tigre language. Nearly 80% of the Beja lived in Kassalā province in 1956. The Beja were predominantly devout Muslim, mostly with Ḫatmīyah allegiances, many Hadendowa were however part of the ʾAnṣār. Most Beja lived a pastoral, semi-nomadic life style, with some being permanent or temporary wage and migrant labourers.[501]

On the Red Sea coast, Sawākin had been the most important city for many generations. Sawākin's history dates back to the times of Ptolemy and for many centuries it was an important and magnificent harbour town, which also served as a harbour for Muslim pilgrims from as far away as Nigeria, who were travelling to Makkah. But by the early 19th century the city had already faded. The Swiss traveller and orientalist Jean Louis Burckhardt visited the town in 1814 and found two-thirds of all houses to be uninhabited. The Egyptians tried to revive the harbour once more in 1865. Although the harbour managed to weather the attacks of the Mahdī's forces, the British decided to develop a new harbour called Port Sudan fifty kilometres further north.[502] The British administrators brought in Arab families from the Nile to run the new city and business was mostly taken over by

500 A good overview of the history of the Beja can be found in: Andrew Paul, *A History of the Beja Tribes of the Sudan* (Cambridge, 1954).

501 John Morton, 'Ethnicity and Politics in Red Sea Province, Sudan', *African Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 350 (Jan. 1989), p. 66.

502 Robert Berg, 'Suakin, Time and Tide', *Saudi Aramco World*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (Jul./Aug. 1993), pp. 32-39.

immigrants from the Middle East. Beja had to compete for low paid jobs.[503] The primary focus of the British in the east lay on Port Sudan and the cotton plantations in Gash and Tokar. The semi-nomadic Beja were of little relevance, except in regard to pacification, as a result of which the British restructured the local leadership.[504]

The Beja began to organise themselves for the first time with the establishment of the *Beja Club* in 1952. The Club had the general social functions of a club at the time, but also established three committees focusing on education with a literacy campaign, on exchange with the government demanding minor jobs in the administration and most importantly on worker issues, forming the first syndicate of dock workers to demand additional rights from the foreign firms. The Club was a direct reaction of the Beja leaders to their community's low status, poor level of education and restricted access to government resources, such as health services. Already, shortly before independence a preliminary political committee was formed in the Club and soon after a memorandum supporting federalism, explicitly demanding a division of power and resources, was sent to the new national government.[505] At this point however the Club did not directly get involved in national politics and in the 1953 elections the Club supported the NUP candidates.

After the division of the NUP, the Club sided with the PDP, due to religious allegiances. At the same time the leaders of the Beja Club continued their struggle for local issues by organising a conference to discuss the issues of the Beja. This first *Popular Conference of the Beja Tribes* demanded more jobs, more education, and access to schools for adults. When these demands seemed to have no effect, a larger conference was organised on 7 June 1957. The aim of this conference was to get a mandate from the people to work for Beja rights. The conference looked explicitly at the economic and social problems and lack of rights of the Beja and

503 John Morton, 'Ethnicity and Politics', *African Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 350 (Jan. 1989), pp. 66-7.
504 John Young, *The Eastern Front and the Struggle against Marginalization* (Geneva, 2007), p. 18.
505 ʾAḥmad ʿUṯmān Tolanab, *Mūʾtamar al-Biǧā* (Port Sudan, 2007), pp. 74-9.

came to the conclusion that independence had not made any difference for the Beja.[506]

In the run-up to the elections of 1958 Dr Ṭaha ʿUṯmān Belia tried to get nominated in one constituency as the candidate of the PDP. Although he was able to get local support, the leadership of the party in Khartoum disagreed. Muḥammad Sirr-al-Ḫatim al-Mīrġanī, the patron of the PDP, preferred Muḫtār Muḥammad Ḥasan. After a protracted struggle between the two sides and a broken promise by Khartoum to let go of their candidate, both candidates ran for the PDP and because they split the vote, they lost the election to the NUP candidate.[507] It was this experience, which demonstrated to the Beja leaders that further cooperation with the PDP, and Ḫatmīyah sect was not in their favour and they decided to form their own political organisation.[508] On 11 October 1958 they formed the *Beja Congress* in Port Sudan at a big meeting. It is interesting to note that this meeting was high enough on the national radar that even Prime Minister Ḫalīl attended personally.[509] Of course, only 36 days later, Ḫalīl handed over power to ʾIbrāhīm ʿAbbūd.

When the ʿAbbūd regime fell, the Beja Congress regrouped, now with the explicit aim to run as a political party in the elections. The ʾUmmah Party decided to support the Beja in their attempt to select candidates, and to rally and mobilise voters. This move by the ʾUmmah must be understood as an attempt to weaken the PDP and NUP, which were stronger in Kassalā Province than the ʾUmmah. The ʾUmmah in turn were allowed to nominate a small number of their own as part of the Beja Congress. Eventually the party won eleven seats[510] in the election, a victory which was at least partially due to the fact that the PDP, its main competitor, boycotted the election.[511]

---

506 Ibid., pp. 80-102.

507 Ibid., pp. 103-8.

508 Muḥammad Adarob Ohaj, *Mūʾtamar al-Biǧā* (Port Sudan, 2005), pp. 79-91.

509 ʾAbū Fāṭimah ʾAḥmad Onur, *Al-Tahmīš fī Šarq al-Sūdān* (Port Sudan 2009), pp. 131-3.

510 Ten candidates won on the ticket of the Congress. Muḥammad ʾAḥmad ʿAwaḍ was nominated in Kassalā by the PDP and when the party decided to boycott, he ran anyway and switched allegiances to the Beja Congress after the election.

511 Muḥammad Adarob Ohaj, *Mūʾtamar al-Biǧā* (Port Sudan, 2005), pp. 137-47.

After the election this tactical alliance with the ʾUmmah became a burden for the Congress. Although the representatives who had been nominated by the ʾUmmah declared their allegiance to the Beja Congress and its secretary, once the parliamentarians had left for Khartoum, they declared that the Beja Congress had joined the ʾUmmah. When questioned, the parliamentarians explained that the ʾUmmah had promised them a ministry and support for Beja issues, but after the government with the NUP was actually formed, the Beja did not receive a ministry. The Congress eventually remained independent and outside the government, but the whole conundrum which was caused by its cooperation with the ʾUmmah during the elections, caused a lot of confusion and consternation among the constituencies and supporters.[512] In the elections of 1968 the PDP participated again, now as part of the DUP. As a result of this competition and its own internal problems the Beja Congress was significantly weakened and the party only won three seats.[513]

The Congress was a much more coherent organisation than the GUN and DDF which I will look at next. It began as a group for social mobilisation, transformed into a pressure group, tried to work with existing parties and then emerged as a full political organisation participating in elections. The Beja Congress is without any doubt the organisation in northern Sudan that has the longest tradition of consistently calling for decentralisation and federalism. Nevertheless, lack of resources and religious allegiances proved to be a challenge for the Congress. It is interesting to note that the Congress, intentionally or not, followed the same political pattern as the graduates in Khartoum, which first formed a club and later a congress to voice their political position.

The Nuba Mountains are a hilly region in central Sudan approximately as large as Austria. Kadugli, the administrative centre of the Nuba Mountains, is 590 kilometres southwest of Khartoum. The Nuba Mountains are comparatively densely populated, during the rainy season they are very green and fertile. The Nuba Mountains are populated mostly by Nuba and Baqqārah Arabs. According

512 Ibid., pp. 149-56.
513 John Morton, 'Ethnicity and Politics', *African Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 350 (Jan. 1989), p. 67.

to Sudan's first census in 1956, over half a million Nuba lived in Sudan. The Nuba speak various languages and are partly Muslim, partly Christian. The term Nuba does not describe a single tribe or ethnicity, but a geographical grouping of various non-Arabic speaking people.[514]

The British got involved rather late in the Nuba Mountains and when they did, they faced a relatively fortified community, suspicious of outsiders. As a result it was well into the 1920s before the Nuba Mountains were pacified.[515] In line with the southern policy the administration implemented a *Nuba policy*. Due to this policy Nuba and Arabs living in the Nuba Mountains were administered under two separate local administrations.[516] Nuba were only allowed to enrol in mission schools and military recruitment of Nuba was more or less stopped.[517] Nevertheless the Nuba were not completely disconnected from the rest of the country, firstly because there were Arabs living in the Nuba Mountains and secondly because there was a large number of Nuba migrant labourers. The Second World War ended the "Nuba Policy" after the British recruited 6,000 Nuba and dispatched them to North Africa to fight against the Germans.[518]

In 1948 the Nuba Mountains were included into the Legislative Assembly and, in 1952, there was the first concerted attempt to create some sort of Nuba representation. The cotton farmers of the Nuba Mountains then formed a farmers' union, comparable to the union of the tenants of the Ǧazīrah.[519] The *Nuba Mountains Farmers' Union* supported the NUP in the 1954 elections, after ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī had promised to register them as a union and to address their key grievances, but after the elections the NUP government did not fulfil ʾAzharī's promises and this led to a radicalisation of the union, partially under the

514 Roland C. Stevenson, *The Nuba People of Kordofan Province* (Khartoum, 1984), p. 4.

515 Siddig D. Babiker El Zailaee, 'British Colonial Policies in the Nuba Mountains of Central Sudan 1899-1946' (Univ. of Manchester Ph.D. thesis, 2003), pp. 52-71.

516 Ibid., pp. 115-35.

517 Ibid., pp. 136-88.

518 Ibid., p. 194.

For an extensive appreciation of the ending of the Nuba policy, see also: Kamal el-Din Osman Salih, 'The British Administration in the Nuba Mountains Region of the Sudan, 1900-1956', (SOAS London Ph.D. thesis, 1986), pp. 337-92.

519 Atta H. el-Battahani, 'Nationalism and Peasant Politics in the Nuba Mountains Region of Sudan, 1924-1966' (Univ. of Sussex Ph.D. thesis, 1986), pp. 269-75.

leadership of the communist party.[520] In 1957 the *Nuba Mountains General Union* was founded in Khartoum and the *Nuba Youth Club* in Dilling. The leaders of these organisations supported the ʾUmmah in the elections of 1958, but "failing to gain any concessions in return for their support to the Umma, the Nuba intelligentsia became increasingly disillusioned with the Northern political parties."[521]

When the *General Union of the Nuba Mountains* (GUN) was founded in late 1964, it was a result of three different formative processes, which took place simultaneously in a conducive political environment. Firstly, in 1964 a larger group of students from the Nuba Mountains joined the University of Khartoum for the first time, before that it had always only been one or two individuals. The Nuba in Khartoum held a celebration to welcome the nine new students and by that action, impressed upon them their special social responsibility.[522] This happened in a period when the students of Khartoum University were highly politicised and the fall of ʿAbbūd brought additional motivation. Nūr Tawor, who entered the university one year later as the first woman from the Nuba Mountains said: "You grow up as a politician if you like it or not, because it is forced on you."[523] The Nuba community in Khartoum was organised into social groups and lending societies. When the October revolution happened, the students got together with the leaders of these societies, most important among them was ʿAṭrūn ʿAṭiyah.[524]

In Khartoum they discussed their objectives and elected ʿAṭrūn ʿAṭiyah as the first head of the Union. The GUN called for Sudan to be organised as a federal state. They asked for the abolishment of two taxes, which were collected in the Nuba Mountains; a poll tax (Diqniyah) and a so-called air tax (Māl al-Hawā).[525] Thirdly the Union asked for all kinds of services and development. At the same

520 Ibid., pp. 304-21.
521 Ibid., p. 356.
522 Yūsif Ǧibrīl, *Personal Interview* (Kadugli, 5 March 2010).
523 Nūr Tawor Kāfī ʾabū-Rās, *Personal Interview* (Kadugli, 5 March 2010).
524 Yūsif Ǧibrīl, *Personal Interview* (Kadugli, 5 March 2010).
525 The air tax was a cattle tax. If you have 25 cows you would be taxed for 30, supposedly because the number of cattle is only established every couple of years. The tax on the 5 non-existent cows is called air tax.

time as the Union was formed in Khartoum, the Nuba also organised themselves into an organisation called "League of the Sons of the Nuba Mountains" (Rābiṭah al-ʾAbnāʾ al-Ǧabal-Nuba) in Kadugli. ʿAbd-al-Fātiḥ Tia remembered, that they had organised the first committee in Kadugli with members from the neighbouring towns and, when they learned about the Union, which had formed in Khartoum, they merged with it.[526]

When in 1965 the elections approached, the students were too young to run for parliament, but they were the backbone of the campaign. Since GUN was campaigning on a very limited budget, the students would walk from village to village to talk to voters. But the biggest expense was mobilisation of voters during the polling days. As Willis, Battahani and Woodward pointed out, "the provision of transport by candidates for potential voters (was) the most important intervention candidates could make".[527] Since GUN was not able to pay for lorries, they tried to get around this problem with a trick, as Phillip Kalo explained laughing:

> "The most expensive is to carry voters from their villages to the voting centre. (…) I told my (… prospective voters, …) you go and tell these people (that you are …) going to vote for (their candidate …) whether ʾUmmah or NUP and this is the symbol for voting. And they will say yes, you are my voter, then let's go. They get in the car and take them to the centre and when they vote they vote for me anyway. (...) So they (ʾUmmah and NUP) paid for us."[528]

Eventually, the Union won a staggering eight of the twelve districts of the Nuba Mountains. Nevertheless the lack of patronage capacity and funding for campaigning and mobilisation was always a difficulty for GUN and the other regional parties.

Although the GUN was not part of any of the governments formed between the elections in 1965 and the elections in 1968, they were still quite successful. They managed to attract some development projects to the Nuba Mountains and maybe

526 ʿAbd-al-Fātiḥ Tia Kafi, *Personal Interview*, (Kadugli, 6 March 2010).
527 Justin Willis, Atta el-Battahani, and Peter Woodward, *Elections in Sudan* (London, 2009), p. 50.
528 Phillip Kalo Ramaḍān Kardela, *Personal Interview* (Kadugli, 6 March 2010).

even more importantly, they were able to petition the government to reinvest surplus earnings from cotton production in the Nuba Mountains, instead of giving the money to the Ǧazīrah Board, as had been done before.[529] At the same time the Union was weakened in this period. Firstly three of the parliamentarians switched their allegiance to the ʾUmmah Party.[530] Secondly an internal conflict over leadership between Philip ʿAbbās Ġabūš and the new head of the party Maḥmūd Ḥasīb eroded its unity. ʿAbd-al-Fātiḥ Tia said that after this conflict broke out, people in the Nuba Mountains were much more reluctant to support the Union.[531]

When the elections of 1968 took place, GUN thus was weakened. Additionally it was facing an opponent who was no longer underestimating GUN. Additionally the NUP and PDP had merged, which also strengthened their position. Lastly, the early dismissal of parliament favoured larger parties with greater financial means at their disposal to campaign. Also the fact that elections took place in May meant that the students were still at university and had not been able to campaign during their summer break. Most importantly the parties chose their candidates differently. Before NUP and ʾUmmah had brought in candidates from outside of the Nuba Mountains. ʿAbd-al-Fātiḥ Tia explained that "after 1965 the big parties selected candidates from the Nuba Mountains and did not bring them from outside anymore."[532] In consequence, GUN only won four seats in 1968, but the Nuba Mountains were still represented by people from the Nuba Mountains.

Dār-Fur is the most Western region in Sudan. It stretches along the Western border from Libya in the North along Chad to the Central African Republic in the South and is approximately as large as Spain. Al-Fāšir, the old administrative centre of Dār-Fur, is 800 kilometres west of Khartoum. Dār-Fur is very dry in the North; the Western and Southern regions are more fertile. Extensive agriculture is carried out in the Ǧabal-Marrah region. According to the 1956 census, 1.3 million

529 Ibid.

530 Different interviewees gave slightly varying information when the parliamentarians switched sides. It is not entirely clear when this happened. Some believe, that it was just before the elections, some think it was already in 1967. Zakariyāʾ ʾIsmāʿīl and Kabashi ʿUṯmān switched to the ʾImām wing of the ʾUmmah. Qamar Husayn switched to the Ṣādiq wing.

531 ʿAbd-al-Fātiḥ Tia Kafi, *Personal Interview,* (Kadugli, 6 March 2010).

532 Ibid.

people lived in Dār-Fur at independence, which equals approximately thirteen per cent of the total population of Sudan. In this period Dār-Fur was inhabited by mostly nomadic, Arabic speaking groups, such as the Banī Husayn and Rizayqāt and mostly sedentary and semi-nomadic non-Arabic speaking groups, such as the Fur and the Zaghawa. The vast majority of the population is Muslim.

Dār-Fur was an independent sultanate until 1874, when it fell to the Turko-Egyptian Sudan. During the Mahdīyah the Dār-Fur became one of the most important support bases of the Mahdī's religious movement and after the Mahdī's death, he was succeeded by Ḫalīfah ʿAbd-Allāhi, a Dār-Furī of the Taʿāīšah tribe. After the defeat of Ḫalīfah ʿAbd-Allāhi by the Anglo-Egyptian forces in 1898, Dār-Fur once again became an autonomous sultanate. It was only when the new regime had consolidated its reign and the British started to be worried about the Ottoman influence in the sultanate, Dār-Fur was once again incorporated into Sudan in 1916.

The role of the condominium in Dār-Fur was even more minimalistic than in the east, the Nuba Mountains and the south. As Julie Flint and Alex de Waal pointed out "Britain's only interest in Darfur was keeping order. It administered the province with absolute economy."[533] To do so a "native administration" along the lines of indirect rule was set up. The tribal structures were spruced up to fit the needs and expectations of the condominium and the Arabs were put into a superior position to the non-Arabs. "The doyen of these reactionary orientalists was Harold MacMichael,"[534] who wrote an ethnography of the Arab tribes of Sudan, which for many years was the basis of the British understanding of Sudanese society.[535] The development of the economy and services was largely ignored. Economic development options were not even considered until 1945.[536] In terms of schools, number of primary and secondary school graduates, hospitals and doctors, Dār-Fur was one of the least developed provinces of Sudan.[537]

533 Julie Flint, and Alex de Waal, *Darfur, A New History of a Long War* (London, 2008), p. 11.
534 Ibid.
535 Sir Harold Alfred MacMichael, *The Tribes of Northern and Central Kordofán* (Cambridge, 1912).
536 Julie Flint, and Alex de Waal, *Darfur* (London, 2008), p. 12.
537 Martin W. Daly, *Darfur's Sorrow: A History of Destruction and Genocide* (Cambridge, 2007), pp.

Thanks to widespread support for the ʾAnṣār and the Mahdī, Dār-Fur became a power base for the ʾUmmah Party after independence, with the exception of the urban centres, where the NUP at times succeeded to win seats thanks to the support of the traders. These merchants, who were fully integrated into the national money economy, felt themselves to be better represented by the young, educated, and urban NUP than by the conservative and religious ʾUmmah.[538] According to ʿAlī al-Ḥāǧ, the first time the issue of the marginalisation of Dār-Fur was discussed in a public forum was at a conference in al-Fāšir in summer 1956, organised by Māʾmūn Muḥammadī and the Dār-Fur Students' Union.[539] As previously mentioned in 1957, some members of the Ḫalīfah's family –ʿIzz-al-Dīn al-Mahdī, Muḥammad Dāwūd and ʿUmar– felt that the ʾUmmah exploited its position in Dār-Fur without giving anything back to the region and they tried to form a breakaway party. This however was prohibited by Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī.[540] In 1962 or 1963 ʿIzz-al-Dīn al-Mahdī al-Ḫalīfah ʿAbd-Allāhi tried a second time to organise the Dār-Furīs, this time in support of ʾIbrāhīm ʿAbbūd. ʿAlī al-Ḥāǧ, who attended those meetings in Khartoum, as one of the students from Dār-Fur at University of Khartoum, stated that this attempt eventually failed, when no specific development commitments for Dār-Fur were made.[541]

In November 1964, just after the popular uprising against ʿAbbūd, the first meetings took place, which eventually led to the formation of the *Dār-Fur Development Front* (DDF). Similar elements as in the case of the General Union of the Nuba Mountains were in place. There were Dār-Furī students in the university, there were Dār-Furīs in the unions and the civil service and there were a handful[542] of university graduates.[543] In the case of the Dār-Fur Development

179-81.

538 The link between the NUP and the merchant community has been shown by various authors, including: Peter Woodward, 'Parties and parliaments', in Muddathir Abd Al-Rahim, *et al.* (eds.), *Sudan Since Independence* (Hants, 1986), p. 55.

539 ʿAlī al-Ḥāǧ, *Personal Interview* (Bonn, 4 September 2010).

540 El Fatih Abdullahi Abdel Salam, 'The Umma Party' (Univ. of Khartoum M.Sc. Thesis, 1979), pp. 229-33.

541 ʿAlī al-Ḥāǧ, *Personal Interview* (Bonn, 4 September 2010).

542 Less than 10, according to: ʿAlī al-Ḥāǧ, *Personal Interview* (Bonn, 4 September 2010).

543 ʾAḥmad Diraige, *Personal Interview* (London, 19 June 2010).

Front it was ʾAḥmad Diraige who functioned as a catalyst, bringing together the right people and creating an initial momentum. The first meetings with around 50 people took place in the Khartoum University Students' Union Club. In this November too, the DDF published its first statements and then went on to organise a big rally at the Horse Racing Club in the south of the city, to which all Dār-Furīs in the capital were invited. According to ʿAlī al-Ḥāǧ, more than one thousand people attended this meeting. Here the DDF elected a committee and its leadership – ʾAḥmad Diraige was elected as president and ʿAlī al-Ḥāǧ as his deputy.[544]

After that, the DDF sent out delegates including ʾAḥmad Diraige to tour Dār-Fur, organise rallies, speak to the electorate and to local leaders and party chapters, to both raise awareness for the underdevelopment problem of Dār-Fur and to pressure the political parties to nominate local candidates in the elections, not candidates "exported" from Khartoum. In the 1950s, the ʾUmmah especially put up candidates from other areas of the country that they wanted to select as ministers in constituencies in Dār-Fur, which were considered to be ʾUmmah strongholds. After the election a candidate like this would go "back and become a minister, but know nothing about the area he is elected from and he would not serve the people."[545] In the actual election the DDF did not propose its own candidates, but supported any candidate from any party who was from Dār-Fur and had the necessary education to be a voice for his community.

After the elections the DDF organised a conference in al-Fāšir and invited all the elected parliamentarians from Dār-Fur to discuss the specific regional issues and grievances of Dār-Fur. ʿAlī al-Ḥāǧ explained the purpose of the conference:

> "We told everybody to be in his party, but we have issues for Dār-Fur, we want you as a block to support these issues. We are not interested if you are Umma or Communist, we are only interested in our issues and for you to support them. That is why we were able to make a conference in al-Fāšir, that is a conference for the parliamentarians, the parliamentary group who was actually elected in 1965. There were 24 of them. That

544 According to interviews with ʾAḥmad Diraige and ʿAlī al-Ḥāǧ. ʾAḥmad Diraige, *Personal Interview* (London, 19 June 2010). ʿAlī al-Ḥāǧ, *Personal Interview* (Bonn, 4 September 2010).

545 ʾAḥmad Diraige, *Personal Interview* (London, 19 June 2010).

> conference was chaired by myself. It began on 25th of May 1965. And after three days, we made a charter and in that charter, we talked about decentralisation of the government and other things, but decentralisation was very very high on the profile."[546]

With this conference the DDF attempted to commit the parliamentarians from Dār-Fur to work together on any question touching on the development of the region. Their aims were very similar to the ideas of the Beja Congress and the General Union of the Nuba Mountains, but their strategy was different.

Nevertheless there were two candidates who ran as independents in the name of the DDF. One of them was Diraige, who won the elections in Zalingi North. In the spirit of the DDF regarding cooperation with established parties, Diraige later found a political home in Ṣādiq's wing of the ʾUmmah Party. Being an independent Diraige would have had a more neutral position and maybe more leverage on other parliamentarians from Dār-Fur, at the same time, being a member of ʾUmmah he was able to join the government as Minister. ʿAlī al-Ḥāǧ said that Diraige's decision to join the ʾUmmah was "controversial."[547] Even Diraige himself said in an interview that joining ʾUmmah was a mistake, in the sense that afterwards he was "too lenient with the political parties." At the same time he argued that it was the right decision, because that way he was able to influence politics and help the modernisation process within the ʾUmmah Party along.[548] It would be wrong to equate the DDF with Diraige only, but because of Diraige's important role in the DDF, it was the common view that the DDF was part of Ṣādiq's New Forces Congress.

These three regional groupings were not the only ones. There were others, such as the *Union of the Southern and the Northern Funj* in Blue Nile who failed to enter parliament or the *ʾIttiḥād al-ʾAbnāʾ al-Ḥalfā* in Northern Province and a similar organisation in the Abyei area, both of which were purely social societies.[549] But

546 ʿAlī al-Ḥāǧ, *Personal Interview* (Bonn, 4 September 2010).

547 ʿAlī al-Ḥāǧ, *Personal Interview* (Bonn, 4 September 2010).

548 ʾAḥmad Diraige, *Personal Interview* (London, 19 June 2010).

549 The organisations in Wādī al-Ḥalfā, Blue Nile and Abyei were mentioned in my interviews. In the newspapers one can additionally find the Kurdufān Front (Al-ʾAyām, 15 March 1965, pp. 6-7, and 25 May 1965, p. 1), the Union of the Sons of Dunqulā who were mainly opposed to the local form of Native Administration (Al-ʾAyām, 4 April 1965, p. 5, and 9 April 1965, p. 1, and 31

even the three organisations discussed were not full-fledged parties yet. The Beja Congress was closest to that and its members, when running in the elections, were listed as members of the Beja Congress on the ballot paper. The members of the Union were running as independent candidates and the Union at the time did not understand itself as a party. As Muṣṭafā ʿAṭrūn clarified:

> "At that moment we did not believe that GUN was a party. It was just an association which would like to see things changed. Nobody thought of GUN as a political party. Our thinking was not much developed. Although the activities which were carried out by GUN were strictly political."[550]

The GUN was thinking in terms of being a development organisation. ʿAbd-al-Fātiḥ Tia used the term "organisation to make demands" (Tanẓīm Maṭlabī) to describe what the GUN was.[551] The same is true for the Dār-Fur Development Front. It had the least elaborate structure of the three organisations discussed. The Front was primarily a regional grouping of parliamentarians, who were actually members in various other parties. ʿAlī al-Ḥāǧ called the DDF a "pressure group."[552]

Therefore these organisations can be understood as being somewhere on a spectrum with local social societies to help the people on one end and fully established regional parties at the other. All three organisations addressed the same issues: lack of representation, lack of decentralisation, and lack of development in the peripheries. All of them tried to have local representatives of their areas elected for parliament and then urged these parliamentarians to act really in the name of their constituencies. The link between the parliamentarians and the organisation was the strongest in the case of the Beja Congress, but it was already quite loose in the case of the GUN. Muṣṭafā ʿAṭrūn explained: "The links between the parliamentarians and the union were not very strong. They were left

---

May 1965, p. 1) and the Sons of the Missīriya who were concerned with employment possibilities along the railway line in the West (Al-Sūdān al-Ǧadīd, 18 May 1965, p. 5).

550 Muṣṭafā ʿAṭrūn, *Personal Interview* (Kadugli, 7 March 2010).

551 ʿAbd-al-Fātiḥ Tia Kafi, *Personal Interview,* (Kadugli, 6 March 2010).

552 ʿAlī al-Ḥāǧ, *Personal Interview* (Bonn, 4 September 2010).

as independent members thinking for themselves."[553] In the case of the Dār-Fur Development Front this link was even weaker.

The individual histories of the three organisations shaped their idea of the nation. The next section will look at the logic which led to the emergence of all the regional movements. However while they had strongly overlapping ideas, they also turned out to be contradictory in other aspects. It is especially these contradictions which become relevant for the argument in the fifth chapter.

Subjects & Citizens

The following section focuses on the origin of the regional movements and what triggered their emergence. Why were they able to gain so many seats in the mid 1960s? I will look at their conception of the Sudanese nation and their model of identity and how this led to a failure of these movements to cooperate with each other and of the central political powers to work together with these movements in a meaningful way. These questions are discussed by examining three aspects: firstly, the centralisation of decolonisation; secondly, issues of identity; and thirdly, federalism as a form of nationalism.

To understand, why the Sudanese regional movements emerged, one has to look at the way the regions were administered during the colonial period, and what changed with decolonisation. On one hand there was the indirect rule institutions of local governance, i.e. the sheikh, the ʿumdah and the nāẓir. These were partially original, partially newly appointed or even completely newly created "tribal" leaders. On the other hand there were the representatives of the central government, i.e. the district commissioner and the governor of the province, as well as technicians and other professional staff sent out from the centre. From 1951 onwards the British started to implement local councils to take over the tasks of

553 Muṣṭafā ʿAṭrūn, *Personal Interview* (Kadugli, 7 March 2010).

the district commissioners. In their fully implemented form local councils were elected, chose their own chairman and had their own finances. By the end of the 1950s most areas of Northern Sudan had some form of elected council.[554]

Nevertheless councils and the district commissioners existed side by side and the office of the district commissioner was only abolished in 1960. Additionally a large part of the day to day tasks of the council were done by the executive officer, who was an employee sent out from Khartoum and reporting back to the *Ministry for the Interior and Local Government*.[555] The office of the governor of the province stayed nearly unchanged, except for a minor reform by ʿAbbūd in 1960, which was rescinded after his fall in 1964.[556] To summarise; superficially not much changed –the colonial system of local government was more or less taken over into the independent Sudan and real institutional change only happened in the 1970s.[557]

However, a district commissioner did not only administer a particular region during the colonial period, he was also the interface between the people and the central state in Khartoum. The district commissioners or inspectors, as Bušrā Ḥamad pointed out:

> "by the very nature of their duties, formed a link between the government and the people. Indeed, the Sudan government was popularly known to northern Sudanese as 'the government of Inspectors' (hukumat al-mufettishin). The same was also true in the southern Sudan where the mufesttish could establish a good deal of personal influence. 'England, Egypt or the British empire meant nothing to many of the peoples of the Sudan, who knew and recognised only their District Commissioner or Inspector. He was the government.'"[558]

554 Galobawi Mohamed Salih, and John Howell, 'Local Government after Independence', in John Howell (ed.), *Local Government* (Khartoum, 1974), pp. 33-4.

555 Ibid., p. 43.

556 Ibid., pp. 34-5.

557 This view was also expressed by: Gaafar Mohamed Ali Bakheit, 'The Politics of Native Administration, 1964-69', in John Howell (ed.), *Local Government* (Khartoum, 1974), pp. 45-6.

558 The two quotes are from Hasan Najila and H. C. Jackson. Bushra Hamad, 'Sudan Notes and Records and Sudanese Nationalism, 1918-1956', *History in Africa*, Vol. 22 (1995), p. 244.

This meant that from the perspective of the average Sudanese in the regions, no matter if in Equatoria, the Nuba Mountains, or Dār-Fur, government was locally present, both in the shape of native administration and in shape of the British commissioners and inspectors. In the southern provinces, the first time that this model was questioned, was at the Juba conference in 1947. The participants were handpicked by the colonial administration, but for the first time, by discussing the link between the northern and southern provinces, a direct link between the regions and the centre was created. Government became an entity in Khartoum, to which you needed to go, while before it had been an institution in your area, which would come to you.

With decolonisation, this change was manifested in the parliament and new government. A parliament guaranteed a higher degree of representation, because the parliament selected and controlled the government. The colonial government however was imposed from outside. While being usually considered as the more legitimate form of government, the parliament was also geographically distant and conceptually more complex. With the district commissioner being the interface to the central state; whether one liked the commissioner or not, the commissioner was present. The district commissioner was not only an administrator; he was the local legislative, executive and judicative power. After independence the local administration was just an executive administration. In the post-colonial state the legislative function was exclusively fulfilled by parliament and the parliamentarians, were elected locally but worked in Khartoum. To make one's wishes and complaints heard in the parliament was not only more complicated because of the geographical separation, it was also dependent on prior understanding of what a parliament actually is, how it functions and what role a parliament and your parliamentarian have.

Decolonisation brought about change not only in the interaction with the central state but also within the local form of that state. Decolonisation meant that the positions of administrators which were previously held by foreigners were now given to Sudanese. This process, dubbed "sudanisation" at the time, was often described as a "northernisation" to me –that is a process where jobs were given to

the on average better educated elite from the riverain centre.[559] What difference did it make when a foreigner was replaced by a northerner –one outsider by another?

The foreign district commissioners were part of a larger entity and therefore their loyalties were different to the loyalties of the "northern" administrators. As British citizens they were loyal primarily to the British crown and to the colonial project. Their loyalty to the centre in Khartoum was secondary. This relationship was very clearly demonstrated by the choice of words in a letter by the Deputy-Governor of Baḥr-al-Ġazāl T.R.H. Owen in 1947:

> "We at least know that the South's case will not go by default, that the Central Government (i.e. Khartoum) understand both our needs and wants and that their conscience is very much awake."[560]

Without actually discussing what Owen was commenting on, his use of "we" and "our" as in "we, the South" or "we, Baḥr-al-Ġazāl" and "their" as in "they, the central government" is revealing. He did not see himself as part of that "central government," possibly not even representing the same interest, but as its antipode.[561]

The Sudan Political Service (SPS), being a distinct body, had a special form of corps spirit and therefore there was a certain level of loyalty within the SPS. Nevertheless the Sudanese who took those positions after sudanisation were mostly riverain Arabs, educated in Khartoum, part of one social class and sharing the same idea of an independent Sudanese state as a political project. That meant they were not only sent out from Khartoum, they were also mostly part of the same peer group in power in Khartoum. As a consequence, the new *men on the*

559 Even an interviewee in Port Sudan used the term "northernisation" during a conversation over coffee in the market of Daym-al-ʿArab with various current and former Beja Congress leaders.

560 Quoted according to: Scopas Sekwat Poggo, 'War and Conflict in the Southern Sudan, 1955-1972' (Univ. of California Ph.D. thesis, 1999), p. 87.

561 A very similar argument has been made by Christopher Vaughan in regards to the administrators in Dār-Fur in his talk at ASAUK 2010: Christopher Vaughan, 'Performing authority at the borders of the state: government and society in Condominium Darfur 1916-1956', Paper presented at ASAUK bi-annual conference (17 September 2010, Oxford).

spot understood their role very differently and had much stronger loyalties to the government in Khartoum.

Lastly, with decolonisation, the link between the government and the local administration changed, due to a change in perspective from colonial to post-colonial. While the colonial state aspired one day to make way to a modern state, it was more guided by the question of how to make administration as cheap as possible. This meant that the governor of the provinces and district commissioners had great leeway when making decisions, exceptions were the rule. From the perspective of the new governing elite, this exceptionalism however was in direct competition with the ideal, centrally organised state. The exceptions were giving way to what was seen as the archaic customs of the peripheries, customs that had no place in the new, independent, modern Sudan.

A good example for this is the case of Dāwūd ʿAbd-al-Laṭīf, governor of Baḥr-al-Ġazāl in 1955. He had succeeded in keeping the province more or less calm during the 1955 mutiny, mainly by removing himself and other northerners from the public view for the time of the mutiny.[562] This strategy of doing whatever it takes in the province, instead of implementing central policy to the letter, was not welcomed by the central government and Dāwūd ʿAbd-al-Laṭīf was removed from his post shortly after.[563] This meant that the administration of the provinces became dependent on Khartoum to a growing degree.

All these processes, caused by decolonisation, the centralisation [564] and reconstruction of the colonial into a modern state, pushed a transformation of the inhabitants, especially in the peripheries, from subjects into citizens. In a perverse irony of history, this transformation led to a second disenfranchisement of the inhabitants. They lost their rights and privileges as subjects but, at the same time

562 Sir K. Helm, *Letter to C.A.E. Shuckburgh assessing the recent event in the south,* 11 September 1955, according to: Douglas Johnson (ed.), *British Documents* (London, 1998) Vol. 2, p. 466.

563 Sir K. Helm, *Telegram to the Foreign Office on a meeting with Dāwūd ʿAbd-al-Laṭīf,* 31 August 1955, according to: Ibid., p. 466.

564 Woodward also pointed to this centralisation of decolonisation: Peter Woodward, 'Sudan's Fragile State, 1956–1989', in: John Ryle, Justin Willis, Suliman Baldo and Jok Madut Jok (eds.), *The Sudan Handbook* (London 2012) p. 150. And: Peter Woodward, *Sudan, 1898-1989: The Unstable State* (Boulder, 1989), pp. 78 & 89.

were not yet able to function as citizens in a modern state and make use those new rights and privileges.

This is where in the 1950s the Southern Liberal Party to a lesser degree, and in the 1960s SANU, the Southern Front, the Beja Congress, the General Union of the Nuba Mountains, and the Dār-Fur Development Front to a greater degree came in. Building on the social clubs and the first graduates to come back with a university education and the few individuals having experience with working for government, they functioned according to ʿAbd-al-Fātiḥ Tia, as an emancipatory project.[565] They helped the peripheral population to understand that they too were stake-holders in the Sudanese state, that they had rights, that they could actually question what the state did with the taxes they had to pay. In this sense the regional political groupings helped to re-enfranchise the citizens in the peripheries. This was the gap which they were able to build on and why they were able to become so important in the 1960s.

The creation of these regional movements however also meant the expression and, in part creation, in part strengthening of regional identities, distinct from the central identity or national identity. This split of identities may have been clearest between the Sudanese in the southern provinces and the elites in the centre, but even here in 1956, they were still vague and far from unbridgeable or final. As mentioned earlier, Paysama, who was an important southern politician of the first generation, was in favour of a stronger affiliation of north and south, although, as a young man, he had been enslaved by northerners.[566] For the majority of people, who had little or no contact with people from Khartoum, sudanisation created this split for the first time.

Before decolonisation the administration was in the hands of a close knit corps of men, mostly from Oxford and Cambridge. There is no question that most British administrators were informed by racist or racialist ideas and considered the Sudanese as primitive and archaic. This attitude also had a paternalistic streak,

565 ʿAbd-al-Fātiḥ Tia Kafi, *Personal Interview,* (Kadugli, 6 March 2010).
566 Stanislaus Paysama, *How a Slave Became a Minister* (Khartoum, 1990).

mixed with a certain level of fascination for these people. The paternalist attitude is inherent to the colonial project. The fascination for the locals is well depicted by the many articles SPS members wrote in the *Sudan Notes and Records* about local religious practices, customs and languages.[567]

The new "northern" administrators, like the British, were also racist or perceived as racist by the local population.[568] Nuer, Dinka, Nuba, Beja and Fur, being non-Arabs or Africans by Sudanese classification, were considered as second-class citizens and often called slaves (ʿabīd). There are many stories one could tell to illustrate the Sudanese problem with racism, but one of the most enlightening ones, which I was told many times is that many older Arab Sudanese rejected their new passports when Sudan became independent, because it stated their nationality to be Sudanese (sūdānī), which also means black person and used to be more or less synonymous to slave (ʿabīd).[569] Philip ʿAbbās Ġabūš was surely not a neutral observer, but his perception was shared by many and a similar sentiment was expressed in many of my interviews:

> "In addition to these concrete grievances, the black peoples had to fight against feelings of racial superiority expressed by those who thought themselves to be Arabs. This was bad enough in the towns. It was even worse in the tribal areas, where northern Arabic-speaking officials often behaved in a very arrogant way in the worst colonialist tradition."[570]

But these administrators were not only racist or perceived to be racist, they also lacked the kind of paternalist attitude and the fascinations of the British in many cases. For them the primitive was only primitive and not noble.[571] This is not at all surprising. For a group of people who were the first or rarely second generation of

---

567 Bushra Hamad, 'Sudan Notes and Records', *History in Africa*, Vol. 22 (1995), p. 243.

568 Bašīr admitted to this when he wrote: "The attitudes towards other cultures were not very much different from those promoted by the colonial education. It was not uncommon to hear or read about the primitive tribal cultures." Mohamed Omer Beshir, 'Diversity, Regionalism and National Unity', *Research Report of the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies*, no. 54 (1979), p. 27.

569 I will return to the issue of these labels in the final chapter.

570 Philip Abbas, 'Growth of Black Political Consciousness in Northern Sudan', *Africa Today*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (1973), p. 39.

571 Bushra Hamad gives an example of this, when he writes about the criticism of the Sudanese intelligentsia of Sudan Notes and Records and its "undue emphasis on things considered primitive and valueless." Bushra Hamad, 'Sudan Notes and Records', *History in Africa*, Vol. 22 (1995), p. 258.

a new modern class who tried to build a new, modern state, all of these old, traditional and archaic customs were stumbling blocks to a supposedly brighter future. While the British had studied the local languages, the new administrators did not consider them as languages (luġah) but as dialects (rūtānā). While the British officials had specifically applied to join the Sudan Political Service, the new administrators were mostly sent to the Nuba Mountains or Equatoria as a part of their career. Lastly while the British were perceived as racist against all Sudanese, these Sudanese were from the centre and racist only against Sudanese from the peripheries.

All of these factors made a difference when considered from the perspective of the Shilluk or the Beja, because it created a distinction between "us" and "them," between centre and periphery. It created or enforced the categories, which were necessary to start a local movement. As a result of decolonisation the participation in the state as a whole was centralised and thus geographically moved away and became procedurally more complicated. In consequence the peripheries were alienated from the central state. At the same time the local representation of the state was sudanised. Sudanisation mostly meant "northernisation" and therefore enforced this alienation from the central state by creating this distinction between "us," the Fur or Bari and "them," the people in the centre. Although there was a continuity of the structures of local administration, the different mentality of the administrators and the particular way in which the administrators were perceived locally, caused a discontinuity of the effects of that local administration, which was in essence the start of regional and ethnical identities as national political categories.

It is important to keep in mind that these categories were primarily geographical and not ethnic, although they often carried ethnic labels. The head of GUN in Kadugli for example was not a Nuba, but an Arab. GUN was accused of being a racist project by politicians in Khartoum, but primarily it began as a geographical entity.[572] Similarly the DDF, which was also accused of racism, actually warned in September 1965 that under the wrong circumstances a hardening of ethnic

572 ʿAbd-al-Fātiḥ Tia Kafi, *Personal Interview*, (Kadugli, 6 March 2010).

boundaries in Dār-Fur could happen, which they believed would be detrimental to the region.[573]

In the southern provinces on the other hand, no southern identity had yet emerged. As mentioned earlier, Buth Diu, a politician from the first generation, considered himself as a Nuer, not a southern Sudanese. Equally in the 1960s, the SANU of William Deng was predominantly a Dinka affair. The Southern Front incorporated different ethnicities, but mostly men from Equatoria. The Anya-Nya and the politicians in exile were often divided along ethnic, regional and religious lines, as Joseph Lagu describes in excruciating detail in his autobiography.[574] Even if on a leadership level a southern identity was sought after, at the local level of the Anya-Nya fighter such a conception had yet to form.

As a result, when various regional movements entered parliament in 1965 they did so, on their own at first, representing their individual regions. However, as Phillip Kalo said, the parliamentarians soon recognised their common interests and problems and members of GUN and Beja Congress would meet, however informally. After the 1968 elections, which weakened both parties, the two parties supposedly agreed to join forces. This plan however never came to full fruition, because the negotiations were interrupted by Numayrī's coup.[575]

The relationship between the northern regional movements and the southern parties was even more complicated. Some of the members of the regional groups, especially some of the Christian Nuba such as Philip ʿAbbās Ġabūš, did support an intensive cooperation with the southerners, while others refused this.[576] The southern perspective was too extreme for many of the regional movements in the north. Phillip Kalo told me that the focus on the right of separation, made any alliance practically impossible. "Their point was so far to us, we couldn't understand it."[577] SANU had better chances to talk to the northern regional

573 Statement by the Dār-Fur Development Front in: Al-ʾAyām, 5 September 1965, pp. 1 & 8.
574 Joseph Lagu, *Sudan, Odyssey Through a State* (Omdurman, 2006), pp. 107-210.
575 Phillip Kalo Ramaḍān Kardela, *Personal Interview* (Kadugli, 6 March 2010).
576 Muṣṭafā ʿAṭrūn, *Personal Interview* (Kadugli, 7 March 2010).
577 Phillip Kalo Ramaḍān Kardela, *Personal Interview* (Kadugli, 6 March 2010).

movements than the Southern Front. Arop Madut Arop who was a Southern Front leader in Port Sudan, remembered about the position of the Beja Congress: "The Beja Congress was not attracted to us because of (our demand for) self determination. They were attracted to SANU, because SANU was preaching federation."[578]

Interestingly the southern movement in exile had, at least in theory, envisioned a cooperation with the people of the Nuba Mountains, when it named itself the *Sudan African Closed Districts National Union*, a name they kept until 1963.[579] Later on it was William Deng who was suggesting joint action along these lines and was arguing that Sudan had two majorities, an African majority and a Muslim majority. Deng did indeed get in touch with leaders from GUN, the DDF and the Beja Congress, when he and Ṣādiq formed the New Forces Congress, but one has to assume that his idea of an African majority was primarily a rhetorical point, considering that the ICF was also part of that Congress.

Nevertheless Deng's idea left its mark, but maybe not in the sense Deng had hoped for. Prunier implied that when Ṣādiq was running against his uncle in 1968, by working with the DDF and Diraige, he introduced the Afro-Arab divide into Dār-Furī politics.[580] Prunier probably gave too much credit to Ṣādiq and Diraige, but what did indeed happen in 1968 was a division of political allegiances in Dār-Fur along ethnic lines, after Ṣādiq worked with Diraige and his uncle worked with the Ḫalīfah's family. Since Ṣādiq simultaneously worked with Deng, this link could be read within Deng's conception of an African majority.

In turn, all non-Africans were recognised as Arabs and therefore became linked to the centre. In 1965 Baqqārah Arabs, like the Missīriyah and other Arabic-speaking groups in the periphery, were still clearly not part of the elite. They were part of the under-developed periphery and in consequence they formed their own

578 Arop Madut Arop, *Personal Interview* (Juba, 2 December 2010).

579 The Nuba Mountains were also a closed district. In various discussions it has been mentioned to me, that the SACDNU explicitly kept a number of seats in the leadership free for future Nuba members. I was never able to confirm this however.

580 Gérard Prunier, *Darfur: The Ambiguous Genocide* (Ithaka, 2005), pp. 71-2.

regional movements, such as the *Sons of the Missīriyah,* who were concerned with employment possibilities along the railway line in the West.[581] In the exhibition of the anthropological museum in Khartoum, which was designed in the 1950s, customs of the Dinka were shown alongside the dresses of the Baqqārah. The only group which was missing were the elites from the centre. There is no question that, in the 1950s, there was no shared bond between people like Maḥğūb or ʾAzharī and a Banī Husayn nomad in Dār-Fur. They were seen to be as equally archaic and backwards as their non-Arab Fur neighbours, but with Deng's suggestion of an African majority, which was then built on by Ṣādiq in his alliance with Diraige, suddenly a shared arabness started to emerge. Shortly before his death Deng realised this, Lwal Diing Wol remembered how Deng told him during the 1968 elections that they had made a mistake: "Now we grouped the pan-arabists together."[582]

The one thing these regional movements all could agree on, no matter if they were able to cooperate in parliament or not, was their common demand for a federal system in Sudan. The first concentrated demand for federalism and the first promise to consider such a solution had been made in late 1955, to get the southern parliamentarians' support for independence. This demand had been at the heart of what the Southern Liberal Party stood for and was what later all regional movements were demanding. This demand was a continuous undercurrent in the political discourse, nevertheless it was not fulfilled until Numayrī implemented his federal approach to dictatorship. Federalism became such a problematic concept in Sudan, that the famous Sudanese historian Muḥammad ʿUmar Bašīr used the term "regionalism" instead of the term

581 Al-Sūdān al-Ğadīd, 18 May 1965, p. 5.

582 Lwal Diing Wol, *Personal Interview* (Juba, 2 December 2010).

This is of course not to say, that there was no ideas of Sudan as Arab nation before Deng. As Oluwadare Aguda pointed out: "The greatest achievement of Arabism in the Sudan has been the unquestioned acceptance by the whole world that this is an Arab state, in spite of the fact that only about 40 per cent of the population is Arab" (Oluwadare Aguda, 'Arabism and Pan-Arabism in Sudanese Politics', The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. 11, No. 2 (June 1973), p. 177.) I comment on the issue of arabness as sudaneseness also in the final chapter. What was new with Deng and the New Forces Congress was an alignment of the central Arab elites with the peripheral Arab nomads and a alignment of local ethnic divisions with national ethno-political categories.

"federalism" because the latter has, as Bašīr said, acquired certain connotations in Sudan, such as disunity.[583]

When in 1955 the northern parliamentarians needed the vote of the southerners, they promised to consider federalism in the new constitution. Work on the new constitution however did not progress much and eventually, in 1957 more radical southerners were elected into the parliament, who had a stauncher position on the question. Nevertheless, federalism was still the primary aim and the armed conflict was still a minor phenomenon. In the same period the Beja started to organise, however not yet as a political party. In the ʾUmmah, members of the Ḫalīfah's family were dissatisfied with national policies regarding Dār-Fur. Federalism however was never truly considered by the elites in Khartoum.

The rejection of federalism had a practical reason, a historical reason, and a political reason. Practically, for a newly independent country like Sudan with a limited budget and a small educated elite, running a full federal structure with nine provincial governments and assemblies would have stretched the human and capital resources to their limits. Historically, the Sudanese elite had learnt about states and parliaments and modern political structures from the British, who were highly averse to federalism in the classical sense. In consequence, it was to be expected that many of the Gordon College educated Sudanese would take a negative view of federalism, see it as a first step towards separation, and would not really understand how it could be practically implemented. Most importantly, politically, in the 1950s federalism was seen as a threat to sovereignty.

As previously discussed, the fear of loss of sovereignty, the fear of renewed colonisation of Sudan, be it by a power like England or the United States, or a power like the United Arab Republic, was at the core of politics before the ʿAbbūd takeover. The demand of federalism was threatening this in a triple way: firstly, only a centralised state was seen as strong and a strong state was necessary to defend sovereignty; secondly, the demand of federalism in the southern provinces

583 Mohamed Omer Beshir, 'Diversity, Regionalism and National Unity', *Research Report of the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies*, no. 54 (1979), p. 34.

was directly connected to the armed conflict in the south which was seen as a threat to a strong central state; and thirdly, the demand of federalism in the southern provinces was seen by many northern politicians to be a legacy of the British colonial project, planted intentionally to weaken Sudan and to delay or reverse independence. ʾIbrāhīm al-Muftī argued accordingly when he said:

> "There are rebels in the south because the English convinced the southerners for 50 years that the northerners did not treat them well and that is why the southerners hate the northerners."[584]

In 1958 the army took over and as armies tend to do, they found a simple solution for a complex problem. As mentioned before, the army believed that the southern problem would go away, if they could make all southerners become Muslim and speak Arabic. The day of rest was moved from Sunday to Friday and the foreign missionaries were expelled. All talk of federalism was outlawed as seditious. Many southern leaders, among them important parliamentarians of the 1958 parliament, such as Father Saturnino Lohure, came to the conclusion that if asking for federalism alone was seditious, fighting for separation was a more straightforward option. The army unsurprisingly reacted with violence.

It was during the ʿAbbūd period where the idea of federalism moved from being suspicious to out-right illegal. The idea of federalism was a direct challenge to military rule in its centralised form, especially since the problem in the south had been one of the motivations for the coup. When eventually military rule was removed by the October revolution, the northern politicians came to the erroneous assumption, that the southern problem would go away if military rule went away. Their expectations were mostly due to the fact that they had no knowledge of the situation in the south and in consequence had no understanding of the grievances of the southerners.

The end of the ʿAbbūd regime meant the emergence of regional movements in the north with similar demands as the southerners. They succeeded to win elections

584 ʾIbrāhīm al-Muftī, *Oral History Interview* (no date and place), according to: Maʿhad al-Dirāsāt al-ʾAfrīqiyah wa al-ʾAsiyūiya, Ǧāmiʿah al-Ḫarṭūm, *Muqābilāt Ruwād al-Ḥarakah al-Waṭaniyah* (Khartoum 1985), Vol. 1, p. 101.

against the people's parties, although, as specifically discussed in the case of GUN, they lacked their resources for patronage, campaigning and mobilisation. This parallel was not missed by northern observers and some recognised the urgency for action. Bašīr Muḥammad Saʿīd, a close associate of ʾAzharī and editor of al-ʾAyām, wrote a number of op-eds to support federalism. He believed that this was good for the development of Sudan, but he also warned that otherwise Sudan might face "dismantlement, division and destruction."[585] He called the national parties to give the issue of regional governance attention and study the possibility of decentralisation.[586] However, he realised clearly that the parties, while being worried about the appearance of regional competition, did not make an effort to understand the underlying problems in the periphery.[587] The government was in no state to act, as it was thrown from one constitutional crisis into the next. The transitional period was naturally a constitutional grey zone. But after the 1965 elections, it got even more problematic, first with the installing of ʾAzharī as permanent head of the Supreme Council of State, then the ban of the communist party and eventually discussion about banning movements which were supporting seditious ideas, a law which some were worried could be used against the GUN and the Beja Congress.[588]

At the same time, the main worry of the parties, besides sustaining government, was to finally establish a constitution. Here the parties needed the support of the southerners and were ready to buy that support by agreeing to some sort of federal structure. Since the constitution never came to anything, it is impossible to say if that was an empty promise or not and what that federalism would have looked like and if it would have only had impact in the south or if it would have been a true federal structure for all regions of Sudan. Nevertheless, what sovereignty was for the democratic period in the 1950s, constitutionality was for the democratic period of the 1960s. The northern parties were ready to promise federalism to get sovereignty in the first place and thence be able to discuss other details of the constitution, but at the same time federalism was a threat to

585 Bašīr Muḥammad Saʿīd, *Op-ed*, in: Al-ʾAyām, 10 March 1965, p. 3.
586 Al-ʾAyām, 20 May 1965, p. 3.
587 Al-ʾAyām, 26 July 1956, p. 3.
588 Al-Sūdān al-Ǧadīd, 24 May 1965, p. 1.

sovereignty from the northern Sudanese perspective in the 1950s and it was a part of the constitutional crisis in the 1960s.

The regional parties were a reaction to the centralisation of the political system, which went hand in hand with decolonisation. The creation of a parliament, the sudanisation of positions, and the changing mentality of administrators all modified the relationship between the citizens and the central government. Their newly found position as voters meant that they had become citizens, but were only slowly learning how to make use of these rights. As citizens they entered a nation in which economic and educational opportunities were clearly in the favour of the centre and the regions only began to demand development in the peripheries. The regional parties helped this process along, without being able to develop a true national vision or a vision of their specific group within the nation at that point in time.

As a side-effect of this process new identities began to emerge and the difference between "us," the people in the periphery, and "them," the elites in the centre, became a political category. What started primarily as geographical identities of the people in the Nuba Mountains and the people in Dār-Fur, became increasingly ethnicised and racialised in the late 1960s. Suddenly the Nuba and Fur were African and the Rizayqāt and the Missīriyah were Arab, which meant that the Rizayqāt and the Missīriyah nominally became part of the political elite and the Nuba and Fur became increasingly peripheral, even within their regions. Nevertheless the regional parties were not able yet to form one common party, representing different peripheral peoples in the north and the south. This meant that they could not put unified pressure on the parties in the centre. But more than that, even if the parties in the centre had wanted this, it would have been difficult to come to an agreement with all regional parties at once.

Even without a national vision or a shared platform, the regional parties were still a major challenge to the NUP and the ʾUmmah. Firstly, they showed that the big two were not really national parties either. Secondly, these parties made the creation of majorities in parliament increasingly difficult. Thirdly, the regional

parties in the north could easily be seen as pre-cursors to potential civil unrest in the north, much closer to Khartoum's comfort zone than the southern provinces. Fourthly, they challenged the model which the other parties suggested for the Sudanese state, as a centralised state where everything, often including the parliamentarians themselves, came from the capital.

Conclusion

The 1965 election was the beginning of the second democratic period of Sudanese politics. If distrust and the instability of coalitions had been the reason for the first coup in 1958, then the parties did not learn much from this experience. The period after 1965 was characterised by even less trust and even more unstable coalition governments. The marked presence of smaller parties in parliament, both ideological and regional, made the creation of coalitions increasingly complicated and to top this off, the big two, were themselves each broken into two wings.

The coalitions preferred by the central elites were some variation of a NUP and ʾUmmah grand coalition, by that making any attempts to include smaller parties superfluous. The only party leader who briefly did attempt to break out of this pattern was Ṣādiq al-Mahdī, but he too was quickly replaced by a new variation of the grand coalition. Instead of seeing any effective variation of policies, the period was characterised by a slow mutation of institutions. The Supreme Council of State was changed and politicised. In consequence the relevance of the role of the prime minister was lessened. The Supreme Court was relegated. The consequence was a constitutional crisis, while the parties failed to finally agree on a new constitution.

This is in line with the argument of the next chapter that the fragmentation of the political system and the distrust between parties, in part caused by the constitutional crisis but in part worsened it, led to a situation where both citizens

and parties started to abandon the democratic structures, which in turn led to the breakdown of the political system.

While the 1964 revolution had come with the promise to deal with the southern question in a constructive and peaceful manner, Maḥğūb's government returned to the previous strategy of shock and awe. As a result, the armed resistance increased, the southern parties became more militant, but also became less able to get in touch with their constituencies and work within their communities. The resulting situation was a triple challenge to the government: first, the southern parties were less and less willing and able to compromise on key issues such as the scope of federalism; second, the armed struggle increasingly questioned the power monopoly of the state; and third, the civil war was an increasing burden for the national budget.

At the same time regional parties in the northern provinces began to appear and became a problem for the NUP and the ʾUmmah. The two large parties, or their wings, increasingly looked like regional parties themselves, once they lost their majorities not only in the south, but also in the east, parts of the centre and indirectly the west. By doing so, the regional parties showed that the big parties could not claim to have a national vision and that their story of a homogenous, Arab, Muslim northern Sudan was far from true. Additionally the regional movements in the north suggested the possibility that civil unrest could spread from the south to the north.

The centralisation of decolonisation transformed subjects into citizens, which thanks to regional parties and organisations became increasingly aware of their rights and grievances. The sudanisation which was perceived as northernisation, the change of attitude of the new administrators, and their way of dealing with the peripheries, resulted in the creation of regional identities as political categories. Suddenly the difference between "we in the Nuba Mountains" and "them, the elite in Khartoum" had a political relevance. These categories were then for the first time grouped along the lines of an African-Arab divide. Before the categories had differentiated the modern elite in Khartoum from the

traditional inhabitants of the periphery. Now the elite was defined as Arab and therefore expanded to include people like the Baqqārah. This of course was a political cleavage, which only started to emerge and to be a problem; it was not yet, as it is sometimes considered today, a fixed dichotomy.

Nevertheless the proliferation of regional parties created a situation where everywhere was periphery. The conceptualisation of an African majority in Sudan created a different vision of what the Sudanese identity, what the Sudanese nation story could be. The southern demands and beliefs were amplified by the armed conflict, but it was the presence of southern regional political parties, in combination with northern regional parties, which challenged the position of ʾUmmah and NUP at their core.

While the different regional parties were not able to unify and exert strong political pressure on the central parties, the ideas they were built on posed a danger to the nation story of the central elites, questioning some of the central tenets their rule was based on. In that sense the regional parties were a larger threat than the institutionally better organised ideological parties. I will return to these questions in the next chapter.

V. Writing the Nation

The following chapter focuses on ideas of the Sudanese nation in the context of the process of writing a constitution. How do the different ideas and conceptions of the different political parties reflect on their proposals for a constitution? The chapter is divided into four parts. The first three parts gather elements already discussed previously, but now they are presented in their specific context and the connections and parallels are clarified. First I will look at the historical development of conceptions of Sudan, sudaneseness, nation, and nationalism. Secondly I will discuss the administrative, logistical and structural elements of the attempts to write a Sudanese constitution. This is followed by a summarising overview of the ideas of the different political parties about Sudan as nation and sudaneseness as identity and their proposals for the constitution. The fourth part of the chapter is the analysis, where I will try to bring together all the different threads and ideas presented so far in the thesis.

Occupy Sudani

Sudan, as understood today, is a very modern formation. In a sense, the Ottoman colonisation, by creating a dominion under Egypt, created a distinct territory with at least vaguely defined borders. One could argue therefore, that the so-called Turkish period was the basis for both the independence claim of Sudan and the unity claim by the Egyptian crown. The Turkish rulers were chased away by the Mahdī, a movement many see as the first nationalist movement of Sudan. Indeed

the Mahdī did create a state with an administration, his movement was directed against foreign occupation and it had an ideological basis. In that sense one could agree with the assessment of the Mahdī as a nationalist figure. At the same time, the Mahdī had planned to bring justice to an area much larger than Sudan and wanted to occupy Ethiopia and Egypt. His mission was not limited by borders and in that sense he was neither nationalist, nor did his movement and leadership define a Sudanese state or nation.

A clear distinction of a territory, which then became Sudan, emerged with the British re-occupation of the area. When the British wanted to occupy Sudan, they used the Egyptian claim to the area as justification, but simultaneously they wanted to avoid Egyptian interference. Therefore they created the Anglo-Egyptian condominium, which was the first time that Sudan emerged as an entity with clearly defined boundaries and which claimed territorial sovereignty over all people living within those boundaries. But the creation of an entity with boundaries does obviously not imply that anyone emotionally or rationally connects with these boundaries and maybe even more importantly feels that he or she shares an identity with others living within these boundaries. In short, boundaries alone do not create a nation story.

The occupation of Sudan was faced by primary and secondary resistance, not least in the peripheries such as the southern provinces and the Dār-Fur. Nevertheless, this resistance was of a local nature and cannot be seen as nationalistic act. The White Flag League is usually credited as the beginning –or forerunner– of the Sudanese nationalist movement. Interestingly though, the League, while being opposed to the British administration and occupation, was unionist in its outlook with regard to Egypt. This meant that the nationalism of the League was the nationalism of anti-colonial resistance. It was not yet a nationalism with reference to a potential Sudanese nation. This was in line with the emergence of nationalism in the Arab world in general which shifted between pan-Arab and state-specific

ideas –a phenomenon, which Fred Halliday argued should be understood in line with Amartya Sen's concept of multiple identities.[589]

Simultaneously, the nationalism of the League was inclusive. As ʿUṯmān pointed out, the fact that the League was led by a man of slave origins did not mean that the traditional elites and people of lower descent were harmonising in the League without friction. There were certainly divisions among them and even racism.[590] Nevertheless, the League's nationalism was still a nationalism of a group of young men whose belonging was defined by their actions.

At this point, however, there was not yet a term for common belonging. This was probably a logical consequence of that early nationalism being aimed at unity with Egypt and therefore the lack of a national entity led to a lack of national identity or terminology. Sūdānī, or Sudanese, actually just meant black. As Sharkey showed, the term Sudanese originally described black Muslims of slave origin in northern Sudan. She made the assumption that it was probably the British who after 1919 first used the term Sudanese to distinguish between people born in Sudan and people born in Egypt. By the late 1920s and 1930s the term was finally picked up by some members of the reading societies as a label to express their nationalism.[591]

Ḫiḍr Ḥamad actually retold a story of how, as a young man, he claimed his sudaneseness when talking to British administrators and colleagues and the problems that this caused for him. The British administration required people to declare their nationality when enrolling in schools and again when taking up positions within the administration. By nationality they meant the tribal origin, such as Ǧaʿalī Arab. Ḫiḍr Ḥamad wanted his nationality to be registered as Sudanese instead. He pointed out that at the time, many inhabitants of Sudan would never have called themselves Sudanese.[592] The idea of using the Sudanese

589 Fred Halliday, 'Nationalism in the Arab World since 1945', in: John Breuilly, *The History of Nationalism* (Oxford 2013), p. 444.

590 Abdelwahab A. M. Osman, 'The Political and Ideological Development' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1989), pp. 60-5.

591 Heather J. Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism* (Berkley 2003), pp. 31-4.

592 Ḫiḍr Ḥamad, *Muḏakirāt, Al-Ḥaraka al-Waṭaniyah, Al-ʾIstiqlāl wa Mā Baʿad-ha* (Khartoum, 1980)

label came mainly out of Gordon College and the reading groups which had formed in this period. ʿUṯmān pointed out how the Mawradah group originally embraced the dual cultural heritage of the Sudanese as both African and Arab, at least on a theoretical level. However, soon after, members around Muḥammad ʾAḥmad Maḥǧūb said that they saw themselves as Arab with special African characteristics. This change of perspective was reflected in the name of the Mawradah group, which in this period became generally known as Faǧr group instead. ʿUṯmān argued that this change was motivated by the desire to remove themselves from the context of Mawradah, a neighbourhood with many inhabitants of slave origin.[593]

Another anecdote Sharkey retold, was the story of Yaḥyā al-Faḍlī, who, born to an Egyptian father and a Sudanese mother had to struggle to get classified as Sudanese. Being Sudanese in his case was both a nationalist point, but also a question of job security and pensions, considering that Egyptians were discriminated against by the British administration.[594] The example of Yaḥyā however is interesting in another way too, as he was one of the leading politicians of what was to become the nationalist movement. As one of the founders of the ʾAšiqqāʾ, Yaḥyā played his role within the Graduates' Congress, which at the time was at the core of the Sudanese nationalist movement.

The British hoped that the Congress would only represent the graduates, but the Congress believed itself to be the legitimate voice of the Sudanese people as a whole. The idea of the graduates representing the people had two implications. Firstly, due to the specific policies of the British with regard to education, only the Sudanese groups which lived close to the Nile had access to education and therefore were part of the Graduates' Congress. If Congress indeed was the voice of all Sudanese, then that meant in consequence that a small number of ethnic groups or tribes spoke for all others – or at least claimed the right to do so.

---

p. 23.

593 Abdelwahab A. M. Osman, 'The Political and Ideological Development' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1989), pp. 139-41 & 136-7.

594 Heather J. Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism* (Berkley 2003), pp. 34-6.

Secondly, with the graduates as the vanguard movement of the country, it carried a vision of sudaneseness being connected to education and modernity.

This link between nationalism and education was strengthened by the fact that the Sudanese nationalist movement was inspired by many of the texts read within the reading groups and other salons and circles. The Graduates' Congress was inspired by the Indian Congress. Developments in India, the writings of Gandhi, but equally events in Europe and documents like the Atlantic Charter and its consequences for Sudan were followed and discussed and were seen as strands of the nationalist debate. The 1952 revolution in Cairo added another element to this. The idea of a distinct Arab nationalism and of potential Arab unity enabled a new nationalism in Sudan which overcame the trappings of unity with Egypt, but was still directed towards and inspired by the Arab world. Yaḥyā al-Faḍlī was in a sense the archetype of this nationalism. He fought for being Sudanese, while being a staunch supporter of unity with Egypt, to eventually embrace a Sudanese nationalism based on Arab unity and non-alignment.

The problem with this sudaneseness was that, like the Egyptians who had claimed sovereignty over Sudan without granting the Sudanese the status of Egyptians, the new self-declared Sudanese claimed sovereignty over all Sudan, without recognising equality between themselves and southerners, or Nuba, or Fur. While the ʿAbbūd regime believed it could sudanise the southern provinces, by converting the people to Islam and by imposing Arabic as the *lingua franca*, the transitional and democratic governments after the October revolution recognised this as a mistake. Nevertheless, the constant talk about an Islamic constitution showed a clear interpretation of sudaneseness. Even the Prime Minister Sirr-al-Ḫatim al-Ḫalīfah who managed the country during the post-revolutionary transition, and was usually seen as especially open to southern concerns –or lenient with the south as Maḥğūb put it– defined the Sudanese identity as at the crossroads of arabism and africanism.[595] One could conclude that a true Sudanese had to be both, African and Arab.

595 Sirr-al-Ḫatim al-Ḫalīfah, *Speech at the opening of the Round Table Conference* (Khartoum, 16March 1965), as reproduced in: ACR, A/85/17 (Sudan Informazioni, Round-Table Conference on the Southern Sudan).

When young men like Ḫiḍr Ḥamad claimed the label Sudanese for themselves in the late 1920s and early 1930s, they possibly unintentionally paved the way for an exclusive, instead of an inclusive, identity. By rejecting their "tribal" identity as nationality, they rejected not only the "tribal," but with it the peripheral, traditional, and "archaic." Sudaneseness was the opposite: it was modern, a phenomenon of the capital and it was inspired by an international body of thought. At the same time, partially due to long-seated resentments and racist ideas, partially due to the elite's connectedness to Egypt, sudaneseness was overlaid with an Arab identity, or as Maḥğūb put it, sudaneseness was arabness with special African characteristics. That meant that by claiming the Sudanese label, Ḫiḍr Ḥamad and those like him caused the term to be simultaneously detribalised and arabised.

In consequence, the original Sudanese, or better, the people originally called Sudanese, who were the blacks, the freed slaves, were excluded from this new sudaneseness on three accounts. The original Sudanese were seen as African, tribal and archaic or traditional. And this was the case even more so for people living in the periphery. A Shilluk in southern Sudan was not Sudanese because he was tribal, on account of being Shilluk, he was non-Arab on account of the Shilluk being African and he was non-modern on account of a lack of education and all other amenities which were available in Khartoum but lacking elsewhere. By claiming the label Sudanese, or in translation black, the young nationalists claimed blackness, while excluding those they considered as African, or too black.

Constituting for Godot

Sudan's problematic relationship to constitutions and constitutional form did not begin with independence. Sudan indeed had a precarious constitutional status before independence, had an independence which was contradictory to all previous agreements and with that entered a period of constitutional limbo.

Nevertheless, or maybe because of that, legality and constitutionality have been at the forefront –or at least on the surface– of Sudanese politics, even during the period of ʾIbrāhīm ʿAbbūd. This section focuses on the attempts of constitution writing and the questions faced on a macro level, while in the next section I will discuss specific issues of identity, nation, and constitution as proposed by specific parties.

Sudan, from the very beginning of the Anglo-Egyptian reconquest, had a very odd status. The British needed the construction of the condominium, that is, a colony with two colonial powers, to legitimise their territorial expansion. At the same time, the Egyptians always kept their claim that Sudan was indeed part of the Egyptian sovereignty. The status of Sudan became even more difficult after Britain unilaterally declared Egypt's independence while exempting the Sudan question from that independence. Constitutionally all this was relevant, because the governor general ruled in the name of both sovereign powers. Theoretically he was very independent but should have consulted both of them equally. Practically of course he was much more dependent on Britain than on Egypt. This meant that there was always a glaring disconnect between constitutional theory and political practice in the affairs of the condominium.

In late 1950 the Legislative Assembly requested the governor general to appoint a commission to discuss the legal framework of the Assembly. This commission became known as the Constitution Commission and it was headed by R. C. Stanley-Baker. Simultaneously the British and Egyptians were once again in discussions about their relationship, but when those broke down, Egypt in October 1951 unilaterally abrogated the treaties of 1899 and 1936 which constituted the Sudanese condominium. At the same time the Egyptians declared a new constitution for Sudan, which was widely rejected in Sudan except by the ʾAšiqqāʾ. Considering that they had no effective authority on the ground to counter the British administration, the Egyptians of course lacked the practical ability to implement their constitution for Sudan. The Sudanese in turn argued that with Egyptian abrogation, the condominium lacked a legal basis and therefore needed to be abolished by temporarily handing over sovereignty to an

international commission, which should replace the governor general. This suggestion was in turn rejected by Britain.

Partially as a consequence of this disagreement on the current status of the condominium, the Commission was dissolved without results. Nevertheless, the chairman wrote a report with suggestions on how to proceed. In January 1952 the report was put in front of the Legislative Assembly, which began a protracted discussion of it. By May the Sudan government sent the *Self-Government Statute* for amendment or approval to the British and Egyptian governments. The Egyptian government was not ready to comment, because it would have nullified their abrogation of the condominium agreements, but it did invite the leaders of the ʾUmmah to discuss the way forward. These negotiations ended in deadlock in June 1952. On 23 July General ʿAlī Muḥammad Naǧīb and Ǧamāl ʿAbd-al-Nāṣir overthrew the Egyptian government and in consequence changed the rules of the game.[596]

After the Free Officers revolution, negotiations started between the Egyptians and the Sudanese and then between the Egyptians and the British, which eventually resulted in a modified Self-Government Statute in March 1953. Elections were held on the basis of the statute. The primary function of the first parliament was to create a free and neutral atmosphere for the Sudanese to decide if they should become fully independent or if they should remain with Egypt. This decision could either be taken by new elections for a Constituent Assembly, or by a referendum. Accordingly a new constitution would be written. This however was not what happened. Once sudanisation had been more or less completed, parliament, in a rather anticlimactic act, voted to declare independence. The decision was unanimous and accordingly accepted by both Britain and Egypt. Nevertheless, even though it most likely did reflect the wishes of the majority of the Sudanese, it was not absolutely constitutional. More importantly, the decision came with a second drawback. Sudan became independent with a transitional constitution, which was a barely edited version of the Self-Government Statute. The transitional constitution, as Muddaṯṯir ʿAbd-al-Raḥīm pointed out, was a:

596 Muddathir ʼAbd al-Raḥīm, *Imperialism and Nationalism* (London, 1969), pp. 190-202.

> "temporary arrangement which was hurriedly contrived at the eleventh hour (…) It was the intention of its makers to replace it, at an early date, with a permanent constitution which would adequately reflect the character, the needs, and the aspirations of the Sudan and the Sudanese."[597]

For the following two years, however, Sudan's politicians were primarily concerned with themselves. First the two sayyids came together and removed ʾAzharī. The new government, however, was constantly threatened by various crises, especially caused by the discussions over foreign aid. Nevertheless, in November 1956 the *National Committee for drafting the Permanent Constitution* was established and fully began to work in January 1957. In April 1958 the Committee finally presented a draft constitution to parliament, which, however, failed to address the issue until it was overthrown by ʾIbrāhīm ʿAbbūd.[598]

In essence, during the first democratic period, there was no urgency or priority for the writing of the constitution and even when it was finally written, it was not debated in parliament. The focus of the parliament and government lay primarily with the maintenance of the government coalition and secondarily with a number of economic questions, which were both relevant from a perspective of ideology and patronage. Certain discussions were actively avoided, such as the southern question, because they were potential breaking points for the government coalition. Eventually the lack of a constitution contributed to the feeling of political instability and of sovereignty being under threat, which then led to the hand-over of power by Ḫalīl to ʿAbbūd.

The ʿAbbūd regime not only took over power and declared that it had done so, it actually legalised its rule by releasing a number of constitutional orders, which suspended the transitional constitution and transferred all legislative, executive and judicial powers to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. Eventually, and as Sīd-ʾAḥmad pointed out, comparable to the colonial regime before independence, the generals sought some sort of legitimisation and started a

---

597 Ibid., pp. 226-7.

598 Abdel Salam Sidahmed, *Politics and Islam* (Surrey, 1997), p. 62.
The minutes of the Commission were published, see: Republic of Sudan, The National Committee for the Constitution, *Summary of the Proceedings, Sittings No. 1-60* (Khartoum, 1968).

gradual constitutional process which created various instruments of popular representation. Sīd-ʾAḥmad argued that these reforms did not increase the regime's legitimacy, which goes to show that constitutionality and legitimacy are not always overlapping.[599]

In October 1964 ʿAbbūd was removed by a popular uprising. One of the great aspects and simultaneously one of the key problems of revolutions is that their legitimisation is purely revolutionary. A revolution, even if motivated by democratic ideals and directed against a dictatorial military regime, is itself not democratically legitimised. And similarly the October regime ran into problems, as the government which was heavily influenced by communists did try to implement laws and policies it considered in line with the spirit of the revolution. The traditional parties on the other hand felt that the government was crossing the line of its role, as it was solely tasked with the holding of elections to establish a new democratically elected government. When the prime minister eventually decided to step down and his cabinet was in consequence resolved, it was not really clear on what grounds he was allowed to do so. Nevertheless, the logic of the moment was in line with the logic of the prime minister and in consequence he formed his new government, which then indeed held new elections.[600]

It is hard to define precisely what the first democratically elected government after the October revolution focused on. Officially they had a charter that bound them to the principles of the October revolution, in practice the NUP focused mostly on strengthening its position while the ʾUmmah was engulfed in internal struggles. Interestingly, the new regime seemed to feel more threatened by the forces of the revolution than by the forces of the army and accordingly moved to outlaw the communists. This led to a continuing constitutional crisis and pitted the institutions of state, that are the High Court and the Supreme Council of State against each other. The important point here was that the constitutional crisis was not that the parliament banned the communist party, although that too was

599 Abdel Salam Sidahmed, *Politics and Islam* (Surrey, 1997), p. 70.
600 Ibid., pp. 78-81.

probably not constitutional, but that the crisis went deeper. The crisis was that the instruments, which should have brokered a constitutional solution, failed.

It was not until al-Ṣādiq al-Mahdī became prime minister that the issue of the constitution came up once more. Ṣādiq, who was in a coalition with the Islamic Charter Front, called for a new constitutional commission which met for the first time in February 1967. This time the technical committee was headed by Ḥasan ʿAbd-Allāh al-Turābī, which meant a strong influence by the ICF. A year later the Commission submitted a proposal to the parliament.[601] The draft as Sīd-ʾAḥmad pointed out "was not particularly Islamic in tone."[602] When the Commission finished writing the constitution, Sudan was in the middle of new elections. The new parliament was dominated by a fractious DUP, which agreed on little but a common wish to rule. Partially as a result of the DUP's instability, Maḥğūb was once again elected as prime minister, now weaker than ever, being a member of the junior party in the government coalition. Consequently, the constitution was never discussed in parliament and when the DUP and the ʾUmmah finally agreed on a way forward regarding the constitution, it was too late. On 25 May 1969 parliament was once again overthrown, this time by Ǧaʿfar Muḥammad al-Numayrī.

Once again during the second democratic period, there was no visible urgency in drafting a constitution. Parliament had been in place for nearly two years when Ṣādiq formed his Constitution Commission. Although the questions mostly remained the same, they were once again discussed from the beginning and some new results were achieved. Overall, however, neither the first, nor the second constitutional draft was particularly innovative. When eventually the second Constitution Commission did produce its draft, like in 1958 parliament was in limbo and therefore discussions of the constitution were postponed until it was too late and parliament was overthrown by the military for the second time.

601 For a broader appreciation of the draft constitution, see: Ali Suliman Fadlalla, 'The search for a constitution', in Muddathir Abd Al-Rahim, *et al.* (eds.), Sudan Since Independence (Hants, 1986), pp. 43-6.

602 Abdel Salam Sidahmed, *Politics and Islam* (Surrey, 1997), p. 102.

In essence, Sudan was in a precarious constitutional position from the establishment of the condominium onwards. Before independence the status of the country as a dual colony and the status of the government with the governor general responsible to both co-domini were a constant source of friction, especially towards the end of the colonial period. Eventually the prime minister took over the majority of the powers of the governor general and the co-domini were replaced by an international commission, which first supervised the governor general. After independence the governor general and this international commission were replaced with the Supreme Council of State, a form of collective head of state. The Supreme Council, like the international commission, was supposed to be neutral and as a result all sides of the political spectrum were represented and the leadership was rotating. In the second democratic period, however, this body was politicised by a different selection of members and the creation of a permanent chair. As a result the Supreme Council ceased to be the constitutional broker and became a participant within the political game and by that caused the constitutional crisis expressed in the ban of the communist party and its judicial aftermath.

The instability of the political coalitions and governments, but even more so the instability of the political set-up itself and of the constitutional framework, inhibited the writing of a permanent constitution. At the same time the lack of a permanent constitution with clear rules and regulations destabilised the political set-up. This meant, from a formal point of view, that Sudan had a first transitional constitution, which was in parts negotiated by a Constitution Commission which was itself probably not constitutional within the condominium agreement, in parts written by British advisers, in parts changed by the Legislative Assembly, and in parts modified again during the Anglo-Egyptian negotiations in the second half of 1952. This first constitution, with minor changes, became the second transitional constitution. The second transitional constitution was in force during the first and second democratic periods and was abrogated during the military regime between 1958 and 1964. Additionally there were two drafts for permanent constitutions, which, however, were never discussed by parliament.

It is fascinating how, again and again since the colonial period, the lack of a sound constitutional underpinning attracted serious attention and comment by all involved parties and simultaneously all attempts at rectifying this situation, since the colonial period, seemed half-hearted. This meant that while the constitutional process is very enlightening, little is to be learned from the actual constitutions or even the drafts for permanent constitutions. Without actual discussion and modification in parliament, it is impossible to say what would have been implemented and how and who would have supported which draft. But that did not mean that the constitutional process and questions were not relevant. On the contrary, the positions the different parties took at different points in time on the constitution and the central constitutional questions were highly informative and give us a relevant prism on the Sudanese nation story.

Ideas about Home

In this section I will look at each political party discussed earlier and their conception of Sudan, sudaneseness and specific suggestions for the constitution and will try to explain how they are interconnected and how they are linked to the history of the party. With regard to constitutional issues, the focus lies on the position of Islam in the constitution, the parliamentary versus presidential system debate and the level and form of federalism. The chapter looks at the political parties in approximately the same order as they are discussed in the thesis, first the big two, then the ideological movements and finally the regional parties.

The ʾUmmah rooted its understanding of the history of Sudan in the Mahdī uprising against the Turco-Egyptian rulers. For them, the Mahdīyah was the first nationalist movement and with it, the Sudan began. This beginning of Sudan meant a clear distinction of Sudan from Egypt, the connection of religious and worldly leadership, and of course a connection between the history of Sudan and the history of the ʾAnṣār. On this basis Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān built his new

vision, which Ḥasan ʾIbrāhīm called Neo-Mahdīsm. Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān acknowledged that his father's movement was destroyed and that he could not rebuild it and fight the British at the same time. Therefore he arranged himself with the British while restructuring the ʾAnṣār. He upheld the other principles, that are the clear distinction from Egypt and the connection of religious power and political power. On this basis the ʾUmmah Party was formed, and its views were anti-Egyptian, pro-western, pro-independence, economically and socially conservative.

Power in this model came directly from the leader of the ʾAnṣār, and rested visibly, even if only symbolically, in him. The leader himself would become politically involved. Additionally this was a centralised model of power, where decisions were taken at the centre and executed in the periphery. With regard to religion and politics, it meant a connection of the two, not on the basis of specific issues, but on the basis of the legitimisation of power and leadership. According to the ʾUmmah perspective on history, without the ʾUmmah and Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān, Sudan would have become a part of Egypt. They pointed to the Sayyid as the ʾabū al-ʾistiqlāl and therefore saw the party's history and the history of the nation as a whole as intricately connected.

In many ways ʾImām al-Hādī's perspective on politics was in continuation of Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān, even if he was possibly not as skilful. He had, additionally, strong competition from his nephew. Ṣādiq, during this period, could not rest his claim for power on the imamate. As a reaction Ṣādiq based his claim on the revolutionary aspect of the original ʾAnṣār, by being much more directly involved in politics, by focusing on the connection of religion and state on an issue-based level, and by acknowledging the role of the peripheries, which due to the militarised character of the Mahdīyah, the ʾAnṣār had also done during the time of the Mahdī.

While Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān was simultaneously claiming traditional legitimacy for himself and was vying for rational-legal legitimacy through Ḫalīl and others, ʾImām al-Hādī based his claim almost exclusively on traditional

legitimacy and Ṣādiq, at this point of his career, exclusively on rational-legal legitimacy. These different claims implied different visions for the country.

When looking at the specific constitutional issues, this meant with regard to the connection of religion and state, that the ʾUmmah, seemingly paradoxically, was not a strong defender of an Islamic constitution in the 1950s. During the first attempt to write a constitution, Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī officially supported the call for an Islamic constitution. His call, however, did not influence the voting of the ʾUmmah members of the Constitution Commission who voted against the proposal. Similarly, the ʾimām wing of the ʾUmmah saw little benefit in an Islamic constitution. As Muḥammad ʾAḥmad Maḥğūb argued in his autobiography, it would have been more Islamic not to try and force an explicitly Islamic constitution on Christians and other minorities.[603] Ṣādiq al-Mahdī, on the other hand, supported the call for an Islamic constitution and so did his wing of the party, which might have been either a concession to coalition politics, or a strategy to challenge his uncle's legitimisation through the imamate.

The ʾUmmah Party had always been supportive of a presidential system of some sort. Both Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī and later ʾImām al-Hādī had hoped to be acknowledged as the leader of the nation, even if that position would have been primarily representative. This is interestingly reflected in the struggle between Ṣādiq and his uncle. Ṣādiq was clearly hands-on. He was a member of parliament and pushed to be elected as prime minister. His uncle on the other hand, like Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān before him, was politically involved, but not as a member of the executive, and instead acted through a representative; Hādī through Maḥğūb and ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān through Ḫalīl.

With regard to federalism, Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān clearly stood for a centralised political system, as demonstrated when he was internally challenged by some members of the Ḫalīfah ʿAbd-Allāhi family who wanted better representation and better political outcomes for Dār-Fur. The ʾimām's wing continued this tradition. The Maḥğūb government both escalated the conflict in the south and tried to use

603 Mohamed Ahmed Mahgoub, *Democracy on Trial* (London, 1974), p. 181.

various instruments including constitutional ones against the regional parties in the north. Ṣādiq, on the other hand, was probably the northern politician at that point in time who was most open to some sort of regional cooperation, with his link to the Beja Congress and his close relationship to Diraige and Deng. Nevertheless, with all the differences between the ʾimām and Ṣādiq, he still rooted his story of Sudan in the nationalist story of his great-grandfather and his grandfather and his critique of his uncle was in comparison to his grandfather. In a sense, the two ʾUmmah wings came to different conclusions regarding the constitution based on the same story of the Sudanese nation.

On the Unionist side, to a certain degree, the opposite was true. Two different stories of the Sudanese nation led to the same conclusions regarding the constitution. The Ḫatmīyah perspective of Sudanese history began before the uprising of the Mahdī and in their construction Sudan was regionally integrated with a special link to Egypt. During the Mahdī uprising the leadership of the ṭarīqah were in exile in Egypt, which strengthened this special relationship. Since the Ḫatmīyah was a traditional ṭarīqah, their sheikh, unlike the sheikh of the ʾAnṣār, remained absent from politics and influenced affairs only indirectly. Authority and legitimisation still resided in the sheikh, but not in a visible or direct form. In consequence legitimacy was based on tradition. The experience of exile as a result of ʾAnṣār political power was defining for the construction of their historical understanding and as a result the political focus lay on countering ʾAnṣār influence, while protecting the model of ṭarīqah legitimised politics. The interpretation of independence was in line with this; thanks to Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī, Sudan became neither an ʾAnṣār monarchy, nor an ʾAšiqqāʾ-led part of the socialist Egypt.

The ʾAšiqqāʾ perspective –and of those like-minded– was an entirely different one. While they acknowledged the history, their idea of a nation was defined primarily as a result of the anti-colonial struggle, in Sudan, but also elsewhere. While Egypt until 1952 was a monarchy, Egypt also had with Saʿd Zaġlūl and others a strong nationalist movement struggling against foreign influence. Therefore the link to Egypt was both strategic and inspirational. At the same time

the conception of the nation was strongly informed by a British education in Gordon College and by on-the-job training as junior government administrators and clerks. Their story of the nation was less about the past, and more about the future. They wanted Sudan to be an equal among other like-minded non-aligned nations and a constructive actor within the Arab world. Authority and legitimisation in their model resided in education and qualification, legitimacy of the government was supposed to be rational-legal. While the ʾAšiqqāʾ were perceived to have had a clear leader with ʾAzharī, and while his role might have become more important towards the end of the 1960s, he was still more a *primus inter pares*. Their understanding of the independence was that they were the only ones who had not collaborated with the "real" colonial power, the British, and therefore they were the true heroes of independence.

As a result, both the Ḫatmī and the ʾAšiqqāʾ wings of the NUP had a clear preference for the parliamentary model. The Ḫatmīyah leadership remained superficially absent from politics and could therefore, unlike the ʾAnṣār leadership, not run for presidency. A president would have been a challenge to the power of the sheikh instead of being an addition. For the ʾAšiqqāʾ their nature as political collective, which was already reflected in their name, blood brothers, meant that a parliamentary model with a strong parliament-elected prime minister and cabinet, was preferable. In their perspectives on foreign policy, they also thought alike, but again for different reasons. While the Ḫatmīyah decision was motivated by its long historical ties to Egypt and the Arab world, the ʾAšiqqāʾ was swayed by current events, their preference for Arab nationalism, and their long admiration for countries such as India and other non-aligned nations. Both the ʾAšiqqāʾ wing and the Ḫatmī wing of the NUP were opposed to federalism. The Ḫatmīyah with their centralised policy actively contributed to the frustrations, which led to the formation of the Beja Congress as a political party. The ʾAšiqqāʾ were opposed to federalism, because they believed that a strong nation needed to be centralised. ʾAzharī made it clear to the GUN parliamentarians that he would have been ready to talk about development for

the Nuba Mountains, but not if the GUN insisted on federalism.[604] For ʾAzharī, like for Maḥğūb, federalism seemed to be an imperialist ploy to weaken Sudan.

While on those issues different motivations still led to a convergence of interests, in regard to religion, the result diverged, comparable to the ʾUmmah. While the Ḫatmīyah clearly stood for a link between politics and religion in regards to legitimisation, it never really pushed for an Islamic constitution. In that regard, its policies and perspective were very similar to the ʾUmmah of Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān and of al-Hādī. The ʾAšiqqāʾ on the other hand, like Ṣādiq, believed in a legitimisation through qualification and ability. And like Ṣādiq, they decided to support an Islamic constitution. While in the case of Ṣādiq's wing of the ʾUmmah this can be seen as a relatively coherent platform, especially considering Ṣādiq's religious training, it seemed slightly more surprising in the case of the NUP and the people around ʾAzharī.

There were three possible factors to explain this, and probably a mixture of the three was decisive. Firstly, by supporting an Islamic constitution the NUP could expose the two religious sheikhs and at the same time move against the communists. That meant that they could strongly enhance their competitive position. Secondly, while from an anti-colonial and a development perspective the ʾAšiqqāʾ might have been progressive, they were still representing a financially well-established and often value conservative stratum of society. ʾAzharī might have not expressed his religiosity like Sudanese in more rural areas, but there was no doubt that he was actually a religious person. It is quite conceivable that ʾAzharī and the men around him genuinely supported an Islamic constitution, especially if one bears in mind that an Islamic constitution mostly meant relatively vague references to Islam, not the implementation of Islamic banking or even ḥudūd punishments.[605] Thirdly, by supporting an Islamic constitution, the NUP expressed an understanding of Sudan as being a Muslim Arab nation.

604 Phillip Kalo Ramaḍān Kardela, *Personal Interview* (Kadugli, 6 March 2010).

605 The term "ḥudūd punishments" describes so-called fixed punishments against acts such as theft or blasphemy, which are punished by cutting off the hand or execution. Only very few countries implement these punishments today and they were carried out in Sudan only for a brief period in time.

Underlining the Muslim Arab character of the nation was at the same time a way to monopolise power in the centre against the non-Arab and non-Muslim peoples of Sudan and it was a tool with which to express the arabness of Sudan outside of the country, where this was always in question.[606]

Neither the communists nor the islamists were as focused on the historical dimension in the construction of their competing visions. The nation as such was actually just a necessary step within a grander scheme of things. Basically, the islamist vision was an attempt to make Islam compatible with the nation, then to transform society and finally to transform the nation and state and in a final step, at some point in the future, the nation and state would become irrelevant again, as they would merge into the ʾummah, which in this case referred to the collective unity of Muslim peoples. Similarly in communism, the idea was to transform society and state and once the classless society would be achieved, the state would die.[607] While in communism this development was seen as inevitable, in islamism it was seen as the only way to achieve a just society. Therefore the focus of the project was in theory not on the state and its nation, but on the peoples and their classes and other social structures. But of course, within an immediate timeframe both movements had a vision of the Sudanese nation, even if, eventually, they wanted to overcome the nation as such.

Both in islamism and in communism, power resided in ability and qualification. Leadership positions in both parties were relatively volatile and most important decisions were taken at large party conferences or at least by the collective of the politburo. Both movements constructed their understanding of Sudanese history along the continuum of their attempted social transformation, and both saw decolonisation as an essential step in this development. Both movements more or

606 An additional interesting argument was made by ʿAbd-Allāhi ʿAlī ʾIbrāhīm who showed that ʾAzharī in line with the demand for an Islamic constitution increased the status and role of the Islamic courts, who had in some form always existed and played an official role, even during the colonial period. This support for the Islamic courts according to ʿAbd-Allāhi was an attempt to weaken the traditional courts, which he was in conflict with as result of the constitutional crisis, connected to outlawing the Sudan Communist Party. Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim, M*anichaean Delirium* (Leiden, 2008), pp. 218-9.

607 Friedrich Engels, *Die Entwicklung des Sozialismus von der Utopie zur Wissenschaft* (Paris, 1880), see: http://www.mlwerke.de/me/me19/me19_177.htm.

less rejected all other political actors as standing contrary to the attempted social transformation and therefore everyone else was not acting in the interest of the people. The essential difference between the two movements was the attempted transformation itself. With it, the visions they had for the Sudanese nation were radically different. The communists working for workers' emancipation needed to address issues of civil liberties, the right to strike, and generally the right to organise. The islamists working for an Islamic society addressed morality laws, for example regarding prostitution, and generally any issues where Islam had clear promulgations, for example with regard to inheritance.

Due to these various factors they positioned themselves towards the constitutional questions. Both movements preferred a parliamentary model and both movements were open to some sort of federalism. Neither movement was taken too seriously on its stance on federalism, however. The islamists were criticised because of their religious orientation and the communists gave so much credence to cadre training, that they were in many cases not ready to promote people from the regions. Even with regard to civil liberties, the differences were minor. While the communists had the edge, especially with regard to women's voting rights, even the islamists supported worker organisation and other liberty issues, due to their direct competition with the communists.

The key difference between the two movements was as regards the question of an Islamic constitution. The communists were categorically against such a proposal. The islamists focused most of their attention on pushing the idea. It is important to point out that the communists had by this time lost their atheist vigour of the 1950s and the islamists still pushed for a moderately Islamic-inspired constitution, not such as that later implemented by Numayrī in the early 1980s and again by the Bašīr and Turābī regime in the early 1990s.

Nevertheless, their two visions of Sudan were highly challenging for the other parties. The idea of an egalitarian society as suggested by the communists was simultaneously a challenge to the religious aristocracy of the Ṣūfī ṭarīqahs and also to the more established supporters of the NUP including traders and small-scale

industrialists. The Islamic model, on the other hand, was contradictory not only to the communists, but the type of Islam pronounced was challenging the ṭarīqahs and the idea of Sudan as being an Islamic nation was problematic to all non-Muslims.

Like the ideological parties, the regional parties did not at all times have a national vision for Sudan, not because they attempted to overcome the nation as such, but because they were focusing on a smaller unit. While the traditional parties often saw the regional parties as secessionist, and the secessionist element is important to understand southern politics, there was still always a reference to the united nation as well.

The historical construction of the regional parties usually referenced a specific local issue and connected it with the feeling of being administrated by outsiders. Development issues were most important for the northern regional parties, with the dockworkers and other migrant Beja labourers in Port Sudan and the cotton farmers in the Nuba Mountains. In the south the core issue was more tied to the wartime experience and the issue of religion, connected to arabisation and islamisation policies. Authority was usually held by those few who had been educated in the national schools, and often the very few administrators from the specific region.

The various local movements usually supported a parliamentary system, opposed an Islamic constitution, and supported a federal structure. However within the idea of a federal structure there were four different national visions. The first vision was proposed by the first generation of southern politicians in the 1950s. They suggested that there was a substantial difference between the northern provinces and the southern provinces and that therefore the two should be governed at least in parts autonomously. The basic outline of this model was implemented during the Numayrī period and it was based on a national story that the Sudan is made up of two large and supposedly homogenous geographical and ethnic blocks, the north and the south.[608] Therefore one could call it a two-nation,

608 One author who defended this model very fiercely was Oliver Albino who argued that the

one-state approach. This model was partially based on how the British administrators understood Sudan and the implementation would have been some sort of return to the colonial model, without the restriction on individual movement.

The second model of federalism was the logical continuation of the first model. With many of the politicians of the first generation in exile and many others fighting in the south, a new story emerged which said that the rift between the two parts of the state had become too big and that therefore it was necessary for the south to become independent. This was the concept of SANU outside and later ALF and SALF. This extreme position, which became a part of the southern Sudanese discourse, made it very difficult later on for northern Sudanese regional movements to connect with the southern Sudanese parties. The Southern Front with its suggestion of self determination basically understood itself as a spokesman for both of these models; either two-nations, one-state, or two-nations, two-states.

The third model was implicitly suggested by the northern regional movements. When the Beja Congress, the GUN and the DDF demanded federalism with power and financial resources in the regions, they were pointing to the diversity within both the north and the south. They were suggesting a federal model, which would have had a smaller unit at its base, possibly one Sudanese state with five regions or nine provinces, or maybe even more. This was however not just a quantitative difference to the two-nation, one-state approach, but a qualitative one. By acknowledging and focusing on the diversity within the northern and southern provinces a federal model more in line with what is practised in Switzerland or Germany would have emerged. While federations of two are often prone to break apart, a federation of many would have been an entirely different way of looking at Sudan and its people.

---

northerners and the southerners had two completely opposed "philosophies" which governed their lives. Oliver B. Albino, *Power and Democracy in the Sudan* (Indiana, 2006), pp. xxx-i.

The last model was eventually suggested by William Deng, who did support federalism, but his primary argument was about the African majority in Sudan. In a sense he questioned directly the right of the people of the centre to rule, and the federal proposal was mostly a legacy and possibly a way to grant Arabs minority rights. While the two-nation, one-state model of the Southern Front would have meant that southerners would govern the south and northerners would govern the state as a whole, Deng's model suggested that the peoples of the peripheries would govern the state as a whole. This again was an entirely different way of looking at the peoples of Sudan.

These different models of federalism and connected to them, these different stories of the Sudanese nation, explain why it was so difficult for the different groups to join forces. Now, while indeed the traditional parties often believed all of the models to be secessionist, all groups except for SANU outside linked back into the national story. The Southern Front, the GUN and the DDF were all formed in Khartoum, by people from the regions who were living, working, and studying in the national capital. SANU inside was a conscious decision by exiled politicians, primarily William Deng, not only to re-enter Sudan but also to settle in Khartoum. The Beja Congress was formed in Port Sudan, but its creation mirrored the emergence of the Sudanese national movement with the Beja Club creating the Beja Congress, like the Graduates' Club had created the Graduates' Congress.

All of these groups focused on local issues, but wanted to make them heard in Khartoum in the parliament as a national forum. With the Southern Front this shift is especially interesting, as it did not participate in national elections in 1965, arguing that only after an agreement, would elections in the south be legitimate. In 1968, however, not only did they participate in elections, but they even joined the government, thereby giving the government a certain degree of legitimacy.

While Sūdānī had originally been a term used to describe the children of former slaves, it was eventually picked up by the educated elite in the 1930s and 40s. Thus Sudanese became a denominator for a specific regional group, class of people and generational age set. The specific sudaneseness as expressed by this

group became the underlying element of the nation story of the big people's parties, especially the NUP. This sudaneseness could to a certain degree still be embraced by the ideological parties, but it clearly excluded the peripheries.

The writing process for a Sudanese constitution was attempted multiple times and first it was shelved because independence seemed more important, later it was interrupted twice by military coups. Either way, though, the process was always primarily a bureaucratic one. There was no wide agreement on the basics before the details would be discussed by a dedicated commission. On the contrary, the commission was tasked to find compromises, where unbridgeable rifts seemed to loom and unsurprisingly it failed.[609]

Although the constitution would have put in writing a story of nation, and although various sides seemed aware of this, fighting for an Islamic constitution or for federalism, the aim at all times seemed to be to write a constitution reflecting one very limited part of the nation. In the same way as coalitions were formed as administrative bargains, the constitution was treated as an administrative problem. The only attempt to find a national vision, carried by Ṣādiq, Deng and Diraige, failed after the death of Deng and due to the internal conflicts in the ʾUmmah Party.[610]

Nevertheless, the divisions within the parties where different conclusions were made based on the same nation story, and the agreements where the same conclusions were made on different nation stories, showed that there was still some room for manoeuvre and space for compromise. It was not simply the

609 Woodward argued that the writing of the constitution failed because the constitutional development went hand in hand with the emergence of political parties, instead of preceding strong party competition. While this is indeed an interesting thought, it does idealise the emergence of European constitutions and ignores the fact that constitutions express something about nations, and are not only arbitrary frameworks of the political process. Woodward, however, argued that this was exclusively the result of the constitutional instability. Peter Woodward, 'Parties and parliaments', in Muddathir Abd Al-Rahim, *et al.* (eds.), Sudan Since Independence (Hants, 1986), pp. 57-8.

610 To pre-empt a possible misunderstanding, especially by Sudanese readers, I am not trying to imply that if Deng had survived, the Sudanese problems would have been solved, or that Ṣādiq's vision would have necessarily succeeded. The whole combination of groups with the islamists included in a coalition besides the regional parties was fragile at best. Nevertheless, this was probably the only political attempt in the 1960s to find such a national vision, which is in itself remarkable.

disagreements about the constitution which produced the political deadlock. As I argue in the next section, it was the relationship between the parties, which was partially expressed in these differences on the constitution and partially exasperated by them, which led to the instability of the democratic system.

Stories of a Failed Nation

In the thesis so far, I have outlined my questions in the introduction and the political history of Sudan until 1969 was then discussed in general and the specific histories of the Sudanese political parties were presented and analysed. These histories form the basis on which to answer the questions posed in the introduction. In this chapter my aim is to bring together the various strands of the thesis and answer those questions. So far, the specific histories of nation, nationality, and sudaneseness, of the process of writing a constitution, and of the nation stories of the different political parties and their resulting view on constitutional issues, have been presented in this chapter. In the following section the aim is to bring all of these strands together.

As mentioned, I began this journey with a vague curiosity about the repeated iteration of democratic governments and military regimes in Sudan. The government of independence was overthrown in 1958. The following military regime was unseated by a popular uprising in 1964. The next democratic period was ended again by the army in 1969, which itself was swept away by revolution once more in 1985, just to give way to a democratic government which was removed by the current ʾInqāḏ regime in 1989. How could this happen? Why was the civil society in Sudan strong enough to remove two military governments, unlike anywhere else in Africa or the Arab world at the time, and still the democratic system was so weak that it gave way to military governments three times?

As discussed in the prologue, there are a number of different approaches to explain these issues, pointing among other things to the personalities of politicians and sectarianism. However, as argued in the prologue, none of these explanations are fully satisfactory and many are outright simplistic in their approach. I argue on the other hand that the instability of the democratic model in Sudan was a direct result of the party model as it evolved, and the consequences for government construction and coalition building, as well as the consequence for the perception of legitimacy as it was connected to the nation story of various actors. To make this argument though, first the question arises as to why so many parties evolved in Sudan and were able to play a decisive role, in contrast to its neighbours. To answer this question, there are two aspects to be considered; the technical and the historical.

Technically, according to Weber, each party is the representation of a specific status and/or class situation.[611] In Sudan there were divisions along both lines; first, a division between people who had been integrated into the money economy, such as workers and employees, and people who had not, like small-scale farmers; and second, a division between those who rather voted according to class and those who voted according to status, that is either as a member of a ṭarīqah or being a southerner and therefore voting for a southern regional party. However, such a division can also be found in many African one-party states and therefore does not explain why multiple parties were possible in Sudan and not elsewhere.

One part of the explanation might be that certain countries were more able than others to actually support multiple political parties. John Iliffe argued with respect to Tanzania, that the dominance of the TANU was not a result of the strength of the party, but of the poverty of the Tanzanian economy.[612] He believed that due to the limited size of the educated elite, only one party was viable to be supported by the country's human resources. In Sudan, however, according to the first national

611 Max Weber, 'Class, Status, Party', in H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills (eds. and translation), *From Max Weber* (London, 1991), pp. 194-195.

612 John Iliffe, 'Breaking the Chain at its Weakest Link', in G.H. Maddox and J.L. Giblin (eds.), *In Search of a Nation* (Oxford, 2005), p. 177.

census, approximately 15,000 Sudanese had attained secondary education or higher, which is comparatively high. However, this only explains why multiple parties were possible in Sudan, not why it actually happened. The historical aspect is most relevant in this regard.

In two regards the colonial period actively shaped the political system in Sudan. Although as argued earlier, Sudan cannot be explained as a two-party system, the division of two large blocs as a result of condominium patronage nevertheless was real. The condominium was not the only reason for the formation of two blocs, the competition between the Ḫatmīyah and the ʾAnṣār pre-dated the British administration. Nevertheless, loyalties and alliances were strongly shaped as a result of the two co-domini competing for support in Sudan. Without the unique structure of Sudan as a territory with two imperial powers, Britain and Egypt, the big two parties would not have evolved in such a distinct fashion.

The second of these divisions was the north-south division. Again, this division is not solely of colonial making. The history of northern slave raiding in the southern provinces was not fabricated by the British. Nevertheless the southern policy created a separate area with a distinct historical experience. The spending of the administration was too low to actually have a relevant impact on the spread of Christianity or English, but a different policy could still have led to a more unified country. This is of course not to say that the north-south conflict and eventual division of the country were exclusively or even primarily a colonial legacy, but the colonial structure of the country had a decisive impact on the formation of parties in the 1950s.

The most important element was not what the condominium did while it was in power, it was how the condominium failed to resist decolonisation. In the late 1940s and early 1950s Britain pushed for greater Sudanese affiliation with the administration to outmanoeuvre the Egyptians. However, when after the Free Officer's revolution the Egyptian government called the British bluff, a quick plan for decolonisation was implemented, which the British had not intended. As a result, Sudan became independent very early, actually more than a year before

Ghana, which is often referred to as the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa to become independent. This early independence was not a result of the strength of the independence movement though, but of the weakness of the imperial powers. The divided independence movement unintentionally played the two co-domini to make continuous concessions, which eventually led to independence, even without the need to unite the independence movement in the first place. ʾAmīr ʾIdrīs went even further when he argued that:

> "In fact the history of nationalism in Sudan has been the history of competing political claims over the identity of the post-colonial state rather than the struggle against European colonialism."[613]

Besides the weak position of the condominium, the events which led to Sudanese independence did not make for a heroic story which could have unified various groups either.[614] The elections were won by the NUP and ʾAzharī managed to keep his government alive until independence, but only just. After sudanisation was completed the debate began as to how independence would be achieved. Eventually ʾAzharī decided to have a vote in parliament about declaring independence instead of a referendum, primarily as a tactical move against the two sayyids. In late December 1955 the parliament voted and only days later, on 1 January 1956, the Sudan became independent. While the vote in parliament was surely the most straightforward approach, a national referendum could have rallied and united the people to a certain degree and created a shared memory. As Renan pointed out:

> "One loves in proportion to the sacrifices to which one has consented, and in proportion to the ills that one has suffered. (…) I spoke just now of 'having suffered together' and, indeed, suffering in common unifies more than joy does. Where national memories are concerned, griefs are of more value than triumphs, for they impose duties, and require a common effort."[615]

613 Amir Idris, *Conflict and Politics of Identity in Sudan* (New York, 2005), p. 44.

614 A similar argument was made by: Afaf Abdel Majid Abu Hasabu, *Factional Conflict* (Khartoum, 1985), p. 156.

615 Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* Lecture delivered on 11 March 1882 at the Sorbonne.

As a result, the Sudan lacked the idea of one unified independence movement. Even more importantly than that, it lacked universally recognised heroes of independence. Additionally, due to the weakness of the colonial state in Sudan, the independence movement was only loosely rooted in the regions. As Baḫīt argued, due to "the circumstances in which the Sudan won independence, before a fully-fledged protest movement had developed (…) 'Independence', in some form, remained a goal" outside of the capital.[616] The sudanisation was experienced as a northernisation in many areas, including the south, the east, Dār-Fur and the Nuba Mountains. While the elites in the centre might have disagreed on who was at the forefront of their independence movement, in the regions independence was not experienced as such and therefore they did not become a part of the so-called nationalist movement as was demonstrated by the appearance of local movements such as the General Union of the Nuba Mountains.

It was against this background and with the jumbled and often bureaucratic processes which led to Sudanese independence in mind that one can understand why Sudan lacked a clear narrative of independence. The shared and collective struggle against one strong suppressor and the final victory against all odds was the base of the nationalist histories of many African states. Of course every independence struggle is multi-layered and complex, also in countries with a clearer nationalist narrative such as Kenya or Ghana, but the developments in Sudan were too convoluted and contradictory to allow for a collectively acceptable national history. If the specific structure of Sudan as a condominium and with the southern policy created the cleavages between different parties, the relatively quick decolonisation meant that the cleavages did not have to be bridged again.[617]

This, however, only explains why many different parties emerged. It does not explain why the existence of different parties led to a systemic instability. There are basically two arguments to this, one looking at the political system from the

616 Gaafar Mohamed Ali Bakheit, 'The Politics of Native Administration', in John Howell (ed.), *Local Government* (Khartoum, 1974), pp. 45-6.

617 This argument is partially based on the ideas I already outlined in: Moritz Mihatsch, 'Sudanese Independencies, 1956 and 2011', SSSUK Bulletin, No. 44 (July 2011), pp. 22-4.

perspective of the constituents, and one looking from the viewpoint of the parties themselves. From the perspective of the constituents, the problem in Sudan was that parties focused too much on maintaining coalition governments and as a result had no time to focus on concrete results. The aid agreement with the United States illustrated this rather well. Ḫalīl did negotiate most of the details of the agreement in secret, so as not to threaten the coalition, and when it was finally put to parliament, the government nearly collapsed. Similarly the constitutional debate was never brought to parliament in order to avoid confrontation between different government parties. When governments actually did have a more far-reaching programme, such as the government under Ṣādiq as prime minister, the government was replaced so quickly by a new variation of the ʾUmmah–NUP coalition, that its plans came to nothing. When ʿAbbūd and the generals took over the government in 1958, they partially used this as an argument. According to the army, the politicians had failed to govern the country, and indeed under ʿAbbūd the finances improved and the quality of life of many Sudanese went up.

But why were the coalitions so unstable? Arguably for four reasons: Firstly, as Ṣāliḥ argued, building a democracy in a country without democratic tradition is difficult[618] –the construction of coalitions, if not institutionalised over many consecutive governments, even more so. Therefore even under the best conditions, if there is no tradition of coalition formation, doing so is challenging for all involved groups. Secondly, the democratic model was still new, parties were not fully formed yet. That meant that politicians still had to find out what would work within their specific context. They were still experimenting with the positioning of parties, the creation of larger political blocs, and ways to differentiate against others. This fluidity made the construction of stable coalitions difficult. This can be seen most drastically in the cases of the NUP and the ʾUmmah, which both had internal disagreements about the mode of legitimacy of government –an issue which is so central that it should have eventually led to a reconfiguration of political parties. Thirdly, the conflicts between individuals and groups, which in Sudan created a situation where for example the two sayyids had never worked together before forming a coalition, meant that the already strenuous process of

618 Mohamed Salih, *African Democracies & African Politics* (London, 2001), p. 3.

maintaining a coalition was made additionally difficult by the deep-seated mistrust that different participants of the coalitions had for each other. Fourthly, possibly the first-past-the-post electoral system made the maintenance of coalitions even more difficult. Because of the election system parties tended to participate in large blocs and therefore the NUP and PDP merged into the DUP and similarly the ʾUmmah merged again. However, the formation of these large blocs meant that governments were actually coalitions on two levels, within the large blocs and between those blocs and other parties. This made negotiations over issues even more fragile, especially when considering how these blocs were split twice by their opponents by skilfully using coalitions.

As a result, the cost of maintaining coalition governments became so high that it trumped all other activities.[619] Therefore the insecurity of the democratic system hindered the government to deliver substantial political change for the wider society and therefore crucial problems remained unresolved. Claude Ake argued that there is a difference between "liberal democracy" which focuses on the institutions of democracy (or to quote Abraham Lincoln "government by the people") and the actual democratic ideal, which also includes the results of democratic processes ("government for the people").[620] This meant that from the perspective of the constituents, the democratic government had already failed before it was removed by the army. Therefore the constituents did not oppose the action of the army and fight for democracy, and the army was able to predict that reaction.

Even more important for the weakness of the democratic structures was the perspective of the political parties on their opponents. Because the nation stories

619 A very similar argument has been made by Alden Young who is working on his thesis in Princeton under the title *Accounting for Decolonization: The Origin of the Sudanese Economy.* He explicitly referred to these ideas in his talk at ASAUK 2010: Alden Young, 'An Archipelago of Schemes: Sudanese Bureaucrats' Changing Ideas about the Economy, 1954-1964', Paper presented at ASAUK bi-annual conference (17 September 2010, Oxford). Peter Woodward also pointed to this in: Peter Woodward, 'Is the Sudan governable? Some thoughts on the experience of liberal democracy and military rule', Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies), Vol. 13, No. 2 (1986), p. 142.

Woodward further elaborated on the idea that the lack of concrete policies led to a breakdown of legitimacy from the perspective of the people in: Peter Woodward, *Sudan, 1898-1989: The Unstable State* (Boulder, 1989), pp. 117-8.

620 Claude Ake, *The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa* (Dakar, 2000), pp. 9-12.

were diverging so strongly, different Sudanese parties did not consider each other as actually part of the same nation and therefore did not accept the other as participating legitimately in the political process. The nation story basically is a perspective on the past, on the present, and on the future. As Renan argued:

> "A nation is therefore a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that one has made in the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the future. It presupposes a past; it is summarized, however, in the present by a tangible fact, namely, consent, the clearly expressed desire to continue a common life."[621]

As discussed in the previous section of this chapter, in all of these regards Sudanese parties disagreed. I will briefly pick up some examples to demonstrate the extent of this divergence.

With regard to the past, the most important signifiers are the heroes, the stories and the roots. The heroes are people who played a positive role in the past in the name of the nation and are recognised for this action. Two heroes of the Sudanese nation were ʾIsmāʿīl al-ʾAzharī and Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī, but both, were only recognised by one part of society as such and other parts of society believed that they were actually traitors to the nation. The stories are specific contexts and events which are seen as especially relevant for the history of the nation. The most important story in many previous colonies is the story of independence, but in Sudan independence, while seen as a moment of heroism by the northern Sudanese, was seen by many southern Sudanese as moment of betrayal. They believed that they had been promised federalism for their vote for independence. When this promise was not fulfilled, they felt that independence was in a sense the first sin in the north-south conflict (or second, if one counts sudanisation). The roots refer to the origins of the nation, how far back the nation is thought to have existed. Again perspectives diverged strongly. While the ʾAnṣār saw the roots of the nation in the uprising of the Mahdī, not only did the Ḫatmīyah see the beginning earlier, but the specific beginning of the ʾAnṣār was connected to the destruction of their mosques and places of pilgrimage.

621 Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* Lecture delivered on 11 March 1882 at the Sorbonne.

With regard to the present of the nation story, the central questions are who belongs to the nation and who does not? Who is entitled to exercise power? What are the immediate problems of the nation and what issues should be prioritised? In Sudan in the 1950s and 1960s this was fully connected to the identity debate with regard to the Arab and/or African, and Islamic and/or Christian nature of the country. Not everyone's views were as contradictory to each other as those of ʾAzharī who supported a centralised state and those of Aggrey Jaden who demanded southern secession. But still, in the late 1950s when northern economic development was under threat because the government had trouble selling its cotton, Sudan's most important cash crop at the time, few northern politicians were ready to prioritise southern Sudanese development. And similarly, in the second democratic period, the northern politicians who controlled most of the state resources prioritised the development of their own constituents over the under-represented peripheries.

As regards the future, all parties obviously wished to achieve happiness for as many Sudanese as possible, but they disagreed fiercely, not only on how to achieve this, but also what this happiness would entail. The different visions are discussed in detail in other parts of the thesis, but generally one can distinguish between the islamist and communist visions of the ideological movements, the modernist vision of the NUP, the conservative vision of the ʾUmmah and the regionalist vision of the southern and northern regional parties and movements.

But why would these differing perspectives be a problem? Sudanese politicians have cooperated at times when they had shared interests. However, when the nation stories began to diverge too drastically, two politicians did not feel as part of the same nation anymore. This was the case no matter whether the exclusion was explicit or not. Southern and other non-Arabic speakers were at times explicitly excluded. For southerners it was always clear, for example, that the northern parties would never accept a southern prime minister for the Sudan. But also less explicitly, for a communist, a Sudan as imagined by the islamists was no longer his country. This idea that the other did not belong to the same nation, was

clearly expressed in the fear of Ḫalīl, that if the opposition would take over power under ʾAzharī, sovereignty were under threat.[622]

In a democratic system it is central that every couple of years the population can elect a new government. But this election is only one part. The more important part is that the loser accepts the result. Of course every political party believes that they have the best solutions for the country, but to accept that another party will govern, the losers have to recognise that the winners are part of the same community and that they too are working for the best of the country. An election basically decides who runs the state and leads the nation. If one does not recognise the winners as part of the nation, then one also does not recognise that they legitimately participated in the elections, and that as result they legitimately won the right to lead the nation for the next years.

In Sudan this mutual and reciprocal recognition of being part of the same community and therefore of legitimately participating in the political process was non-existent. With this argument Ḫalīl handed over power to the army, the islamists managed to outlaw the communists, the southerners were thrown into prison as secessionists, and Maḥǧūb asked the press to stop reporting on regional movements in the north and attempted to push a law against them. All these actions were because of the divergent nation stories considered as legitimate by those who acted. Ḫalīl indeed believed that he was saving the nation, and so did the islamists, and the northerners, and Maḥǧūb.

The question, which remains, is why did this happen in Sudan and not in other countries? In other countries, too, different parties have different nation stories. Communities are something fluid and ever-changing. They need to be re-enacted and redefined at every stage. Even if every member has a slightly varying conception of the group as a whole, as long as these conceptions are overlapping

622 Woodward has already pointed to the idea that "the major parties had (…) shown their willingness to pursue their objectives outside parliament" and uses Ḫalīl's handover as an example. He too argued that from the perspective of Ḫalīl, this was a legitimate political move. Woodward however argued that this was exclusively the result of the constitutional instability. Peter Woodward, 'Parties and parliaments', in Muddathir Abd Al-Rahim, *et al.* (eds.), Sudan Since Independence (Hants, 1986), p. 57.

enough, they form a community. Even if differences are relatively wide, a common ground can sometimes be established. In the Sudanese context this meant that maybe if it had been only ʾUmmah and NUP, they would have been able to form one nation. But with the fragmentation of the political system along two additional axes, the ideological and the regional, the nation-building project failed.

The greatest challenge in the Sudanese case was the interconnection between different issues and parties. For example, the southern political parties were not only relevant in regard to the southern question, but the presence of the southern parties also shifted the dynamics in northern Sudanese politics between the various northern parties. The same is equally true for all other parties such as the communists and islamists.

A compromise between two groups would have always pre-empted a compromise with a third group. The traditional legitimacy of the PDP and the Imam-wing of the ʾUmmah made a stable coalition with the southerners difficult and with the northern regional parties nearly impossible. A stable alliance between the islamists and either one of the regional parties was unrealistic. Similarly a long-term cooperation between the communists and the more conservative parts of ʾUmmah and NUP was difficult to imagine. An alliance of the communists and islamists was simply impossible. All these kind of coalitions might have temporarily existed as strategic forms of cooperation but they always remained inherently unstable.

This instability was partially caused, and could not be overcome, because of the internal divisions of ʾUmmah and NUP. Both parties were amalgamations of different groups, which agreed primarily on issues relating to independence. Both were internally divided over the mode of legitimacy of government. Eventually they should have broken apart and reconfigured in new and different broad alliances, which would have reflected the post-independence realities. However the pressure of the FPTP system forced them to maintain this artificial configuration because any division led to highly disadvantageous electoral

outcomes for whatever party was divided. The party leaders were perfectly aware of this phenomenon, which is demonstrated by their attempt to reunify their parties, which eventually succeeded for both ʾUmmah and NUP. And if the FPTP system alone did not suffice to maintain the existing party divisions, the additional pressure of ideological and regional parties, made any reconfiguration even less likely.

The fact that the coalitions and the political process were so unstable, made any agreements on actual issues increasingly difficult, especially in regard to the big issues which were plaguing the constitutional debate and with it the debate about the nation. None of the parties was really in a suitable position to come to such agreements. The two people's parties would have risked breaking up again had they debated issues which were contested within the party. In the ideological parties leaders were quickly replaced, if not seen as tough enough in regard to the ideological dogma. Lastly politicians from regional parties were quickly perceived as traitors due to the fragility of the networks of trust within these organisations. As a result the members of parliament, which were delegated by the people to write a constitution failed to build the basis for a coherent nation story.

Equally however, the general public was not able to compensate for this short-coming of the parliament, in part because many individual citizens and especially members of the different elites were caught up in one specific issue or struggle, be it ideological or regional. In parts the geographical distances between citizens, especially in absence of a truly national media, prevented a direct exchange from taking place. As a result we find a vicious circle, where the specific and strong differentiation of parties led to the instability of the political system, which led to a failure to form a nation. The lack of a coherent nation story itself was the reason for the differentiation of parties and the nation failure amplified the instability of the political system.

What began as the debate about sudaneseness in the colonial period then became the constitutional debate after independence. Both debates were symbolising and representing perceptions of the nation story. The arabisation of the Mawradah

group under the leadership of people like Maḥğūb led to the rejection of the federal system in the first parliamentary period, and then to the escalation of the civil war in the south under ʿAbbūd and later Maḥğūb. The conflicts between the ʾAbū-Rūfians and the sayyids escalated into the rejection of holy men in politics by ʾAzharī in opposition in 1957. The squabbles between islamists and communists at university and in secondary schools in the period of independence turned into a constitutional witch-hunt in 1965, when communists were removed from posts in the government administration and corporations such as Sudan Railways.

As a result of the structure of Sudan as a condominium and because of the structure of the condominium, the Sudanese political landscape was fragmented into two large blocs in the north and an opposition in the south. Because of the weak resistance, the colonial state mustered against the nationalist movement, the movement was neither forced to unite, nor was it forced to move substantially outside the capital. In consequence, the nation was solely in Khartoum and elsewhere other ideas of nation were developed. The instability of the whole system was additionally increased by the pressure of the ideological parties. With no constitutional basis to work with, during very short periods of democratic rule, and partially as a side effect of the first-past-the-post electoral system, the parties failed to develop a common ground and feeling of common belonging after independence.

This lack of a feeling of common belonging had two major effects. Firstly, it led to distrust between the politicians and further complicated the already difficult process of forming coalitions. Politicians ended up spending more of their time on maintaining coalitions than on producing actual political results for their constituents. In consequence, the people felt that the democratic system had failed them and accepted military rule with a sigh of relief. Secondly, it meant that different parties did not accept each other as legitimate participants in the political process and therefore turned –in their own eyes legitimately– to undemocratic tools to oppose the others.

The lack of inclusivity of sudaneseness, the absence of a constitution, the constant distrust between politicians, the failure to recognise each other as legitimate partners, were all a result of the failure to establish one inclusive nation story or to find a way to balance out competing nation stories in a way that they would have complemented and not contradicted each other. All these elements led to a practical breakdown of Sudanese politics. In other words in the 1950s and 60s Sudan indeed was a failed nation.

Epilogue

Jean-Luc Godard once said that a good story should have "a beginning, a middle and an end but not necessarily in that order." The problem I have with this, as a historian working on Sudan, is that the end seems to be constantly shifting. It is not that I cannot find a historical end point, where to end my discussion. The coup of Numayrī offered a clear end. But with the events in Sudan every single day the perspective on what has actually happened keeps perpetually in motion.

Speaking Truthfully to Power

On 9 July 2011 South Sudan became an independent country and I was sitting in a plane to New York. I was on my way to Washington to visit the national archives. I was pretty exhausted when we arrived and, probably like many people, TSA officers make me a bit nervous, especially considering all the horror stories floating around on the internet. When I finally got to the front of the line at immigration I decided to answer the man's questions as truthfully and precisely as possible. In a very literal sense, I was speaking truth to power. When he asked what I was planning to do in the United States, I told him that I was on my way to the national archives to look at documents which would help with my history Ph.D. thesis on Sudanese politics. He looked at me for a moment and asked: "With the South Sudan being independent now, does that make your work easier, or more difficult?" That was the one reply I had expected the least and answered that it does not matter much, because my work is historical.

This is of course at the same time true and false. My thesis indeed ends much before current events, but still, every time someone asks how the South Sudanese independence impacts my work, I pause and I am not sure how to answer. I think the most honest answer would be that it feels a little odd to think all day long about a country which does not exist any longer. Sudan, as I discuss it in my thesis, existed for a mere fifty-five years. In a sense, while writing my thesis on Sudan's beginning, I could witness its end –and its end and its beginning were very much interrelated. As ʾAmīr ʾIdrīs aptly argued: "In the Sudanese context, history has never been about the past, but about the present contested realities."[623]

The beginning in many ways foreshadowed the end. In my first chapter, I discussed the background of the events which formed the core of the thesis. The extreme geographic, cultural, linguistic, religious, and ethnic diversity of Sudan were in a way the backdrop and challenge to the colonial endeavour, first under Turco-Egyptian rulers, then under Anglo-Egyptian leadership, but the backbone of the condominium was the Nile and the people living alongside it. The towns along the Nile had access to railway transportation and telegraphic communication, and the inhabitants had much better access to education and other services.

Because the English occupied the Sudan fighting against a religious movement, they paid strong attention to the ṭarīqahs after their victory, and by doing so cemented the role of the ṭarīqahs in Sudanese society and politics. After the White Flag uprising, the British attempted to eliminate the influence of Egypt in Sudan, shut off the southern provinces to northerners, and reduced the role of the potentially nationalist and therefore dangerous educated elites. These elites eventually formed the Graduates' Congress and after the British missed their opportunity to work with the Congress, it became increasingly pro-Egyptian. The British on the other hand worked with the ʾAnṣār, whom they had originally fought when occupying Sudan, and tribal chiefs and other local leaders of the colonial administration.

623 Amir Idris, *Conflict and Politics of Identity in Sudan* (New York, 2005), p. 14.

In the second chapter I first discussed the history of the 1950s up to the coup by ʿAbbūd in 1958. The dynamic of the late 1940s intensified in the 1950s, in that the nationalist movement increasingly was linked to two large blocs with the Ḫatmīyah, Sayyid ʿAlī al-Mīrġanī, and the ʾAšiqqāʾ on one side, with the patronage of Egypt, and the ʾAnṣār, Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān, and the ʾUmmah on the other side with the patronage of Britain, or at least of parts of the colonial administration. The two sides, partially unintentionally, pressured each other, and by doing so, forced each of the patrons to make concessions. Britain eventually tried to outmanoeuvre Egypt by affiliating the Sudanese more closely to the administration, but when the Free Officers took power in Cairo and called the British bluff, Sudan achieved quick decolonisation, which was still unimaginable to most actors just a few years earlier. What led to the early independence was however not a strong nationalist movement, but a weak colonial state. The fragmented political class failed to get together and deliver tangible results, including a much needed constitution. In an atmosphere where sovereignty seemed continually threatened by outside forces as well as other parties, the prime minister eventually handed over power to the army, without much resistance from the Sudanese people.

In the second part of the chapter, I discussed the two large parties, the ʾUmmah and the NUP. The formation of these two parties was mostly a result of the competition of the two co-domini and once independence was achieved the NUP split apart, and a little later after the death of Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān who had functioned as a unifying figure, so did the ʾUmmah. Nevertheless, the Sudanese political system continued to be analysed as a two-party system, an approach that not only ignored the regional and ideological parties and movements, but somehow glossed over the fragmentation of the ʾUmmah and the NUP. This perspective is understandable, considering the large impact colonial administrators had on the academic literature. The difficulties of the Sudanese political system and the democratic structures can, however, only be fully understood if one fully appreciates the system as multi-party system and the resulting relevance of coalitions.

The focus of the third chapter was on the period of military rule and the October revolution against the junta. While the army succeeded in boosting the economic development in the first years, its inability to create any form of popular participation and its failure to find a solution to the problems in the southern Sudan eventually led to widespread disapproval. When a debate on southern issues by the Khartoum University Student Union was broken up by the police, a student was shot. The funeral was followed by protests which led to a general strike, and eventually the army gave in and stepped down. The following transitional government was dominated by the so-called professional front, a front that represented unions and professional associations. Since many members of the front were sympathising with the communists, the newly formed Sudan Communist Party had a very strong impact on the transitional government. To curb this influence, the other parties pushed for quick elections, and they affirmed their demands by massive street protests. Eventually the transitional government was changed and elections took place. As a result the politicians once again missed the opportunity to use a transition to write a constitution.

In the second part of the chapter I discussed the history of the two ideological movements, the islamists and the communists. Both movements were able to gain considerable support at the universities, before they tried to influence national politics. Both movements had greater influence than their size suggested, but both movements were also disadvantaged by the electoral system and therefore only marginally represented in parliament. One of the core aims of the communists was to stop an Islamic constitution and one of the main aims of the islamists was to outlaw the communists. The islamists eventually succeeded, but by doing so produced a fully-fledged constitutional crisis. The important impact of the ideological movements in the 1950s and 60s was often overlooked, partially because they acted through others and partially because they had an even more central role in later years.

The fourth chapter first discussed the events of the second democratic period up to the coup of Numayrī. This period was characterised by quick change of coalition governments and the conflicts within the NUP and the ʾUmmah. Even

more importantly, it was a period of constitutional crises. On the one hand the politicians failed once more to write a new constitution, on the other hand, as an after-effect of outlawing the communist party, the institutions which were constitutionally meant to mediate and broker a solution failed to do so, because they had been previously politicised. In that situation, participation in government became the only possible protection from legal manipulations by other parties in government. If sovereignty was the driving factor during the first democratic period, constitutionality was the driving factor in the second democratic period.

The focus of the second part of the chapter lay on the regional parties in the north and the south. The history of the southern parties began with the integration of the south into the national institutions of Sudanese affiliation with colonial rule. After the negative experience of sudanisation and a first outbreak of violence in Torit in 1955, the southern parliamentarians still voted for independence, because the northerners promised that federalism would be duly considered when drafting a constitution. When the first generation of politicians failed to obtain any concessions, a more radical group was elected in 1958, which, however, was no more successful. Under ʿAbbūd the demands for federalism became illegal, southern politicians were put in prison, others went into exile. Slowly an armed movement emerged. The armed movement was able to put considerable pressure and the costs of fighting a war in the south were one reason for the collapse of the ʿAbbūd regime, but they were also never strong enough to hold large areas. During the second democratic period, two southern parties competed for popular support, while trying to balance their support for the exiled movement and the rebels, and their political ambitions and possibilities in Khartoum.

At the same time regional parties in the north emerged. The General Union of the Nuba Mountains and the Dār-Fur Development Front emerged in the direct aftermath of the October revolution, while the Beja Congress had existed before but now transformed into a full-fledged political party. These movements, while having similar demands, had no common platform, or even national vision yet. The war in the south and the demand for self-determination, which possibly

included secession, made it difficult for them to work with the southern parties. The regional parties in both, the north and the south, were a reaction to the inclusion of the peripheral people into the state and the transformation of subjects into citizens, while not actually being included in the nation.

The conflict in the south was from the perspective of the general public in Europe often the single story they knew about Sudan. But not only in the popular debate abroad, but also academically and inside Sudan, the north-south conflict was a central lens for the interpretation of events. In this sense, the independence of South Sudan in 2011 might change one more important thing. It could allow us to re-embed the conflict between periphery and centre within the general context of the struggle of power in Sudan –a large step into this direction was already taken by Johnson, when embedding the north-south conflict within the general context of peripheral struggles. The independence of the south re-opened the door for a more diverse and more nuanced view of Sudanese party and parliamentary politics, not only after that independence, but also before. On a historiographical level, this thesis attempts to contribute to this. In this regard, there is also the biggest potential for continuing work. The history of the northern regional movements in particularly is still massively understudied and deserves additional attention.

Speaking Truth to Power

In early 2011, I was invited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Khartoum to give a talk on "Ideas of Federalism during Sudan's Second Democracy and their Implications." I had agreed believing that this would be my opportunity to speak truth to power. My talk touched on the histories of the various regional movements in the northern Sudan and I argued that the fact that these movements have appeared and re-appeared in various forms should indicate to the current government that only if they would actually address the grievances of these

movements, could they hope for a lasting solution. To my surprise, most of the present members of the foreign service agreed with me whole-heartedly. I wondered if my worries about the Nuba Mountains were unfounded and if the Bašīr government was actually ready to look for a genuine solution.

Only a couple of months later, a German friend of mine, who had come to my talk in Khartoum, was visiting Oxford. By now the Sudanese army was bombing the "rebels" in the Nuba Mountains. Apparently the level-minded parts of the regime had not won the day. But maybe that was not really the problem. Maybe the idea of a rapprochement between the SPLM-N who was representing the peripheries, and the government, which was still using an islamist vocabulary, was unrealistic. Maybe the nation stories of these two movements were so divergent that even with all possible goodwill, a mutual recognition as legitimate participants in the political process was out of question.

In the fifth chapter of my thesis I presented my analysis, bringing together the various strands and questions brought up in the thesis. The primary argument aimed at exactly this relationship between nation stories and mutual recognition of legitimacy. The first section of that chapter focused on the issue of sudaneseness and how the term, which at first included only black Muslims of slave descent, evolved to eventually exclude everyone who was too black, such as those first called Sudanese. In the second and third sections I discussed the process of constitution writing and constitutionality and the positions of the various parties on these issues.

In the final section I argued that the contradictory positions of the parties created a dual deadlock, which led to a breakdown of the democratic system. Firstly, due to reciprocal distrust, widely diverging platforms, and generally the difficulty of forming coalition governments, especially in the absence of such a tradition or a democratic tradition in general, coalitions became extremely unstable. Unstable coalitions meant that politicians were forced to invest a lot of time and effort to keep coalitions alive. Concrete political actions were either avoided, so as not to rock the boat, or they simply did not receive enough attention, because the

maintenance of coalitions was always prioritised over actual policy decisions. As a result the governments failed to deliver tangible change to the electorate and therefore the people reacted with relief and hope when the army took over.

Secondly, the divergent nation stories of the different parties led to a situation where they stopped seeing each other as part of the same nation and therefore believed that the others were not legitimately participating in the political process. When parties stopped recognising other parties as part of the same nation, the use of non-democratic mechanisms, be it the hand-over of power to the army or the attempt to outlaw the other party in order to protect the nation, became legitimate. The reciprocal recognition of legitimacy is a prerequisite for a democratic system and therefore the lack of a common nation story or sufficiently overlapping nation stories directly destabilised democracy.

The nation, her history and stories, her heroes, her imagined past, present, and future are at the core of a stable political system and a stable political system is a prerequisite for development and a better future for the people. This basic causal link is persistently being ignored by many development and aid organisations working in Sudan today. The focus on the tangible and what can be easily measured have led to a discourse of structures and capacity building –and within this framework it remained incomprehensible why the billions spent have not produced the desired results. If we want to take the Sudanese seriously, and in fact if we want to be taken seriously by them, it is time to acknowledge that in Sudan too history and ideas matter.[624]

Two interesting ways to expand on this study of the nation story in Sudan would be firstly to look at these issues from the perspective of the regions and secondly to look at the periods of military rule. While this study has included the movements from the regions, it has nevertheless focused on politics in the parliament, and therefore in the centre. As mentioned, the regional movements

624 Similar ideas have of course also been proposed by others, also in the development literature. For example, David Roden argued: "The recent experiences of the Sudan emphasize the dangers of giving insufficient weight to social and political factors in development planning, particularly in the early stages of nation building." David Roden, 'Regional Inequality and Rebellion in the Sudan', *Geographical Review*, Vol. 64, No. 4 (Oct., 1974), pp. 515-6.

were all constructed with the centre as a reference point. Still, it would be interesting and informative to look at how the centre was imagined in the periphery and how the relationship between the regions and the centre was constructed.

The issue of the army is also a fascinating one. Military regimes, the current government notwithstanding, have been relatively unstable in Sudan. Traditionally the argument would be that they failed to monopolise the essential centres of power and therefore were prone to be removed. However, I believe more importantly the military regimes too, failed to propose an inclusive nation story. While ʿAbbūd's bureaucracy lacked any vision for the country, Numayrī's federalist socialism seemed to have alienated the centre, while his radical islamism alienated the peripheries. It would be interesting to follow this argument through to see if the military regimes at least in parts failed for the same underlying reasons of structural instability as the democratic governments.

#SpeakingTruthToPower

On 22 June 2012 the student activist ʾUsāmah Muḥammad, known on Twitter as @simsimt, was arrested in Khartoum, after al-Jazeera English had broadcast a video message by him, arguing why he was planning to participate in the demonstration planned for 30 June 2012. He was not speaking incognito. He was speaking in the full knowledge what risk he was taking and he truly spoke truth to power.

> "I think my country Sudan has really hit rock-bottom and things cannot get any worse than what they are now. And I think after 23 years of oppression and injustice, poverty, crimes that are all committed under the current regime, change now is an inevitable must!"[625]

625 ʾUsāmah Muḥammad, *Message to 'The Stream' on 'al-Jazeera English'*, 22 June 2012 (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YdkfiFeKVzY).

While ʾUsāmah was in prison, the streets of Khartoum saw the biggest wave of protests since the emergence of the current regime. Students and young graduates took to the streets in decentralised protests and some neighbourhoods were temporarily taken over.

Nevertheless the protests have so far been unsuccessful. The traditional parties have neither been able or ready to contribute to the debate. In parts the armed conflict in the Nuba Mountains and in the Blue Nile have frightened many ordinary Sudanese and now that the country seems threatened from outside, they are less likely to question the actions of the regime. In a sense, while the SPLM-N addresses many of the same issues as the protesters who are partially organised under the umbrella of Qirifnā, the armed conflict weakens the protestors in Khartoum.

But nevertheless, as Qirifnā has pointed out, the demands of the armed groups are legitimate. Overcoming the ʾInqāḏ regime would not only mean changing the head of government, or an end to islamist and pseudo-islamist policies. It seems as if the emergence of a national vision of Sudan has begun. Not only did the SPLM-N and Qirifnā recognise the same problems in the present and recognise each other's contribution in the struggle. Both movements are themselves inclusive, with members from different ethnicities and religious backgrounds. The struggle against the current regime, if successful and then indeed against all odds, might prove to become that unifying story, which independence failed to be. To answer Yūsif al-Fāḍil's question, "does the fact that we continue to do nothing make us a failed nation?"[626] I believe, that if the Sudanese succeed in standing together and fighting for their freedom, this could be the first step in the long overdue process of nation building.

626 Yūsif Mubārak ʿAbd-Allāhi al-Fāḍil al-Mahdī, 'Sudan Need Not Be a Failed State', *Muftah Online*, 20 June 2012.

Bibliography

The bibliography is divided into sources, interviews, literature and theses. Each section is sorted alphabetically. However, in line with Sudanese bibliographical dictionaries, Egyptians and northern Sudanese are sorted by first name, southern Sudanese by their first vernacular name, everyone else is sorted by family name – the logic being, that Sudanese have no clear last name, as names are build up from the given name, the father's given name, his father's given name, etc. Therefore Philip ʿAbbās Ġabūš, is sometimes simply Philip ʿAbbās or Rabāḥ al-Ṣādiq al-Mahdī, usually is know only as Rabāḥ al-Ṣādiq, while her full name would be Rabāḥ al-Ṣādiq Al-Ṣiddīq ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī. To make the bibliography a little more accessible, the name by which each person is sorted, is printed in bold.

Sources

Archival Sources:

The thesis is based on archival sources from the National Archives in Washington DC. The most important series were the documents from the US Embassy in Khartoum and the CIA documents. I also used documents from the archive of the Comboni Mission in Rome. Besides their collection of the Sudan Informazioni, their collections of letters by south Sudanese politicians are very helpful. Finally I worked with the British Documents on the End of Empire published by Douglas Johnson.

Newspapers:

The thesis is partially based on articles from Al-Sūdān al-Ǧadīd, Al-ʾAyām and Rāʾī al-ʿĀm, as well as The Vigilant. I predominantly looked at the years between 1964 and 1969. The three papers in Arabic are available at the national archives in Khartoum. Theoretically the Vigilant should be available too, but the archivists claim that it is not. Thankfully a number of articles from the Vigilant were reproduced by Sudan Informazioni.

Individual Documents:

Dwight D. **Eisenhower**, 'Special Message to the Congress on the Situation in the Middle East', *Speeches by the U.S. President* (5 January 1957).

Girifna, *Demands of a Nation*, 13 February 2011 (http://www.girifna.com/demands).

Abraham **Lincoln**, *The Gettysburg Address*, 19 November 1863.

Republic of Sudan, Commission on Inquiry into the Disturbances in the Southern Sudan during August 1955, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry* (Khartoum, 1956).

Republic of Sudan, House of Representatives, *Minutes of the Sudanese House of Representatives*.

Republic of Sudan, Ministry of Social Affairs, Population Census Office, *First Population Census of Sudan 1955/56, Last (9th) Interim Report* (Khartoum, May 1958).

Republic of Sudan, The National Committee for the Constitution, *Summary of the Proceedings, Sittings No. 1-60* (Khartoum, 1968).

SPLM, *SPLM honors South Sudan war veterans*, 20 August 2010 (http://www.splmtoday.com / index.php ? view=article & id=507:splm-honors-south-sudan-war-veterans).

ʾ**Usāmah** Muḥammad, *Message to 'The Stream' on 'al-Jazeera English'*, 22 June 2012 (http:// www.youtube.com/watch?v=YdkfiFeKVzY).

Yāsir ʿArmān, 'The SPLM-N Position on the National Consensus Forces Democratic Alternative Charter', *Notes of the SPLM-North*, 7 July 2012 (https: //www.facebook.com / notes / splm-north / the-splm-n-position-on-the-national-consensus-forces-democratic-alternative-char/438645082843113).

Yūsif Mubārak ʿAbd-Allāhi al-Fāḍil al-Mahdī, 'Sudan Need Not Be a Failed State', *Muftah Online*, 20 June 2012 (http://muftah.org/sudan-need-not-be-a-failed-state/).

Interviews

Oral Archives:

ʿ**Abd-Allāh** Nuqd-Allāh, *Oral History Interview* (no date and place), according to: Maʿhad al-Dirāsāt al-ʾAfrīqiyah wa al-ʾAsiyūiya, Ǧāmiʿah al-Ḫarṭūm, *Muqābilāt Ruwād al-Ḥarakah al-Waṭaniyah* (Khartoum 1985), Vol. 3, pp. 376-400.

ʿ**Alī** ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān, *Oral History Interview* (no date and place), according to: Maʿhad al-Dirāsāt al-ʾAfrīqiyah wa al-ʾAsiyūiya, Ǧāmiʿah al-Ḫarṭūm, *Muqābilāt Ruwād al-Ḥarakah al-Waṭaniyah* (Khartoum 1985), Vol. 1, pp. 1-36.

ʾ**Ibrāhīm** al-Muftī, *Oral History Interview* (no date and place), according to: Maʿhad al-Dirāsāt al-ʾAfrīqiyah wa al-ʾAsiyūiya, Ǧāmiʿah al-Ḫarṭūm, *Muqābilāt Ruwād al-Ḥarakah al-Waṭaniyah* (Khartoum 1985), Vol. 1, pp. 78-108.

Mīrġanī Ḥamza, *Oral History Interview* (no date and place), according to: Maʿhad al-Dirāsāt al-ʾAfrīqiyah wa al-ʾAsiyūiya, Ǧāmiʿah al-Ḫarṭūm, *Muqābilāt Ruwād al-Ḥarakah al-Waṭaniyah* (Khartoum 1985), Vol. 3, pp. 241-375.

Personal Interviews:

Abel **Alier** Kwai, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 26 February 2011).

Abel Alier was born in Bor district in 1933. He studied law in Khartoum and was one of the founders of the Southern Front. He participated in the Round Table Conference and later served as member of parliament. He played a central role in the Addis Ababa peace talks and served as vice president to al-Numayrī. Later he served on various official posts.

ʿ**Abd-al-Fātiḥ** Tia Kafi, *Personal Interview,* (Kadugli, 6 March 2010).

ʿAbd-al-Fātiḥ Tia Kafi is a member of the Miri tribe in the Nuba Mountains. He worked as a primary school teacher in Kadugli from 1957 until 1985. He participated in the attempts to organise the Nuba in Kadugli in 1964 before they joined GUN.

ʿ**Abd-Allāhi** Muḥammad ʾAḥmad, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 16 and 30 December 2010, and Omdurman, 15 January 2011).

ʿAbd-Allāhi Muḥammad ʾAḥmad graduated in economics from University of Khartoum in 1955. He was a member of parliament in all parliaments between 1965 and 1989 and he held 15 different cabinet positions as a member of ʾUmmah. He has held ambassadorial positions in the Turābī period.

ʿ**Abd-al-Raḥīm** ʿAlī, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 2 February 2011).

ʿAbd-al-Raḥīm ʿAlī was born 1945 close to Dongola. He joined the islamist in secondary school in 1961. He was the cultural secretary of the movement in the university. He is now the rector of the Arab League's "International Institute of Arabic Language" in Khartoum.

ʾ**Aḥmad** ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 26 December 2010).

ʾAḥmad ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān was born in Nile State, he studied at the University of Khartoum 1954-58 and in Holland. He joined the islamist movement in 1949. He taught in Sudan and Saudi Arabia and held various positions in the Numayrī and Turābī periods and was a member of parliament after 1985.

ʾ**Aḥmad** Diraige, *Personal Interview* (London, 19 June 2010).

ʾAḥmad Diraige is the son of a Fur paramount chief. He studied in the UK and returned in 1963. In the following year he played an influential role in establishing the DDF. He was elected to parliament as an independent candidate in 1964 and later joined the ʾUmmah wing of Ṣādiq Al-Mahdī. He became the governor of Dār-Fur in the al-Numayrī period, but he had a falling out with the president in 1983 and was forced into exile.

ʿ**Alī** al-Ḥāǧ, *Personal Interview* (Bonn, 4 September 2010).

ʿAlī al-Ḥāǧ was born in Dār-Fur in 1940. He was among the few students from Dār-Fur when the ʿAbbūd regime fell in 1964. He played a central role in the foundation of the DDF. Later on he joined the ICF and NIF. He is considered the right-hand man of Turābī and lives in exile in Bonn.

Arop Madut Arop, *Personal Interview* (Juba, 2 December 2010).

Arop Madut Arop completed secondary school at Comboni College in Khartoum. He worked as a teacher at Comboni in Port Sudan from 1964 until 1971. From early on he was a member of the Southern Front. He now is a journalist and author. He was member of parliament in the South Sudanese parliament representing Abiey.

Dafʿ-Allāh al-Ḥāǧ, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 9 February 2011).

Dafʿ-Allāh al-Ḥāǧ was born in 1934 in Omdurman. He studied law at Khartoum University 1954-58. He was active in KUSU as a member of the islamist movement. He worked as a lawyer and a judge. He later held different cabinet positions and as chief justice 1983-84. He has been a lawyer since.

Ǧaʿfar Šayḫ-ʾIdrīs, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 28 November 2010).

Ǧaʿfar Šayḫ-ʾIdrīs born in Port Sudan in 1932. He studied philosophy in Khartoum and London. He was an early member of the Sudanese islamist movement. He eventually challenged Turābī over the role the movement played in politics. He remains a well-known islamist scholar in Sudan.

Hišām al-Muftī, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 10 December 2009).

Hišām al-Muftī is the son of ʾIbrāhīm al-Muftī, who was a minister in the first ʾAzharī government. He lives as a lawyer in Khartoum and is active in the opposition.

Isaiah **Kulang** Mabior, *Personal Interview* (Juba, 5 December 2010).

Isaiah Kulang Mabior was born in 1939 as the son of a local chief. In June 1959 he joined the wildlife department. From 1961 onwards he was responsible for Yambio. In these years he was part of an underground support network for Anya-nya. In 1964 he was sent for further training, first in Khartoum and then in Tanzania. He continued to hold various positions specialised on wildlife in Sudan and later South Sudan.

Joseph **Lagu**, *Personal Interview* (London, 14 June 2010).

Joseph Lagu belongs to the Madi ethnicity, and was born in southern Sudan in 1931. He graduated from the military college in Omdurman in 1960 and defected in 1963. He became on of the founders and key military leaders of the Anya-nya rebel army. He later played a central role in the Addis Ababa agreement and held various government positions.

Lwal Diing Wol, *Personal Interview* (Juba, 2 December 2010).

Lwal Diing Wol was born in 1933 in Aweil district as a son of a chief. He became a member of parliament for SANU in 1968, although he had not finished his secondary school by then. He continued to hold various positions in Sudan and South Sudan.

Paul **Marial** Dot, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 23 December 2010).

Paul Marial Dot was born in Rumbek in 1941. He studied sociology at Khartoum University after 1964. He experienced the events as they unfolded in the late 1960s as a student member of Southern Front. He later held various ministerial and other official positions in South Sudan.

Muḥammad ʾIbrāhīm Nuqud, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 14 February 2010).

Muḥammad ʾIbrāhīm Nuqud was born in 1930. He joined the communist party when he was in school and became its head in 1971 until his death in 2012. He lived most of his life underground.

Muḥammad Rifaʿat al-Saʿīd, *Personal Interview* (Cairo, 3 August 2009).

Muḥammad Rifaʿat al-Saʿīd was an early member of the communist movement in Egypt. He was close to its leader Henri Curiel. He now belong to Tağammuʿ Party. He is considered as controversial because he used to have links to the Mubarak regime.

Muḥammad ʿUṯmān, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 3 February 2011).

Muḥammad ʿUṯmān joined the islamist movement in 1951. He later worked as a teacher. He eventually joined the Ministry of Education to produce English training programmes for television. He now works for the International University of Africa in Khartoum.

Muṣṭafā ʿAṭrūn, *Personal Interview* (Kadugli, 7 March 2010).

Muṣṭafā ʿAṭrūn was one of the first Nuba students at the University of Khartoum, where he enrolled in 1964. He was a member of the Student Office of the General Union of the Nuba Mountains.

Nabīl ʿĀbid, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 8 February 2011).

Nabīl ʿĀbid is a Coptic Sudanese of Egyptian descent. He studied law in Sudan, Egypt and England. He was affiliated with the communist party as a student. He now has a law practice in Khartoum and regularly writes in different newspapers.

Nūr Tawor Kāfī ʾAbū-Rās, *Personal Interview* (Kadugli, 5 March 2010).

Nūr Tawor Kāfī ʾAbū-Rās was born in the Nuba Mountains. When she was in high school she co-founded the Nuba Women Association in 1962. She was the first woman from the Nuba Mountains to study at University of Khartoum, where she enrolled in 1965. She remains an activist for Nuba and women rights in Sudan and abroad.

Phillip Kalo Ramaḍān Kardela, *Personal Interview* (Kadugli, 6 March 2010).

Phillip Kalo Ramaḍān Kardela was born in the Nuba Mountains in 1941. He began his schooling in Kadugli and finished it in the Comboni College in Khartoum. In 1965 he was elected as Member of Parliament for the General Union of the Nuba Mountains. He lost his seat in 1968.

Ambrose **Riiny** Thiik, *Personal Interview* (Juba, 29 November 2010).

Ambrose Thiik was born in Gogrial District in 1940 as a member of a chiefly family. He began his schooling in Tonj, and completed it in Rumbek secondary school in 1961. He studied law at the University of Khartoum until 1966. He after became a lawyer in Khartoum where he worked for various firms.

Simultaneously he played a role in the Southern Front. He later had various official posts, including South Sudan chief justice.

Al-**Ṣādiq** Al-Mahdī, *Personal Interview* (Omdurman, 20 January 2011).

Ṣādiq Al-Mahdī is the son of al-Ṣiddīq and grandson of Sayyid ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān. He was born in 1935 and studied in Sudan and Britain. When his father died he took over an important role in the party and after the death of his uncle he also became the leader of the ʾAnṣār. From 1965 to 1968 he was a member of parliament and briefly prime minister and again he became prime minister in 1986 until 1989.

Sārah Nuqd-Allāh, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 3 February 2011).

Sārah Nuqd-Allāh is the daughter of ʿAbd-Allāh ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān Nuqd-Allāh. Her father was the right hand man of Ṣādiq Al-Mahdī and she remains an important figure in the ʾUmmah.

Suʿād ʾIbrāhīm, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 22 February 2010).

Suʿād ʾIbrāhīm was a Sudanese communist and feminist, born in Omdurman in 1935. She played an influential role in the communist party, while having a complicated relationship to the women's movement. In her later life she became an important advocate for Nubian rights and culture.

al-**Ṭayyib** Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, Personal Interview (Khartoum, 24 January 2011).

Al-Ṭayyib Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn joined the islamist movement at the age of 16. He was a member of the political bureau of the islamist party in the university in the mid-60s. He left the movement in 1989. He now works for the University of Khartoum as a professor for political science.

al-Tiǧānī al-Ṭayyib Bābikir, *Personal Interview* (Khartoum, 11 February 2010).

Tiǧānī al-Ṭayyib Bābikir was born in 1927. He joined the communist movement in Cairo before it was founded in Khartoum. He was among the founders and was a member of the central committee of the party from 1959 until 2009.

Yāsir ʿArmān, *Personal Discussion* (Khartoum, 7 April 2010).

Yāsir ʿArmān is a Ǧaʿaliyī Arab, born in 1961. He joined the Sudan Communist Party at university in mid-seventies. He left Sudan and joined the SPLM in 1987. He became very close to the former leader John Garang. He later ran as presidential candidate and is now a leader of the SPLM-N.

Yūsif Ǧibrīl, *Personal Interview* (Kadugli, 5 March 2010).

Yūsif Ǧibrīl was born in Kadugli in 1945. He was one of the first Nuba students at the University of Khartoum, where he enrolled in 1964. He was the Deputy Chairman of the Student Office of the General Union of the Nuba Mountains, right after the formation in 1964.

Literature

Abdel Ghaffar Mohamed Ahmed and Samia El Hadi El Nagar, 'When Political Parties Fail, Sudan's Democratic Conundrum', in Mohamed Salih (ed.), *African Political Parties, Evolution, Institutionalisation and Governance* (London, 2003), pp. 94-114.

Abdel Salam Sidahmed, *Politics and Islam in Contemporary Sudan* (Richmond, 1997).

Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim, M*anichaean Delirium, Decolonizing the Judiciary and Islamic Renewal in the Sudan, 1898-1985* (Leiden, 2008).

ʾAbū Fāṭimah ʾAḥmad Onur, *Al-Tahmīš fī Šarq al-Sūdān* (Port Sudan 2009).

Chimamanda Ngozi **Adichie**, 'The danger of a single story', *TED Global 2009* (http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html).

Afaf Abdel Majid Abu Hasabu, *Factional Conflict in the Sudanese National Movement 1918-1948* (Khartoum, 1985).

Oluwadare **Aguda**, 'Arabism and Pan-Arabism in Sudanese Politics', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (June 1973), pp. 177-200.

Ahmad Alawad Sikainga, *Slaves Into Workers, Emancipation and Labor in Colonial Sudan* (Austin, 1996).

Ahmad Alawad Sikainga, *"City of Steel and Fire", A Social History of Atbara, Sudan's Rilway Town, 1906-1984* (Oxford, 2002).

ʾAḥmad ʿUṯmān Tolanab, *Mūʾtamar al-Biğā* (Port Sudan, 2007).

Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk, 'The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan: From Collaboration Mechanism to Party Politics, 1898-1956', The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History Vol. 38, No. 2 (June 2010), pp. 207–36.

Ahmed Mohiddin, 'A Commentary on President Nyerere's Vision of Tanzanian Society', *African Affairs*, No. 267 (Apr. 1968), p. 130-43.

Claude **Ake**, *The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa* (Dakar, 2000).

Oliver B. **Albino**, *The Sudan; A Southern Viewpoint* (London, 1970).

Oliver B. **Albino**, *Power and Democracy in the Sudan, How Decentralization Hurts* (Indiana, 2006).

Ali Salih Karrar, *The Sufi Brotherhoods in the Sudan* (Illinois, 1992).

Ali Suliman Fadlalla, 'The search for a constitution', in Muddathir Abd Al-Rahim, Raphael Badal, Adlan Hardallo, and Peter Woodward (eds.), Sudan Since Independence (Hants, 1986), pp. 41-52.

Amir Idris, Conflict and Politics of Identity in Sudan (New York, 2005).

Benedict **Anderson**, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York, 1983).

Julian **Baggini**, *The Ego Trick: What Does it Mean to Be You?* (London, 2012).

Roland **Barthes**, 'The Death of the Author', *Aspen*, No. 5+6 (1967).

Bashir Muhammad Said, *Al-Zaim al-Azhari wa Asri-hi* (Khartoum, 1990).

Peter K. **Bechtold**, *Politics in the Sudan, Parliamentary and Military Rule in an Emerging African Nation* (New York, 1976).

Robert **Berg**, 'Suakin, Time and Tide', *Saudi Aramco World*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (Jul./Aug. 1993), pp. 32-39.

Bruce J. **Berman** and John Lonsdale, 'Nationalism in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa', in John Breuilly, *The History of Nationalism* (Oxford 2013), pp. 308-17.

Jan **Blommaert**, 'Intellectuals and Ideological Leadership in Ujamaa Tanzania', *African Languages and Cultures*, No. 2 (Apr. 1997), pp. 129-44.

Bushra Babiker, 'Khartoum: Past, Present and the Prospects for the Future', *Sir William Luce Paper*, No. 1 (March 2008).

Bushra Hamad, 'Sudan Notes and Records and Sudanese Nationalism, 1918-1956', *History in Africa*, Vol. 22 (1995), pp. 239-70.

Dennis L. **Cohen**, 'Elections and Elections Studies in Africa', in Yolamu Barongo (ed.), *Political Science in Africa: A Critical Review* (London, 1983), pp. 72-93.

Robert O. **Collins**, 'The Sudan Political Service', *African Affairs*, No. 284 (Jul. 1972), pp. 293-303.

Robert O. **Collins**, *A History of Modern Sudan* (Cambridge 2008).

Frederick **Cooper**, *Africa Since 1940, The Past of the Present* (Cambridge, 2002).

Richard **Crossman** (Ed.), *The GOD that failed, A Confession* (New York, 1949).

Alexander Solon **Cudsi**, 'Islam and Politics in the Sudan', in James P. Piscatori (ed.), *Islam in the Political Process* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 36-55.

Sir James **Currie**, 'The Educational Experiment in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan', *African Affairs*, No. 134 (1935), pp. 41-59.

Martin W. **Daly**, *Empire on the Nile, The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1898-1934* (Cambridge, 1987).

Martin W. **Daly**, *Darfur's Sorrow: A History of Destruction and Genocide* (Cambridge, 2007).

John **Daniel**, Roger Southall, and Morris Szeftel (eds.), *Voting for Democracy: Watershed Elections in Contemporary Anglophone Africa* (Fernham, 1998).

John S. R. **Duncan**, *The Sudan, A Record of Achievement* (Edinburgh, 1952).

John S. R. **Duncan**, *The Sudan's Path to Independence* (Edinburgh, 1957).

Friedrich **Engels**, *Die Entwicklung des Sozialismus von der Utopie zur Wissenschaft* (Paris, 1880), see: http://www.mlwerke.de/me/me19/me19_177.htm.

Toyin **Falola**, and Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria* (Cambridge, 2010).

Ruth **First**, *The Barrel of a Gun, Political Power in Africa and the Coup d'État* (London, 1970).

Julie **Flint** and Alex de Waal, *Darfur: A Short History of a Long War* (London, 2005).

Michel **Foucault**, *The Order of Things, An Archaeology of Human Sciences* (New York, 1970).

Michel **Foucault**, *Power/Knowledge* (New York, 1980).

Severino **Fuli** Boki Tombe Ga'le, *Shaping a Free Southern Sudan, Memoirs of Our Struggle 1934-1985* (Loa, 2002).

Gaafar Mohamed Ali Bakheit, 'The Politics of Native Administration, 1964-69', in John Howell (ed.), *Local Government and Politics in the Sudan* (Khartoum, 1974), pp. 45-64.

Galobawi Mohamed Salih, and John Howell, 'Local Government after Independence', in John Howell (ed.), *Local Government and Politics in the Sudan* (Khartoum, 1974), pp. 33-45.

Rami **Ginat**, 'Egypt's efforts to unite the Nile Valley: Diplomacy and propaganda, 1945-47', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (March 2007), pp. 193 – 222.

Haga Kashif Badri, *Women's Movement, In the Sudan* (Omdurman, 2009).

Fred **Halliday**, 'Nationalism in the Arab World since 1945', in John Breuilly, *The History of Nationalism* (Oxford 2013), pp. 435-52.

Hasan Abdin, *Early Sudanese Nationalism, 1919-1925* (Khartoum, 1985).

Adam **Haslett**, 'Feeding the Fire', *Granta Online*, 19 September 2011 (http://www.granta.com / New-Writing / Feeding-the-Fire-The-Political-Context-of-9-11).

Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim, *Sayyid ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī; A Study of Neo-Mahdīsm in the Sudan, 1899-1956* (Leiden, 2004).

Fred M. **Hayward**, (ed.), *Elections in Independent Africa* (Boulder, 1987).

K. D. D. **Henderson**, *Sudan Republic* (New York, 1965).

Ḫiḍr Ḥamad, *Muḏakirāt, Al-Ḥaraka al-Waṭaniyah, Al-ʾIstiqlāl wa Mā Baʿad-ha* (Khartoum, 1980).

P.M. **Holt**, and M.W. Daly, *A History of the Sudan* (Harlow, 2011).

John **Howell** (ed.), *Local Government and Politics in the Sudan* (Khartoum, 1974).

Hussein Zulfakar Sabry, Sovereignty for Sudan (London, 1982).

John **Iliffe**, 'Breaking the Chain at its Weakest Link; TANU & The Colonial Office', in Gregory H. Maddox and James Leonard Giblin (eds.), *In Search of a Nation; Histories of Authority & Dissidence in Tanzania* (Oxford 2005), pp. 168-197.

Wendy **James**, *War and Survival in Sudan's Frontierlands* (Oxford, 2007).

James P. **Jankowski**, *Egypt, A Short History* (Oxford, 2000).

Anthony H. **Johns**, and Nelly Lahoud, 'The World of Islam and the challenge of Islamism', in Nelly Lahoud, and Anthony H. Johns (eds.), *Islam in World Politics* (London, 2005).

Douglas **Johnson**, *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars* (Oxford 2003).

Joseph **Lagu**, *Sudan, Odyssey Through a State, From Ruin to Hope* (Omdurman, 2006).

Ann Mosley **Lesch**, *The Sudan, Contested National Identities* (Oxford, 1998).

Staffan I. **Lindberg**, *Democracy and Elections in Africa* (Baltimore, 2006).

John **Lonsdale**, 'Anti-Colonial Nationalism and Patriotism in Sub-Saharan Africa', in John Breuilly, *The History of Nationalism* (Oxford 2013), pp. 317-37.

Sir Harold Alfred **MacMichael**, *The Tribes of Northern and Central Kordofán* (Cambridge, 1912).

Sir Harold Alfred **MacMichael**, *The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (London, 1934).

Mamoun Beheiry, *Glimpses from the Life of a Sudanese Public Servant* (Omdurman, 2003).

Mansour Khalid, *The Government They Deserve, The Role of the Elite in Sudan's Political Evolution* (London, 1990).

Moritz **Mihatsch**, 'Sudanese Independencies, 1956 and 2011', SSSUK Bulletin, No. 44 (July 2011), pp. 15-31.

Mohamed Ahmed Mahgoub, *Democracy on Trial, Reflections on Arab and African Politics* (London, 1974).

Mohamed Omer Beshir, *The Southern Sudan; Background to the Conflict* (London, 1968).

Mohamed Omer Beshir, *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan* (London, 1974).

Mohamed Omer Beshir, 'Diversity, Regionalism and National Unity', *Research Report of the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies*, no. 54 (1979).

Mohamed Omer Beshir, 'The Sudan's Twenty-Five Years of Independence: The Continuing Search for Systems', Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies), Vol. 9, No. 2 (1982), pp. 114-31.

Mohamed Salih, *African Democracies & African Politics* (London, 2001).

Mohammed Nuri El-Amin, 'The Sudanese Communist Movement, the First Five Years – I', *Middle Eastern Studies* (1996), pp. 22-40.

Mohammed Nuri El-Amin, 'The Sudanese Communist Movement; The First Five Years – II', *Middle Eastern Studies* (1996), pp. 251-263.

Mohammed Nuri El-Amin, 'The Sudanese Communist Movement, the First Five Years – III', *Middle Eastern Studies* (1997), pp. 128-151.

John **Morton**, 'Ethnicity and Politics in Red Sea Province, Sudan', *African Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 350 (Jan. 1989), pp. 63-76.

Muddathir 'Abd al-Raḥīm, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan, A Study in Constitutional and Political Development, 1899-1956* (Oxford, 1969).

Muddathir Abdel-Rahim, 'Changing Patterns of Civilian-Military Relations in the Sudan', *Research Report of the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies*, no. 46 (1978).

Muddathir Abd al-Rahim, Raphael Badal, Adlan Hardallo, and Peter Woodward (eds.), *Sudan Since Independence, Studies on the Political Development since 1956* (Hants, 1986).

Muḥammad Adarob Ohaj, *Mūʾtamar al-Biğā* (Port Sudan, 2005).

Muḥammad Nağīb, *Kuntu raʾīsan li-Miṣr, Mudhakkirātī* (Cairo, 1984).

Tim **Niblock**, *Class and Power in Sudan, The Dynamics of Sudanese Politics, 1898-1985* (London 1987).

E. S. Atieno **Odhiambo**, 'Matunda ya Uhuru, Fruits of Independence', in E. S. Atieno Odhiambo, and John Lonsdale (eds.), *Mau Mau and Nationhood* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 37-45.

Joseph **Oduho** Haworu, and William Deng, *The Problem of the Southern Sudan* (London 1963).

Andrew **Paul**, *A History of the Beja Tribes of the Sudan* (Cambridge, 1954).

Stanislaus **Paysama**, *How a Slave Became a Minister* (Khartoum, 1990).

Philip Abbas Ghabush, 'Growth of Black Political Consciousness in Northern Sudan', *Africa Today*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (1973), pp. 29-43.

Terry **Pratchett**, Ian Stewart, and Jack Cohen, *The Science of Discworld II, The Globe* (London, 2003).

Gérard **Prunier**, *Darfur: The Ambiguous Genocide* (Ithaka, 2005).

Gérard **Prunier**, *Darfur, A 21st Century Genocide* (Ithaka, 2008).

Ernest **Renan**, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* Lecture delivered on 11 March 1882 at the Sorbonne (quoted according to: http://ig.cs.tu-berlin.de/ oldstatic/ w2001/ eu1/dokumente/ Basistexte/Renan1882EN-Nation.pdf).

David **Roden**, 'Regional Inequality and Rebellion in the Sudan', *Geographical Review*, Vol. 64, No. 4 (Oct., 1974), pp. 498-516.

Øystein **Rolandsen**, 'A False Start, Between War and Peace in Southern Sudan, 1956-62', (Univ. of Oslo Ph.D. thesis, 2010), *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (March 2011), pp. 111-2.

Saad Ed Din Fawzi, *The Labour Movement in the Sudan, 1946-1955* (Oxford, 1957).

Salah El Din El Zein El Tayeb, *The Students' Movement in the Sudan, 1940-1970* (Khartoum, 1971).

Samir Sobhi, 'Salah Hilal: Luminary in the Shadow', *Al-Ahram Weekly*, Issue No. 490 (13 - 19 July 2000), http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2000/490/profile.htm.

Thomas **Schmidinger**, *ArbeiterInnenbewegung im Sudan* (Frankfurt, 2004).

David **Sconyers**, 'Servant or Saboteur?', *Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies)*, No. 1 (1987), pp. 42-51.

Scopas **Sekwat** Poggo, *The First Sudanese Civil War; Africans, Arabs, and Israelis in the Southern Sudan, 1955-1972* (New York, 2002).

Amyarta **Sen**, *Identity and Violence, The Illusion of Destiny* (New York, 2007).

Heather J. **Sharkey**, *Living with Colonialism, Nationalism and Culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (Berkley 2003).

Heather **Sharkey**, 'Arab Identity and Ideology in Sudan: The Politics of Language, Ethnicity, and Race', *African Affairs*, No. 426 (Jul. 2008), pp. 21-43.

Al-**Ṣiddīq** al-Mahdī, *Ǧihād fī Sabīl al-Dimuqrāṭiyah* (Omdurman, 1965).

Roland C. **Stevenson**, *The Nuba People of Kordofan Province, An Ethnographic Survey* (Khartoum, 1984).

Panayiotis J. **Vatikiotis**, *Islam and the State* (London, 1987).

Dunstan M. **Wai**, (ed.), *The Southern Sudan, The Problem of National Integration* (London, 1973).

Gabriel R. **Warburg**, *Islam, Nationalism and Communism in a Traditional Society: The Case of Sudan* (London, 1978).

Gabriel R. **Warburg**, *Historical Discord in the Nile Valley* (London, 1992).

Gabriel R. **Warburg**, *Islam, Sectarianism, and Politics in Sudan Since the Mahdiyya* (London, 2003).

Gabriel R. **Warburg**, 'The Muslim Brotherhood in Sudan: From Reforms to Radicalism', *Report of the Islam in Africa Research Project*, PRISM (2006), available on: http://actveng.haifa.ac.il/PDF/article/Muslim_BROTHERS_fin.pdf.

Max **Weber**, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Tübingen, 1976).

Max **Weber**, 'Class, Status, Party', in H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds. and translation), *From Max Weber* (London, 1991), pp. 180-195.

Justin **Willis**, Atta el-Battahani, and Peter Woodward, *Elections in Sudan: Learning from Experience* (London, 2009).

Peter **Woodward**, *Condominium and Sudanese Nationalism* (London, 1979).

Peter **Woodward**, 'Nationalism and Opposition in Sudan', *African Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 320 (July 1981), pp. 379-88.

Peter **Woodward**, 'Parties and parliaments', in Muddathir Abd Al-Rahim, Raphael Badal, Adlan Hardallo, and Peter Woodward (eds.), *Sudan Since Independence* (Hants, 1986), pp. 53-64.

Peter **Woodward**, 'Is the Sudan governable? Some thoughts on the experience of liberal democracy and military rule', *Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies)*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (1986), pp. 137-49.

Peter **Woodward**, *Sudan, 1898-1989: The Unstable State* (Boulder, 1989).

John **Young**, *The Eastern Front and the Struggle against Marginalization* (Geneva, 2007).

Theses

Abdelwahab A.M. Osman, 'The Political and Ideological Development of the Muslim Brotherhood in Sudan, 1945-1986' (Reading Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1989).

Atta H. el-Battahani, 'Nationalism and Peasant Politics in the Nuba Mountains Region of Sudan, 1924-1966' (Univ. of Sussex Ph.D. thesis, 1986).

Eltigani Abdelgadir Hamid, 'Islam, Sectarianism and the Muslim Brotherhood in Modern Sudan, 1956-1985' (SOAS London Ph.D. thesis, 1989).

El **Fatih** Abdullahi Abdel Salam, 'The Umma Party 1945 – 1969' (Univ. of Khartoum M.Sc. Thesis, 1979).

Gaafar Mohamed Ali Bakheit, 'British Administration and Sudanese Nationalism, 1919-1939', (Cambridge Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1965).

John **Howell**, 'Political Leadership and Organization in the Southern Sudan' (Univ. of Reading Ph.D. thesis, 1978).

Kamal el-Din Osman Salih, 'The British Administration in the Nuba Mountains Region of the Sudan, 1900-1956', (SOAS London Ph.D. thesis, 1986).

Karamalla Awad, 'Native Administration and the Evolution of Local Government in the Sudan', (Univ. of Manchester MA thesis, 1964).

Khaled H. A. Osman, 'The Effendia and Concepts of Nationalism in the Sudan' (Reading Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1988).

Shamil **Jeppie**, 'Constructing a colony on the Nile, circa 1820-1870' (Princeton Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1996).

Scopas **Sekwat** Poggo, 'War and Conflict in the Southern Sudan, 1955- 1972' (Univ. of California Ph.D. thesis, 1999).

Heather J. **Sharkey**, 'Colonialism and the Culture of Nationalism in the Northern Sudan, 1898-1956', (Princeton Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1998).

Siddig D. Babiker El Zailaee, 'British Colonial Policies in the Nuba Mountains of Central Sudan 1899-1946' (Univ. of Manchester Ph.D. thesis, 2003).

Marit Magelssen **Vambheim**, 'Making Peace while Waging War; A Peacemaking Effort in the Sudanese Civil War, 1965-1966', (Univ. of Bergen MA thesis, 2007).

Elena **Vezzadini**, 'The 1924 Revolution; Hegemony, Resistance and Nationalism in the Colonial Sudan' (Bergen Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 2008).

Andrew **Vincent**, 'Religion and nationalism in a traditional society: Ideology, leadership and the role of the Umma Party as a force for social change in the northern Sudan', (Univ. of Pennsylvania Ph.D. thesis, 1988).

John Obert **Voll**, 'A History of the Khatmiyyah Tariqah in the Sudan' (Harvard Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1969).