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THE IMPACT OF TRIBALISM AND SECTARIANISM ON THE RISE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SUDANESE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT 1899-1956
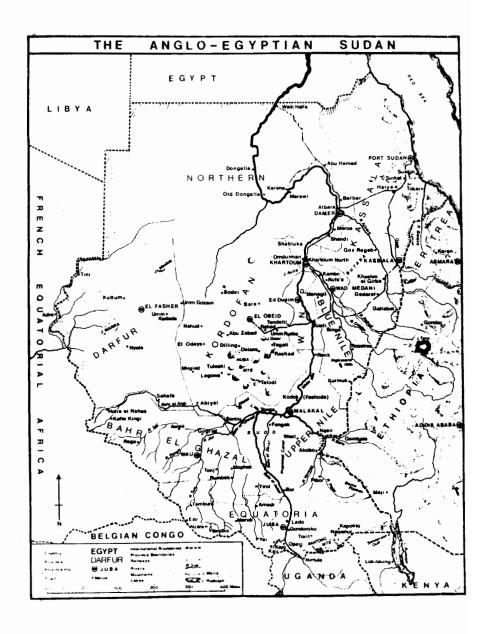
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Sectarianism and tribalism were characteristics of most of the African countries which had been colonised by the British. The aim of this paper is to show how the British Administration in the Sudan had benefited from these divisions to prevent the rise and the development of a Sudanese nationalist movement bearing the modern concepts of nationalism.

The Condominium Agreement of 1899 created a peculiar position for the Sudan. Though nominally, a condominium ruled by Britain and Egypt the Sudan Government, since the Agreement was signed, and until self-government was achieved in 1953, was dominated by the British officials of the Sudan political service. Despite Egypt's passive role in the administration of the Sudan, events in Egypt were bound to affect the Sudan, and were partly responsible for the deepening of tribal and sectarian divisions in the country.

In the first twenty years of the Condominium, priority was given to the establishment of law and order. The problems of security and pacification were

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very real. In the northern Sudan the Government was faced during the period 1900 – 1916 with no less than fourteen incidents caused by religious fanatics[1]. Though no stress on tribal leadership was made, tribal leaders were often consulted by the Government. The shaykhs of orthodox sects, the *Ulama* and tribal chiefs were the mainstays of the British Administration against a revival of fanatical Mahdism[2]. *Sayyid* Ali al-Mirghni, leader of the *Khatmiyya* sect was the favourite of the Government during this period. Until the outbreak of the First World War, he stood alone as the only prominent religious leader in whom the government placed confidence. He fitted in the Government policy of fighting the *Mahdiyya* and the Egyptian influence in the Sudan. Despite the fact that he was a refugee in Egypt during the *Mahdiyya*, he showed his objection to any Egyptian influence in the Sudan[3]. The first real challenge to this position of *Sayyid* Ali came in 1915. In that year the support of the *Ansar* was needed by the British to combat the call of the *Jihad* instigated by the Ottoman Sultan against them[4]. This needed the cooperation of *Sayyid* Abd al-Rahman, the posthumous son of al-Mahdi.

As education is a prerequisite for the rise and the development of any nationalist movement bearing the modern concept of nationalism, it is relevant to trace the educational development in the Sudan. The period 1900-1920 witnessed the early moves towards the development of education. The educational aims were summarized in the creation of a competent artisan class who would ultimately fill many minor government posts[5]. Another aim which the educational system set out to achieve was to train the Sudanese to replace the Egyptians in the army, and Egyptians and Syrians in the junior administrative positions. In 1902 the Gordon Memorial College was founded to train the sons of the leading men, the heads of villages and the heads of districts particularly in technical subjects. By limiting general education to a small class the aim was to weakening the prospect of the rise of any nationalist movement. Emphasis were therefore made on vocational training in government schools rather than on liberal education.

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1. M.O. Beshir, *Educational Development in the Sudan 1898-1956*, Oxford, 1969, p. 24.
2. G.M.A. Bakkheit, *British Administration and Sudanese Nationalism 1919-1939* (Ph.D. Cambridge, no date) p. 20. The Mahdist revolution against the Turko-Egyptian rule in the Sudan occured between 1881-1885. Its leader Mohammad Ahmad declared himself the expected mahdi. He organized his followers, the Ansar, and managed to overthrow the Turko-Egyptian government in January, 1885. An Islamic government was subsequently established.
3. Sudan Archives Durham (hereafter SAD), The Wingate Papers, n° 194/2/157-59, Wingate to Cromer, 24th February, 1915. Also the Robertson Papers, n° 521/7/6, Sudan Agent, Cairo, to Robertson, 28th June 1952.
4. The Ottoman Empire took the side of Germany during the First World War. Considered at that time as the *Khalifa* of the muslims, the Ottoman sultan was instigated by the Germans to declare holy war (Jihad) against the British.
5. Beshir, *op. cit.*, p. 28-29.

From 1917 onward attention was focused in the development of native administration. The concepts of native administration became dominant over the educational policy. The growing tension in Anglo-Egyptian relations which had culminated in the March 1919 revolution in Egypt[6], and which had its impact on the Sudanese, encouraged the authorities to go ahead with the policy of introducing native administration. The period after 1919 witnessed serious attempts to establish indirect rule and the revival of tribal authority. In July 1919, the same year of the revolution in Egypt the British Administration in the Sudan sent a delegation of Sudanese notables to London to congratulate King George V on the victory of the British in the War. The delegation had mainly consisted of tribal and religious leaders[7]. No members of the educated class were included in it. The ulterior motive of the British Administration for the sending of this delegation was to gain the support of these notables for the motto of the "Sudan for the Sudanese" which was subsequently raised to eliminate Egyptian influence from the Sudan. The ideal of independence from Egypt for the Sudan was set up during the Governor – Generalship of Wingate (1900-1916)[8].

The most significant outcome from departure of this delegation was the sectarian rivalry which it had created. *Sayyid* Abd al-Rahman, planned, without telling the rest of the delegation, to present his father's sword to the King of England[9]. This action was in contravention of what was agreed upon by the delegation that no presentation should be made[10]. Though knowing the effects of this presentation on *Sayyid* Ali, the British authorities made no effort to stop it. Instead, eight hours were spent in persuading *Sayyid* Ali of the insignificance of the issue. This had shaken his confidence and led him to believe that the matter was pre-arranged by the British authorities. Though appeared as a minor incident, it was bound to affect the development of the Sudanese Nationalist Movement and had contributed to its division along sectarian lines. The spectacular rise of *Sayyid* Abd al-Rahman in the years after 1919 and the economic promotion provided for him by the British Administration in the

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6. The 1919 Revolution in Egypt demanded the evacuation of the British from Egypt and the termination of the British Occupation.

7. The delegation of 1919 consisted of *Shaykh* al-Tayyib Ahmad Hashim, the *Mufti* of the Sudan, *Shaykh* Abul Gasim Ahmad Hashim, the president of the Board of *Ulema* ; and *Shaykh* Ismaeil al-Azhari, *gadi* of Darfur ; *Shaykh* Abd al-Azim Bey Khalifa, *Nazir* of the Ababda ; *Shaykh* Ali al-Tom, *Nazir* of the Kababish ; *Shaykh* Ibrahim Farah of the Ja'aliyyin and *Shaykh* Awad al-Karim Abu Sinn, deputy *Nazir* of the Shukriyya. The delegation also included *Sayyid* Ali al-Mirghani, *Sharif* Yusif al-Hindi and *Sayyid* Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi.

8. G. Warburg, *The Sudan Under Wingate 1900-1916*, London, 1971.

9. By presenting his father's sword to the King of England, S.A.R. 's aim was to gain the confidence of the British who viewed him and his followers with suspicion and having the aim of reviving mahdism.

10. Public Record Office, Foreign Office, London, (hereafter P.R.O.F.O.) 371/96939, n° JE 1054/2, Civil Secretary to F.O., 19th May 1952. Sir Lee Stack, the Governor-General of the Sudan 1917-1924, was in London when this presentation took place.

Sudan, which made him a wealthy and distinguished person led *Sayyid* Ali and some intellegentsia to believe that he had monarchical ambitions to be fulfilled with British support. *Sayyid* Ali's reaction to the presentation of the sword had not to await his return. In an interview with Lord Curzon, the British Foreign Secretary, he spoke favourably of Egypt's historic role in the Sudan and the bonds between the two countries[11]. He was adamant in his objection to the kingship of *Sayyid* Abd al-Rahman and told the British authorities in the Sudan that he would prefer to have "Haile Selassie as king of the Sudan rather than S.A.R."[12].

The adoption of indirect rule and native administration in the Sudan began in 1921 with the publication of the Milner's report of the special mission to Egypt[13]. The report endorsed the administrative reforms which the British Administration had been working out for itself since 1917, particularly emphasizing the role of native authorities in the future[14]. It says :

"Having regard to its vast extent and the varied character of its inhabitants, the administration of its different parts should be left, as far as possible, in the hands of native authorities, wherever they exist, under British supervision."[15]

The report was critical of the educational policy in Egypt because of discontent which had been created. It called for the avoidance in the Sudan of the faults found in the educational policy in Egypt. Lugard's, Dual Mandate, which appeared in 1922, with its emphasis on indirect rule became the gospel of the Sudan Administration[16]. It warned against the discontent and indicipline which might arise from the impact of western education. Collaboration with tribal authorities was recommended to use them to control the rural masses and to make them passive to the appeals of nationalism made by the western educated Sudanese. In fact and prior to the publication of Milner's report the Governor of Berber province, in northern Sudan, had warned his colleagues against the mistake of creating an educated class. He stressed the need to strengthen the solid elements in the country, shaykhs, merchants, before the irresponsible body of half educated Sudanese and students took control of the public mind[17].

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11 Martin Daly, *British Administration and the Northern Sudan, 1917-1924. The Governor – Generalship of Sir Lee Stack in the Sudan,* The Netherlands, 1980, p. 72.

12. SAD, The Robertson Papers, n° 521/1/92, Robertson to Mayall, 4 May, 1945.

13. The Milner's Mission was formed in December 1919 under the leadership of Lord Milner, Secretary of State for Colonies. Its terms of reference was to investigate and present a report on the disturbances of 1919 in Egypt.

14. Bakheit, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

15. Extract from the Milner Report quoted in SAD, n° 695/8/1, Minute by His Excellency the Governor-General, dated 1.1.1927.

16. Beshir, *op. cit.*, p. 56. Captain Lugard was the British Governor of Nigeria in the early years of the twentieth century.

17. National Record Office, Khartoum, CIVSEC/1/9 File L.F. Vol. 1.

At the time the British authorities were busy with formulating and implementing their ideas about native administration the first modern Sudanese Nationalist Movement was developing. The gradual expansion of education had produced an educated class imbued with new ideas conceptions and interests. The schools and modern education had weakened tribal differences and encouraged the growth of a sense of nationalism. The school Graduates Club was founded in Omdurman in 1918. The educated class suspected the policy of indirect rule and native administration as calculated to preserve tribal society by prompting allegiance to the tribal leaders and the tribes, and as such contrary to modernism, nationalism and their own interests. They found that the basic conceptions of indirect rule were contrary to the modern ideas which were taught to them in the schools and aimed at reviving a tribalism which had been almost completely destroyed by the *Mahdiyya*[18] and the previous twenty years of direct rule[19].

The British motto of the "Sudan for the Sudanese" was viewed with suspicion by many of the educated Sudanese. It was considered by them as one aiming at the elimination of the Egyptian influence from the Sudan, and rule it for the sole benefit of Britain. The British propaganda for this motto was met with a secret one for "unity of the Nile Valley". Secret societies were established in the main towns of the Sudan in 1920. The most important were the Sudan Union Society which was formed in 1920 and White Flag Society established in 1924. Both of them were inspired by the Egyptian struggle against the British occupation, and therefore raised the slogan of the common struggle against the same enemy i.e. Britain. Activities of these societies culminated in the 1924 revolt. The revolt was organized, led and supported by the educated class. The Government antagonism to the educated class increased and its apprehensions about the educational system were doubled. The murder of Sir Lee Stack, in Cairo, in November 1924, provided the British Administration with a long awaited pretext to eliminate what had remained of Egypt's official contacts with the Sudan, and to take suppressive measures against the educated class and the Sudanese Nationalist Movement. The selection and appointment of educated Sudanese to government posts carrying direct administrative duties was abandoned in 1924 in favour of a policy which aimed at gradual reduction of the educated Sudanese in the administration[20]. The reduction of educational facilities to meet the basic principle of indirect rule, which was in progress since 1922 was strictly adopted. No primary school was founded during the period 1920-32 and the number of elementary schools in 1928 was the same as that in 1920.

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18. The Mahdist revolution and state in the Sudan disrupted tribal organizations through forceful migration of tribes e.g. the migration of tribes from western to central Sudan.

19. Beshir, *op. cit.*, p. 77-78.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

Sir J. Maffey's period as Governor-General witnessed more suppressive measures against the educated class and thorough implementation of indirect rule. These objectives were vigorously pursued during this period. He minuted the following :

"If the encouragment of native authority in the true sense of the Milner formula is our accepted policy, before old traditions die we ought to get on with extention and expansion in every direction thereby sterilising and localizing the political germs which must spread from the lower Nile into Khartoum."[21]

He warned that under the impulse of new ideas and with the rise of a new generation, old traditions may pass away with astonishing rapidity. It would be advisable, Maffey maintained, to fortify them while tribal sanctions were still a living force[22]. He was critical of the British experiment in India where he had watched an old generation gave place to a new and had seen how political unrest swept over even backward peoples simply because they had allowed the old forms to crumble away. Though political conditions were still easy in the Sudan but nothing, according to Maffey, would stand still[23].

The suppression of the nationalist movement and the educated class, following the incidents of 1924, synchronized with the development of the rivalry between *Sayyid* Abd al-Rahman and *Sayyid* Ali[24]. When supporting *Sayyid* Abd al-Rahman financially, the aim of the British Administration in the Sudan was to make him busy with making money rather than to revive mahdism. A partial aim of introducing Native Administration was to prevent the spread of mahdist propoganda in new fields[25]. In fact, *Sayyid* Abd al-Rahman's ambitions were purely political. He sought recognition and power[26]. He was more realistic than the British Administration in realizing the importance of allying himself with the educated class to serve his own interests. The Sayyid's campaign to win over the intelligentsia began in 1927. He knew that they shared him his dislike of native administration. His first real opportunity was the 1931 Gordon College Strike when he mediated between the students and the Government[27]. By 1932 he had many adherents amongst the educated politically minded young men, and became the accepted leader of a large intellegentsia group. As he won their

21. SAD n° 695/81, Minute by His Excellency the Governor-General, dated 1.1.1927.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*
24. See above note 7.
25. SAD 10/1-11, Note on Mahadism and Sayed Abdel Rahman, 28-4-35.
26. Fadwa Taha, "Sayyid Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi : Kingship and its implications on the History of the Sudanese Nationalist movement", Second International Sudan Studies, Conference Papers, 8-11 April 1991, University of Durham, U.K., p. 53-60.
27. The British Administration in the Sudan reduced the salaries of the graduates of the Gordon Memorial College as a result of the 1929 Economic Depression.

support he conducted a conciliatory attitude towards tribal authorities, to whom he was frankly hostile up to 1931[28].

.   *Sayyid* Ali started in the early 1930's to surround himself with a group of graduates[29]. The fact that he was less active in public affairs and had no capacity to run commercial and agricultural enterprise led him to be adamant on his beliefs of the monarchical ambitions of *Sayyid* Abd al-Rahman[30]. These beliefs were shared by a group of intelligentsia who saw in *Sayyid* Ali a possible ally against these ambitions. By 1932 the Graduates were clearly divided along sectarian loyalties. Despite the fact that some intelligentsia had shown resentment to sectarian influence, they were compelled to give up realizing that the leaders of the sects were enjoying a wide popular support. Cooperation with them was inevitable to guarantee the success of any popular movement[31]. Dependence on the popularity of sectarian leaders was even sought earlier. In 1924, a meeting of the White Flag League leaders decided that they needed the support of at least one of the Sayyids in order to succeed[32].

The sectarian rivalry of the 1920's and the 1930's was bound to have its impact on the political developments of the 1940's. The liberal policy of Sir Stewart Symes, Governer-General 1934-1940, towards the educated class failed to stop the influence of sectarianism on the intelligentsia. The Graduates General Congress which was formed in 1938 did not escape the impact of sectarianism. The Congress memorandum of April 1942 demanded the recognition of the Sudanese right of self-government and self-determination immediately after the war. The British Administration rejected the memorandum on the ground that the Congress had no right to speak on behalf of the Sudanese. This decision to reject it was somehow inherent in the ethos of the Sudan Government. Its members had thrown themselves whole heartedly into native administration. Though Sir Stewart Symes started cooperation with the educated class, his successors failed to pursue his policy. The growing power and size of the educated class, were something to which they paid too little attention and for which they had little sympathy.

Following the rejection of the Congress memorandum, the British Administration in the Sudan conducted secret negotiations with some members of the Congress. These negotiations contributed to the split of the Congress in two factions. One faction supported the British policy of gradual development

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28. SAD 10/1-11, Note on Mahadism and Sayed Abdel Rahman, 28-4-1935.
29. Tim Niblock, *Class and Power in the Sudan : The Dynamic of Sudanese Politics 1898-1985*, London, 1987, p. 127.
30. Fadwa Taha, "Sayyid Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi : Kingship...", p. 55.
31. A. Khayr, *Kifah Jil*, Cairo, 1948, p. 7.
32. PROFO 371/10039, June, 1924.

towards self-government. The other faction demanded the immediate evacuation of the British from the Sudan to be achieved through unity with Egypt. The Congress elections of 1944 were fought on the basis of sectarianism and alliances with the Co-domini. The Unionist groups backed by the *Khatmiyya* sect won these elections. Many of the graduates who were not necessarily *Khatmiyya* sect followers, found themselves in the latter's side in the 1944 elections in order to express anti government and anti *Ansar* feelings. From 1944 the Congress was dominated by the Unionist groups who had developed into political parties. The faction supporting the British policy of gradual development towards self-government formed the *Umma* Party under the patronage of *Sayyid* Abd al-Rahman.

Though the 1940's witnessed the development of Sudanese nationalism and the emergence of the Sudanese political parties, the British authorities did not give up their support for tribal leadership. Though they had realized the weakness of this leadership since the 1930's, yet they set up the Advisory Council in 1944 only to discover that by and large tribal leaders were the political pawns of the Ansar and the *Khatmiyya*[33]. The majority of representatives for the Advisory Council came from the rural areas of the northern Sudan away from the strongholds of the intelligentsia. The two Sayyids were, however, not keen about the Council as their aim was to gain the support of the educated class to serve their own ends. To diminish the importance of the political parties, tribal leaders were instructed not to join them. Robertson, Civil Secretary 1945-1953, minuted :

> *"I have instructed Governors, that tribal and local Government authorities are not allowed to join these parties or take part in politics, whether this will do any good or not, I can't say"*.[34]

A policy of using tribal leaders against the actions of political parties had, however, started. When these parties started to talk about sending representatives to take part in the negotiations for the revision of the 1936 Treaty[35], three heads of tribes in the western Sudan wrote to their District Commissioners to protest at this procedure[36].

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33. G. Warburg, "Sectarian politics in the Sudan 1914–1945", *Asian and African Studies,* 9 (3), 1973.
34. SAD, The Robertson Papers, n° 521/2/6 – 9 Robertson to Mayall, 2nd June, 1945.
35. The 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty gave Britain certain facilities in Egypt in case of war. It permitted the return of Egyptian troops to the Sudan and re-opened the Egyptian immigration to the Sudan. The negotiations of the 1936 Treaty started in early 1946. See Fadwa Taha, *The Sudan Question in the 1946-1947 Anglo-Egyptian Negotiations : A Study of the Background and the Development of the Conflict,* M.A. University of khartoum,1981.
36. SAD, The Robertson papers n° 523/10/8, note by the Sudan Agent, Cairo, on the Sudanese delegation in Cairo, March, 1946.

The Legislative Assembly which was formed in 1948 represented the views of the British officials, tribal leaders and the *Umma* Party. The *Umma* participation in the Assembly was however used as a precaution against the Egyptian claim of sovereignty over the Sudan[37]. Its patron, *Sayyid* Abd al-Rahman, believed that his support of the government institutions would result in a quick attainment of self-government and for the recognition of his status as the right-hand man of the government.

Though the British Administration was aware and worried about the little impression tribal forces had made in the Assembly, they continued to use them against the political parties and the continuous demands made by the *Umma* members in the Assembly for fixing a date for self-determination[38].

Following Egypt's unilateral abrogation of the 1899 Condominium Agreement and the 1936 Treaty in October 1951, some political parties proposed that an international commission appointed by the United Nations Organization should take over the responsibility for the government of the country. Encouraged by the British authorities the tribal members of the Legislative Assembly prepared a memorandum to the effect that they spoke for the overwhelming majority of the Sudanese[39]. Their policy which was stated in the memorandum was cooperation with the exiting Sudan government to develop and put into effect a fully self-governing constitution until such a time as the Sudan was in a position to decide its own future[40]. In 1951 the tribal forces were formed in the so-called Socialist Republican Party. It consisted largely of the tribal leaders in the Assembly. The party proved unable to make a significant progress against sectarian based political parties.

The strength of the sectarian based political parties was shown in late 1952 after the outbreak of the military coup of 23rd July in Egypt. In their new approach to the Sudan question, the new government in Egypt sought the backing of the Sudanese political parties. Agreements were signed with these parties leading in the end to the conclusion of the self-government Anglo-Egyptian Agreement of February 1953. The British government was forced to recognize the parties as the spokesmen of the Sudanese[41].

37. The Egyptian claim of sovereignty over the Sudan was controversial issue althrough the Condominium rule. It was based on the right of conquest i.e. Mohammed Ali's invasion of 1820-1821. The Umma Party was known for its adamant rejection of any form of Egyptian sovereignty over the Sudan.
38. Fadwa Taha, *The 12th of February 1953 Anglo - Egyptian Agreement on the Sudan : An Historical Study*. Ph. D. University of Khartoum, 1986, pp. 58-104.
39. SAD, The Robertson papers, N° 529/8/7 Robertson to J.Longe, 18th November 1951.
40. SAD, N° 534/11/3-5 Memorandum by the country members of the Legislative Assembly, November, 1951.
41. Fadwa Taha, *The 12th of February...*, op. cit.

In the 1st day of January 1956 the Sudan was declared and recognized as an independent state. The post-independence era witnessed immense difficulties which had mainly resulted from the mistakes of the colonial rule. In implementing their policy of "Divide and Rule", the fundamental base of British rule in Africa, the British Administration prevented the emergence of a pure Sudanese nationalist movement. The urgent need to expand education in its all levels so as to meet the requirement of nationalism and self-government was not observed. In a population of six and half million, it was estimated that only 80,000 had received elementary education. This had its repercussions on the Sudanese Nationalist Movement as most of the Sudanese remained – ignorant of the principles acquired from education such as the consciousness of nation. The policy of indirect rule and native administration hindered educational progress through its siding with tribal chiefs and its alienation of the educated class.

The attitude of the British Administration towards the sectarian leaders contributed to the division of the Sudanese Nationalist Movement along sectarian lines. By creating reasons for rivalry between *Sayyid* Abd al-Rahman and *Sayyid* Ali, the British Administration increased the deeply rooted sectarianism and hindered the development of national consciousness. This state of affairs made the national cause of secondary importance as compared to the sectarian sentiments. The idea of national unity had scarcely developed and the emergence of political parties had been stimulated by the rivalry of the Co-domini and sectarian leaders. The support of the parties was not based on an understanding of the political issues but on sectarian loyalties. The first parlimentary elections of 1953 were fought on the basis of sectarianism. Candidates of the different constituencies depended on sectarian backing to win.

The alliance between the political parties and the sectarian leaders became a disaster in the post-Independence era. Though the two *sayyids* were not members of the parliament their influence was felt on its proceedings. Attempts by the political parties to divert from this alliance were doomed to failure. Six months after the attainment of Independence in 1956, the two *Sayyids* drew together. They realized that together they represented the strongest traditional elements in the country and that by remaining apart they would tend only to weaken one another and increase the rapidly growing strength of non-sectarianism[42]. Together they obstructed the emergence of the National Unity Party. The impact of sectarianism is, however, still dominating the political map of the Sudan.

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42. M.A. Mahgoub, *Democracy on Trial : Reflections on Arab and African politics*, London, 1974.

FAMINTINANA

Ny fomba nanararaotan'ny britanika ny fizarazaran'ny foko sy ny antokom-pinoana efa tafapètraka mba handalinam-paka ireo fizarazarana sy ny ady naterak'ireny tsy fifanarahana ireny sy hanatanterahana ny politikan'ny "zarazarao hanjakana", izany no asehon'ity asa ity.

Nanomboka tamin'ny fananiham-bohitra nataon'ny britanika sy ny Ejipsiana tamin'ny 1896-1898 izay niafara tamin'ny "Condominium Agreement" tamin'ny taona 1899 izany, izay nahatonga ny britanika ho isan'ny mpiray antoka tamin'ny fitantanana an'i Soudan.

Ary satria moa ny Fanjakana Mahdiste no tena nokendrena tamin'ilay fananiham-bohitra, dia tsy mba nasiana vidiny ny Ansar raha tsy tamin'ny taona 1915 noho ny fahasahiranana tamin'ny Ady Lehibe Voalohany. Teo anelanelan'ireo dia ny antokom-pinoana Khatmiyya, teo ambany fahefan'i Sayyid Ali Al-Mirghani, no niangaran'ny fanjakana britanika tao Soudan; fantatra anefa fa ny Ansar dia nanohitra ny antson'ny Sultan tiorka hanao Jihad hanoherana ny britanika sy ny mpomba azy. Fitavozavozana ve sa hevi-petsin'i George V no nanankinany ny fiarovana ny Fanjakana britanika tamin'i Sayyid Abdel-Rahman, ilay zanaky ny Mahdi taorian'ny nahafatesany. Nanana ahiahy i Ali Al-Mirghani ka nanao fifanekena tamin'i Ejipta na dia tsy tena nankasitrahiny aza izany.

Teo anelanelan'izany, tany amin'ny taona 1920 tany, dia nisy fihetsehan'ny tia tanindrazana nalaina tahaka tamin'ny fikomiana ejipsiana tamin'ny taona 1919 nanohitra ny fitondrana britanika. Tsy azo nihodivirana intsony ny fifandonana tamin'ny taona 1924. Nohararaotin'ny britanika ny fahafatesan'ny Governora Jeneraly tao Le Caire mba hamongorana izay nety ho fihanaky ny hevitra ejipsiana tany Soudan sy izay nety ho fitiava-tanindrazana, hanoherana ireo sokajy nahita fianarana, ary hamongorana ny fampianarana aza. Niverina tamin'ny fahefam-poko indray izany, ka nizara ho Khatmiyya sy Ansar.

Mitoetra mandraka ankehitriny io fizarazarana miankina amin'ny fizarazaran'ny foko sy ny antokom-pinoana io.

RESUME

Cette communication veut montrer comment les Britanniques ont bénéficié des loyautés tribales et sectaires déjà établies pour approfondir les divisions et les litiges afférents à ces différends et pour mettre en oeuvre la politique de "Diviser pour Règner".

Cela commence par l'invasion anglo-égyptienne de 1896-1898 qui se conclue par le "Condominium Agreement" de 1899, faisant des Britanniques les partenaires de l'administration du Soudan.

Dans la mesure où cette invasion visait essentiellement l'Etat Mahdiste, la secte Ansar ne sera prise en considération qu'en 1915 en raison des nécessités de la Première Guerre. En attendant, c'est la secte Khatmiyya, sous l'ordre de Sayyid Ali Al-Mirghani, qui jouit des faveurs de l'administration britannique au Soudan; et pourtant, les Ansar étaient connus pour leur opposition à l'appel du Sultan ottoman à la Jihad contre les Britanniques et leurs alliés. Maladresse ou machiavélisme de George V, il confie à Sayyid Abdel-Rahman, le fils posthume du Mahdi, la défense de l'Empire britannique. Inquiétude d'Ali Al-Mirghani qui s'allie à l'Egypte malgré ses propres réticences.

Entretemps, vers 1920, un mouvement nationaliste inspiré de la révolte égyptienne de 1919 s'insurge contre le pouvoir britannique. En 1924, les confrontations étaient inévitables. La mort du Gouverneur Général au Caire donne aux Britanniques tous les prétextes pour éliminer l'influence égyptienne au Soudan, éliminer toute velléité nationaliste, contrer la classe instruite, supprimer même l'éducation. On en revient à l'autorité tribale, laquelle était divisée en Khatmiyya et en Ansar.

Cette division basée sur les loyautés sectaires et tribales restera jusqu'à nos jours.