

## **THE PROBLEM OF SOUTHERN SUDAN**

*By*

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For almost two decades, the problem of southern Sudan has played a dominant role in the political history of the Sudan. Its long-term significance, however, extends far beyond Sudanese national boundaries : it has had repercussions on the relationship between the Sudan and neighboring countries, and has weakened the outlook for the future of Afro-Arab cooperation. In addition, it has served to emphasize a basic weakness common to many new multiracial states, that is, the lack of a political system that successfully accommodates various ethnic and cultural groupings.

The long-standing conflict in southern Sudan has been subject to different interpretations. It has been described by some as a religious conflict (Christianity versus Islam) and by others as a racial one (African versus Arab). Each party has put forward its case and has attempted to repudiate the argument of the other side ; the result has been a heated ideological atmosphere of accusation and counteraccusation, a situation which has not helped to clarify the issues underlying the conflict.

The problem of southern Sudan is both important and controversial, and the arguments have taken varying directions over the past two decades. It thus seems that an investigation taking into account the long-term development of the southern Sudan affair might lend valuable perspective on the issues underlying the problem.

This study represents an attempt in that direction. In particular, it will assess the claim of many northern Sudanese leaders that the problem evolved out of a colonial conspiracy initiated by the British who used « divide and rule » tactics to colonize, christianize, and westernize southern Sudan. It will also analyze the methods utilized by the various Sudanese governments in their efforts to conciliate the various interests in the controversy surrounding southern Sudan. Finally, it will examine the events that led to insurgency

in the mid-1950's and to the demand for separation which, together, engulfed Sudan in political crises of major magnitude over a period of seventeen years ; only with the signing of the Addis Ababa Agreement (1972) did the conflict come to an end.

### *The Early Years*

Sudan's first encounter with the outside world turned out to be decisive in the development of the southern dilemma. The Turco-Egyptian expedition in the 1830's brought southern Sudanese seclusion to an end, as the north and the south were for the first time placed under a single administration as part of the Ottoman empire. The regional relationship began to deteriorate shortly thereafter, however, as trade in slaves and ivory were developed by northerners and Europeans into a profitable operation. The slave merchants, predominately Arab, encouraged tribal wars and played off one chief against another in order to guarantee the flow of slaves- one result of which was the uprooting of the population in the south. Although slave trade was officially prohibited in the Sudan in 1860, it continued to flourish and left behind a legacy of mistrust and violence. Even when the Sudan was independent for thirteen years under Mahdi rule, slave raids were still carried out on southern villages. Although the slave trade was terminated by the end of world war I, southern apprehension toward the north continued throughout the years<sup>(1)</sup>.

Following the Mehdi's defeat in 1898, Britain was left in charge of the Sudan under an Anglo-Egyptian condominium arrangement. The British Colonial Administration saw no need to strengthen national unity ; instead, they placed the north and the south under separate administration on the ground that they geographically, racially, culturally and religiously distinctive, separated into a Negroid south and an Arabized north.

At this early stage of colonization, the British were mainly concerned with the pacification of the south. To this end, they followed a policy of separate development for southern Sudan along traditional African lines. As an important step, they localized the administrative machinery by utilizing the indigenous tribal structure and organization, a device by which the British could enhance their own position in the south<sup>(2)</sup>.

Britain's concern was to quell any evidence of tribal unrest in order to maintain law and order rather than to develop the south economically and politically. Consequently, the south fell behind the more homogeneous north,

which embarked on new economic and educational development<sup>(3)</sup>. The gap widened when southern education was completely entrusted to missionaries, who divided the south into religious «spheres of influence» and exploited ethnic and cultural differences in order to separate the north and the south even further. It should be pointed out that missionaries were not allowed to proselytize in the north, but were given a free hand in the south<sup>(4)</sup>.

In accordance with this stance, such British officials as R. C. Owen began, as early as 1911, to suggest the formation in the south of a «large Christian population which would eventually link up with Uganda and form a substantial buffer or check to the spread of a faith, such as the Muslim»<sup>(5)</sup>. Although such a policy was not officially adopted until much later, the seeds for separation were being sown in the early years of this century. In 1904, for instance, the use of Arabic by non-Moslems was prohibited on the ground that it was closely associated with the religion of Islam, even though it was widely spoken in the south. Instead, English was introduced gradually and by 1918 was made the official language. The substitution of Sunday Sabbath for Friday as the day of rest in the south was also announced in 1918. Furthermore, a southern military force (Equatoria Corps), whose training began in 1910, replaced the northern garrison in the south in 1917. By this change, the last direct link between the north and the south was severed. From this time on, the separation was so blatant that several British officials began to pressure their government to update its Sudan policy to be more in accord with reality.

#### *Colonial Conspiracy : policy of Separation*

During the years following the First World War, British administrators became more and more critical of the status quo in the Sudan, and they pressured their government to make a decision on whether to cut the south off entirely from the north or to introduce a more sound policy for the administration of a unified Sudan.

In the end, the British government decided to pursue the first alternative, as part of a long-term design to join Uganda, Kenya, Tanganyika and southern Sudan into a unified federal state in Central Africa. Rather than making their objectives explicit, however, the British gave the impression that their separatist policy was established in order to preserve native traditions and to protect pagan tribes against the encroachment of Islam ; they did nothing to stop the propagation of christianity, however.

Subsequently, the British took concrete measures to bring about a total separation between the south and the north. In 1921, the southern governors began to hold their own separate annual meetings away from the national governors convention held in Khartoum ; they also were instructed to increase contact with their counterparts in Kenya and Uganda. In the following year, the Passports and Permits Ordinance was established, in order to control traffic between the north and the south. It gave each Governor-General the authority to declare any part of the Sudan closed for other Sudanese and foreigners, and to limit the admission of other Sudanese and foreigners as he deemed necessary. Moreover, the Closed Districts Order (1922) classified Darfur, Equatoria and Upper Nile, and parts of Khordofan, Gezira and Kassala as closed districts<sup>(6)</sup>. In 1925 the Permits to Trade Order was promulgated to halt northern commercial activities in the south since only southerners were allowed to trade without a permit. Sir Harold A. MacMichael, Civil Secretary, explained the British policy in a letter to the southern governors as follows :

It has been the aim of the Government to encourage as far as possible (Christian) Greek and Syrian traders rather than the Gallaba (i.e. Muslim Arabs from Northern Sudan) type. Permits to the latter should be decreased, unobtrusively but progressively, and only the best type of the Gallaba, whose interests are commercial and pursued in a legitimate manner, should be admitted. The limitation of Gallaba trade to towns or established routes is essential<sup>(7)</sup>.

Throughout the 1930's, the British stepped up their campaign to implement their separatist policy. Most Northern merchants lost their licenses and were either deported or voluntarily left the south ; sale of northern cloth was forbidden in the south ; chiefs and natives were forced to change their Arabic names and dress ; intermarriage was not allowed ; southern tribes were told to cease any contact with the north ; some tribes were even resettled to force them to sever any relationship with neighboring Arab tribes ; in addition, a no-man's land was established between south and north<sup>(8)</sup>.

Another step that further intensified the policy of separate development was the establishment of a segregated educational system in the south, conducted by missionaries with material and moral support from the British administration through a grants-in-aid program. Instruction in the schools served to encourage southern hostility toward the north by keeping the memory of slavery alive. The separateness was further strengthened by the use of English as the official language in the south. In 1928, the Language conference (Rejaf), attended by missionary representatives from southern Sudan, Uganda, the

Congo and the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, decided in favor of the use of local vernaculars and English in the southern Sudan and the complete exclusion of Arabic on the ground «it would open the door for the spread of Islam, Arabize the South, introduce the Northern Sudanese outlook»<sup>(9)</sup>.

Missionaries cooperated fully in execution of the southern policy since it gave them a free hand to spread the gospel and western culture ; their major contribution was in the area of educational training, thanks to the British «grant-in -aid program, which progressively increased from LE 1,765 in 1927 ot LE 9,155 in 1937. Their educational training, however, failed to prepare southerners for civil and administrative jobs, and thus could not meet the greater demand for southern staff trained at the managerial level to carry out the policy of southernization, when northern officials were sent back home<sup>(10)</sup>. This situation had «a far-reaching effect on the efficiency of the administrative machinery and was, therefore, a further contributory factor to the backwardness of the South»<sup>(11)</sup>.

The net result was that the south developed in complete isolation from the north, which was embarking on new educational and economic development projects. As one result, the indigenous Sudanese political leadership in the north became more and more suspicious of te southern policy. Between 1938 and 1942, the Graduate Congress demanded that all regulations restricting the freedom of movement and trade for the Sudanese in the South be abolished ; they urged the administration to cancel grants-in-aid to missionary schools and to work for a unified educational system for the whole country<sup>(12)</sup>. These demands fell on deaf ears, however. Although the British felt that educational and economic development should be accelerated in the South, they still saw no need to introduce radical changes in their southern policy. In fact, it was not until the end of the Second World War that it became evident to the British that their policy was creating a major discrepancy between the south and the north in terms of economic development.

### *The New Southern Policy (1946-53)*

In 1944, Sir Douglas Newbold, the Civil Secretary, attempted to change the direction of Britain's southern policy in a suggestion that the south should be more closely integrated with either the north or with East Africa, or with both<sup>(13)</sup>. However, he did not reiterate the reform suggested earlier, in the 1930's, that the south be made an independent state.

This attempt was buried quietly when Newbold died, but it was indicative of the need for a reexamination of the Sudan policy. Such a need was increasingly evident, as a consequence of certain postwar developments. First, the East African territories, especially Uganda, were «extremely cool toward and prospect of union with this vast an unproductive land»<sup>(14)</sup>. Secondly, as northerners became more vital to southern development projects, they exerted greater pressure for change in the north-south relationship. Thirdly, the British finally came to realize that the landlocked south was without the economic resources and political institutions necessary for survival as a separate entity for any period of time. Fourthly, Egypt was pressuring Britain for the recognition of its sovereignty over the Sudan<sup>(15)</sup>. For all these reasons, the British finally abandoned their original idea of annexing southern Sudan to a Central African Federation ; instead, in 1946, they adopted a policy favoring the integration of the south into the north, largely out of a belief that a united Sudan would have a better chance of resisting pressures represented by a revived and strengthened Egypt. Sir James Robertson, the Civil Secretary, stated that the new policy took into account the fact that:

the peoples of the Southern Sudan are distinctively African and Negroid, but that geography and economics combine to render inextricably bound for future development to the Middle Eastern and Arabised .

Northern Sudan ; and therefore to ensure that they should, by educational and economic development, be equipped to stand up for themselves in the future as socially and economically the equals of their partners of the Northern Sudan in the Sudan of the future<sup>(16)</sup>.

However, when Britain revised its policy in favor of merging the north and the south together, it failed to make adequate preparation for such a merger and failed to include political safeguards to prevent northern domination in a united Sudan. Even as this policy was being established, some British officials who foresaw the likelihood of problems developing out of an uneven arrangement and suggested such possible safeguards as giving the south regional autonomy or having only a federation between the north and south. These views were disregarded at the time, however, although they would be taken up again later by southern leaders as the only solution to the southern problem.

Consequently, plans for a united Sudan proceeded at a high speed. In March, 1946, the Sudanization Committee was established and was told that «the progressive Sudanization of our governmental machinery 'was' a matter of the greatest political and administrative importance»<sup>(17)</sup>. A month later, the

Sudan Administration Conference recommended that the south should be integrated with the north and that an elected Legislative Assembly be created «to exercise legislative, financial and general administrative function in conjunction with a newly-constituted Executive Council<sup>(18)</sup>».

These recommendations were denounced by some British administrators in the south, however, who demanded that an Administrative Conference for the southern Sudan be held in order to hear the opinion of leading southerners on their future. Shortly thereafter, the Juba conference was convened and attended by seventeen southerners, six northerners and six British officials.

This conference turned out to be a turning point in the history of the Sudan since the conferees rejected suggestions for regionalism or federalism, the alternatives to unification that had been advocated by some British officials in the south, with the support of missionaries who were vehemently against «one Sudan<sup>(19)</sup>».

Furthermore, the conference made a call for national unity and for the initiation of measures to politically integrate the south with the north. It also recommended that a legislative assembly be created to govern a united Sudan under a centralized government. It was agreed that measures should be initiated towards the creation of a unified system of education for the whole country and the improvement of communication and trade between the two regions<sup>(20)</sup>.

The proposed Legislative Assembly was constituted and formally opened on December 15, 1948. Only shortly afterward, however, southerners began to express a desire to run their own local affairs, largely due to dissatisfaction with what they considered to be a token development program. By 1950 southern politicians began to ask for a Federal status within one Sudan<sup>(21)</sup>.

Southern dissatisfaction was further evidenced in March, 1951, when a constitution Commission was created to advise the Governor-General on formal measures to be initiated pursuant to granting self-government to the Sudan. At this point, Mr. Buth Diu, the Southern representative on the commission, suggested a federal system, when his proposal was rejected, he withdrew from the Commission. The Commission still completed its task but did at least include some safeguards in the proposed constitution in an attempt to allay southern fears; specifically, they recommended that the Governor-General be given wide legislative powers to provide protection over the south.

The constitution was approved by the Legislative Assembly in 1951. Significantly, however, the specific safeguards for the south were annulled in the Cairo Agreement (1953). Instead, under the Self-Government Statute (which led to the independence of the Sudan in January 1956), it was decided to give the south at least two ministers. By the terms of this arrangement, however, the north had advantages over the south since the latter was far behind the north economically, educationally, and politically. The south lacked political organizations and even a national consciousness. At this time, southern leaders were primarily interested in a united Sudan that would guarantee rapid economic and educational development in the south as well as an adequate share in running the government. This partnership would be put to a test in the following years.

*National unity : Tragic Directions :*

A united Sudan ran into problems even at the outset, when southerners were excluded from the delegation which met in February 1953 with the Egyptian government before the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement. Their exclusion was interpreted as further evidence of continued northern domination. At the time, however, it would have been difficult to have designated any southern representatives that might have spoken for the south as a whole ; there was not yet a single political party able to claim such a broad constituency. It was only with the 1953 elections that the Southern Party<sup>(22)</sup> was formed and was able to capture 12 of the 22 southern seats in the elections. In the following years, it would attempt to capture the leadership in the south, after 1954 being renamed the Southern Liberal Party.

During 1954-1955, the imbalanced situation between north and south was further emphasized when the Sudanization Committee filled only four out of the 800 civil service jobs with appointees from the south on the pretext that a few southerners were qualified and experienced for these posts. It was a great disappointment for the south and an apparent documentation of the way the British and the missionaries, who had been in charge of Sudanese education, had been sorely lacking in their training of qualified personnel for responsible and high-level positions in the Sudanese administration<sup>(23)</sup>.

This event clouded the political atmosphere and brought back to the surface much of the deeply rooted mistrust and hatred felt by the southerners toward northern domination. Increasingly, they saw the independence arrangement as simply the substitution of one foreign colonialism by another; in addition, southern leaders felt that they were tricked because promised to place southerners in high posts in the local and central governments were not fulfilled.



In their viewê Sudanization of the Civil Service had essentially amounted to northernization.

This mounting frustration coincided with a general reawakening of political consciousness in the south. Some southerners quitted the National Unionist Party (NUP) and joined the Liberal Party ; two southern ministers left their cabinet posts in May 1955 in protest over the handling of southern affairs ; political agitation mounted in an atmosphere charged with accusations by the opposition leadership, both among southerners and northerners. It gradually became apparent that the Al-Azhari government was unable to cope with the rising problems in the south.

As a result, several southern leaders talked about federation or even independence for the south. In an effort to obtain concensus on their goals, the Liberal Party organized Juba conferences in 1954 and 1955,, both of which demanded federal status for the south and southernization of more jobs. In response, the Parliament unanimously voted in favor of asking the next Constituent Assembly to give full consideration to the question of federation. Nevertheless, tension and distrust were building up in the two regions Particularly in the south which was ready to explode at any time. The incident that eventually triggered a bloody civil war in the Sudan was a demonstration in Nzara over a wage dispute for southern workers, that ended tragically in the killing of a handful of southerners. Although the shooting was done by members of the southern Equatoria Corps, these events aggravated the situation and quickly spread into wide spread violence against northerners-military and civilian alike<sup>(24)</sup>.

In an attempt to cool the mounting crisis, the government decided to transfer the Equatoria Corps to the north and to replace them by northern garrisons. The Equatoria Corps refused to comply with these orders and mutined, shooting their officers and massacring several hundred northerners in August, 1955. The government responded with force to suppress the mutiny, and quickly reestablished control of the city of Torit. Fatefully for the future of the Sudan, however, the city had by then become deserted, as military and civilians alike had fled to the bush. This series of events marked the beginning of the insurgency in the south, which would be organized by former soldiers and officerss from the Equatoria Corps Who had abandoned their positions and had found refuge in the bush<sup>(25)</sup>.

These events were greatly troubling to the government, but did not disrupt its plan for independence. On January 1, 1956, the Sudan was declared an

independent and sovereign state. Southern representative supported the declaration, but only after the Parliament had unanimously called upon the Constituent Assembly to fully consider the demand of the south for federation. This was a condition *sine qua non* for the southern votes in favor of independence<sup>(26)</sup>. Within the next two years, talks on federation continued, but northern leaders showed no sign for compromise—a matter which caused frequent walk-outs by southerners. The net result was an apparent deterioration in the south-north relationships.

Northern politicians paid very little attention to the rising problems that were besetting in the south ; they were too preoccupied with their own struggles for power to be able to recommend a constructive program to cope with southern problems. Such lack of sensitivity was evident in the manner in which seats on the committee to draft the constitution were allocated : only 3 of the 46 seats were given to southerners. Inevitably, then, when southern representatives pressed the question of federation, in December, 1957, they were outvoted and their proposal for federation was defeated<sup>(27)</sup>. In protest, southern representatives boycotted the remaining meetings.

This affront to the south gave an effective impetus to the newly founded Southern Federal Party during the 1958 parliamentary elections ; as a result, it captured 40 out of the 46 southern seats. Subsequently, on June 16, 1958, its members walked out of the Constituent Assembly after they had indicated their formal opposition to the new Constitution.

This event engulfed the Sudan in its most severe political crisis yet. By November, when it became evident that the government was unable to handle the explosive situation, the army was invited to take over the government,<sup>(28)</sup> thus ending the search for a constitutional solution to the southern problem. The military government, under Abboud, promptly embarked on a campaign to suppress opposition and to silence any talk about federation. It suspended the parliament—a measure which deprived southern leaders of the main forum by which they had been able to air their grievances and to keep communications open with northern politicians. When political parties were banned, southern leaders were forced to go underground or to flee the country<sup>(29)</sup>.

The military regime took a heavy-handed approach immediately and embarked on a program to achieve «... racial integration by islamization and assimilation of the Southerners or by extermination of the educated Southerners should islamization be thwarted»<sup>(30)</sup>. It proceeded to take direct and full charge

of southern education in an attempt to create a single educational system for the nation as a whole. Arabic was introduced as a medium for instruction in the south ; all missionary schools were taken over by the government and all private schools in the south were prohibited. Later by 1962, missionaries were expelled from the south on the ground that they were considered a threat to national unity ; they were held responsible for instigating trouble in the south and for conspiring with the mission-educated southern elite<sup>(31)</sup>.

During these years, the disturbances in the south had driven thousands of Sudanese across the borders into neighboring countries such as Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Central African Republic. Gradually the refugees began to form organizations to oppose the Sudan's military regime and, in light of the failure to obtain federation, to demand independence for southern Sudan. The Sudan African National Union (SANU), with its headquarters in Leopoldville, Congo, became a major spokesman for the southern cause, particularly in its insistence on a peaceful solution based on the principle of self-determination for the south. It began to seek international support and unsuccessfully requested the O.A.U. and the U.N. to examine the Question of Southern Sudan<sup>(32)</sup>.

Another organization formed among refugees was Anya-Nya, which was created in 1963 by those who had participated in the mutiny of 1955. Its aim was to capture the south by force and its members repudiated any peaceful solution to the problem<sup>(33)</sup>. In order to conduct their guerrilla warfare activities they captured weapons, primarily by ambushing convoys that were on route to the Congolese «Simbas» but also by exchanging food, clothing or shelter for guns from Congolese fleeing into southern Sudan from their own nation's troubles. Beginning in 1964, the Anya-Nya conducted successful guerrilla attacks in the southern terrain, a region the Sudanese army found difficult to reach because of transportation and communication problems ; the army's activities were in fact limited to large villages and towns in the region.

The warlike situation in the south resulted in tremendous uprooting of the southern population. By the end of 1964, the number of southern Sudanese refugees in Uganda alone had reached 50,000, a situation which prompted the Ugandan government to close its borders with the Sudan<sup>(34)</sup>.

The failure to bring about a military solution to the southern problem caused several northern leaders to criticize the way the government was handling the situation. To head off the mounting criticism, the government set up a

Commission of Inquiry consisting of nineteen southerners and thirteen northerners to investigate the causes of the southern problem and to make recommendations to achieve internal stability within the framework of the Constitution<sup>(35)</sup>.

This Commission was vehemently criticised by SANU on the ground that (1) the appointed southern representation showed «on genuine attempt to include southern intelligentsia» ; (2) the Commission was instructed not to recommend «anything infringing the present Constitutional structure, on the principle of a unitary government» ; (3) the government continued to ignore southern leadership in exile. SANU leaders reiterated their position in favor of a negotiated settlement between the Khartoum government and the southern leaders, although they could no longer exclude the use of violence as a means to their end<sup>(36)</sup>.

#### *Dialogue : Round - Table Conference*

By late 1964, the population in the north, led by students from the University of Khartoum, became increasingly vocal about their disillusionment with the military regime and with the policy of force which so far had failed to solve the southern problem. Instead, they began to agitate in favor of a peaceful solution and felt that the military government was incompatible with the search for a peaceful settlement. As a result, in October, 1964, Abboud was overthrown and a transitional government was formed. The new prime minister, El Khatim Al Khalifa, was well informed about the south since he had served there as Assistant Director of Education. He immediately initiated the following measures to regain southern confidence : first, he appointed three southern ministers to his cabinet, including Clement Mboro as the Interior Minister in charge of national security ; secondly, he established a precedent by being the first head of government to acknowledge publicly the ethnic, cultural, geographic and historic differences between the north and the south ; furthermore, in order to clarify the case in the minds of both north and south, he granted the press unprecedented freedom to discuss the issue underlying the conflict.

One immediate result of this more relaxed atmosphere was the establishment of the Southern Front as a new political party in the Khartoum, created by southern professionals and civil servants who preferred to work from within the Sudan to alter the status of the south. They maintained close ties with SANU headquarters in Kampala, Uganda. At the beginning their party was considered to a great extent the front for SANU, but it gradually became independent as the southern leadership split<sup>(37)</sup>.

SANU leaders looked favorably on the change of leadership in the Sudan, and contacted the new government and suggested the initiation of a dialogue to end the conflict. They suggested a program of action to include the following :

- (a) A general amnesty be declared by the Sudan Government for all the refugees, together with a guarantee for their safety ;
- (b) The recognition of SANU as a political party and permission for it to function inside the Sudan ;
- (c) The convening of a round-table conference between Sudanese political parties of both the North and the South, and in which the Judiciary, the University of Khartoum, and in which Union leaders would be represented, to discuss the constitutional relationships between the North and the South<sup>(38)</sup>.

In addition, they recommended that observers from the O.A.U. and from neighboring countries should be invited to attend the conference.

Al khalifa responded on December 10, 1964, by declaring a general amnesty to all Sudanese who had left the country since 1955, including any who had been given trials in absentia or who were still wanted on political charges. Furthermore, two of his ministers travelled to Kampala where they signed an agreement concerning the Sudanese refugees; they met with SANU leaders to explain their government's new policy and to persuade them to come home. In reply, however, the SANU leaders insisted on first reaching a negotiated settlement outside the Sudan prior to their return, and further suggested a federated form of government, the repeal of the Missionary Societies Act and the establishment of a southern economic development program as well as a southern army command<sup>(39)</sup>. The government response was cooperative ; it informed them that these proposals were negotiable and suggested the convening of a conference inside the Sudan as a mechanism for both sides to express their views in order that they might find a formula to end the civil war in a spirit of cooperation, tolerance, and understanding.

SANU was divided in its reaction, both with regard to the place of the conference and the ultimate goal for the south. The moderates, headed by William Deng, was in favor of federation and a negotiated settlement anywhere ; the radicals, led by Joseph Oduho, insisted on separatism and negotiations outside the Sudan<sup>(40)</sup>. Unfortunately, the SANU organization would never recover from this schism.

On March 16, 1965, the Round-Table Conference was convened ; it was attended by 27 southerners (including SANU's two factions), 18 northerners, and observers from Algeria, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, and the U.A.R. The northern delegation agreed on a unified platform regarding the southern problem ; they ruled out both federation and a centralized unitary form of government and instead favored a solution based on a united Sudan that would accomodate ethnic and cultural differences. They therefore proposed a system of local government based on geographical differences<sup>(41)</sup>.

The southern representatives were divided, however, William Degn (SANU) advocated a federal system while emphasizing the multi-racial character of the north ; on the other hand, Aggery Jadein (SANU) denounced Arab domination in the south and called for political independence. As a further contrast, the Southern Front suggested that a plebiscite be conducted by a neutral and independent body in order to determine whether the south preferred federation, separation or unity with the north<sup>(42)</sup>.

As a compromise, the Front and SANU leadership finally proposed the creation of two separate states in the Sudan that would be bound together by common services and insitiutions since there was need for some form of interdependence between south and north. They felt, that such a step might lead to a voluntary union in the long run. Meanwhile, however, Santio Deng, another southerner, stated that his Sudan Unity Party would not recognize any agreement that would grant the south independence.

The conference was doomed to failure because each side rejected the proposals of the other as being too extreme, and it thus concluded without reaching agreement on the constitutional status of the south. A tweleve-man committee was appointed to continue the deliberations on the constitutional question, however ; there was a concensus that the committee should not consider any proposals in favor of separation or of the status quo<sup>(43)</sup>.

A year later, this committee reported that it had made no progress in finding a formula to solve the crisis because each side insisted on its position with noroom for compromise. Upon teceiving this report, the government decide against calling the second Round-Table Conference ; instead a new committee was set up to draft a new constituion. In protest over the composition of this committee, both SANU and the Southern Front refused to participate in its deliberations. Morevoer, when the government announced that an election would be held in March, 1967, the Southern Front stated its intention to boycott

the election on the ground that an election should take place until a new constitution was approved and a state of emergency was lifted<sup>(44)</sup>.

The Deng wing of SANU decided to participate in the election and campaign for its program of federation and self-determination, however, and the Southern Front soon changed its strategy and agreed to take part in the upcoming election<sup>(45)</sup>. This reversal was made because the Front feared it could lose its influence in the south to the SANU while, at the same time it could attempt to exert pressure within the Parliament to prevent the approval of any constitution which ignored the rights of the south. Another factor in this decision was that the Front might also be able to enter into coalition with a party which would appreciate the southern case.

Subsequently, in May, 1968, the Southern Front did enter into a coalition with UDP and Umma-Imam to form a cabinet under Mahgoub. This participation in the coalition resulted in a rift between the Front and southern leaders living in exile, however<sup>(46)</sup>. More importantly, the coalition government was not effective in pursuing a settlement of the thorny southern problem. Instead, the situation only deteriorated further when the Mahgoub government decided to resort to the use of force to solve the southern problem. Slowly, however, as it became clear that no one would achieve a military victory, there was evidence of a growing sentiment that a political solution was critically important and could only be reached through the exercise of understanding and tolerance on the part of the Sudanese leaders of both north and south.

#### *on the Road to Settlement*

Following the military takeover in May 1969, General Gafaar Al-Numeiry, the Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council, took the first major step to end the deadlock when he publicly acknowledged the cultural and historical differences between the two regions as well as the right of the south to develop its own culture within a united Socialist Sudan<sup>(47)</sup>. This statement marked the first time that a president committed himself openly to the principle of regional autonomy for the south. In addition, he promised the extension of the period of general amnesty, initiation of an economic, social and cultural program for the south, appointment of a minister for southern affairs and the establishment of a job training program for southerners. These conciliatory efforts were rejected by southern leaders, who accused Al-Numeiry's government of being «Arab in aspiration and commitment»<sup>(48)</sup> in view of the proposed plan for merging the Sudan in a federation with Egypt and Libya, a move which

would submerge them in the Arab north even further.

Despite this rejection, Al-Numeiry proceeded to launch further diplomatic efforts in September 1971—two months after the communist abortive coup. He established secret talks with Joseph Lagu who had emerged as leader of both Anya Nya and the South Sudan Liberation Movement (SSIM). In the following months, this government began a dialogue with exiled southern leaders in Ethiopia, Uganda and Zaire<sup>(49)</sup>. Moreover, he dispatched delegations to the Scandinavian countries and to Switzerland to solicit help from voluntary organizations, to end the conflict in the south without any more bloodshed. Al-Numeiry also sought the help of the O.A.U. to reach a settlement in a spirit of African fraternity.

These efforts eventually proved to be fruitful in bringing an end to the civil war which had drained Sudanese resources for seventeen years. On March 27, 1972, the Sudanese government and the SSIM ratified a peace agreement in Addis Ababa to end the civil war. It should be pointed out that the Agreement was a compromise, and did not represent a clear-cut victory for either side in the conflict: southern leaders had to give up their ideas for independence or federation while the Sudanese government was forced to grant the south regional autonomy. Arabic was to be recognized as the official language, but as a concession English would be used as a working language along with local languages<sup>(50)</sup>.

Shortly after the agreement was signed, the Sudanese government established a special fund to meet the initial expenses of repatriation, resettlement and rehabilitation of southern refugees. In response to an appeal by Al-Numeiry, the U.N. Secretary-General requested the U.N.H.C.R. to coordinate the U.N. Emergency Relief program for southern Sudan<sup>(51)</sup>.

In retrospect, an accumulation of factors contributed to the conclusion of the Addis Ababa Agreement. The long years of fighting had convinced the Sudanese government and the SSIM of the need for compromise, perhaps, since neither side had been able to win the war militarily. Undoubtedly, too, southern leaders had changed their views partly through an assessment of their situation in light of the failure of the Biafran secessionist movement and the strong stance made by African governments against any further balkanization of the continent.

Emperor Hail Selassie played «a discreet but important mediatory role» in bringing about the agreement; he intervened to iron out the differences between



the Sudanese government and the southern leaders after they had reached an impasse<sup>(52)</sup>. As a result of his mediation, Al-Numeiry moved to close down the Eritrean Liberation Front's office in Khartoum, its headquarters in Kassala and their training camps in the Sudan following the southern settlement<sup>(53)</sup>.

The O.A.U. also played an important role in furthering the settlement by the use of its good offices to mediate the conflict and by its refusal to place the item on its agenda, a measure which would have only aggravated the situation. A change of position within the World Council of Churches must also be given due credit as a contributory factor. The World Council of Churches had been generously contributing to the resistance movement in the south but exerted pressure on southern leaders to seek a negotiated settlement<sup>(54)</sup> once they reached the conclusion that there was no sense of continuing this endless war and as they found themselves siding with the white regimes in Africa.

The future of a unified Sudan will depend on the full implementation of the Addis Ababa Agreement. It would require complete cooperation between northern and southern leaders ; the national government must be responsive to the needs of the south and must involve southerners in the running of the administration, because only sincerity and tolerance can eliminate the fear and mistrust of the past and heal the wounds of a seventeen-year civil war. The future of the settlement will depend to a large extent on the present leadership in the Sudan. Indeed, any change in the government might threaten the delicate balance that was created by the Addis Ababa agreement<sup>(55)</sup>.

There is every indication that President Al-Numeiry is diligently seeing to the enforcement of the agreement's provisions in order to help ameliorate north-south relations. In addition, he has taken measures to remove southerners' fear of close association with the Arab north, and no longer is interested in joining Egypt and Libya in a Federation of Arab Republics, a move which he had advocated in the past. To demonstrate his independence vis-a-vis these countries, he resumed diplomatic relations with the United States on July 25, 1972, after a five-year break,<sup>(56)</sup> and accepted American aid for refugee resettlement. Moreover, it is expected that the Sudan would improve relations with such neighbors as Ethiopia, Uganda, Zaire and the C.A.R., where southerners had found refuge during the years of turmoil. With the civil war over, the Sudan might be expected to play a major role in African politics because of its unique location on the fringe of Black Africa to the south and Arab Africa to the north.

*Summary and Conclusion :*

The problem of southern Sudan grew out of the British decision to foster separate development for the south, a measure which resulted in uneven development between the north and the south socially, educationally and economically. Thus at the end of 1964, when the British suddenly decided to abandon its separate development policy in favor of a united Sudan, the south found itself in an unequal position in this merger ; as the northern leadership failed to give southerners an adequate share in running the local and central government, southern leaders began to demand federal status for their region. The north gave only lip service to this request, however, and an indirect result was the uprising which broke out in August 1955, an event which marked the beginning of a seventeen-year civil war. The subsequent failure of civilian governments to deal with the southern question effectively brought the army into power and for eight years, Abboud tried to force a solution while also waging a campaign to speed up the process of Islamization and Arabization in the South. His policy drew a great deal of criticism in both the south and the north ; indeed, several politicians and intellectuals openly supported a new approach to the problem, and advocated a new governmental system that would accommodate regional and tribal differences within a united Sudan. By 1965, the army was thrown out and a civilian caretaker government under Khalifa was formed, an event that led to the convening of the Round-Table Conference. Although the conference ended without achieving a final settlement, southerners and northerners had at least agreed that the present centralized unitary form of government was not suitable for the Sudan. On a new proposed form of government, however, they disagreed ; the north was willing to grant regional autonomy based on geographical divisions but the majority of southerners insisted on independence or a plebiscite. In the following years, both diplomatic and military maneuvers were used to bring about an end to the civil war but each met with very little success. It was not until Al-Numeiry came to power that the Sudanese government openly accepted the need to grant autonomy to the south—a move which set in motion several events that eventually led to the signing of the Addis Ababa agreement in February, 1972. That agreement ended the civil war in the Sudan. However, the future of a united Sudan would depend to a great extent on the implementation of the settlement and Al-Numeiry's continuation in office. It seems that he is the only leader at this time who can hold the nation together, as any change in the government might threaten the delicate balance that was created by the Addis Ababa agreement and might again result in separation. Also, the future of a stable Sudan will depend heavily on the rapid reconstruction of the south which can not be accomplished without massive international loans and technical assistance.

FOOTNOTES

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