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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

THE ISLAMIC POLICIES OF THE

SUDAN GOVERNMENT, 1899-1924.

BY

M. M. RAHMAN.

ABSTRACT.

The present work intends to study the policy that the Anglo-Egyptian rulers adopted towards Islam when their joint rule was established in the Sudan in 1899. The period covered by the study is extended from 1899 to 1924.

Besides an introduction and the conclusion the main body of the work has been divided into six chapters. For convenience, each chapter has been sub-divided into sections.

Giving a brief historical background leading to the establishment of the joint Anglo-Egyptian rule in the Sudan in 1899, the introduction introduces to the reader the prime necessity for adopting a policy of religious non-interference. It also indicates the Government intention to restore the orthodox Islam in the country.

Chapter I dwells upon the Government policy towards the official institutions of the orthodox Islam - viz, the courts administering the Shari'a Law and the public mosques. Along with these it also throws light on the Government attitude towards the pilgrimage to Mecca and the chief Muslim religious festivals.

Chapter II discusses the Government policy towards the traditional methods and institutions of education of the Sudanese Muslims, which in different ways represented orthodox Islam in the Sudan.

Chapter III deals with the Sudanese religious brotherhoods, their origin, methods of organisation and their rituals. But more important,

it, at the end, discusses the new Government's policy towards these religious brotherhoods.

Chapter IV casts light on the Government policy towards the Mahdists and their leader. It falls into two periods: one from 1899 to 1913 and the other 1914 to 1924. It discusses the policy on the basis of the four elements of Mahdism, viz, its doctrine; leader; sacred writings, objects and places; and its methods of organization.

Chapter V deals with the Government policy to protect the Muslim North from the influence of the Christian Missions. It also indicates the Government missionary policy vis a vis Islam in the Southern Sudan. It shows that at least up to 1924, the controversial "Southern policy" of the future did not start operating.

Chapter VI discusses the wartime (1914-1918) British Muslim policy and shows how the religious sentiment of the Muslims of the Sudan were exploited for definite political ends.

The Conclusion concludes with the explanation why the so called policy of religious non-interference was possible on the part of the British rulers. It also tries to bring to light the effects and impacts of twenty-five years of Anglo-Egyptian rule on the Sudanese Muslims.

THE ISLAMIC POLICIES OF THE
SUDAN GOVERNMENT, 1899-1924.

by

M. M. RAHMAN.

A Thesis submitted to the University of
Durham for the degree of Master of Arts
in Modern Near and Middle Eastern History.

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August, 1967.

PREFACE.

The purpose of this small thesis is to outline the policies that the Anglo-Egyptian rulers adopted towards Islam when their joint rule was established in the Sudan in 1899. The period covered by this study extends from 1899 to 1924.

For the preparation of this work the Wingate Papers, carefully preserved in the School of Oriental Studies, University of Durham, have proved to be a mine of information. The other sources used are, Cromer Papers in the Public Record Office, London, Sudan Intelligence Reports in the Foreign Office Library, Sudan Government Annual Reports in the Marshall Collection, Oriental Section of the Durham University Library. The Church Missionary Society Archive, London, should also be mentioned for its papers relating to the Sudan mission. Besides these, many secondary sources, such as periodicals, newspapers and some general works have been consulted.

One or two words must be said on the subject of transliteration from the Arabic scripts. While the personal names (except in quotations) have been transliterated with diacritical marks, the place-names have been left in conventional form. For the words of non-Arabic origin I have again preferred the conventional form.

To conclude this prefatory note, I must make some solemn acknowledgments. First of all I express my deep feelings of gratitude

to Sir John C.B. Richmond, K.C.M.G., M.A., who, with his scholarly supervision and masterly comments helped me to bring this work to the stage of presentation. My thanks are also due to Mr. R.L. Hill who supervised my work while it was only in its embryonic stage. I am also indebted to the Government of Pakistan for awarding me a scholarship under the Merit Scholarship Scheme. I am thankful to the University of Rajshahi, East Pakistan, for granting me necessary study-leave. I thank the library staff of the Oriental Section for their kind help and active co-operation and Mrs. Conchie for taking every pains in typing the thesis. Finally, I should express my gratitude to my beloved parents in whose unfailing words of inspiration I always found my guiding light.

M.M. Rahman.

School of Oriental Studies,
University of Durham,

August, 1967.

ABBREVIATIONS

C.M.S.	Church Missionary Society Archive.
F.O.	Foreign Office.
M.E.J.	Middle East Journal.
O.U.P.	Oxford University Press.
P.R.O.	Public Record Office.
P.R.O./F.O.	Foreign Office Papers transferred to Public Record Office.
S.N.R.	Sudan Notes and Records.
W.P.	Wingate Papers.

CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	i
Abbreviations	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I	10
The official and other religious institutions under the Anglo-Egyptian Government, 1899-1924.	
CHAPTER II	43
The positions of the traditional methods of education and the instruction of religion under the new educational system.	
CHAPTER III	63
The tariqas of the Sudan and the policy of the Government.	
CHAPTER IV	97
The Government policy towards Mahdism, Mahdists and their leaders.	
CHAPTER V	128
The Government, Missionaries and the Sudan - North and South .	
CHAPTER VI	157
The wartime British Muslim policy and its Sudanese phase, 1914-1918.	
CONCLUSION	192
APPENDIX I	201
Bibliography	205

INTRODUCTION.

I

The modern history of the Sudan¹ may be said to have commenced with its invasion in 1820 by the expedition sent for its conquest by Muhammad 'Alī Pasha,² under the command of his son, Ismā'īl Pasha. At that time Egypt itself was a part of the Ottoman Empire and Muhammad 'Alī, himself an Albanian Turk, had been appointed the Pasha of Egypt in 1806, by the Turkish Sultan.

The objects of the Pasha in invading the Sudan are believed to have been to destroy the remnants of the Mamlūks who had escaped his persecution and fled to Dongola, to obtain gold then reported to exist there in considerable quantity, and the slave recruits for his army. As a result of the invasion, the petty kingdoms of the main Nile submitted, and in 1821 the Funj Kingdom was overthrown. Muhammad Bey, the Defterdār, a subordinate commander and a son-in-law of Muhammad 'Alī Pasha, invaded and occupied Kordofan. In the course of the next few years Khartoum developed a centre of Egyptian administration in the Sudan. By the year 1841, Egyptian control of the northern and central territories of the Sudan was complete. Further expansion of the Egyptian rule in the Sudan took place during the reign of Ismā'īl Pasha, the son and successor of Muhammad 'Alī Pasha. By the end of 1879, the Egyptian rule had been

1. Sudan means the territory comprised by the modern Republic of the Sudan.
 2. A Turkish word; the highest title in the Ottoman and Egyptian Court hierarchy.

extended over the upper Nile to the Equatorial Lakes, the great tributary of the Bahr El-Ghazal and the former Sultanate of Darfur.

The Turko-Egyptian occupation of the Sudan lasted from 1821 until the capture of Khartoum by Muhammad Ahmad in 1885. During this period the administration was carried on by the Governors-General appointed by the Khedives (title of the Ottoman Viceroy of Egypt), and under them by the governors of the various regions or provinces. In the latter half of the Turko-Egyptian rule in the Sudan, the slave trade assumed such proportions that Ismā'īl Pasha had to take action against it. For this purpose and also to secure better administration, he tried the experiment of appointing a British Governor of Equatoria, Sir Samuel Baker, who was succeeded by General Gordon, and then of appointing General Gordon as Governor-General, which post he held from 1877 to 1879. But the changes effected by Ismā'īl Pasha, however, had little permanence. In 1882, there occurred a revolution in Kordofan. It was organised by Muhammad Ahmad who proclaimed himself the Mahdī, the 'expected one'. By 1885, Khartoum was captured and Egyptian rule in the Sudan came to an end.³ The Mahdī died five months after the fall of Khartoum, and the Government of the Sudan was taken over by Khalīfa 'Abd Allāh at-Ta'aishī, an Arab of Darfur, who continued his rule until 1898.

The Mahdist uprising in the Sudan coincided with the British

3. For the real causes of the revolt of the Mahdī, see - Holt, P.M., The Mahdist State in the Sudan. O.U.P. 1958; pp.24-27.

military occupation of Egypt in 1882. It made the British the real masters of Egypt, although it remained in name a province of the Turkish Empire. During the period of the British occupation of Egypt, attempt was made to suppress the Mahdist revolt in the Sudan. An Egyptian army under Hicks Pasha was sent for the purpose, but the army was completely annihilated by the Mahdists. Darfur, then under Slatin Pasha, fell to the Mahdists. Khartoum, Sennar, and the whole length of the Nile from Nubia to Equetoria were thus threatened by the Mahdists.

At last the British Government took some action. It sent General Gordon, the former Governor General of the Sudan from England with the mission of extricating all Egyptian garrisons and inhabitants and abandoning the Sudan. But the course of rebellion moved too quickly. Khartoum fell in January 1885, and General Gordon died at the hands of the Mahdists.

But the fall of Khartoum did not mean the end of the efforts on the part of the British authorities in Egypt to reconquer the Sudan. In view of the importance of the Nile to Egypt, it could not be contemplated that the upper reaches of that great irrigating and life-giving river should be left indefinitely under the control of those who could neither profit by it themselves, nor allow others to do so, and thus its recovery must be attempted as soon as the time was ripe⁴. But apart from this, the more alarming were the reports that the French were planning to annex the

4. For the diplomatic background of the reconquest of the Sudan, see - Holt, P.M., The Mahdist State in the Sudan. Ibid. pp.204-210.

Southern Sudan. Thus, in 1896 an Anglo-Egyptian army under the command of General Kitchener moved forward out of Egypt and occupied Dongola. In 1897 it advanced to Abu Hamad. In 1898 the joint British and Egyptian army marched against the Khalifa's Capital and shattered his power at the battles of Atbara and Omdurman. Next year, the fugitive Khalifa himself was killed at Gedid by a force commanded by General Reginald Wingate.

A brief note here is necessary to indicate the political status of the Sudan after its reconquest. In the first instance, the reconquest of the Sudan was regarded nothing short of the restoration of the Sudan to Egypt, although Cromer, then British Consul General in Egypt, had in mind a kind of administration which would not repeat the misgovernment and chaos that existed earlier. Hence, after the reconquest, Britain could not hand the Sudan back to Egyptian rule owing to Egypt's past record of misgovernment. Nor could she annex it herself because of possible international complications. France definitely would have objected and the Sultan of Turkey had already indicated that over the question of the Sudan he might annoy the British in Egypt by his technical and moral power over the Khedive⁵. But more than these, Britain wanted a freer hand in the affairs of the Sudan. Hence, to satisfy political exigencies and assure the Sudanese a good Government, a "Condominium" of Great Britain and Egypt was created. On the 19th of January, 1899., the Condominium Agreement⁶ was signed by the representatives of both Governments,

5. Salisbury to Cromer, No.47, Secret, June 3, 1898. P.R.O/F.O., 78/5050.

6. For full text of the Condominium Agreement, see Appendix I. pp. 201-204.

Cromer for the British, and Butros Ghali for the Egyptian. It gave to the Sudan a 'constitution' in the form of a Condominium. It recognised "the joint military and financial efforts" to which the conquest was due, and the "claims which have accrued to Her Britanic Majesty's Government, by right of conquest, to share in the present settlement and future working and development of the system of administration and legislation." It provided that "the British and Egyptian flags shall be used together, both on land and water, throughout the Sudan". It laid down that the Governor-General "shall be appointed by Khedival Decree on the recommendation of Her Britanic Majesty's Government, and shall be removed only by Khedival Decree with the consent of Her Britanic Majesty's Government". It invested the Governor-General with full legislative powers.

II

The Condominium Agreement of 1899, put the Sudan under the joint Anglo-Egyptian rule. But it is needless to say that all the important posts of the Sudan Government, including that of the Governor-General, were held by the British officials. Only the minor posts were held by the Egyptians. Thus, in fact, if not in theory, the country became a 'British Colony'. The immediate, task of the British administrators, however, was to restore order and to lead the country to the way of progress and prosperity.

Judged by the standards of modern material civilization, Sudan at that time was in the stage of primitive days. The new British administrators found that except for mere basic foundations 'a society and a civil

polity' in the Sudan had almost been wrecked by the previous years' misgovernment. This not only gave the new rulers a fairly free hand to rebuild the structure as they pleased, within reason, but it also left open before them a large field for experiment and bold innovations. But there was one great difficulty which made the task completely impossible. The experiments and innovations can not be attempted in older and more complex communities within a highly organised structure and an unbroken tradition. This was true with Northern Sudan whose inhabitants were mostly Muslims.

This difficulty led the English rulers to take into account some fundamental considerations. The most important of these was the existence of Islam, the religion of the majority of the Sudanese. If the pagan South was excluded, then not only was the Sudan a Muslim country, but a fanatically Muslim country, where the Christian had been an infidel with all the disabilities which had been attached to an infidel in the earliest days of Islam. The Muslims of the Sudan firmly believed that there is not only one God, but also there is only one faith; and those who do not accept the teachings of the Prophet might have many virtues, but they cannot stand on the same footing as the true believers. Thus, the English rulers in the Sudan had to contend against an undoubted prejudice. They fully realised that, as Englishmen, they might be respected or even liked; but as Christians there was a feeling against them which it was very difficult to overcome. Furthermore, they could realise that no matter how much the Sudanese had been oppressed by the Turks and Egyptians, but still they were at least Muslims. But they were "Nazarenes", and

obviously that was a point wholly against their being accepted as rulers. The point may be illustrated by an anecdote narrated by Sidney Low. After travelling a whole day with a British officer an Arab Shaikh told his companion: "Ah! if you could only be a Moslem, how glad we should be!"⁷

Indeed, such a sentiment demanded a very careful and tender handling. Thus, of all the policies of the Sudan Government, the policy which it was to adopt towards Islam was one of great importance. Consequently, from the very outset what the Government emphasised was the policy of religious non-interference. This policy was first expressed when Kitchener issued his remarkable directives to his subordinates in the provinces. It said: "Be careful to see that the religious feelings are not in any way interfered with, and that the Mohammedan religion is respected"⁸. Besides this clear instruction to his subordinates, the tone and language of a proclamation of Kitchener to the Shaikhs of Kordofan and Darfur dated November 11th, 1898, is worth quoting. "I give you" the proclamation said, "the Aman⁹ of God, his Prophet, and the Aman of His Highness the Khedive, and my Aman. Fear nothing as long as you are true and faithful to the Government"¹⁰. Any one will believe that the proclamation emanated from a Muslim sovereign and not from a Christian.

The policy set by Kitchener was faithfully followed by his successor Francis Reginald Wingate. Wingate's own deep religious

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7. As quoted by Sidney Low, *Egypt in Transition*, London, 1914; p.58.
 8. Reports by Her Majesty's Agent and Consul-General on the Finances, Administration and Condition of Egypt and the Soudan in 1899; Egypt No.I (1900); Cd. 95; p.56.
 9. Trust.
 10. Sudan Intelligence Report, No.60. 25th May to 31st Dec. 1898; (marked confidential); Appendix 97, p.141.

convictions made him "tolerant of all who sincerely believed in the faith in which they had been brought up"¹¹. And he was "willing to afford them every encouragement to follow the way of life that gave them the greatest spiritual satisfaction provided that this was not used as a political weapon with which to destroy the Government"¹². He fully realised that, while there must clearly be no interference with the religion of the Muslims, nothing should be done which could be interpreted, by prejudice or malice, as interference. Therefore, one of Wingate's first actions was to appoint a Board of 'Ulamā -- doctors of Islamic Law -- to advise him on matters relating to Islam. Henceforth, on every matter which had a bearing on the religion of Islam, the Governor-General used to consult the Board before he took any action. In the provinces as well, adequate measures were taken so that the religious feeling of the Muslims might not be injured. In each province two 'Ulamā, one Imam¹³ and one Mu'adh¹⁴ had been appointed, to satisfy the religious feeling of the people.

Apart from religious non-interference, another aspect of the Islamic policies of the Sudan Government put emphasis on "the restoration of orthodox Islam"¹⁵ in the Sudan and to create environment in which the Sudanese 'Ulamā could "lead the Sudanese Islam back to the path of orthodoxy"¹⁶, as if the Sudanese Muslims had become completely unorthodox

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11. See, "Papers concerning the proposed Memoir" (by ? of ?) Gen.Sir.Reginald Wingate, 1946; W.P. 457.
 12. Ibid.
 13. The man who conducts prayer.
 14. The man who chants the call for prayer.
 15. Hill, R.L., Slatin Pasha, O.U.P. 1965; p.81.
 16. Ibid.

under the Mahdists. This reflects that the British administrators were confused about orthodox Islam and the teachings of the Sudanese Mahdī, the latter they regarded highly unorthodox.¹⁷

But in spite of their basic confusion, they did not fail to realise what were the legal institutions through which orthodox Islam could flourish. Thus, like the former Turko-Egyptian rulers of the Sudan,¹⁸ the new Government paid its due attention to the institutions and establishments like, the Sharī'a courts and the public mosques. Together with all these, the new Government facilitated the journey to Mecca to perform pilgrimage, one of the pillars of orthodox Islam.

Among other things, the following pages will attempt to elaborate all these policies and examine their values.

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17. This point of Confusion on the part of the British officials is nicely discussed by Hill; see, Slatin Pasha, Ibid. p.81.
18. For the policy of the Turko-Egyptian Government towards Sudanese Islam, see, Holt, P.M., The Mahdist State in the Sudan, op.cit. pp.20-21.

CHAPTER I

The official and other religious institutions
under the Anglo-Egyptian Government, 1899-1924.

I

The official religious institutions in the Sudan are represented by two sets of organizations -- the courts administering the Shari'a law and the public mosques.¹ The Sudan cannot, of course, claim the indigenous origin of the organization of these two institutions. These two organizations made their way into the Sudan when the country was under the Turko-Egyptian rule (1821-1822). To understand better the status and working of these two institutions under the joint Anglo-Egyptian rule, it is better to have some idea about them in the pre-Anglo-Egyptian days. For the sake of convenience, we may study these two institutions separately. Let us first take up the courts administering the Shari'a Law.

During the Turko-Egyptian period, the Egyptians were mainly responsible for the proper organization of the Islamic Law in the Sudan. From the Egyptians, the Sudanese Muslims came to learn something about Islamic Law.² The sixty-two years of Turko-Egyptian rule established in the Sudan an Islamic legal hierarchy.³ But the stages by which it was established are buried in obscurity. According to the Sudanese chronicler

1. Hamilton, J.A. de.C. (edited), *The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan from within*; London, 1935; p.208.
2. Hill, R.L., *Egypt in the Sudan, 1820-1881*. O.U.P. 1959; p.42.
3. *Ibid*, p.43.

there were occasions when the Egyptian authorities appointed Qādī and Qādī 'Umūn⁴. Of course, the highest posts, from the beginning, in the administration of Islamic law were filled up by the qualified persons from Egypt.

It is interesting to note that under the Turko-Egyptian rule Islamic law was not the only law in the Sudan. The Egyptians brought to the Sudanese the 'codes of civil and military law inspired by Western practice'. By the side of Islamic law the Egyptians established civil law and civil courts, the operation of which to some extent 'restricted the area of jurisdiction of Islamic law'.

The status and operation of the Islamic Law, of course, acquired a great significance at the hands of the Mahadists. It is beyond any doubt that during the days of the Mahadists who established a theocratic state, the supremacy of the Islamic law was fully recognised at least by Muhammad Ahmad. After the capture of Khartoum in 1885, the Mahdī is said to have gathered a number of 'Umāra (ruler) and 'Ulamā and declared that each and every Alim (sing of 'Ulamā) whether in the capacity of judge or not, should pronounce his decrees according to the Holy Qur'ān and Sunna (the sayings of the Prophet)⁵. At the same time he also empowered his Amīrs to execute those decrees⁶. The Mahdī was a firm believer in the unity and simplicity of Islam. To him what weakened the power and vitality of Islam was the division of the Islamic world into four great theological and legal

4. Ta'rikh mulūk al-Sudan, p.30., as mentioned by Hill, Ibid. p.43.

5. Sudan Law Journal & Reports., Khartoum, 1964; p.168.

6. Ibid; p.168.

systems⁷ and the birth of innumerable religious brotherhoods. He did not recognise the four kinds of legal systems and abrogated the Ḥanafī code, officially followed in the Sudan during the Turko-Egyptian period. The Mahdī was zealous to bring every aspect of life under the direct control of Islamic law. Even during the early years of the rule of Khalīfa 'Abd Allāh, the successor of Mahdī, Islamic law had a great hold upon the state affairs. During this time, al-Shaikh al-Ḥusain, Ibrāhīm ordered all judges to pronounce their judgements according to the tenets of the Holy Qur'ān and Sunna.⁸ Apart from justice, such other things as the taxation, finance and the trade of the country were brought under the direct jurisdiction of Muslim law "adapted and developed by experience".⁹ Thus, during the Mahdīyya, the main core of administration followed Islamic law which covered civil, criminal, personal -- in fact all sides of life.

Against this background provided by the Mahadists and their predecessors in matters of Islamic Law, the Anglo-Egyptian authority had to begin their work. The great problem that confronted the new Government was to decide whether or not to allow the Islamic law to continue the great control and influence upon all matters civil, criminal and the like, which it had exercised during the Mahdist regime.

Undoubtedly, this was a great issue to decide. But fortunately enough, the British, the most prominent and dominant partner to the Government of the Sudan had, in this respect, a well founded precedent to guide them.

7. The Shāfiites, Mālikites, Ḥanafites and the Ḥanbalites.

8. Sudan Law - Journal & Reports, op.cit., p.169.

9. Theobald, A.B., The Mahdiyya, London, 1951; p.180.

In the second half of the eighteenth century the British snatched from the Muslims the political power of India. There in India, the English did not, at the beginning, abandon the application of Islamic law all of a sudden. On the contrary, British policy in India at the initial stage was to retain the existing legal system -- the traditional Hanafī law sponsored by the Mughal Emperors. But this policy was only ephemeral. In 1772, Warren Hastings for the first time framed the regulation 11, of 1772. It was adopted as the Regulation of 17th April, 1780 and in Section 27 it was enacted thus:

"In all the suits regarding Inheritance, Succession, Marriage,and other religious usages and institutions, the laws of the Quran with respect to Muhammadans shall be invariably adhered to"¹⁰ The Madras Civil Courts Act III, 1873, Sec.16, also gave the similar recognition to the Muslim law by declaring, - "Where in any suit or other proceeding it is necessary for a civil court to decide any question regarding succession, inheritance, marriage or any religious usage or institution, the Muhammadan law in cases where the parties are Muhammadan shall form the rule of decision"¹¹

Thus, it appears that the Hasting's regulation 11, of 1772, and the Madras Civil Courts Act III, of 1873, recognised the Islamic law and restricted its operation to the sphere of personal matters only. The Islamic Criminal law in India was replaced by the Indian Penal Code, 1862.¹²

10. As quoted by Kashi Prasad, S.S., Muslim law as administered in British India, Allahabad, 1937; p.138.

11. Wilson, Sir.R.K., Anglo-Muhammadan Law, Cal. 1930; p.73.

12. Coulson, N.J., A history of Islamic law, Edin. 1964; p.164.

The Islamic Civil law code too, in India, became gradually and increasingly anglicised by virtue of the principle adopted by the courts of deciding cases according to 'justice, equity and good conscience'.¹³ Hence, there ensued quite naturally the 'codification of considerable portion of the civil law on English basis' with the consequent result that from the second half of the nineteenth century, Islamic law, in Indian sub-continent, had been confined to the jurisdiction of family and personal status only.

In dealing with the position and status of the Islamic law in the Sudan, the Anglo-Egyptian authority, better called the British administrators, followed the same policy as they did in India. In this respect their Indian precedent and experience came to their help. In 1899, the Sudan Government promulgated a Penal Code which was mainly based on the Indian Penal Code.¹⁴ By the introduction of this Penal Code, the operation of Islamic law in the sphere of criminal matters was rendered ineffective. Henceforth, the criminal laws of the Sudan took the model not of Islamic criminal laws, but that of English. In the field of Civil law too, the gradual Anglicization of Civil laws replaced the Islamic Civil Codes.

Thus, in the Sudan, the Islamic law was ousted by the new Government from the criminal and civil jurisdictions. By the year 1902, the actual field and jurisdiction of the Islamic law in the Sudan was clearly defined by the 'Sudan Mohammedan Law Courts Ordinance', May 1902.¹⁵ By this

13. Ibid, p.164.

14. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1903, Part I, p.17.

15. Laws of the Sudan, Vol.XI, title XXVIII, Edited by Bennett, C.H.A., London., p.1.

Ordinance the Shari'a Courts of the Sudan were empowered only to deal with, "any question regarding marriage, divorce, guardianship of minors or family relationship waqf, gift, succession, wills"¹⁶ This Ordinance clearly shows that while the operation of Islamic law was confined only to family and personal matters, the non-Muslim law codes, as stated earlier, gained supremacy in civil and criminal spheres.

Although the field of Islamic law was greatly narrowed down, yet it is not easy to ascertain whether it was a deliberate policy of the Government to restrict the operation of Shari'a law to the matters of family status. Few reasons may be attributed to the actions of the British administrators in this respect.

Firstly, as Christians they had practically no knowledge of Islamic law. They thought, from whatever little knowledge they had in that field, that the Islamic law, with its origin in prophecy and revelation and its communication of the precise will of God to man, could not itself be sufficient to meet the new exigencies of the modern times. Secondly, the high officials of the Sudan Government, responsible for the formulation of policies were born and brought up in an environment where there was a sharp and clear cut division between State and religion. This attitude surely inspired them to stress on the division of law into secular and religious, the latter they allowed to proceed on its own way.

16. Ibid.

But the English, perhaps, cannot be blamed for the introduction of non-Muslim law codes in a predominantly Muslim country like the Sudan. Because they were not the first to do it. Long before, the Muslim countries like the Ottoman Turkey and her dependency Egypt had entertained a massive inflow and introduction of European laws which beyond doubt replaced many of purely Islamic laws. In the early part of the nineteenth century, European criminal and commercial laws had gained a foothold in the Ottoman Empire. The process was facilitated through the well-known system of Capitulation.¹⁷ A further acceleration of the process came about when a large scale reception of European law was effected in the Ottoman Empire by the 'Tanzimat' reforms of the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century. In 1850, the Ottoman Government promulgated commercial code which was in part a direct translation of the Commercial code of France.¹⁸ And interestingly enough, it contained "provision for the payment of interest".¹⁹ Again, the Penal Code that the Ottoman Government promulgated in 1858 was in fact a translation and reflection of French Penal Code. This new Penal Code made a great inroad upon the Shari'a law of the Ottoman Empire; under it, "the traditional hadd or defined punishments of Shari'a law were all abolished except that of the death penalty for apostacy".²⁰ The introduction of these non-Muslim law codes was followed by the establishment of new secular courts, known as "Nizamiyya", responsible for the application of these new codes. Within the

17. A system by which the Western powers got a definite assurance from the Ottoman Government that their citizens living in the Middle East would be governed by their own laws and not by the laws of the Ottoman Empire.

18. Coulson, N.J., op.cit; p.151.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

jurisdiction of these Secular Courts now fell all civil matters save and except the cases of personal status.²¹

The process of the reception of European or other non-Muslim laws, however, did not remain confined only in Turkey. In this respect Egypt, then greatly independent of the Ottoman control, was by no means lagging behind. From 1875 onwards, Egypt even surpassed Turkey, her overlord, in the matter of accepting and introducing the French laws. On French model, Egypt promulgated 'penal, commercial and Maritime Codes'. Following Turkey, she also set up a system of secular courts to administer these new laws. Apart from these, Egypt effected the enactment of Civil Codes, based on French model, and it is doubtless that a very few provisions for these were borrowed from the Shari'a.²²

From the above, it appears certain that before 1899, when the Anglo-Egyptian joint rule was established in the Sudan, the Muslim countries like Turkey and Egypt had been introducing the non-Muslim laws which to a great extent limited the area of the operation of Islamic laws. During the Turko-Egyptian rule even the Sudan, the area of our present discussion, felt the pressure of the incoming of 'western inspired' civil laws which restricted the area of Shari'a law in that country.²³ Hence, it is clear that by introducing the non-Muslim laws and thereby restricting the jurisdiction of Islamic laws in the Sudan, the British administrators did nothing new. On the other hand, by doing so, they simply added fuel to the process which earlier had received its momentum of the start at the hands of the Muslim rulers of Turkey and Egypt.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid. p.152.

23. Hill, Egypt in the Sudan, 1820-1881, op.cit., p.43.

No doubt, under the Anglo-Egyptian authority, the boundary of Islamic law was drastically restricted. But there is, however, no evidence to show that the authorities in the Government, particularly the British administrators, had ever cherished any idea of abolishing the operation of Sharī'a law, even in its limited sphere. On the contrary, they rather expressed feelings of optimism about the future of the Sharī'a law (of course in its present limited sphere). This optimism of the British administrative circles found its expression as early in 1905, when Cromer recorded: "The fact that the Mohammedan Law is capable of being worked without producing results which clash violently at every stage with modern ideas, if the people who administer it are honest and reasonably intelligent"²⁴. This observation at least shows that far from attempting to eliminate Islamic law root and branch, the British authorities held high hopes regarding the working of the Sharī'a law in spite of its manifold drawbacks resulting from its inelasticity and immutability.

Another important aspect of the problem is revealed in the fact that the restriction of the area of Islamic law and its replacement by non-Muslim laws in the sphere of civil and criminal matters did not produce any suspicion in the minds of the Muslim religious dignitaries of the Sudan that the English were trying to cause any major harm to the Islamic law (now rendered applicable only to personal matters) of their land. This fact is illustrated when in 1904 Cromer wrote: "..... The Grand Qadi did not look askance at Mr. Bonham Carter²⁵ and was not oppressed

24. Cromer, Review of the Sudan Reports, 1904; Cairo, 1905; p.25.

25. Then the Legal Secretary to the Sudan Government.

with the idea that the Government is about to lay a sacrilegious hand on the Sharia".²⁶ Continuing further, Cromer remarked how the Grand Qādi of the Sudan was pleased with the "judgment with which Mr. Bonham Carter treated all matters connected with the Law of Islam."²⁷

Far from entertaining any doubt that the British might 'lay a sacrilegious hand on the Shariā', the Grand Qādi of the Sudan highly appreciated the efforts of the Government to organise the Sharī'a courts which then were in a degenerate state. More than this, the reaction of the Grand Qādi who was also an important religious personality of the Sudan, to the introduction of non-Muslim Law Codes in the country, is worth quoting. Commenting on the 'stagnant state of the Muhammadan Law in the Sudan' the Grand Qādi remarked: "..... though the Islamic law had been the only law applied to the people of the Muslim countries, time had, necessitated the introduction of other codes".²⁸ Certainly, in the context of the structure of the Muslim States in the Middle Ages, the Grand Qādi was correct in his own line of thinking. In the Middle Ages the Muslim states and society for the most part had remained 'basically static'. This state of affairs rendered it possible for the application of Sharī'a law in those days to meet successfully the 'internal requirements' of the Muslim states and society. But the pressures which arose out of the contact between Islam and the Western world from the nineteenth century onwards, confronted Islam with an entirely different, difficult

26. Cromer, Review of the Soudan Reports 1904; op.cit., p.25.

27. Ibid.

28. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan, 1902, Part I, p.14.

and alien situation. It was the challenge of time coupled with the material and technological superiority of the West. To meet this challenge, Islam had no other way but to abandon the Shari'a and replace it with laws of Western inspiration in those spheres where Islam felt a particular urgency to adapt itself to modern conditions.²⁹ Although it is true that the replacement of Shari'a by other codes in civil and criminal spheres was no part of the British programme to adapt Islam to modern conditions, yet by doing so they paved a way which in future was trodden by many Muslim countries. Thus, against the background of the trends and requirements of the modern times, the Grand Qādi was perhaps acting rightly when he extended his support to the Government actions in the field of law and legal affairs.

The foregoing analysis bears out the fact that in altering the status of the Shari'a law, the Government had no hostile intention whatsoever. And far from making any attempt to abolish it, the Government adopted most admirable steps to organise the Muhammadan law courts then left in pitiable condition. The 'Sudan Muhammadan Law Courts Ordinance, 1902', no doubt restricted the field of Shari'a law; but on other direction the ordinance aimed at organizing the Shari'a courts in different classes or categories. The Ordinance fairly provided that, "The Sudan Mohammedan Law Courts shall comprise a Court of Appeal, High Courts, Courts of 1st class Kadis and Courts of 2nd class Kadis".³⁰

29. Coulson, N.J., op.cit; p.149.

30. Sect.2., see, The Laws of the Sudan, Vol.XI. op.cit.

Proceeding further, the Ordinance made clear the constitution of the different kinds of Muhammadan Law Courts. The 'Court of Appeal' was to consist of the Grand Qādi, the Muftī (a State adviser who can explain the law) and the Inspectors of the Muhammadan Law Courts.³¹ Every High Court was to consist of a single High Court Qādi.³² Every '1st class' Court was to consist of a single '1st class' Qādi,³³ and every '2nd class' Court was to consist of a single '2nd class' Qādi.³⁴

Hitherto, for the administration of 'Sharī'a family law', classical Muslim tradition had only one judicial organ - the court of a single Qādi. No hierarchy and no elaborate organization existed whatsoever. Hence, judging from this point, the 1902 Ordinance of the Sudan Government is undoubtedly commendable, as it tended to create such an elaborate organization and judicial hierarchy for the administration of Muhammadan Law in the Sudan as was unknown in the past history of Islam.

Again, in organizing the Sudan Muhammadan Law Courts, the Ordinance of 1902 introduced another novelty. For the administration of 'Sharī'a family law' there existed in 'classical Muslim tradition, no system of appeal'. But the Ordinance by creating a Court of Appeal consisting of the Grand Qādi, the Muftī, and the Inspectors of the Muhammadan Law Courts filled that void.³⁵ This step undoubtedly ensured better judicial administration by offering scope to the litigants not satisfied with the judgments delivered in the lower courts.

31. Sect.3.(1).

32. Sect.4.

33. Sect.5.(1).

34. Sect.6.

35. Sect.2.

Apart from all these, the Government was satisfied not only with the organization and creation of a Muslim judicial hierarchy; at the same time it made the appointment of salaried judges for the Muhammadan Law Courts purely a Government responsibility. Thus the Qādis became the officials of the Legal Department of the Sudan Government; the offices of the Grand Qādi and the Muftī and Inspectors of Muhammadan Courts became Government posts.

In another direction, the Government took some admirable steps. By promulgating Ordinances it tried to offer scope for introducing reforms in the field of Muhammadan law. Even in the early years of the Sudan administration, wrote Cromer, the Grand Qādi of the Sudan regarded F.R.Wingate, the Governor-General of the Sudan, and Bonham Carter, the Legal Secretary, 'as friends' who desired to assist the Grand Qādi in the work of reforms on lines which might "commend themselves alike to devout Muslims and to those of other creeds"³⁶. In fact, the 'Sudan Mohammedan Law Courts Ordinance', May, 1902, laid the foundation and offered ample scope for many future reforms in the administration of Sharī'a law when it empowered the Grand Qādi within its framework to make regulation from time to time, with the approval of the Governor-General, to regulate the decisions, procedure, constitution, jurisdiction and functions of the Muhammadan Law Courts and other matters connected with such courts.³⁷

36. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1904; Part I, p.38.

37. Sect.8.

The above power accorded to the Grand Qāḍī by the Section 8 of the Sudan Muhammadan Law Courts Ordinance, 1902, was fully utilized by the latter in 1912. In that year, the Grand Qāḍī, with the approval of the Governor-General, issued the 'Maazuns Regulations, 1912'. Among other things, the 'Maazuns Regulations, 1912', spelt a reforming spirit in the organization of the Sharī'a Courts when it emphasised that the Ma'dhūns must possess, "a good knowledge of Arabic reading and writing."³⁸, and "a good knowledge of the Muhammadan Law relating to marriage, divorce, iddats and wardship, and of all rules concerning their duties"³⁹. Thus it is needless to say that the Regulation by stating the proper qualifications of the Ma'dhūns ensured the proper functioning of the Muhammadan Law Courts.

But more important than these is another attempt made in 1915 to introduce further reforming principles in the whole organizational set-up of the Muhammadan Law Courts of the Sudan. In that year, the Grand Qāḍī, with the approval of the Governor-General and under the section 8 of the Sudan Muhammadan Law Courts Ordinance, 1902, issued 'The Sudan Mohammedan Law Courts Organization and Procedure Regulations, 1916'⁴⁰. Under this there are as many as three hundred sections dealing with the various aspects⁴¹ of the administration of Muhammadan Law in the Sudan and all of them dispelled an inert desire to organize the courts on a sounder basis. Thus in the Chapter I, the Regulations of 1916 laid down the proper qualifications for the judges of the Muhammadan Law Courts. It emphasised

38. Sect.2.(a).

39. Sect.2.(c).

40. See, Laws of the Sudan, Vol.XI.; op.cit, p.8.

41. Selection, appointment and delegation of Sharī'a officials; jurisdiction and competence of courts and the function of the Grand Qāḍī; Court procedure; Executions; Registers, etc.

that the "persons to be selected for judicial posts shall be in possession of Alimiya certificates from El-Azhar University, or from a similar religious College in Egypt, or shall be graduates of the Sharia Law Section of Gordon College"⁴² It is further commendable that the 1916 Regulations outlined the qualifications not only for the judges, but even for the clerks of the Muhammadan Law Courts.⁴³ The Regulations laid down that, ".... for a clerkship in the Mohammedan Law Courts a good knowledge of the Arabic language, the Sharia, Composition, Correspondence Mohammedan Law Courts Procedure, Regulations and of the rules of moral conduct according to the Mohammedan religion" was necessary.⁴⁴

'The Sudan Mohammedan Law Courts Organization and Procedure Regulations, 1916' had also many other beneficial effects which can hardly escape the notice of any critic. The Chapter II of the Regulation containing sections 11-53 is much more important. It defines in greater detail the 'Jurisdiction and Competence of Courts and functions of the Grand Kadi' and thus sought to establish a hierarchy of courts whereby the Qādis of the District Courts could exercise a wide but limited jurisdiction;⁴⁵ the Qādis of the Province Courts could ".... try by way of appeal all cases heard by Kādis of District Courts under them."⁴⁶ Besides, the Province Courts were empowered to try original suits beyond the competence of the District Courts,⁴⁷ and the High Court was competent to

42. Sect.1.

43. Laws of the Sudan, op.cit., p.10.

44. Chapt.I., Sect.3.

45. Sects. 22, 23, 24.

46. Sect. 25.

47. Sect. 26-29.

"rehear in appeal suits decided in first instance by the Kadis of Province Courts",⁴⁸ and also to 'rehear as a court of Revision' the decisions of the Province Qādis in appeal from District Qādis.⁴⁹ The Regulations of 1916 empowered the High Muhammadan Courts so much so that they could at anytime call for and revise any case heard either by Province or District Courts.⁵⁰

The above Regulations also increased the power of the Grand Qādi in several ways. It made the Grand Qādi such that he could "when circumstances so demanded hear any case not previously decided by a Mohammedan Law Court".⁵¹ The Regulations also further made him the "general administrator of the estates of Mohammedan deceased persons".⁵²

One of the many meritorious measures devised by the Regulations for the proper functioning of the Muhammadan Law Courts is the creation of the Committee of Supervision "composed of the Chief Justice, the Grand Kadi, the Muftī, the Inspector of the Mohammedan Law Courts".⁵³ The main object of the Committee was to "point out judicial errors in order to prevent their recurrence....".⁵⁴ The work of all the Muhammadan Courts except that of the High Court⁵⁵ was brought under the supervisory jurisdiction of the Committee of Supervision. Though this Committee had no power to "affect the judgments given or the matters decided", yet it⁵⁶

48. Of course with certain restrictions (see Sect.30).

49. Sect.31.

50. Sect.35.

51. Sect.36.

52. Sect.38.

53. Sect.42.

54. Sect.45.

55. Sect.43.

56. Sect.45.

could refer to the High Court for review of any judgment which it considered contrary to the principles of the Sharī'a.⁵⁷ Thus, the Committee, in spite of its limited power, certainly acted as a check when the cases of the violation of Sharī'a law could arise.

There is another important measure that had been effected by the above Regulations of 1916. It certainly deserves comment, as it went a long way in strengthening the positions of the Muhammadan Law Courts in the Sudan. It enacted that "The Kadis of the Mohammedan Law Courts as regards their decisions under the Sharia and the exercise of their judicial functions, are independent of and in no way subordinate to the civil authorities who must not in any way interfere with their judicial independence".⁵⁸ Thus it ensured the independence of the Muhammadan Law Courts from the encroachment of the civil authorities, and recognised a factor of most vital importance for the proper administration of justice.

The 'Sudan Mohammedan Law Courts Organization and Procedure Regulations, 1916' also introduced some other major changes in the field of the administration of Muhammadan Law in the Sudan. The Regulations provided that the "Decisions of the Mohammedan Law Courts shall be in accordance with the authoritative doctrines of the Hanafia jurists except in matters in which the Grand Kadi otherwise directs in a judicial circular or memorandum, in which case the decisions shall be in accordance

57. Sect.45.

58. Sect.52.

with such other doctrines of the Hanafia or other Mohammedan jurists as are set forth in such circular or memorandum"⁵⁹.

The first part of the Section, however, invites no comment, as it merely represents the restoration in the Sudan of the Hanafī law which had been earlier abrogated by the Mahadists. The Hanafī law, the official code of the Ottomans, had been imposed upon the Sudan by the former Turko-Egyptian rulers while the people of the Sudan were mostly Mālikī. The courts had no scope to exercise any personal discretion owing to the dominance of the doctrines of a particular School (i.e. Hanafī, in Sudan) which was regarded as 'authoritative'. But this inelasticity of the operation of the Muslim Law was greatly overcome by the latter part of the Section 53, of the 'Sudan Mohammedan Law Courts Organization and Procedure Regulations, 1916'. It contributes largely to the introduction of reforming principles by making provision for the application of the other codes of Islamic law, which are also equally valuable and resourceful.

Again the Section 53 of the 'Sudan Mohammedan Law Courts Organization and Procedure Regulations, 1916', empowered the Grand Qādi to issue 'judicial circulars', to effect reforms. Accordingly, the Grand Qādi issued a series of circulars almost all of them, of course, were "based on reforms either already promulgated or at least under consideration in Egypt"⁶⁰. Moreover, as the application of other codes than Hanafī was made possible, many of the earliest reforms effected

59. Sect.53.

60. Anderson, J.N.D., Islamic Law in Africa, London, 1938. p.311.

through the 'judicial circulars' consisted mostly in the substitution of the MĀlikī (the Code to which the Sudanese Muslims were more accustomed) for the Hanafī law in regard to certain matrimonial cause.⁶¹

The Government promulgated not only the Ordinances and Regulation; it was also quite aware of the necessity of providing the Muhammadan Law Courts with trained Qādis. In the early years of its administration, the Government badly felt the need of trained and qualified Qādis.⁶² As a partial solution to this problem, the Government adopted the policy of recruiting Qādis from among the graduates of Gordon College. But the problem was finally solved when a legal School for the training of the Qādis was attached to Gordon College.⁶³ In this section of Gordon College the young trainees for the posts of Qādis received instructions in Arabic language and literature, the Qur'ān and the Muhammadan Law. The result was highly satisfactory. These trainees could come out as qualified Qādis after passing prescribed examinations and their subsequent appointments to the new posts obviously ensured better and efficient service. In fact, this training college of the Qādis in the Sudan proved so successful that it was copied in Egypt where a training school for the Qādis was opened in al-Azhar.⁶⁴

Apart from producing trained Qādis for the Muhammadan Law Courts, the Government also adopted sufficient measures so that the working of

61. Ibid, pp. 311-314.

62. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1904; Part I, pp.37-38.

63. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1903; Part I, p. 19.

64. Wingate to Kitchener, 26th Oct. 1911; W.P. 301/4.

these courts could be properly supervised. To achieve this, Inspectors were appointed for the regular inspection of the courts.

The above analysis should in no way give us the impression that the whole of the Muslim Sudan equally and uniformly felt the impact of these reorganizations and reforms of the Muhammadan Law Courts. While the effects of all these were restricted mainly to the population of the urban areas, the attempts at Government level to bring the rural areas with its nomads, agriculturists and pastoralists under the influence of the Muhammadan Law, appears to be very meagre. Instead of Sharī'a law, the Muslim nomads and pastoralists of the Northern Sudan, were governed "almost entirely by ⁶⁵ 'āda" or Customary Law. The Government adopted no measure to apply the Sharī'a law in their case. On the contrary, in 1912, the Sudan Government, as part of its policy of decentralization, promulgated the "Powers of Nomad Sheikhs Ordinance" which, inter alia, accorded the full recognition to the "ruling of ⁶⁶ 'āda". It may be explained that the migratory nature of the nomads made it almost impossible, even nowadays, to bring them under the strict jurisdiction of law and order. Moreover, although Muslims, religion could not sit firmly upon their hearts. To all these may, perhaps, be added the paucity of funds. Hence, in the early days of the administration of the Sudan, when facilities for transport and communication were meagre and financial means limited, it was perhaps better to allow the nomads to administer themselves in their own way.

65. Trimingham, J.S., Islam in the Sudan, O.U.P. 1948. p.122.

66. Ibid, p.122.

II

The second of the official religious institutions that drew the proper attention of the Government, was the public mosques. In this respect, the policy and attitude of the Government bears an eloquent testimony to their tolerance and non-interference with the religious matters. As "the place for the divine services",⁶⁷ mosques are of immense importance to the Muslims. Primarily the mosques are the "houses of which God has permitted that they be erected"⁶⁸ Herein lies the importance of the mosque which represents one of the basic religious needs of the Muslims.

From the very beginning of the Anglo-Egyptian rule in the Sudan, the Government was quite conscious to appreciate the needs and importance of mosques for the Muslim population of the Sudan. This contention is borne out by the fact that after the reoccupation of the Sudan, Kitchener, the first Governor-General, assured that the "Mosques in the principal towns will be rebuilt"⁶⁹

Besides this formal assurance, the Government created a 'special fund' to assist the local mosques committees in building and rebuilding the mosques.⁷⁰ This 'special fund' was placed under the charge of Slatin Pasha, the Inspector General of the Sudan.⁷¹ The construction of many of

67. See, Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol.III, Leiden, 1936; Article, Masdjid.

68. Sura, XXIV.36; vide Encyclopaedia of Islam, Ibid.

69. It is one of the directives issued by Kitchener to the Provincial Governors just after the reconquest. For the full text see, Reports by Her Majesty's Agent and Consul-General on the Finances, Administration, and Condition of Egypt and the Soudan in 1899; op.cit; pp.55-56.

70. Hill, Slatin Pasha; op.cit, p.82.

71. Ibid.

these mosques sometimes came under the jurisdiction of the Public Works Department of the Sudan Government, which designed them with utmost care.⁷²

The 'special fund' to help the local mosque committees used to offer subsidies in building the mosques. The help and subsidies rendered by the Government normally fell under two categories. Sometimes the local mosque committees were given cash money, but mostly the Government helped the construction or rebuilding of the mosques by "waiving the freight charges on material for their construction."⁷³

It may be mentioned here that although the Government assured the reconstruction of the mosques in the principal towns, it did not allow the "...private mosques to be re-established"⁷⁴ But for this particular measure the Government should not be misunderstood. It took this step because it felt that these private mosques "generally formed centres of unorthodox fanaticism".⁷⁵ Of course, the Government made reasonable provision that any request for the establishment of private mosques was to be referred to the Central Authority for proper consideration.⁷⁶

The efforts of the Government to help the mosques produced marvellous results. In the early years, many mosques received substantial assistance from the Government. As early as 1902, two mosques in the Province of Dongola, namely the Dongola Mosque and the Duem Mosque, received assistance from the Government towards their reconstruction.⁷⁷

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid.

74. Kitchener's directives to the Provincial Governors, op.cit.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid.

77. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1902; Part II, p.261.

The Dongola Mosque was practically rebuilt by the Government at the cost of more than £E.700.⁷⁸ The Duem Mosque of the White Nile province, in the same year, received a financial assistance from the Government to the tune of £E.60.⁷⁹ In the same year, the Government extended aid, financial and otherwise, to many other Public Mosques. A small mosque at El-Damer and a larger one at Shendi were built in 1902, and received Government recognition.⁸⁰ Among these, the one at Shendi received some assistance from the Government in the shape of roofing materials.⁸¹ With substantial assistance from the Government, a mosque at Kawa in the Jezira Province, formerly made of mud bricks, was built with burnt bricks.⁸² Besides these, when the interior of the principal mosque at Wad-Medani collapsed owing to insecure foundations and bad workmanship, it was rebuilt under Government assistance and supervision.⁸³

In the subsequent years, the activities of the Government in matters of financing and constructing mosques were quite encouraging. Besides the mosque at Kawa, as already mentioned, another mosque at Masid in the same province had been very old and required a good deal of repair. In 1904, with the assistance of a Government grant of £E.50, it was rennovated.⁸⁴ Similarly, in the same year the mosque at Gedarif, the only mosque of Kassala, was financially assisted by the Government for its

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid.

80. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1902; Part III, p.243.

81. Ibid.

82. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1902; Part III, p.275.

83. Ibid., p.333.

84. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1904, Part IV, p.57.

reconstruction and repair.⁸⁵ Besides helping the mosque of Gedarif, the Government also promised a sum of £E.200 for the erection of another mosque at Kassala.⁸⁶

At Singa in Sennar Province the Muslims had no mosque until 1907. The people, realising Government's sympathetic attitude raised some subscriptions from among themselves and approached the Government for a grant.⁸⁷ The Government at once realising the need for a mosque for these people granted a sum of £E.100.⁸⁸ There were even many mosques which obtained Government assistance more than once. The Duem mosque of the White Nile Province had received, in 1902, financial aid from the Government.⁸⁹ But still when it was not completed until 1907, the Governor-General graciously granted £E.300 for the completion of the work of that mosque.⁹⁰ Apart from all these, the Government liberally helped the reconstruction of mosques when they were damaged by natural calamities. Thus, in 1908 when the mosque at Tokor and the Zāwiya (Mosque cum Qur'ān School) in the Red Sea Province were destroyed by storm, the Government immediately granted the sum of £E.150 towards their repairs.⁹¹ Just after this, the Government extended another financial aid for the repair of the old mosque at El-Damer in Berber.⁹²

85. Ibid, p.78.

86. Ibid.

87. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1907, Part III, p.396.

88. Ibid.

89. See above p.

90. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1908, Part III, p.685.

91. Ibid, p.635.

92. Ibid, p.482.

During the subsequent years, the Government took appropriate steps to open so many public mosques. In 1909, five public mosques were opened; among these, two in Berber Province, one in Dongola Province, one in Blue Nile and one in White Nile Province.⁹³ Following this, eight public mosques were opened in different provinces.⁹⁴ Again in 1911, three were opened, one each in Halfa, Kassala and the Red Sea Provinces.⁹⁵ But the year 1912, perhaps, witnessed the opening of the largest number of public mosques in the Sudan. In this year the Government recorded the opening of as many as thirty public mosques in different parts of the Sudan.⁹⁶

Apart from paying attention to the construction and opening of public mosques in different parts of the country, the Government in the early days of its administration undertook the construction of a big mosque in the capital city of Khartoum.⁹⁷ The Public Works Department of the Sudan Government was entrusted with its construction.⁹⁸ It is important to note that as a mosque of the capital city, the Governor-General himself took active interest in it. The mosque was so big in plan that for want of sufficient funds it remained unfinished until 1908, when the Governor-General after prolonged negotiations succeeded in obtaining an amount of £20,000 from the Egyptian Wakf Department, which was mainly responsible to finance its construction.⁹⁹

93. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1909, Part II, p.114.

94. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1910, Part II, p.131.

95. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1911, Vol.1, p.81.

96. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1912, Vol.II, p.339.

97. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1902, Part II, p.217.

98. Ibid.

99. Gorst to Wingate, Cairo, 22 Dec.1908; W.P., 284/9.

Besides this, the Governor-General made another important move to secure funds from Egypt for the mosques of the Sudan. In principle the maintenance of the mosques of the Sudan was met by the revenue of the Wakf lands inherited by the Sudan Government.¹⁰⁰ But as, owing to the opening of the large number of mosques the Sudanese Source was considered quite inadequate, the Governor-General asked the Egyptian Wakf Department to contribute an annual sum for the upkeep of the mosques in the Sudan.¹⁰¹

It may be remembered that the Government in the beginning did not allow the construction of the private mosques for the apprehension that 'they might well turn into the centres of unorthodox fanaticism'.¹⁰² But very soon the Government relaxed this restriction when it felt a bit secure. Thus, as early in 1902, a private mosque was built at Messalamia (Jezira) by Shaikh Muhammad 'Ali, head merchant of the Markaz;¹⁰³ and by 1905, Sudan had as many as 170 private mosques as against 370 public mosques.¹⁰⁴

Thus, under the active care of the Government, so many public and private mosques were established in the Sudan within a few years. In various ways Government helped the mosques. Sometimes plots were allotted to establish a Wakf for the upkeep of the mosques. In 1911 such a plot

100. Carter, E.B., Wakf lands in the Sudan, p.6., W.P. 284/12/3.

101. Wingate to Gorst, 22 Dec.1908., W.P. 284/9.

102. See above p.31.

103. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1902, Part III, p.275.

104. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1906, Part III, p.378. (Schedule I).

was allotted to the mosque of Monagil in the Blue Nile Province, on which the mosque committee built a row of shops with corrugated iron roofs.¹⁰⁵ Apart from this, very often the British officials cheerfully offered contribution as subscription for the construction of mosques.¹⁰⁶ But the most interesting and important suggestion of many zealous provincial governors was to adopt some new ways which could procure funds for the construction of new mosques. In 1903, the Governor of Sennar was strongly in favour of levying a small and light universal tax for building of mosques in each province and suggested, - $\frac{1}{2}\%$ of land tax per village, $\frac{1}{2}\%$ of tribute from Nomads, $\frac{1}{2}\%$ on all Royalties paid by merchants from each village or Ferik (nomad encampment) of nomads or merchants.¹⁰⁷

In the same way, the Governor of Kassala also proposed that a very small percentage of the revenue derived from land tax and herd tax might be allowed to go towards the building of a good mosque at Kassala.¹⁰⁸ But official records unfortunately do not bear any evidence whether these suggestions of the enthusiastic Governors were ever accepted.

The Government not only took steps to help the building and rebuilding of the mosques; at the same time it was quite aware of seeing

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105. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1911, Vol. II, p.45.
 106. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1906, Part IV., p.579.
 107. Reports on Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1903, Part IV, p.86.
 108. Reports on Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1904, Part IV, p.78.

that the mosques were properly provided with staff.¹⁰⁹

Like all other Muslim countries, in the Sudan too it was a general practice that the mosque was fully responsible for maintaining its staff. But despite this traditional convention, the Government on different occasions readily made recommendations for the grant of money for the staff of the mosques. Thus, in 1902, it so happened that the Governor of Dongola himself made an application to the higher authority asking for the grant of salaries for the Imām, Mu'adh^hdhin, and the servant of the Duem mosque of Dongola.¹¹⁰ Even sometimes on request from the mosque authority an increase of pay was granted to the Imāms of the mosques. Such an increase of pay for the Imām was readily accorded to the Imām of the Halfa Mosque in 1908.¹¹¹

Thus, within the first twenty-two years of the Anglo-Egyptian rule, there came to exist more than six hundred mosques (most of them public) in the Sudan.¹¹² Even in the Southern Sudan which was almost wholly pagan, the

109. Although Islam does not recognise or require any priesthood to lead services and administer other rites, yet for the sake of convenience it had been customary to have a small staff of two or three attached to every mosque. It should be remembered that the only function of this small staff consisted in keeping the mosque in good order and catering to the needs of the worshippers. At the head of this staff stood the Imām whose main function is to lead the congregations in prayer at the appointed times; below him was the Mu'adh^hdhin, the person meant for giving the calls for prayer and a servant who was no more than a caretaker of the mosque.

110. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1902, Part III, p.262.

111. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1908, Part III, p.535.

112. Martin, P.F., The Sudan in Evolution, London, 1921, p.246.

Government made no official objection for the construction of mosques to meet the religious needs of the Muslim garrison and civil officials stationed there. Before 1905 there existed no mosque in the Southern Sudan; but by 1915 there came to exist three mosques in the South, - one at Wau, the other two at Renk and Kodok.¹¹³

In building the mosques the intention of the Government was not merely to facilitate the saying of prayers. Through these mosques, and particularly by constructing the Khartoum mosque, the Government hoped that they could produce broad minded Muslim notables who could guide the religion to the right path.¹¹⁴ The other mosques, the Government hoped would bring the Muslims more and more closer to formal Islam and thereby reduce the heat of unnecessary religious fanaticism.

III

Apart from building and rebuilding the mosques, the Government displayed a most favourable attitude towards the other religious institutions of the Muslims. Among these Hadjdj, or the annual pilgrimage of the Muslims to Mecca, stands out prominent. From the very inception of the new regime, the Government, realising the importance of this institution to the Muslims, considered it to be a duty to provide adequate facilities to the Muslims of the Sudan to perform this sacred religious duty.

113. Ibid, p.247.

114. Reports by her Majesty's Agent and Consul-General on the Finances, Administration and Condition of Egypt and the Soudan in 1899; op.cit, p.58.

It is a most important point to note that during the days of the Mahdists the pilgrimage to Mecca was prohibited; and some of the scholars are prone to indicate that the pilgrimage was replaced by the visit of the Mahdī.¹¹⁵ The English writers take delight in pointing out that the Anglo-Egyptian rule removed the ban which the Mahdists placed on the pilgrimage to Mecca. The Government encouraged the pilgrimage on the understanding that the returned pilgrims, as stronghold of orthodoxy, could better counteract the unorthodox tendencies and practices of the Muslims of the Sudan.

The realization of this significance of the pilgrimage led the Government to bring the pilgrimage arrangement under its own supervision. All the pilgrims were made to sail from Saukin where they were given a medical check up free of cost.¹¹⁶ The poor pilgrims used to receive food and water at Government expense.¹¹⁷ On occasion, many pilgrims from distant parts of the country reached Saukin penniless. For many such pilgrims, the Government used to defray the cost.¹¹⁸ Sometimes it also happened that many non-Sudanese pilgrims from the West of the Sudan passed through Saukin. The rush of these non-Sudanese pilgrims eventually produced such abnormal pressure on Saukin port that its quarantine camp ultimately suffered loss. The result was that in 1908 the quarantine camp

115. Theobald, A.B., - *The Mahdiyya*, op.cit; p.183.

116. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1904, Part II, p.38.

117. Ibid.

118. Ibid.

of Saukin refused to accept these non-Sudanese pilgrims.¹¹⁹ But in spite of the loss of the Saukin quarantine camp,¹²⁰ the Governor-General of the Sudan did not think it judicious to check the passage of the non-Sudanese pilgrims through the Sudan and Saukin simply on the ground that it would mean ".... the creation of foes",¹²¹ and at all events, the Government thought it better to facilitate their passage.

In the early years of its administration, the Government of course put some restrictions on the number of pilgrims and the attendants accompanying them. But this came about as a measure to control slave traffic to Mecca. It became a regular feature with the majority of the pilgrims to take a number of servants with them while on journey, and sell them in Arabia as slaves. Hence there arose the necessity to limit the number of pilgrims and the number of servants accompanying them. But while doing so, the Government was quite aware of the fact that the restriction might be interpreted by the Muslims otherwise. Thus, in 1914, the Governor-General feared to impose any further restrictions¹²² which might be misinterpreted by the Muslim population as an attempt of the Government to render the pilgrimage difficult of performance.¹²³

119. Harvey to Wingate, Cairo, 18 Oct. 1908; W.P. 248/10.

120. The loss of Saukin Quarantine Camp in 1908: Cost of the Camp - £4,622.
The Quarantine Board received, - (i) Government Grant - £500.

(ii) Fees from the Pilgrims - £480.

From a letter from Harvey to Wingate, Cairo., 18th Oct. 1908; W.P. 248/10.

121. Wingate to Harvey, Cairo, 20th Oct., 1908; W.P. 248/10.

122. As for example the other restriction was that the pilgrims had to pay a deposit money at Saukin; this was enforced by the Proclamation of 13th Jan. 1903. vide. *

* Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1903, Part II, P.L.11.

123. Wingate to Cromer, 7th Feb. 1914; P.R.O./F.O., 633/23.

Under no circumstances did the Sudan Government find it wise to interfere with the question of the journey of Muslims to Mecca for pilgrimage. This policy of the non-interference with the affairs of pilgrimage, however, reached its climax during the World War I, when the relations between Britain and Turkey became strained. Even during this period, the Sudan Government did not prevent the Sudanese pilgrims from proceeding to Mecca, then under Turkish control. On the contrary, the Governor-General considered it completely impolitic "... to interfere with the departure of ... pilgrims (to Mecca) from the Sudan"¹²⁴ Moreover, while the war was in progress, the Governor-General, for the safety of the pilgrim caravan, had sent three batteries to guard the coastal road from Medina to Mecca against any Turko-German attack which might cause inconvenience for the pilgrims.¹²⁵

Apart from providing adequate facilities for making the journey to Mecca for pilgrimage, the Government was wise enough to respect the religious sentiments of the Muslims by recognising the chief religious festivals of the Muslims as public holidays. Among the public holidays, the one on the birthday of the Prophet deserves some special mention.

Though not an official festival ordained by law, the occasion of the birthday of the Prophet 'received a general recognition of the popular sentiment' of the Muslims. The day was also celebrated during the Mahdist days, but what is important is that the Anglo-Egyptian

124. Wingate to Kenny, Khartoum, 23rd Sept. 1914; W.P. 191/3.

125. Wingate to Cromer, 25th Sept. 1916; W.P. 201/8.

Government gave it an official recognition.¹²⁶

At the time of the chief religious festivals the Government took upon itself the responsibility to maintain peace and order. For all occasions of the important religious festivals, the duties of the Government representatives in Khartoum and at Headquarters of the Provinces, were defined.¹²⁷ Even, during these occasions the Governor-General used to invite chief Muslim religious dignitaries to his palace for coffee. It definitely worked for the closer understanding between the high English officials and the Muslim notables. But the most important in this series is perhaps the recognition of Friday instead of Sunday as an official day of rest,¹²⁸ (which will be discussed later).

Thus, under the Anglo-Egyptian rule, we find that the Muslim Law Courts were organised, the public mosques were erected, pilgrimage to Mecca was facilitated and the chief religious festivals were recognised as public holidays. By these popular demonstrations of religious tolerance, the Government surely paved the way to win the hearts and confidence of the Muslim population.

* * *

126. Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, op.cit., p.148.

127. Vide, Sudan Government confidential circular memo No.31. - C.S./C.R.R./1685; May 1st, 1911; W.P. 300/5/1.

128. See below PP, 144-145.

CHAPTER II

The positions of the traditional methods of education and the instruction of religion under the new educational system.

I

"In the Sudan, as elsewhere" says Trimingham, "orthodox Islam is represented by: (1) the traditional educational system; (2) the courts administering the Sharī'a; (3) the public mosques"¹. In the previous chapter the Government policies towards the Sharī'a courts and the public mosques have been discussed. One of the policies of the Sudan Government, as stated earlier,² was 'to restore orthodox Islam' in the Sudan. Hence, in this chapter we shall proceed to outline the policy of the Sudan Government towards the traditional system of education which, along with the Sharī'a courts and the public mosques 'represented' orthodox Islam in the Sudan. But before starting the discussion of the Government policy in this respect, it is perhaps necessary to have an idea of the traditional system of education³ which had existed in the Sudan prior to the establishment of the Anglo-Egyptian rule.

1. Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, op.cit, p.115.

2. See above, p. 8.

3. The outline of the traditional educational system in the Sudan, which follows in the subsequent pages, draws mainly upon Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, op.cit, pp.115-120.

From the beginning of the sixteenth century when the influence of new culture of Islam began to be felt in the Sudan, the education of the country centred around mainly two institutions -- the mosque and the Khalwa.⁴ These two were the recognised bodies supposed to assume the educational task.

Both in the mosques and the Khalwas the entire programme of education revolved around the religion of Islam. The only aim of education was to study the Sharī'a. For the Sudanese Muslims it was 'the only' subject of true learning.' Besides, the study of the Sharī'a, the recitation of the Qur'ān also formed one of the chief subjects of study.

In the Khalwas, the fakī⁵, i.e. the teacher of the Khalwa, used to teach his students how to recite the Qur'ān. The students repeat the particular sections of the Qur'ān in rhythm for many times until they are completely memorized. The fakī did not require the Qur'ān as he always used to dictate from memory. The students used to take down the dictated sections on their wooden slates. When a student completed a section, the fakī used to write the first verse of the next on his slate. The boy then used to take the slate with that verse to his parents who then, according to the custom, sent some presents to the fakī.

4. The word 'Khalwa' is derived from the Arabic word 'Ikhtilaa' which means seeking seclusion or privacy.

5. For the wide range of meaning of fakī, see - Trimmingham, Islam in the Sudan, op.cit, p.141.

Besides learning how to recite the Qur'ān, the boys of the Khalwas had to do some works for the fakī. Every Wednesday, each student had to take some dura (the staple Sudanese food crop), and was supposed to cook and eat that with the fakī and to take a little of it to his home as baraka ('an active power of holiness'). The students also did some other things for the fakī. These included the collection of firewood, clearing of the ground and so on.

The students had to spend normally seven years in the Khalwa learning the recitation of the Qur'ān and working for the fakī. Then he was required to recite the Qur'ān three times before the fakī. After this, he was examined by another fakī, and if he could satisfy both, only then was he to be pronounced a ḥāfiz, (one who can recite the Qur'ān correctly).

Although the students helped the fakī in household affairs, still they did not live with the fakī. The fakī usually belonged to the village in which he lived. But sometimes, many young boys of seven or eight used to leave their villages in search of a fakī who had a good reputation. These boys were known as muhājirīn, who used to cultivate lands for the fakī as payment. They read until the age of sixteen, when, very often they themselves became fakīs.

Besides the Khalwas, there were Zāwiyas or mosques in the Eastern Sudan where the boys, at about the age of twelve used to continue their studies. In these Zāwiyas or mosques, the curriculum consisted of

two branches of learning studied simultaneously: Tawhīd--theology, according to the madhhab of Al-Ash'arī; and Fiqh, according to the madhhab of Ibn Mālik.

The Zāwiyas generally grew up centering around the house of the Shaikh. They 'combined the functions of mosque, monastery, school and college'. In these establishments, the instructions were given in two ways. Usually, the students used to sit around the fakī whilst he recited 'the text and commentary, adding his own glosses'. Books were seldom used and the pupils used to take down the sections, dictated by the fakī, on slates.

The above discussion gives a brief outline of the traditional educational system in the Sudan. It becomes evident that in those days education was completely a non-Government obligation. It was financed and administered by independent bodies. In fact, the entire system depended on individual efforts, and the state exercised no control over it.

But it must be admitted that although there was no state control, still the Sudanese rulers at times showed their interest in spreading the education. It is said that on many occasions, the rulers of the Funj dynasty gave substantial "grants to the Mosques and aids to schools.."⁶

6. Baghir, K., Religious education: present and future development, (Khartoum, Mimeog Paper); p.6.

But even during the Turko-Egyptian period education in the Sudan still remained a non-Government activity. However, a sign of slow progress could be noticed during this period. The Government began to subsidise the Khalwas by offering small grants to their fakīs, and thus tried to strengthen the basis of popular education. In this respect, the reign of Imā'īl Pasha witnessed a considerable progress. He made small stipends available to young Sudanese students to study in Al-Azhar; and "as an encouragement all theological students in the Sudan were exempted from taxation"⁷. Moreover, in Al-Azhar there was a separate block for the students from the Sudan; it was known as "Riwāqal-Sinnāriyah"⁸. But the same system of education in the Khalwas and mosques continued unchanged during the time of the Mahdists, with the exception that the number of the Khalwas and mosque schools was reduced.⁹

Thus, when the Sudan was reconquered from the Mahdists, the schools which then existed in the Northern Sudan were the Khalwas and the Zāwiyas. These were attended almost entirely by the Muslim pupils who were taught to recite the Qur'ān. This traditional system was undoubtedly, as Trimmingham has said, "devoid of all joy and discovery"¹⁰. For under that system no critical study of Muslim theology as the tradition was made. At the same time, the system was thoroughly onesided, as it laid stress only on the religious aspect of the life. These were certainly the

7. Hill, Egypt in the Sudan, 1820-1881; op.cit, p.126.

8. Dodge, B., Al-Azhar, Millennium of Muslim Learning., Washington, D.C., 1961; p.202.

9. Baghir, K., Religious education: present and future development, op.cit., p.8.

10. Trimmingham, Islam in the Sudan, op.cit., p.120.

drawbacks of the traditional system of education in the Sudan.

Within a short period of time, the Sudan Government developed its own educational system which was, of course, inspired mainly by "purely administrative necessity to provide Sudanese functionaries and so reduce the costly imported staff"¹¹. But whatever might be the real intention, the Government did not abolish the traditional system of education which again in the words of Trimingham formed the 'basis' of orthodox Islam in the Sudan.¹² As a part of its policy to 'restore orthodox Islam', the Government retained in essence the traditional system when it embarked upon its new educational programme. This action of the Government had another aspect. By retaining the old system within the framework of the new one, it avoided the question of a possible interference into the religion of the people. While this may be discussed later, we shall concentrate our attention to the new educational system that grew up under the care of the new Government.

II

To any student of British Colonial Administration, the early history of education in the Sudan under the Anglo-Egyptian rule is certainly an interesting subject. In the first place, the Sudan was not, theoretically, a British possession. Neither did it form a part of the British Colonial system. This fact rendered possible many experiments

11. Ibid, P.254.

12. Ibid, P.115.

which would have been out of the question under Crown Colony Government as it existed in 1900.

In the second place, owing to the tragedy of General Gordon, the Sudan was, in 1900, the object of universal interest. Every Englishman felt that the story of their connection with Sudan affairs from the time of the Gordon mission onwards had been ignoble. Thus, on the reconquest of the country in 1898 when they discovered that a 'ravaged' and depopulated country had come within the orbit of their responsibilities, they welcomed the opportunity of making some amends for the past.

Almost immediately after the battle of Omdurman, Lord Kitchener, realising the true needs of the Sudan, issued an appeal to the British public in the name and memory of General Gordon, for funds to erect and endow a college at Khartoum. So generous was the response that within two months, the sum of £1,000,000 had been subscribed.

In his appeal, Lord Kitchener said: " certain questions will naturally arise as to whom we should educate. We should begin by teaching the sons of leading men, heads of villages, and heads of districts. They belong to a race very capable of learning and ready to learn.

Certain teaching in its early stages would be devoted to purely elementary subjects. Later, after these primary stages have been passed, a more advanced course would be instituted, including a training in

technical subjects, specially adapted to those who inhabit the Valley of the Upper Nile"¹³

The above appeal which Kitchener made to his countrymen casts light on the policy of the Sudan Government in the field of education.

A General Council of Gordon College was formed in London, and an Executive Committee was elected with full power to give effect to Lord Kitchener's proposals, with such modifications as might be deemed necessary. The plans for a suitable building for Gordon College were at once drawn up, and it was finally agreed that £30,000 should be spent on the building, etc., the remainder forming an endowment fund.¹⁴

Lord Kitchener left the Sudan soon afterwards upon his appointment as the Chief of Staff to Lord Roberts in South Africa, and Sir Reginald Wingate became the Governor-General of the Sudan and Sirdar of the Egyptian Army. In 1900, James Currie was appointed the first Principal of Gordon College and Director of Education in the Sudan, and it was through the wisdom and vision of these three great pioneers that the foundations of education in the Sudan were so well and truly laid.

The watchword of the Sudan Government from its earliest days was economic development, and an insistence, by means of education and research,

13. As quoted by Udal, N.R., Education in the Northern Sudan, p.5. This article is extracted from Atti dell' VIII Convegno, R.Accad. Ital. Oct.1938.

14. Ibid.

that the inhabitants of the country should be enabled to share in such development, both as beneficiaries and as administrative participants.

With these objects in view, the immediate aims of the Government's educational policy were:

1. "The diffusion among the masses of the people of an education sufficient to enable them to understand the machinery of Government, particularly with reference to the equitable and impartial administration of justice".
2. "The creation of a competent artisan class, which was entirely lacking at the time".
3. "The creation of a small administrative class, capable of filling many Government posts, some of an administrative, others of a technical nature"¹⁵.

The corollary of this policy was that no post in their own country which they were capable of filling was to be debarred to the natives of the Sudan. To give effect to this, in so far as the very meagre funds at the disposal of the Government then permitted, it was decided to provide the following educational facilities.¹⁶

1. Elementary Vernacular schools.
2. Instructional Workshops.
3. Primary (or Intermediate) Schools.
4. A training College for Elementary School Teachers.
5. The Gordon College.

Let us now discuss the above one by one.

15. Currie, Sir James, "The Educational Experiment in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan 1900-33", *Journal of the African Society*, 1934, p.364.

16. Udal, N.R., *op.cit.*, p.6.

1. Elementary Vernacular Schools.

At first, Elementary Vernacular Schools were opened in the capital towns of the various provinces. No fees were payable. The Syllabus was of a very simple nature, and any idea that the education given was in anyway a qualification for Government service was deliberately and actively discouraged.

The Khalwas or the Qur'ān schools fell within the category of Elementary Vernacular Schools. With a view to improving the teaching in the Khalwas, an interesting experiment was tried in certain districts, whereby the fakīs of the Khalwas were persuaded to allow their sons to undergo a short course of training, after which the latter returned as teachers to their fathers' Khalwas, and more modern methods of teaching and an improved syllabus were introduced. The teachers of these improved Khalwas received a small salary, and their Khalwas were inspected regularly by officials of the Education Department. The experiment proved very successful in the most northern provinces.

2. Instructional Workshops.

As regards the training of artisans, two instructional workshops --- and not technical schools --- were established, one in Khartoum and the other in Omdurman, where training was given on a production basis. This was an innovation at the time, but the objects aimed at -- the elimination of the pedagogic element and the creation of an industrial atmosphere from the commencement of the training -- were attained.

The workshops in Khartoum were attached to Gordon College. Their close connection with the college was of the greatest benefit to the boys in the College, who received their manual instruction in the workshops.

Carpenters, fitters and blacksmiths were trained in Gordon College workshops, while building and pottery were taught at Omdurman. There were no fees.

3. Primary (or Intermediate) Schools.

Primary Schools were at first opened in Khartoum (as part of Gordon College) and Omdurman, but later on other Primary Schools were instituted in the principal towns of the Northern Sudan. These schools were at first staffed with Egyptian teachers, who were gradually replaced by Sudanese teachers trained at Gordon College.

The number of boys in the Primary Schools was carefully limited to those who were likely to be required for Gordon College, for minor Government posts, and for Commerce, and was adjusted from time to time after close consultation between the educational and administrative authorities. The main object behind this was to ensure that the product of the Primary Schools should all be usefully and economically absorbed, and to obviate the creation of an unemployed and therefore discontented class of intelligentsia.

4. Training College for the Elementary School Teachers.

A three years' course of training for the Elementary Vernacular School teachers was given in the Elementary Training College, for which promising boys of good Arab family were selected as boarders from the "kuttab". In addition to the practical training in Pedagogy and the usual class subjects, particular attention was paid to manual instruction, physical training and games; and as far as possible the boys, on completion of their training, were sent as teachers to their own districts.

5. Gordon College.

Gordon College was opened by Lord Kitchener on his way to India in 1902. At first it contained a Primary School, a Training College for Arabic teachers, and a School of Law for the Qādis. The staff consisted of a nucleus of British education officers, but, pending the training of Sudanese school masters, most of the teachers were at first Egyptian.

The Sudan Government was anxious that the British education staff should take a share in the normal administration of the country, and an elaborate scheme was set on foot, by which it was made possible for them to do a tour of service on the administrative side, thus enabling them to acquire first-hand knowledge of the character of the people and of the machinery of the Government.

By 1908, Gordon College contained a Primary School, a Secondary School, a Training College for Teachers, a School of Law for the Qādis, and a School of Engineering and Surveying. Later, vocational courses in

science, accountancy and clerical subjects were added and arrangements were made whereby the boys in the various sections spent part of their summer holidays in the appropriate Government Departments, where they were given specialised training in their particular subjects.

The education given during the first two years of Gordon College Course was of a general nature and included manual instruction, but in the last two years the boys in the various sections received special vocational training in addition to their general educational course. The language of instruction was chiefly Arabic, but particular attention was paid to the teaching of English, which was entrusted to British tutors, who were also responsible for the character training of the boys and were in close contact with them. This character training was similar to that given in English Public Schools, but adapted to the Sudan, and every effort was made, both inside and outside the classroom, to make the boys useful and loyal citizens of the Sudan.

Most of the boys trained in Gordon College were absorbed in Government Departments on the completion of their course, and the rest found employment in various banks and commercial firms.

There were also Mission Schools in the Northern Sudan. They were all Primary Schools for boys and girls. These schools were opened in the principal capital towns in the Northern Sudan by the Church of England Missionary Society, the Armenian Mission, and the Roman Catholic Mission. These schools, indeed, rendered a very valuable service and were attended by Europeans as well as by the natives of the Sudan.

Besides there, there were also 'Kuttab' for the girls. The first Government 'Kuttab' for girls was opened at Rufaa in the Blue Nile Province in about 1908, and a few more were opened during the next decade. But it was not, however, until 1920, when Miss J.D.Evans¹⁷ was appointed Controller of Girls' Education and Principal of the Girls' Training College in Omdurman, that the problem of girls' education was seriously taken in hand.

III

In formulating its educational policy and in achieving the underlying objectives,¹⁸ the Government, however, was extremely cautious not to offend the religious sentiment of the Muslim population of the Sudan. In his appeals to the British public for raising the subscription for Gordon College, Lord Kitchener made it clear that "...there would be no interference with the religion of the people".¹⁹ Thus, in spite of Lord Cromer's remark about the Khalwas that "such schools are as nearly useless as any educational institutions could be",²⁰ the Sudan Government could not afford to abolish all these 'useless' Khalwas when it launched its ambitious educational programme. Whatever criticism might be put forward against these traditional educational institutions, the Government fully realised the importance of the role these institutions played in strengthening the faith of the Muslims in their religion. Judged by the

-
17. Miss J.D.Evans had been a teacher in one of the Egyptian Government Girls' Schools, and it was due to her organising capacity and tireless devotion to duty that girls' education made a remarkable progress.
18. See above, pp.50-51.
19. As quoted by Udal, N.R., op.cit., p.5.
20. Cromer, Modern Egypt. (1911 ed.); p.879.

standards of the West, these educational institutions might 'not comply with a single canon of education', but by teaching the Holy Qur'ān they well provided a solid foundation to the faith of the Muslims of the land. Thus, it is found that, instead of abolishing the Khalwas, the Government adopted appropriate measures to improve and modernise them.²¹ Henceforth, many of the Khalwas introduced elements of the three R's and these Khalwas received subsidies from the Government.²² Thus, the Khalwas, instead of being abolished, received liberal encouragement at the hand of the Government.

There is no doubt that in its new educational programme the Government laid a great stress on those elements which were to fortify the secular aspects of life. But this does not at all mean that the new educational set-up ignored the incorporation of religion and religious instruction. Rather, one of the corner stones of Government policy in this respect was to include in the new educational system religion and religious instructions, and by doing this, any appearance of seeking to interfere with the faith of the people was carefully avoided.

As stated earlier, the Khalwas were mainly concerned with the teaching of the Qur'ān and religion. But it would be wrong to suppose that the teaching of religion was a monopoly of the Khalwas. In the newly opened Elementary Vernacular Schools, adequate provision was made for religious instruction. A glance at the syllabus of studies of the Elementary Vernacular Schools (Standard I) can well provide a correct

21. See above, p. 52.

22. Udāl, N.R., op.cit, p.11.

picture of the situation. In these Elementary Vernacular Schools "... ten hours (in a week) are given to the 'Koran' and four hours to 'Religion', and sixteen hours to secular education (reading, writing and arithmetic)."²³ And in Standard II the same proportions were observed.²⁴ Commenting on the syllabus that made provision for religious instructions Lor Cromer remarked: "I am entirely in favour of giving religious instruction in these schools."²⁵ "In the first place", he explained the causes, "for political reasons it is an unavoidable necessity. In the second place, from every point of view, I prefer a religious to an irreligious Mohammedan."²⁶ Apart from the Khalwas and the Elementary Vernacular Schools, Gordon College itself had adequate provision for the teaching of religion. Particularly striking was the section which was entrusted with the training of the judges for the Muslim Law Courts. The inclusion of the Islamic teachings in Gordon College made the Sudan Government liable to attacks of some sections of the British public. The Edinburgh Missionary Conference²⁷ vigorously attacked the Sudan Government on the said score. "Gordon College" the Conference remarked, "though launched as a memorial to a great Christian with the money of those who wished to honour him as such, became the chief Muslim training institution."²⁸ Wingate, the Governor-General always apprehended an attack of this sort. In 1908 he wrote:

23. Cromer, Review of the Sudan Reports, 1904, op.cit., p.42.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. See below, pp. 145-146.

28. Ibid.

".... I am always a little afraid that amongst the thousands of original subscribers to Gordon College Fund there are a small number of Exeter - Hallites and non-conformists who, if the curriculum of the Gordon College were fully ventilated, might begin to question certain items, and might say they did not think their money was going to be expended in the propagation of Moslem religion"²⁹ And in fact once he had to defend and justify the teaching of the Qur'ān and Islam thus: "... as the majority of the youths in the College (Gordon College) and in the Primary and Elementary Vernacular Schools are Muslims, the teaching of the Qur'ān etc, is part of the curriculum"³⁰ This proper realization of the importance of the teachings of Islam for the Sudanese, the majority of whom were Muslims, was responsible for the unceasing Government encouragement for the promotion of religious instruction and religious studies. Thus, when the 'Ulamā of the Sudan showed their utmost interest in forming an Islamic Academy which afterwards came to be known as al-ma'had al-'ilmī, the Government displayed considerable interest. This Academy consisted of notable religious-scholars who used to deliver lectures in their own houses. Shaikh Ahmad al-Badawī, a great religious notable of the time was the first president of the Academy. One of the chief duties of the Academy was to spread the Islamic learning. At first the members opened their houses as the centres of learning. But in 1912 Abū'l Qāsim Muḥammad Hashim, the successor of Shaikh Ahmad al-Badawī, persuaded the Government to give land around the old mosque in Omdurman as waqf for the

29.Wingate to Gorst, Khartoum, Nov.17, 1908; W.P. 284/10.

30.Wingate to Seely, Erkoit, April 18, 1912; W.P. 181/1/3.

building of a new mosque and the Academy attached to it.³¹ A subscription list was opened and £16,000 collected and the Government allotted part of the market dues.³² Under the authority of the Legal Department the Academic Institute was administered by a Board of 'Ulamā; the teachings in the Academy followed those of the Al-Azhar. For the first time, the period of study was divided into three stages - Elementary, Secondary and Higher - each with defined syllabus and fixed timetables. The Academy played its part well and in the course of time produced a number of 'Ulamā, Imāms of the mosques, registrars of marriages and so on.

While the schools and other institutions in the Sudan provided the facilities for Islamic teachings, the Government was in favour of sending the Sudanese 'Ulamā to Al-Azhar for higher learning in Islamic studies. Thus, when there "... was a feeling among the higher Muslim dignitaries in the Sudan (principally Egyptian) that the study of Muslim Theology was being neglected ...",³³ the Governor-General suggested that, "... the only way to provide Moslem teachers for the Sudanese 'Ulamā was to send a few young Sudanese 'Ulamā to Azhar Mosque in Cairo where they will go through the regular curriculum of study - and return to the Sudan as qualified teachers".³⁴

Besides encouraging the teachings of religion, the Government, in pursuing its educational policy, was always cautious so that the people might not feel that in training their sons the Government had some ulterior

31. Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, op.cit, p.121.

32. Ibid.

33. Wingate to Kitchener, Oct.26, 1911; W.P. 301/4.

34. Ibid.

motive. To overcome this natural suspicion of the Sudanese Muslims, the senior British officials of the Education Department toured the country and visited the Shaikhs in their homes, thus winning their confidence and persuading them to send their sons to schools and particularly to Gordon College.³⁵

Again, proselytizing in the Northern Sudan was not permitted by the Government.³⁶ But in spite of this, as noted earlier, a few Primary Schools for boys and girls were opened by the missionaries in the principal towns in the Northern Sudan.³⁷ These schools were attended both by European and natives of the Sudan. But in this respect the greatest care was taken that no Muslim parent should send his child to one of these schools without clearly understanding before-hand the nature of the instruction given. To avoid the suspicion of Muslim parents it was therefore laid down in the administrative regulations of the Sudan Government that full consent of the parents or guardians must be obtained by the Director or Head of the school before any pupil was given religious instruction, no matter of what nationality or religion the pupil might be. And it was also laid down in the regulation that when religious instruction was being carried out, no other children except those whose parents had given the necessary consent might be present. These instructions were strictly followed.³⁸

35. Udal, N.R., Education in the Northern Sudan, op.cit., p.10.

36. For details see Chapter V.

37. For the reasons why these missionary schools were allowed in the Northern Sudan see, Ibid, pp.

38. Ibid.

In the educational sphere the Government was extremely cautious not to offend the sentiment of the Muslim inhabitants of the country in relation to the education of girls. In view of the suspiciousness and prejudices of the Sudanese Muslims on the subject, the policy of the Government in this respect was that no girls' school should be opened except at the request of the inhabitants.³⁹

In conclusion, we find that the Government formulated its new educational policy mainly to meet the demands of administrative machinery. Consequently the new system, beyond doubt, laid a greater emphasis on the secular aspects of life. But at the same time we have also found, how by retaining and improving the traditional educational system it tried to provide religious instruction to young generations. Undoubtedly, through the new educational system, the Government aimed at introducing "judiciously a modicum of Western culture"⁴⁰ But in attempting so, it never, as Wingate once asserted, intended to "alienate the sympathies of the student from the traditional Eastern culture"⁴¹

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39. Udal, N.R., Education in the Northern Sudan, op.cit., p.13.

40. Belfast News Letter, Nov. 11, 1912.

41. Ibid.

CHAPTER III *

The ṭarīqas of the Sudan and
the policy of the Government.

I

Literally, the word ṭarīqa means 'road, way, path'. It is popularly applied to certain organizations composed of religiously minded people united by a common faith in the virtue of some particular teacher, and practising a common ritual of prayer and devotion. The basic idea underlying their existence is the belief that common man, in order to attain salvation, needs the guidance of some person endowed with 'peculiar' spiritual virtue (baraka), who acts as intermediary between him and God.

The ṭarīqas are in fact, 'the institutionalised expression of Ṣūfism'¹. The teachings of Ṣūfism were spread throughout the Islamic world through the growth of these religious orders. The ṭarīqas themselves are the organizations which are the result of the development of the practice of mysticism by groups of devout Muslims. But to acquire this stage in which we mean them now, the formation and structure of the ṭarīqas had to pass through several stages.

* The first two sections of this Chapter are mainly based on:
 (a) Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, op.cit, pp.187-241; Chapter VI, The Religious Orders.
 (b) S.N.R., Vol.IV, No.4, 1921; pp.175-194; Article, Religious Confraternities of the Sudan (by C.A.Willis).
 (c) The Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol.IV, op.cit; Article Ṭarīqa.
 1. For details of Ṣūfism; see, The Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol.IV, Ibid, Article: Ṭasawwuf.

In the early days of the history of Ṣūfism, the early Ṣūfīs usually wandered about alone. But by nature, the mystical experience can never be completely solitary. It is also exogenous. Although Ṣūfism in practice consists of feeling rather than knowledge, there is a natural succession which involves example and training. Further the early mystics were fully conscious of the dangers inherent in Ṣūfism through the development of heterodox theophanistic mysticism. Hence, they felt the need for guidance and training. So gradually, aspirants to the mystical ṭarīqa ('path') came to put themselves under the guidance of older men. A ṭarīqa at first meant no more than the graded method of contemplative mysticism followed by one who had had a mystic call. Circles of disciples would gather around some venerated Shaikh, such as al-Juna-yd (d.A.D.909) and Sarī Saqatī (d.A.D.866), and a community would be formed. Although the community was always mobile and its members wandered about the country supported by alms, a retreat or **rest house** would often be founded as a centre. We hear of such a retreat at Damascus as early as 767 A.D. and in Khorasan about 815 A.D.² In the Middle East, these developed into monasteries during the eleventh century A.D.

These schools, however, represented only the teaching of the Shaikh and had a very limited influence. Therefore, for centuries these groups broke up on the death of the Shaikh. They were not the definite

2. Macdonald, D.B., Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory, (Handbooks in Semitics IX), 1903; p.177.

orders in the sense we know them now, but simply groups of disciples gathered around a loved and honoured teacher, which disintegrated after his death - the bond of allegiance being a personal one. At this stage when these groups used to break up on the death of the Shaikh, certain eminent pupils would ascribe themselves to their leader and bestow the ṭarīqa on others as from the dead Shaikh. The Shaikh ceased to train his disciples directly and a special cult then developed around his person. At this stage we find a change in the constitution of the body of adherents. While the dedicated disciples devoted themselves to asceticism and the duties of the order, the membership was now extended to include lay-adherents who took the ṭarīqa from the Shaikh but were allowed to carry on the normal duties of life. The ṭarīqa by this width of membership thus became a kind of 'religious-philanthropic body'.

Such a body came to be called a ṭarīqa, the word which then meant the particular system of spiritual training attributed to the founder of an order. Each ṭarīqa is supposed to have been handed down through a continuous chain (silsila) and adherents can produce a spiritual succession (isnād) from the Prophet through 'Alī or Abū Bakr to the existing Shaikh of the order, so the Shaikh is regarded as being the spiritual heir of the original founder, deriving his authority from his immediate predecessor.

It was not until the thirteenth century A.D., that corporations established themselves with the definite purpose of carrying on the name

and rule of life of the master. But once started, they developed a vigorous life and multiplied with great rapidity.

The *ṭarīqas* or religious brotherhoods should not be confused with sects. Here a clear-cut distinction may be made between the two. The sect is exclusive and demands total allegiance and views all those who are not members as heretics in varying degrees. But the members of a religious brotherhood, on the other hand, do not view those of other brotherhoods or even unaffiliated Muslims as heretics, but rather as individuals following another legitimate path to God. Members of different religious brotherhoods pray in the same mosque and attend the religious ceremonies of others.

The religious orders were not intended to replace the formal Muslim religious organization. They did not claim that the 'path' each endorses is a substitute for orthodox religious practices. On the contrary, orthodox practices were incorporated into the 'way', and even if they were not entirely so incorporated, all religious brotherhoods even now a days agree that orthodoxy is the basis of their religious faith and any 'path' is only an aid to enriching religious experience.

Indeed, some brotherhoods and individual mystics in the past found themselves in trouble with the orthodox hierarchy in the Muslim world because they had, on occasion, either not made the above point clear, or had gone so far as to claim that, rather than traditional rituals, the essential thing was the individual's pursuit of the 'path' to union with God. This claim, coupled with the fact that such mystical

experiences tended to encourage individualist, schismatic or heretical ideas, made such organizations the object of suspicion among the orthodox. The orthodox canonists constantly attacked the brotherhoods for such innovations as, their 'supererogatory exercises' and their dispensations; their use of stimulants, their jugglery, their belief in the supernatural efficacy of baraka. In particular, the canonists devoted special attention to the critical history of the isnād of initiation, exposing the lacunae and improbability of their chains.

Apart from the attacks of the orthodox canonists, the religious orders very often became objects of suspicion to governments, because being well organised mens' societies, they sometimes became embroiled in local politics.³

II

In the history of the Sudanese Islam, the religious brotherhoods played a highly significant role. In the Sudan, Islam was spread by pious men⁴ connected with one or other of the numerous religious orders which were then found active throughout the Islamic world. Although the work of proselytization was carried out by these pious men, it was not backed in any formal way by the orders to which they belonged. The efforts of these

3. Gibb, H.A.R., and Harold, B., Islamic Society and the West, O.U.P., 1937; Vol.1, Part 2; pp. 70-80.

4. In the early 19th century, Muhammad al-Nūr - W.Dayfallāh wrote Ṭabaqāt which gives the biographies of many of these holy men. Excerpts are given in Mac Michael, History of the Arabs in the Sudan, Vol.II, pp.217-323; S.Hillelson, 'Ṭabaqāt Wad DayfAllah. Studies in the Lives of the Scholars and Saints'. S.N.R. VI/2, 1923, pp.191-230.

individuals won not only converts to Islam in a general sense, but also adherents to particular orders⁵. Some of these pious men gained such success in their localities that they developed autonomous order or at least sub-orders 'in virtual independence of the parent order'. Such successful religious teachers came to be regarded as Saints (Walī, pl. Awliyā) and miracles were attributed to them. They were revered as possessors of baraka which might be transmitted by inheritance or contact⁶. Thus their tombs became places of pilgrimage, their possessions acquired the quality of relics and the headship of their orders became hereditary.

The introduction of the religious brotherhoods in the Sudan goes back to the days of the Funj Kingdom, the foundation of which led to the great missionary activity in those parts of the country which were still unconverted to Islam. The introduction of the religious brotherhoods in the Sudan passed through two main stages. In the first, the orders were introduced only to spread Islam. This coincides with the introduction of the orders like the Qādiriyya, Shādhiliyya and the Majdhūbiyya⁷. But in the second stage the introduction of the orders was influenced by events like the revival of Islam in the 18th and 19th centuries, which was going on outside the Sudan.⁸

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5. For the spread of Islam in the 19th Century by the religious orders, see, Arnold, T.W., *The Preaching of Islam*, London, 1896., pp.258 ff.
 6. See, Westermarck, E., *Pagan survivals in Muhammedan civilization*, London, 1933, pp.87-144.
 7. Each is discussed separately. See below, pp.69-71.
 8. Trimmingham discusses it fully, see, *Islam in the Sudan*, op.cit., p.189.

The following is a brief description of the religious brotherhoods of the Sudan.

(i) Qādiriyya: In the early thirteenth century, the Qādiriyya was the first to develop into a definite self-perpetuating order, designed to carry on not only the teaching, but also the name and the rule of a Shaikh.

The founder of this order was 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī who had his seat in Baghdad. Although 'Abd al-Qādir did not plan to establish an order, his devoted disciples, after his death, spread his teachings, his ecstatic practice which constituted the foundation for a body of rules, doctrines and practice. The followers of 'Abd al-Qādir continued to ascribe themselves to him and to initiate followers in his name.

The Qādiriyya order was introduced in the Sudan by one Tāj ad-Dīn al Bahārī in the second half of the tenth century, A.H. It is reported that Tāj ad-Dīn was advised by Dā'ūd b. 'Abd al-Jalīl Muḥammad, a wealthy slave trader of Arbaji, who met the former whilst on pilgrimage. Taj ad-Dīn remained in the Sudan for seven years, and appointed a number of Khalīfas, who later became the temporal and spiritual head of families, and even to this day, their descendents continue in double function in Jezira.

Nowadays, unlike the other orders, the Qādiriyya order has only nominal adherents. If it has any stronghold in the Sudan at all, it is in Jezira.

(ii) Shādhiliyya: It was more a school of Sūfī doctrine than an organised order. It was founded by Abū'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. 'Abd Allāh ash-Shādhilī. He was born in 1196 A.D., in Tunisia. While studying in Fas he was influenced by the Ishrāqī (Illuministic) School of Sūfism. But his order was never consolidated and he even did not initiate his pupils into any special rule or ritual. After his death, his teaching was spread by his disciples. One Sharīf Ḥamad Abū Dunāna is said to have introduced the order in the Sudan in 1445 A.D. Sharīf Ḥamad was the son-in-law of Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Sulaimān al Jazūlī, the propagator of the Shādhiliyya order in Morocco. The Shādhiliyya order acquired considerable influence in the Sudan during the Funj regime through one Khōjalī b. 'Abd ar-Raḥmān (d.1743) popularly known as the Saint of Tūtī Island. Khōjalī had not only numerous disciples but also great influence. He was succeeded by his son Aḥmad who was the Khalīfa for nearly sixty years. But the Shādhiliyya order could not maintain its influence for long. In course of time, the other orders like the Sammāniyya, Majdhūbiyya and the Mirghaniyya won away its adherents in Jezira, Damar and north of Khartoum.

(iii) Majdhūbiyya: This order was founded in the Sudan in the early 18th century by Ḥamad ibn Muḥammad al-Majdhūb al-Kabīr (1693-1776). The founder was a member of the Ja'aliyyīn tribe. But the order derived its tradition from the ṭarīqa of Abū'l Ḥasan ash-Shadhilī. Muḥammad al-Majdhūb started the order in Damar district which shortly became the main centre of education for such riverain tribes as the Ja'aliyyīn, Shā'iqiyya,

and Hasaniyya. Under Muhammad al-Majdhūb as-Sughayyir, the grandson of Muhammad al Majdhūb, there opened a new era in the history of the order. It is said that the Majdhūb unsuccessfully resisted the invasion of Ismā'īl Pasha. Following this, Muhammad al-Majdhūb fled to Saukin and from there to Mecca, where he became a follower of the Shādhiliyya order. But when he returned to Saukin in 1830, he got a good number of followers in that district.

The followers of the Majdhūbiyya order believed that the Mahdī would come from the West, and they warmly extended their support to the Mahdī. Even nowadays, the order has its adherents in Damar, and it also has its followings amongst the Beja tribes on the Red Sea Coast.

(iv) Sammāniyya: Historically, the Sammāniyya order is connected with the Khalwatiyya⁹ order of the 14th century. But in itself it is of much more recent creation. It was introduced into the Sudan by Shaikh Ahmad at-Tayyib b. al-Bashīr who was initiated in Medina either by As-Sammānī or his successor Muhammad Sharīf Nūr ad-Dā'im. Along both banks of the White Nile the order has gained its numerous family branches and followers.

(v) Idrīsiyya: This order was founded in the 18th century by Ahmad ibn Idrīs al-Fāsī. He was originally a follower of the Shādhiliyya order. At the beginning of the 19th century he played an important part in the reformist movement in Islam. After his death in 1837, the history of the order was one of dissention and discord; two of his famous pupils,

9. The order is now very weak in the Sudan.

Muhammad ibn 'Alī as-Sanūsī and Muhammad 'Uthmān al-Mirghanī entered into rivalry for their master's spiritual heritage. The result was that both of them founded two separate orders, the Mirghaniyya and the Sanūsiyya. When there appeared division in the order, Muhammad, a son of Ahmad al-Idrīs, recognised a pupil of his father, Ibrāhīm ar-Rashīdiyya, as his father's successor. Meanwhile, 'Abd al-Muta'āl, another son of Ahmad al-Idrīs, at first attached himself to the Sanūsī and then went to Dongola where he gained considerable success in reconstructing the order of his father. Another branch of the family in Arabia was headed by Muhammad ibn 'Alī b. Muhammad b. Ahmad Idrīs (1876-1923) who could establish the Idrīsī dynasty in Asir. He had also considerable influence in Dongola where he had married.

The family of Ahmad ibn Idrīs always claimed the leadership of the followers of the Mirghaniyya and the Sanūsiyya on the grounds that the founders of these orders were pupils of their ancestor. But none of the orders treated the claim seriously.

(vi) Rashidiyya: The order was founded by Ibrāhīm ar-Rashīdiyya a disciple of Ahmad ibn Idrīs. It is an off-shoot of the Idrīsīyya order. The order has a number of followers in Dongola, Omdurman and on the White Nile.

(vii) Mirghaniyya or Khatmiyya: Mirghaniyya is one of the best known and widely distributed religious orders in the Sudan. It was founded by Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghanī (1795-1853), one of the most famous disciples of Sayyid Ahmad ibn Idrīs, the founder of the Idrīsīyya order. Earlier it has been stated how after the death of Sayyid Ahmad ibn Idrīs, his two

pupils Muḥammad 'Uthman and Muḥammad 'Alī as-Sinūsi contended together for the leadership of the Idrīsiyya order.¹⁰ The result of the rivalry was the setting up of two independent Shaikhs. Because of his Sharīfian origin Muḥammad 'Uthmān could win the support of the Meccan Sharīfs against the Sanūsi. He completely modified the rule of Aḥmad b. Idrīs and his order derived its name 'Mirghaniyya' from Sayyid 'Alī Mirghani, an ancestor of his. Muḥammad 'Uthmān now sent his son al-Ḥasan to Eastern Sudan which had been previously influenced by his own teachings when he was sent to that region as a propagandist by Aḥmad ibn Idrīs. In Saukin, al-Ḥasan won over the Beja tribes of the Banī 'Āmir, the Ḥatanqa and Ḥabāb. From Saukin he also travelled other areas of the Sudan and had an outstanding success in Northern Kordofan, Dongola and Nubia.

Before his death in 1853, Muḥammad 'Uthmān had his order firmly established in the Northern Sudan. The death of Muḥammad 'Uthmān was followed by an internal rivalry among his descendents. In the Sudan, al-Ḥasan established himself as a great regional leader. He settled at Kassala and founded as the centre of his activity a village, Khatmiyya, after which the order in the Sudan is also popularly called the Khatmiyya. On his death in 1869, al-Ḥasan was succeeded by his son Muḥammad 'Uthmān Tāj as-Sirr. On the outbreak of the Mahdist revolt, Muḥammad 'Uthmān Tāj as-Sirr supported the Egyptian Government. Naturally, Muḥammad 'Uthmān Tāj as-Sirr was forced to fly to Cairo where he died in 1886.

10. See above pp, 71-72.

(viii) Ismā'īliyya: The Ismā'īliyya order was an off-shoot of the Mirghaniyya. It was founded by Ismā'īl al-Walī (1793-1863). It is said that when Muhammad 'Uthmān al-Mirghani came to Kordofan, he was initiated as one of his followers. In 1842, after his return from pilgrimage Ismā'īl al-Walī was permitted by his Shaikh to found his own branch which came to be known as the Ismā'īliyya. Ismā'īl al-Walī was succeeded by his son Muhammad al-Mekkī, a religious leader who played a considerable part during the days of the Mahdists and was greatly trusted by the Khalifa. Muhammad al-Mekkī died in 1906, leaving a number of sons, and a grandson, Muhammad Mirghanī Ismā'īl al Mekkī, who became the head of the family by seniority of descent. The followers of this order are mainly found in the Western Sudan.

(ix) Tijāniyya: This order was founded at Fez in the 18th century. It is perhaps the most important order in West Africa where it played a significant role in the spread of Islam. It was founded by Ahmad b. Muhammad b. al-Mukhtār at-Tijānī, who at first was affiliated to many orders. But it was not until 1781 when he founded his own rule on strict lines. Shortly before the outbreak of the Mahdist revolution, this order was introduced into the Sudan from Egypt by Muhammad b. al-Mukhtār (d.1882). Its adherents in the Sudan are chiefly found among the Fellātā¹¹ immigrants, and in certain parts of Darfur.

(x) Hindīyya: This order was started in the Sudan during the early days of the Anglo-Egyptian regime. It was founded by Sharīf Yūsuf al-Hindī,

11. These are usually West African pilgrims who, during the nineteenth century, on their return from Mecca, have settled permanently in the Sudan.

originally a follower of the Sammāniyya order. In this sense it is an off-shoot of the Sammāniyya order. It was started as a small group of devotees of the Sharīf in the Jazira area early in this century. Its founder (d.1941), was one of the important religious personalities of the Sudan during the Anglo-Egyptian regime.

(xi) ‘Azmiyya: Like the Hindīyya ṭarīqa, the ‘Azmiyya order was started in the Sudan during the Anglo-Egyptian regime. It was founded by an Egyptian Shaikh, Muḥammad Mādī Abū’l -‘Azā’im, (1870-1936). From 1905 to 1915, he was a teacher in Gordon College. Originally, Muḥammad Mādī was a follower of Shādhiliyya order. It is said that the reformist principles of Wahhābism, influenced him very much. Like the Wahhābis, he attacked the Saint worship, the veneration of the Shaikhs and mourning at funerals. In 1915 he was deported to Egypt for his 'tendentious political principles'.

(xii) Sanūsiyya: This is not a Sudanese religious brotherhood and consequently not prominently represented within the country itself. But still its mention is necessary as this order initiated a movement,¹² which was of considerable importance in a country bordering on the Sudan.

The founder of the order, Muḥammad ibn ‘Ali al-Sanūsī, a native of Algeria, was a prominent religious teacher in the second half of the 19th century. After making an extensive travel in Egypt and the Hezāj he established his order in Cyrenaica. The keynote of this order was to oppose the innovations introduced into the life and manners of Muslim countries by the ever increasing contact with Western civilization, an

12. For details of the movements of the Sanūsiyya confraternity, see, Evans.-Pritchard, E.E., The Sanusi of Cyrenaica, Oxford, 1949; pp.1-28.

opposition which took the form, less of active hostility than of passive resistance. As in many other reforming movements in Islam, the advocates of this order made attempts to base life exclusively on the Qur'ān and the Sunna of the Prophet, and to eliminate all accretions not expressly sanctioned by these two sources of authority.

The connection between the Sanūsiyya order and the Sudan was but slight. Impressed by the prestige of Muḥammad al-Mahdī, the son and successor of Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Sanūsī, the Sudanese Mahdī asked him to be his third Khalīfa, but the offer was rejected. During the time of 'Alī Dīnār, the Sanūsīs could establish a number of Zāwiya in Darfur. But except for a few immigrants from the Western Desert, there are almost no followers of the order in the Sudan.

Beside the orders mentioned above, there are a few more which were brought into the Sudan from Egypt during the time of the Funj. Such orders are the Ibrāhīmiyya, Rifā'iyya and Badawiyya. All these have adherents amongst the Egyptians and 'some blacks of slave origin' who had not any ṭarīqa affiliation.

Any description of the religious orders in the Sudan will remain incomplete unless something is said about their methods of organization, doctrines and their rituals. An attempt will be made in the following paragraphs to enumerate each of them.

The organizations of the religious orders are more or less similar. They differ only in such secondary details as grades, litanies and rituals. At the head of each order stands the Shaikh whose dignity

is usually hereditary. Immediately under the Shaikh are the Khalīfas, entrusted with the charge of a particular region. Under the regional Khalīfa are the sectional leaders, muqaddams, who can enrol and initiate new members; they are also responsible for the propaganda and management of the order.

It is difficult to extract the doctrines of many orders, as they are not always systematically formulated. But it is beyond doubt that as the orders are the 'institutionalised expression of Ṣūfism', they must have Ṣūfī doctrine behind them. But as Ṣūfism was always regarded with suspicion by the orthodox canonists, the first object of the founder of an order was to prove his orthodoxy and thus to avoid the reproach of innovation. The task of proving the orders orthodox could, however, be done in a simple way. On founding an order, its founder at once traced all his teachings and doctrines to some well-known orthodox Ṣūfī who transmitted it to him from the Prophet himself. As a second measure to prove their orthodoxy, the orders accept the Law (Shrī'a) 'as the starting point of the Ṣūfī path'. This is fully expressed in the following extract from a Mirghaniyya manual:

"Hold firmly, my brother, to the Shari'a, because you cannot approach the 'path' except through the Shari'a, nor can you approach the 'truth' except through the ṭarīqa Shari'a is the root, ṭarīqa is the branch and the ḥaqīqa (truth) is the fruit"¹³

13. Minḥat al-aṣḥāb by Aḥmād b. 'Abd ar-Raḥman ar-Ruṭbī, p.96; as quoted by Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, op.cit., p.207.

Although Sūfism, with its doctrine and teachings is the basis of the orders, but still in the Sudan most of the followers of the orders are completely ignorant of it. The abstract doctrines of Sūfism are too difficult for the masses to understand. Hence, to make their orders acceptable to the masses, the Shaikhs, instead of attaching top priority to the doctrines of Sūfism, insisted mainly on the Sūfī form of devotion, ascetic discipline, material obligation, spiritual experiences and miracles of the Saint.

The characteristic ritual of the orders is the performance of dhikr, a devotional exercise based on the Qur'ānic injunction to 'remember God with frequent remembrance' (XXXiii,41)¹⁴. The essence of the dhikr is the repetition many times of such phrases as 'God is great', 'There is no God but God', 'peace and blessings upon the Prophet', and the different names of God. Spiritual songs and hymns may be introduced, as also rhythmical movements of the body, resembling dancing. The actual details of the ritual vary from order to order. Dhikrs are held at regular weekly services, but may also be organised for special occasions, such as public or private feasts. Another part of the ritual of the ṭarīqas is contained in certain prayers and selections from the Qur'ān, which are used both for public and private devotion. These are known as hizb or wird.

14. As quoted by Trimmingham, Islam in the Sudan, op.cit, p.212.

III

Whatever might be the legal status of the religious orders vis a vis the orthodox Islam, it can not be denied that these orders played an important role in the history of Sudanese Islam. Even according to some devoted members, the stated aim of the ṭarīqa, even in these days, 'is to educate people in the principles of Islam'. In fact, the education of the Sudanese for several hundred years during the Funj Kingdom was in the hands of the various Fakhs who had their training with some ṭarīqa Shaikhs. The ṭarīqas, as they claim, 'taught the Law and the Qur'ān'.

Apart from the educational functions, the religious orders had some other distinctive roles to play. For the masses they provided supplementary aids or devices for obtaining fuller religious experience. To average people, the formalised Islam of the mosque does not permit much free expression of religious devotion and emphasizes a rather removed and distant relationship of the individual to God. The brotherhoods represent the organised expression of popular Muslim mysticism, providing the devotee with a method for achieving more intimacy with the supernatural, and breaking down the formalism of the mosque.

In the Sudan the religious brotherhoods also played an important social role. In a country like the Sudan, traditionally divided by tribal loyalties, the brotherhoods have in some respects functioned as a social force, cutting tribal lines and binding members of different tribes and

lineages together as spiritual brothers. On the other hand, tariqas often encouraged divisiveness, as when one tribe becomes affiliated chiefly with one brotherhood, while another becomes affiliated with a second. Further, the religious brotherhoods and their leaders have often been instrumental in the establishment of new communities. Thus, for example, a religious man establishes a retreat consisting of his home and school, around which his followers, derived from heterogeneous tribal origins, settle. Their unity is in this common residence around the religious leader and membership in his tarika. The group inter-marries, acquires a name after their religious leader and takes on some of the character of a tribe.

Owing to the manifold important functions performed by the religious orders, their religious Shaikhs commended a great influence during the days of the Funj. Sometimes the Funj kings invited the religious Shaikhs or 'holy men', as they were called, from outside. Although at that time the orders were not organised in the sense we now know them, yet the teaching and influence of these 'holy men' was greatly impressed upon the country. They not only captured the hearts of the intellectually backward masses, but many of their successors became influential guides of the Funj kings and princes, not only in spiritual, but even in political affairs. They were highly regarded and subsidized by the Funj kings. At the same time the common people sought their intercession, not only with God but also with their rulers. During their life these religious Shaikhs enjoyed royal favour and the

adoration of the people, and after their death they became intercessors with God and their tombs places of pilgrimage.

During the centuries preceding the Turko-Egyptian conquest of the Sudan, the influence of the religious orders was so deep-rooted into the Sudanese soil that the conquest could hardly undermine its power and influence. Of course, the establishment of one or two schools in the Sudan and the facilities provided in the al-Azhar for the Sudanese pupils, slightly reduced the educational function of the religious orders. But the loss was adequately compensated in another direction. The conquerors now attached a new value to the existence of the ṭarīqas. As the Turko-Egyptian conquest destroyed the local chieftains, the new rulers had to turn to the religious Shaikhs or the heads of the religious orders as the natural leader of the people. Hence like the tribal chiefs, these religious S haikhs were very often used as the instrument of administration. As the new rulers had to do this as a logical consequence of the conquest, this policy made the religious Shaikhs wealthy and respected members of the community. Thus, when the Mahdī raised his Standard in Aba Island, they were all, with the exception of the Majādhīb, hostile to his claims which they knew assailed their authority.

The status and influence enjoyed by the religious orders under the Turko-Egyptian rulers met its tragic end at the hand of the Mahdī when he established his temporal and spiritual authority over the country. The Mahdī was uncompromisingly hostile to the religious orders and their leaders. He at once abolished the religious orders, as he considered

them to be unnecessary and unscriptural. But this was perhaps not the only reason why they were abolished by the Mahdī. The vital issue which concerned him most was the fact that the leaders of the orders denied his claims. Although hostile at the beginning, the majority of the leaders of the orders afterwards found it expedient to join the Mahdī when the latter gained dramatic victory against the Egyptians. Only one or two like the head of the Mirghaniyya, who still opposed him, had to escape from the country. The Mahdī himself, at first a Shaikh of the Sammāniyya, refuted all who thought that he was founding a new trīqa by his change of the name of his followers whom he called Anṣār. He wrote in a letter to the Shaikh al-Islam, "the Prophet ... announced to me that my followers are as his followers and that the commonest of them in the sight of God is like unto Sheikh Abd el Kader el Gilani".¹⁵ After the Mahdī, the Khalīfa maintained the abolition of the orders quite successfully and looked upon them with suspicion as being seditious.

After the reconquest of the Sudan, the policy of the Government towards the Sudanese religious brotherhoods followed more or less the pre-Mahdist Turko-Egyptian lines. Under the Condominium Government the Shaikhs of the orders returned to the Sudan and quickly reclaimed the allegiance of the people who were attached to them by personal loyalties, except in certain parts of the White and Blue Nile provinces, where many clung to the belief in the Mahdī and his son.

15. Wingate, F.R., Mahdism and the Egyptian Sudan, London, 1891; p.47.

Although the Shaikhs of the orders re-established themselves under the new regime and flourished as days passed, yet it appears that in the beginning the British administrators in the Sudan could not appreciate the real influence of the religious brotherhoods in the popular Sudanese Islam. This view is confirmed when it is found that from the very beginning F.R.Wingate, the Governor-General of the Sudan, was uncertain what to do with the numerous religious orders. In June 1901, the Governor-General formed a Board of 'Ulamā to advise him in matters relating to Islam. In reporting his action to Cromer in Cairo, he pointed out that the number of the ṭarīqas had been on the increase and he hoped that with the aid of the Board of 'Ulamā he could deal with them quietly but firmly.¹⁶ He also pointed out that if anything was not done the orders might be very troublesome in the future.¹⁷ This clearly reflects Wingate's ambiguity as to what he wanted to do with the religious orders --- to suppress them as the Mahdī did, or what?

In spite of Wingate's obscurity, there are facts which indicate that in the beginning the Government was excessively deferential to the official view of the al-Azhar University and the 'Ulamā of Egypt which held that "... the orders were a deviation from orthodox Islam and should be discouraged".¹⁸ This was also made sufficiently clear by Slatin Pasha, the Inspector General of the Sudan Government. Slatin was very much

16. Wingate to Cromer, 13 June, 1901, W.P. 271/6.

17. Ibid.

18. Hill, Slatin Pasha, op.cit., p.87.

committed to the views of the al-Azharite 'Ulamā. It is from him that we come to know that under the Anglo-Egyptian Government, "the ṭarīqas were simply tolerated and not officially recognised"¹⁹ When, in 1912, the local branch of the Idrīsiyya order in Dongola persuaded a young inspector, H.C.Jackson, to give approval to the appointment of a fraternity official, a Khalifa, Slatin Pasha with great annoyance remarked: "He does not know that ṭarīqas are only tolerated and not officially recognised, and that we neither appoint nor dismiss Khalifas"²⁰ In the face of this, it is hard to accept that after the reconquest of the Sudan the Shaikhs of the orders returned to the Sudan with what Trimingham called, "the official recognition"²¹

In 1911, R.Savile, the Governor of Kordofan, appointed a leader of the Mirghaniyya fraternity and thus gave 'official recognition to the office'. This time also Slatin expressed his dissatisfaction that the action of the Governor of Kordofan was wrong.²² According to Slatin 'the Government should have nothing to do with these religious orders' as he thought the leaders were only after the monetary profit that accrued to them from promising people a place in heaven in the next world, making women pregnant etc. Consequently, he thought the leaders were really frauds and that the Government could not be responsible for their action.²³

19. This view of Slatin on the ṭarīqas is recorded by Major General S.S. Butler, in his diary, 23rd Oct.1911, when he had an interview with Slatin and had talks on the ṭarīqas - see, Butler's diary, W.P. 400/10.

20. Hill, Slatin Pasha, op.cit, p.93;

21. Trimingham, Islam in the Sudan, op.cit., p.201.

22. Butler's Diary; op.cit. W.P. 400/10.

23. Ibid.

Slatin further held that "if the Government appoints a man it must be responsible for his actions. The only religion recognised by the Government is the orthodox Mohametanism. If these sects or *tarikas* have quarrels and the quarrels become rows and disturbances the offenders must be tried under Penal Code. Or if they go against Mohametan tenets they must be tried by Mohametan Law.²⁴"

While this was the official attitude of the Sudan Government towards the religious orders, still it cannot be denied that the orders flourished under the Condominium Government while they had been suppressed by the Mahdī. The new Government had to tolerate them for the same reason which required the former Turko-Egyptian rulers to favour the orders.²⁵

But the new Government did not treat all the orders equally. The orders with more influence and high prestige were treated accordingly. Thus, following the policy of the Turko-Egyptian days, the new regime showered more favour on one particular religious order as it commanded great influence and significance in the country. This was the Mirghaniyya order. A brief background is perhaps necessary to indicate why, leaving aside the others, the new regime favoured this particular order.

The Mirghaniyya order had long been established in the Sudan and drew most of its adherents from the natives in the Northern and Eastern Sudan. They were more peaceably inclined than the nomad Arabs of Western

24. Ibid.

25. See above p. 81.

Kordofan. Many of them settled down to agricultural pursuits --- tending their water wheels along the banks of the Nile between Khartoum and the Egyptian frontier. They had a stake in the country and an interest in its peaceful development. Not only was the militancy of Mahdism a threat to their own 'way of life' but in particular many of the followers of the Mirghaniyya had ties of blood and culture with Egypt. It was only natural, therefore, that their sympathies lay with the people of Egypt with whom they had these sentimental links. Thus they looked to Egypt as the only power who could prevent their ṭarīqa from being overrun by the more warlike Mahdists.

The fact that the followers of the Mirghaniyya order had remained loyal to the Egyptian Government had a determining influence on the policy of the Sudan Government after the reconquest. After the Mahdists had been overthrown, the Condominium Government discovered that the tribal organization had disintegrated; the temporal chiefs had either become the Mahdist supporters or been killed. Hence, the Government found that amid the ebb and flow of rival religious denominations, the important ṭarīqa Mirghaniyya provided the only solid rock upon which any kind of administrative edifice could be built. As the Mirghaniyya order had so many followers living in many parts of the Sudan, Wingate, the Governor-General, felt that ".... to back them up, and make use of their proved loyalty, would gradually exercise a stabilizing influence over much of the country"²⁶ Thus, even

26. See - Papers concerning the Proposed Memoir (by ? of ?) Gen. Sir Reginald Wingate., 1946, op.cit., W.P. 457.

before the Condominium was established, when the Anglo-Egyptian troops were still far distant from Khartoum, but fast approaching the city, the army busied itself with the rebuilding, as far as possible, of the Khatmiyya mosque which also contained the tomb of the celebrated Persian missionary, S haikh al-Mirghani. Moreover, his descendent Sayyid 'Alī al-Mirghani, then living in Egypt, was sent for and installed as custodian of the tomb and mosque of his ancestor.²⁷ All this was the idea of Wingate even when he headed the Intelligence Department in Cairo. The idea of Wingate was prudently adopted and when he himself became the Governor-General of the Sudan, he gave preferential treatment to the Mirghaniyya order. In 1901, he created the Board of 'Ulamā, the members of which were largely drawn from among the followers of the Mirghaniyya order.²⁸ And it was with the help of this Board of 'Ulamā, dominated mainly by the Mirghaniyya that Wingate wanted 'to deal quietly but firmly' with other ṭarīqas which were then growing increasingly in number. This clearly indicates the amount of favour that the Mirghaniyya order could draw from the Government.

Apart from the prominent position the Mirghaniyya held in the Board of 'Ulamā, their leader, Sayyid 'Alī al-Mirghani, was presented to the King, when the latter paid a visit to the Sudan on his way back from India. In the same year (1900) the Sayyid was honoured with the C.M.G. for his loyalty to the Government. All these were rare honours which the

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27. Willis, C.A., An account of the visit to H.M. the King of a deputation of Sudanese Notables - (A type script manuscript) p.12;
 28. Papers concerning the Proposed Memoirs (by ? of ?) General [W.P.204/1. Sir Reginald Wingate, op.cit.

leaders of other orders could not even think of at that time.

The loyalty of the Mirghaniyya was counted much in ensuring the good Government of the country. The Mirghaniyya family lived in various places throughout the Sudan. Although they were under the local authority of the district in which they lived, the Government looked upon Sayyid 'Alī al-Mirghani as their head. Wingate was so concerned for the loyalty of the Mirghaniyya followers, that from time to time he used to advise the Sayyid to devote special attention on his followers' doings, especially in matters of religion, so that they might always be good and loyal.²⁹

Among many other favours enjoyed by the Mirghaniyya order was a financial allotment which the representatives of this order used to receive from the Government. It is, of course, difficult enough to give a precise amount of this allotment, as they were highly confidential. But whatever might be the amount, under no circumstances was the Government prepared to discontinue this payment. In 1916, Cecil put forward a suggestion to Wingate to stop this payment and thereby to curtail the financial liability of the Government. But Wingate promptly opposed the idea, and considered the move highly impolitic. In plain words he wrote Cecil: "The cessation of the payment would be a mistake and not worthwhile".³⁰

Although the apparent intention of the Government was 'to deal with' the religious orders through the Board of 'Ulamā, it is difficult to measure the amount of success it achieved in this direction. In spite of

29. Wingate to Sayyid 'Alī al-Mirghani, 28 May, 1912; W.P. 101/5.

30. Wingate to Cecil, Erkoit, 5 July, 1916; W.P. 201/2.

its special favours to the Khatmiyya, the Government did not appear to stand in the way by blocking the formation of some new orders which were created under its very nose. Al-Hindīyya³¹, one of the most influential religious brotherhoods of the Sudan was formed during the early days of the Condominium regime. It is particularly interesting to note that it was created by Sharīf Yūsuf al-Hindī, a man who even happened to serve in the Mahdist Government. The Government appeared to have made no objection when he established near Khartoum a rest house and a religious school. In the latter the older men were prepared for the role of Khalīfa, i.e. the representatives of the Sharīf, who functioned in the more remote districts as religious teachers and missionaries of the order. Similarly another order 'Azmiyya³² came into being in 1915-16. It was started by Muhammad al Madī, who even served in the Egyptian Education Department until 1915.

As stated earlier, the Government had to bestow favour on the Mirghaniyya for great political benefit; but this did not make it blindly partial to this particular order. On the contrary, in many inter-order quarrels which fell within the jurisdiction of Penal Code, the Government's decision on many occasions went against the Mirghaniyya. On two such occasions, the Majdhūbiyya order, which was pro-Mahdist, gained Government verdict in its favour when there arose quarrels between itself and the Mirghaniyya. As previously stated, the followers of Majdhūbiyya order joined Mahdiyya, while the Mirghaniyya kept loyal to the Egyptian Government.

31. See above, p. 74.

32. See above, p. 75.

After the conquest of Kassala by the Mahdists, Shaikh Muhammad al-Majdhūb took a slave woman belonging to 'Uthmān al-Mirghani. From that slave woman Shaikh Muhammad al-Majdhūb had a daughter. On the reconquest, the Mirghani people restored the slave woman and her daughter. Shaikh Muhammad al-Majdhūb then complained to the Government which allowed him to have his daughter.³³ Similarly, at Saukin, which was under the Egyptian rule even during the Mahdiyya, the Egyptian authority gave a Zāwiya of the Majdhūbiyya order to the Mirghaniyya. But sometime after the reconquest, when Saukin was brought under the Sudan Government, the Khalifas of the Majdhūbiyya complained to the Government which persuaded the Mirghaniyya followers to give the Zāwiya back to the people of the Majdhūbiyya order.³⁴

In their internal matters such as organization, rituals etc, the orders enjoyed complete freedom from the Government interference, so long as they did not go against the basic principles of Islam.³⁵ Each order had its own source of income over which the Government exercised no control. Their main income came from the collection of Zakāt, a kind of religious offering ordained by the Muslim Law to be set aside for religious purposes. It was the custom of many to offer to the head of their order this Zakāt, for the receiving of which tribal and religious leaders very often competed. The collection of Zakāt, therefore, gave rise to jealousies between the chiefs of tribes and the leaders of the orders. To this complicated issue the Government adopted a very sound attitude. It maintained that, "whereas

33. Naum Sukayr, "History of the Majdhūbiyya tarika", (A type script manuscript), p.16. W.P. 195/7.

34. Ibid;

35. This Slatin made clear to Butler, see above, p. 85.

the voluntary payment of Zeka, being a matter of private conscience, could be left to the individual, the collection of Zeka either by tribal or religious leaders was not to be countenanced.³⁶

In spite of the fact that the religious orders enjoyed freedom in their internal matters, yet in one of their internal affairs, such as the question of succession, the Government tried to interfere, particularly when the issue involved some political implications. This happened with the Sanūsiyya order, which though not originally a Sudanese order, had a small number of followers in Darfur. It is necessary here to throw some light on the relation between the Sanūsi confraternity and the Anglo-Egyptian Government.

In the beginning of the 20th century, the relation of the Anglo-Egyptian Government was friendly with the Sanūsiyya confraternity. Wingate himself advocated a policy of friendliness and good-will, just as he did with the Sharīf of Mecca, Sayyid 'Alī al-Mirghani and other religious powers.³⁷ On the death of the Great Sanūsī in 1902, and the election of his cousin Sayyid Ahmad to take his place during the minority of the Great Sanūsī's son, Sayyid Muhammad Idrīs, Wingate's view was still to continue the same line of policy and to treat Sayyid Ahmad very much on the same line as his predecessor.³⁸

When the Italo-Turkish war broke out, in which the Sanūsīs subsequently sided with the Turks in Cyrenaica, the Italian Government

36. Hamilton, J.A. de.G.(edited) - The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan from within; op.cit, p.211.

37. Wingate to Milo Talbot, June 14, 1916; W.P. 131/10.

38. Ibid.

requested the British Government to mediate between the Italian Government and the Sanūsī.³⁹ The British Government, however, refused to do so, as it did not wish to jeopardise its friendly relation with Turkey. But it justified its inability on the ground that the Sanūsī refrained from undertaking any hostility either against Egypt or against the Sudan.⁴⁰ Even during the early days of the beginning of World War I, the Grand Sanūsī, Sayyid Ahmad maintained friendly relations with the Anglo-Egyptian Government by refusing to be influenced by Germans or Turks.⁴¹ And in view of this friendliness on the part of the Sanūsī chief, Clayton proposed to Wingate to give the Sanūsī some kind of subsidy as was given to similar chiefs elsewhere by the British Government.⁴² When the Foreign Office in London authorised the Governor-General to act as he thought as regards the subsidy for the Shaikh Sanūsī,⁴³ the Governor-General was in favour of making some money advance for the ostensible purpose of improving his Zāwiyas in Jughub and other places within Egyptian frontier.⁴⁴ All these Anglo-Egyptian authority were prepared to do only because in its dealings with the Sanūsī it was principally actuated by a desire to secure the good-will of an independent religious chief, who could refrain the fanaticism of his followers and prevent them from joining a Jihād.

So long as this friendly relation existed between the Sanūsī and the Anglo-Egyptian Government, there was no attempt on the part of the

39. Clayton to the Private Secretary of the Governor-General of the Sudan, 13th April, 1915, W.P. 131/10.

40. Ibid.

41. From the Copy of a telegram from Clayton to the Governor-General, March 9, 1915, W.P. 131/4.

42. Ibid.

43. From the Copy of a telegram from Clayton to the Governor-General, Cairo, 10th March, 1915; W.P. 131/4.

44. Ibid.

latter to interfere with the former's internal matters -- such as the question of succession or otherwise. But with the progress of the World War I, when Turkey eventually joined against Great Britain, the Pan-Islamic party in Constantinople made strenuous efforts to induce Sayyid Ahmad, the Sanūsī Chief to proclaim a Jihād against England and to attack Egypt.⁴⁵ When the Sanūsī chief yielded to the pressure of the Pan-Islamic party, Wingate suggested a policy with the object of "...breaking up the Senussi confraternity on divide et impera lines".⁴⁶ And this Wingate tried to achieve by running Muhammad Idris Sanūsī, the son of the late Great Sanūsī, Muhammad al-Mahdī, against Sayyid Ahmad.⁴⁷ Henceforward, the Anglo-Egyptian Government began to support the cause of Muhammad Idris to the real headship of the fraternity. In return, Muhammad Idris also gave an undertaking to Wingate, now the High Commissioner in Egypt, to the effect that he would be loyal to the British and Egyptian Governments.⁴⁸

During the World War I, the Sanūsī Chief was not the only person who had to be deterred from the proclamation of a Jihād. For internal security and the loyalty of the subjects, the Sudan Government mainly depended upon the religious leaders such as the heads of the religious orders, who exercised a strong influence on their followers. In this crucial moment, the influence of these religious leaders were utilized for a definite political purpose.⁴⁹ These religious leaders did their best to keep their followers quiet. Wingate, in turn, was not ungrateful.

45. "Note on the Senussi", Intelligence Department, War Office, Cairo., 26th April, 1915; W.P. 131/4.

46. Wingate to Milo Talbot, 14th June, 1916; W.P. 131/10.

47. Ibid.

48. Muhammad Idris al-Mahdī al-Sanūsī to Wingate, 17th April, 1917; W.P.100/19

49. See below, p. 114.

He tried to reward those religious leaders who rendered to the Government such a valuable service. For his loyalty to the Government, Sayyid 'Alī al-Mirghani was honoured with the K.C.M.G. For the Sayyid's brother, Sayyid Ahmad al-Mirghani, Wingate made strong recommendation to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.⁵⁰ Recalling the past services of the Mirghaniyya order to the Government, Wingate wrote: Head of the important Mirghaniyya family at Kassala, "the influence of Sayyid Ahmad al-Mirghani over the tribes of Eastern Sudan had been consistently exerted in the interest of the Sudan Government".⁵¹ For Sayyid Ahmad al-Mirghani, he recommended a C.M.G. Similarly for Sharif Yūsuf al-Hindi he wrote to the said authority: "A religious notable of outstanding personality and wide spread influence, whose declaration of adhesion to the British Government during the war had a most beneficial effect. Since then he rendered valuable service in inducing the Arabs to supply transport camels required for military operations in Sinai, Egypt and Darfur."⁵² For the Sharif, Wingate recommended an Honorary C.M.G.

As no native princes were left in the Sudan, the Government under the pressure of circumstances had to tolerate the emergence of the heads of the religious orders. Even the Government tended to foster some of them such as the Mirghaniyya. While doing so, the Government was, of course, quite aware of the views of the Al-Azhar 'Ulamā that 'the orders were deviation from the orthodox Islam and should be discouraged'. Officially,

50. Wingate to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Khartoum, Oct. 8th, 1916; W.P. 202/1.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

the Sudan Government was committed to the al-Azharite views. But when the political and administrative expediency required the Government to take the help of the religious orders, it created a dilemma for the Government. This explains why Wingate was confused as to what to do with the orders. Although the orders were never officially recognised by the Government, still, in practice, the political necessity of the country ultimately prevailed over the orthodoxy of the al-Azharite 'Ulamā. The existence of the religious orders and their leaders were greatly valued; the powers and influence of the heads of the religious orders were utilized for political purposes whenever such need arose. In fact, it was an extremely difficult task to suppress or abolish the orders. Because in contrast with other countries where it is only certain groups or strata of the population who belong to a tariqa, all Muslims in the Sudan have an attachment to one or other of the tariqas. This made the abolition or suppression of the orders by the Condominium Government an impossible task. Moreover, there appears to have been no persistent demand on the part of the 'Ulamā, either Egyptian or Sudanese in this respect, as the 'Ulamā themselves were members of one or the other of the orders.

Undoubtedly, during the period of the Anglo-Egyptian rule, the heads of the religious orders, were made to play the role of native princes in the Sudan. But this did not lead to a policy on the part of the Government, "of playing off one religious leader against another...."⁵³ This might have happened in the late 1920's and onwards when Sudanese politics quite naturally revolved around two great religious leaders like

53. Trimingham, Christian approach to Islam in the Sudan, O.U.P., 1948; p.26.

Sayyid 'Alī al-Mirghani and Sayyid 'Abd ar-Rahman b. al-Mahdi. But the existing papers give no encouragement to the view that this happened well before 1919 when with the Egyptian revolution relations between Egypt and Great Britain became strained.

On the whole, the relation between the Government and the leaders of the orders was one of cordiality. On the occasions of state functions and ceremonies they were very often invited. It helped not only the exchange of greetings between the high Government officials and the leaders of the orders, but also the ideas and feelings. Although nowadays a handful of Sudanese 'Muslim Brothers' accuse the British for destroying their Islamic Society and corrupting their religious leaders,⁵⁴ the Government was lucky enough that the more powerful of the Sudanese orders, the Khatmiyya and the al-Hindiyya were favourable to it. The attitude of the orders towards the Government depended entirely upon that of the leaders. Naturally the leaders who had an assured position did not try to encourage fanaticism. This attitude of the orders was, of course, not inspired by their sympathy for the British; on the contrary, in adopting this attitude the leaders and orders were solely inspired by their own interests.

Whatever it might be, this attitude of the orders and their leaders, as time passed on, proved to be very valuable for the steady development of a stable rule in the Sudan.

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54. Barkley, H.B., Burri al-Lamaab, a Suburban Sudanese Village near Khartoum; New York, 1964; p.162.

CHAPTER IV

The Government policy towards
Mahdism, Mahdists and their leader.

I

In the early years of its administration, the Anglo-Egyptian authorities in the Sudan very often felt that the battles of Omdurman and Omdwaykarat served as death blows to Mahdism¹ and the Mahdists in the Sudan. In the battle of Omdurman, September 2, 1898, Kitchener completely defeated and routed the army of the Mahdist Khalifa, with the exception that the Khalifa 'Abd Allāh with some of his followers managed to escape. The battle of Omdwaykarat, however, witnessed the fugitive Khalifa defeated and killed by Wingate, the future Governor-General of the Sudan.²

Following the battle of Omdwaykarat in which the Khalifa of the Mahdi was killed, Wingate sent two telegrams, one to Lord Cromer, then His Majesty's Agent and Consul General in Egypt, and another to his wife. These two wires largely substantiate the views held in the previous paragraph that these two battles destroyed Mahdism in the Sudan. To Lord Cromer, Wingate wired: ".... Mahdism received its coup de grace on the 24th and I hope a new era will open for the unfortunate Sudanese people"³

1. For definition see below, p. 103.

2. For the details of these campaigns see, Churchill, W.S., *The River War*, Vol. II, London, 1900; pp. 1-165.

3. Wingate to Cromer, 25th Nov. 1899; W.P. 269/11.

To his wife he expressed his inner feelings of joy, resulting from the victory over the enemy: "Hurrah! Mahdism finished..."⁴ The same degree of optimism was entertained by the people of Britain as well. "Mahdism has been", commented a British daily, "destroyed root and branch....."⁵

All these expressions were hardly more than emotional outbursts of the victors, and contained very little intrinsic value. In fact, these two battles by no means meant the death of Mahdism in the Sudan. In 1902, only three years after the battle of Omdwaykarat, Reginald Wingate, then the Governor-General of the Sudan, recorded in his diary confessing that "there is plenty of latent Mahdism and until the generation born and brought up in that faith has died out, we shall be subject to its outbreak in one form or another....."⁶ He even maintained the same view in 1908: "..... Mahdism in this country is not really dead; it has been stifled, but there is still plenty of vitality in it and we must be prepared for a recrudescence from time to time"⁷.

The apprehension of the Governor-General, of course, had some real basis, for the early years of the Anglo-Egyptian rule in the Sudan witnessed several attempts of the Mahdist followers to revive and propagate the faith. Early in 1900, a party of Mahdist followers in Omdurman, who expected the coming of the Prophet Jesus,⁸ since the Khalifa of the Mahdī was dead, threatened public security. In 1903, a 'Mahdī' appeared in Kordofan and tried to propagate the Mahdist ideas. Again in the following year there

4. Wingate to Lady Wingate, 24th Nov. 1899; W.P. 269/11.

5. The Daily Telegraph, 27th Nov. 1899.

6. Wingate's personal Diary - Feb. 1902; W.P. 272/8.

7. Wingate to Gorst, Khartoum, 10th May, 1908; W.P. 282/5.

8. The Mahdists believed that the revelation of the Mahdī was to be followed by the second coming of Nabī 'Īsā. It is an article of their faith.

appeared a Nabī 'Īsā at Sinja on the Blue Nile. All these events tended the authority to change its view that Mahdism was dead in the Sudan.

Realising that Mahdism was by no means a spent force, the Government felt that unless carefully watched and checked at every turn this faith might again become a danger to the peace and security of the country. In the survival of the Mahadist cult, the Government could clearly ascertain two distinct tendencies: 'the fanatical spirit of a die-hard remnant, and the slow but steady transformation of Mahdism into an orthodox *ṭarīqa*! despite the fact that the Mahdī denied that his followers constituted an order and proclaimed the liquidation of all orders. The first tendency was displayed in the belief held by the Mahdists that as Muhammad Ahmad was the true Mahdī, the prophecies must be fulfilled which foretold that the revelation of the Mahdī was to be followed by the short reign of Anti-Christ and the Second Coming of Jesus. The new Government was accordingly cast for the role of the Dajjāl,⁹ and the dreamers of this dream looked anxiously for the coming of the Nabī 'Īsā. Even many spurious prophecies began to circulate. They were attributed to Farāh who lived in the seventeenth century. One such prophecy said "At the end of time the English will come to you, whose soldiers are called police There will be no deliverance except through the coming of 'Īsā".¹⁰

Thus, from the very beginning the Government was very cautious to deal with any symptom of Mahdist revivalism, however insignificant they might appear, because it knew very well how from an insignificant beginning the idea ultimately caused enormous danger. As part of their policy, the

9. Anti-Christ.

10. Quoted from Hillelson, Sudan Arabic Texts, p.159.

conquerors, just after the reoccupation of the Sudan, made attempts to shake the belief of the people in Mahdī and Mahdism. As a means to this end, Kitchener, after the battle of Omdurman, destroyed the tomb of Mahdī, the source of religious inspiration of the Mahdists. After the battle he ordered the embalmed body of the dead to be turned out of the grave; the head was wrenched off and the trunk was cast into the Nile.¹¹ When this action was questioned in the British Parliament, Kitchener, justifying his own action, wrote to Lord Cromer that the tomb of the Mahdī was destroyed after due deliberation and that it was prompted solely by political considerations.¹² And in a further telegram, explanatory of the same action, Kitchener expressed himself in the following terms:

"It was advised, after the taking of Omdurman that it would be better to have the body removed, as otherwise many of the more ignorant people would consider that the sanctity with which they surrounded the Mahdi prevented us from doing so"¹³

Hence, the destruction of the tomb of Mahdī and the desecration of his body were two attempts by the authority to undermine the people's belief in Mahdī and his mission. Apart from these, other measures were adopted to weaken the cause of the cult by making its principal votaries practically inactive. Of the three Khalīfas of the Mahdī, Khalīfa ʿAbd Allāh and Khalīfa ʿAlī, died in the course of battle. Khalīfa Muhammad Sharīf, and two

11. Contemporary Review, Vol. LXXV, London, 1899; p.295.

12. Kitchener to Cromer, 1st Feb, 1899; P.R.O./F.O. 30/57/14.

13. Quoted from a letter of Lord Cromer to the Marquess of Salisbury, Cairo, 12th March, 1899; P.R.O./F.O. 30/57/14.

14. Following the principle of early days of Islam, the Mahdī appointed four Khalīfas or successors: (a) Khalīfa ʿAbd Allāh; (b) Khalīfa ʿAlī, (c) ʿAlī al-Sanūsī; (d) Khalīfa Sharīf. ʿAlī al-Sanūsī rejected the offer and consequently that seat remained vacant.

of the Mahdī's sons al-Bushra and al Fadjil who survived the battles were banished to Shukkaba where they were intended to lead a normal life under close police supervision. Other important followers of Mahdī were sent to Rosetta prison to lead a life of complete inactivity.

But by destroying the tomb of Mahdī and putting into prison his principal followers, the Government could hardly achieve its desired end. In fact, all the attempts made to destroy the influence that lingered around the name of Mahdī and the Khalīfa proved hardly successful. No doubt the crushing military defeat that the Mahadists suffered at the hand of Lord Kitchener dispirited them, but it could not shatter their beliefs in the Mahdī. The Mahadists, beyond doubt, lost what little sympathy remained among the people in the Nile Valley north of Omdurman; but along the White Nile and in the Jezira the movement was still strong. In fact, the majority of the Mahdists continued to revere the memory of the Mahdī and the Khalīfa. In their mind the Mahdī enjoyed a very strong position; whether he was defeated or victorious -- he was their hero. If victorious, it would be clearly because God fought on his side and gave him victory over his enemies. If vanquished, he was a martyr who fell fighting for his God. Hence, everyway -- the veneration of the Mahdī was assured. In the early years of the administration, H.H.S.Morant, the Governor of Halfa, discovered that five Mahadist prisoners in the Zabtia prison had still firmly adhered to their belief that Muhammad Ahmad was the Mahdī and that the Nabi ^cĪsā was to come. He was simply astonished to find that the defeat of the Mahdists and their subsequent misfortune could not upset their belief in Mahdī and

Mahdism.¹⁵ Still more, the survival of the Mahdism and the attitude of the Mahdists towards the Government was best summed up by a contemporary British daily, "In spite of the crushing defeats of the Mahdists" it continued, "the people almost adore the Mahdi....; they hate the enemy, whoever he may be, but most of all when he is a foreigner".¹⁶ The Government could also correctly estimate the gravity of the situation. In his annual report for 1908, the Governor-General recorded that the final overthrow of the authority of the Khalifa "has not resulted in the total extinction of Mahdism as a faith. It is true the Mahdi died, but the inquisities and the subsequent fall of his Khalifa have not yet altogether destroyed the belief of many of his followers in his divine mission".¹⁷

The Government was thus quite alive to this situation and had to adopt a definite policy towards Mahdism and the Mahdists so that the latent Mahdism might not again constitute a threat to the established authority and the Government.

II

Mahdism in the Sudan, like other religious movements, had its special doctrines, venerated leader, sacred writings, places and objects and method of organization. It is better to study the policy of the Government towards the cult and its followers, not only in the pronouncements which from time to time had been formulated, but in its practical application to these several

15. Reports on the Finances, Administration and the Condition of the Sudan, 1906, Part IV; p.640.

16. The Liverpool Daily Post, 15th April, 1910.

17. Reports on the Finances, Administration and the Condition of the Sudan, 1908, p.42.

elements. Hence, as a first step, it would be useful to explain and indicate briefly what each of them meant to the Mahdists themselves.

(a) The doctrine of Sudanese Mahdism:

Mahdism, in general, is a Messianic belief held by the orthodox Sunnī Islam that God will send the 'Rightly Guided One' (Mahdī) who will be the precursor of the millenium and the second coming of the Christ and will deliver the world from evil, instituting the reign of perfect. In orthodox Islam the Mahdī is still to come. But the history of Islam records the rise of many Mahadist movements, a characteristic of all being that they are militant, directed against abuses and heresies and in accordance with the Mahdī's claim to supreme spiritual and temporal authority, hostile to established institutions, civil as well as religious.

The basic truth of the Sudan Mahdism is that the Mahdists of the Sudan believe that the true Mahdī appeared in the person of a Dongolawi religious Shaikh called Muhammad Ahmad, who proclaimed himself in that character in 1881, and called upon his countrymen in the name of true religion to rise against the worldly and heretical Government.

(b) The leader of the Mahdists:

In the early years of the Anglo-Egyptian rule, the Mahadists definitely lacked a potential leader. Muhammad Ahmad, the Mahdī, died in 1885. Khalifa 'Abd Allāh and Khalifa 'Alī died in the battle of Omdiyakarāt. Khalifa Muhammad Sharīf was courtmartialled as a ringleader of the Shukkaba incident which aimed at a Mahdist uprising.

Of course, Khalīfa ʿAbd Allāh in his life time had designated his son ʿUthmān as 'Shaikh al-Din' to succeed him; but ʿUthmān was killed at Kereri and none of his brothers seemed to have been regarded as a claimant to the throne. No doubt they were competent men and a credit to his father, but they did not possess the 'baraka', the abour of sanctity, which attached to the house of Mahdī.

Of the four sons of Mahdī, al Fadjil and al-Bushra were court martialled for their complicity in the Shukkaba incident. ʿAlī, a boy of eighteen was interned at Rosetta until 1905. The youngest son of Mahdī was ʿAbd ar-Rahmān who was being brought up by one of his relatives. Now upon one of these two surviving sons of Mahdī, the Mahdists sought for a leader. ʿAlī was older than ʿAbd ar-Rahmān, but it is a recognised fact that in the Arab world, premogeniture does not bestow an unquestioned claim to succession. What is counted most is the personality in which ʿAbd ar-Rahmān far superseded his elder. Thus, during the Anglo-Egyptian rule ʿAbd ar-Rahmān was recognised by his father's followers as the heir to his father's baraka. His elder brother ʿAlī quietly receded into the background.

(c) The Sacred writings, places and objects of the Cult.

Among the sacred writings of the Mahdists, the chief is the Rātīb, the prayer book of the Mahdī. It is believed by the Mahdists that the Rātīb was dictated to Mahdī by the Prophet at Jebel Gedir. Among other sacred writings of the Mahdists are the various letters and proclamations of the Mahdī himself. For the Mahdists, the most sacred place was the Cave (al-Ghar) on the Aba Island, in which Muhammad Ahmad received the call to his mission.

It is also said that Mahdī himself ordained Gedir, Kaba and Gunzara, in that order of precedence, to be regarded as the holy places. Reasons for such is that at Gedir he received the Rātib, at Kaba he collected force to attack El-Obéid, throughout the seige of which town Gunzara was his headquarters. The last two places witnessed the arrival of many tribes to tender their submission and were for a time centre of religious activities.¹⁸ Besides these, after the death of the Mahdī in 1885, his tomb in Omdurman also became an object of veneration and visits.

Among the sacred objects are the sword, ring and the mole of the Mahdī which he used as divine signs to convince his followers, who subsequently regarded them as sacred.

(d) The organization of Mahdism.

In the Sudan, all who believe that Muhammad Ahmad was the true Mahdī, are in theory, the Mahdists; but in practice the symptoms of organised Mahdism are meetings of the Mahdists under appointed leaders for prayer and reading the Rātib, pilgrimage to Aba Island and the payment of Zakāt or religious offerings to the leader of the cult.

In brief, these are the various elements of Mahdism in the Sudan. Now an attempt can be made to ascertain what was the Government policy, in its practical application, to each of these elements of Mahdism.

18. Memorandum on the policy of the Sudan Government towards the Mahdist cult - by R. Davies, Acting Director of Intelligence, Khartoum, December 11th, 1926; pp.1-2.

III

The attitude of the Anglo-Egyptian Government towards Mahdī and his doctrine.

The attitude of the Turko-Egyptian authority towards Mahdī and his doctrine is of great significance. In the early days of the Mahdist rising, 'Abd al-Qādir Pasha was appointed the Governor-General of the Sudan in 1882. It is said that to the Grand Qādi and the Muftī he entrusted the task of compiling treatises against the presumption of the Mahdī. They dwelt upon the principle of obeying the authorities and declared that there was no need for such a 'Messiah', as the people were enjoying peace and good government of the Khedive, and the Governor-General and all Muslims owed allegiance to the Khalifa of Islam in Constantinople. Even if the time were ripe for the advent of the 'Messiah', they further added, the present 'impostor' was not the man expected, as there was nothing in him that conformed to the description they had read in their books.¹⁹

Thus the Egyptian authority in the Sudan recognised neither the Mahdī nor his doctrine. In most of his correspondence with the Khedive, Ra'ūf Pasha the predecessor of 'Abd al-Qādir as the Governor-General in the Sudan, frequently termed Muḥammad Aḥmad as 'false Prophet', 'impostor',²⁰ and along with the 'Ulamā of Cairo, those in Constantinople too declared the Sudanese Mahdī to be a 'false Prophet'.

After the establishment of the joint Anglo-Egyptian rule, the official representatives of Islam in the Sudan Government had done nothing to invalidate the former view that Muḥammad Aḥmad was an 'impostor' and that

19. Shebikha, M., The Independent Sudan, New York, 1959, p.62.

20. Ibid, p.47.

his doctrine was false. On the contrary, in 1908, the Governor-General in a memorandum, clearly referred to Mahdism as "the prescribed creed".²¹ A man with great foresight, the Governor-General thought that after a generation or two, the Mahdī might assume his place as a 'founder of a religious tarika'. Under such circumstances, the Governor-General thought that in the meantime "the Government should not leave it in doubt that it regarded him as an impostor".²² The Governor-General was so keen to pass off Muhammad Ahmad as an impostor, that as early as 1901 in a letter to Lord Cromer, he branded Muhammad Ahmad as an "impostor".²³ The same feeling of the Governor-General was also shared by his subordinates. In 1910, a provincial Governor, in a letter to the Governor-General, impressed the latter on the necessity of "... Compiling a treatise showing that the Mahdi was an impostor."²⁴

It is very interesting to note that although the Government declared Mahdism a 'prescribed cult', yet it did not persecute those who held belief in Mahdī and his doctrine. On the other hand, after the battle of Omdurman, a general amnesty was proclaimed and many of the followers of the Mahdi returned to their property.²⁵ Further more, after the battle of Omdwaykarat, Khalifa Muhammad Sharif and two of Mahdi's sons were simply banished to Shukkaba, a village between Wad Medani and Sennar, and they were neither prosecuted nor executed. Similarly, 'Ali, the third son of Mahdi was not executed but was interned at Rosetta.

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21. Memorandum on the policy of the Sudan Government towards the Mahdī cult, op.cit, p.3.
 22. Ibid.
 23. Wingate to Cromer, Khartoum, 24th Feb.1901; W.P. 271/2.
 24. Asser to Wingate, 2nd Sept. 1910; W.P. 217/3.
 25. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of Egypt and the Soudan, 1908, Egypt No.I (1909) cd. 4580, p.55.

But the absence of active persecution of the Mahdists on the part of the Government did not in any way confer on the followers of the Mahdī the liberty to preach the doctrine of Mahdī. On the other hand, any attempt to propagate the idea or any efforts on the part of the Ansār that tended to assume a messianic form was severely and promptly dealt with.

The above policy of the Government came to light first in 1899. As stated earlier, the Khalīfa Muhammad Sharīf and two of the Mahdī's sons were banished to Shukkaba and were not persecuted. But when in August, 1899, the authority learned that they were planning a Mahdist rising, they were arrested, tried before a military court and shot dead. Again in 1901, the Government released 'Alī 'Abd al-Karīm and his followers from Halfa prison, knowing full well that they still held faith in Mahdī. But when in 1902, E.A. Stanton, the Governor of Halfa, received reports that 'Alī 'Abd al-Karīm and his followers were carrying on the old propaganda of millenium -- they were arrested and tried before the religious and legal authorities.²⁶

From the above analysis, it emerges that although the Government did not persecute those who held faith in Mahdī's doctrine, yet it did not give them the freedom to propagate that doctrine. This very policy of the Government was based on the deliberation and sound recommendations of the Board of 'Ulamā, Following the events of the early years, when there arose a number of Nabī 'Īsā who tried to propagate the Mahdist ideas, the Governor-General consulted Bonham Carter, the Legal Secretary to the Sudan Government, as to whether an official proclamation should be issued declaring 'Mahdism

26. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of Egypt and the Sudan, 1902; p. 303.

to be illegal'. But after consulting the Mufti and the Board of 'Ulamā, the Legal Secretary considered the execution of the Governor-General's view quite unwise.²⁷ The Legal Secretary's decision was backed by good reasons. After the reconquest, there were in fact a considerable number of men who believed in Mahdī. Although logically a belief in Mahdism necessarily involved disloyalty to the existing Government, in fact it did not always do so, because most of the followers of Mahdī were ignorant and illogical. Moreover, others who were a bit educated and intelligent were attracted by the puritan element in the Mahdī's teaching and rejected the political side of the teaching. Hence, these men, so long as they did not embark on active propagation of their views, were not necessarily dangerous. The Board of 'Ulamā, the Legal Secretary communicated to the Governor-General, did not "recommend the Government to punish men merely because they were believers in Mahdism."²⁸

The following are the arguments put forward by the Legal Secretary. In the first place, the Board of 'Ulamā recognised that such a policy would savour of persecution and particularly as some of these men were morally of good lives. Secondly, if the Government issued a proclamation making belief in Mahdism punishable, it would inevitably lead to false charges being put forward from spite or motives of private revenge.²⁹ In the opinion of the Board of 'Ulamā, the man who might have become a danger was the

27. Memorandum on the policy of the Sudan Government towards the Mahdist Cult. op.cit, p.2.

28. Ibid, p.3.

29. Ibid.

Mahdist who, either from a desire for gain or a desire for influence actively propagated the teachings and the doctrine of Mahdī. Thus, in spite of the Governor-General's desire to declare Mahdism a 'prescribed cult' the Government policy towards the Mahdist doctrine did not become so. The Board of 'Ulamā considered it advisable on the part of the Government to issue a proclamation stating that "persons who collected together others for the purpose of propagating Mahdī's doctrines or who actively teach such doctrines, will be punishable"³⁰

(b) The Government policy towards Sayyid 'Abd ar-Rahmān, the leader of the Mahdists.

We have discussed earlier, how the leadership of the followers of Mahdī devolved upon Mahdī's fourth son, 'Abd ar-Rahmān, during the Anglo-Egyptian regime.³¹ Now we can proceed to study the Government policy towards this leader of the Mahdists. Up to the outbreak of World War I, the Government, in the words of Slatin Pasha, followed a deliberate policy of non-recognition towards 'Abd ar-Rahmān.³² Just after the conquest of the Sudan, 'Abd ar-Rahmān along with the family of Mahdī, was kept under strict supervision. It can well be remembered that when Sayyid 'Alī al-Mirghani, the head of the Khatmiyya order was being honoured and feted in 1900, a young man, ill dressed, and mounted on an inexpensive donkey, could be seen proceeding to the District Office in Omdurman. This was Sayyid 'Abd ar-Rahmān. From the District Office he used to draw the pension of £E5 a month, which the Government awarded to him. It is said that Slatin Pasha, the Inspector

30. Ibid,

31. See above, pp 103-104.

32. Memorandum on the policy of the Sudan Government towards the Mahdist Cult. op.cit, p.2.

General was very strict with the sons of Mahdi.³³ In about 1909, Slatin Pasha issued instructions that Sayyid 'Abd ar-Rahmān was not to be accorded the title of 'Sayyid', nor was to be permitted, "in official correspondence, to sign himself Abdul Rahman el-Mahdi, but only Abdul Rahman Muhammad Ahmed".³⁴

This policy of the Government produced sharp reaction in the family of Mahdi and of Khalifa, which could not any more tolerate the position of obscurity to which they were relegated. Thus, in 1911, both the families made 'a written appeal for the better treatment, social and economic'. Among other things, they also asked that those of them who were worthy should be invited to levees and public functions. But unfortunately they "received a severe and public snub at the hands of Slatin Pasha".³⁵

Besides this, the new Government from the very beginning carefully watched the every movement of Sayyid 'Abd ar-Rahmān. Thus in 1912, the A.D.C. of Omdurman noted that 'Abd ar-Rahmān "had taken to riding at night, unescorted and with his face veiled, that he sat next to the Shaikh of Uliema in the mosque, that he was constantly in Zaptia for no special reason and that certain clerks used to kiss his hand".³⁶ From all these facts, the A.D.C. concluded that "Abdul Rahman was getting somewhat too large for his boots."³⁷

33. Hill, Slatin Pasha, op.cit. p.139.

34. Memorandum on the policy of the Sudan Government towards the Mahdist Cult, op.cit, p.3.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

(c) Government attitude and policy towards the Mahdist writings, sacred places and objects.

As the new Government always apprehended the resurgence of Mahdism and Mahdist ideas, so it strictly prohibited the reading of the Rātib, in public assemblies. In spite of this prohibition, many people possessed the book and they used it in their home. But no action was taken against them until and unless they used it openly in public assemblies.

In the early days of the new regime, pilgrimage to the sacred places of Mahdism, except to the Maḥdī's tomb is not recorded. In 1908, Sayyid 'Abd ar-Raḥmān was permitted by the Government to begin the development of the Aba Island. But at the same time, the pilgrimage to the 'cave' was forbidden by the Inspector General.³⁸

Another place for the pilgrimage of the Mahdists was the tomb of the Maḥdī, the fate of which has been described earlier. In spite of its destruction and desecration, the followers of Maḥdī continued to revere the visit of the tomb as one of their sacred duties. Government did not raise any protest with these visits to the tomb of Maḥdī, but "the prayers and offerings at the tomb were not permitted and any observed tendency to make them was counteracted by picketing it with police."³⁹

Among the sacred objects of the Mahdists, the most important is the 'Sword of Victory', the sword which Maḥdī himself used. But the veneration of the 'Sword of Victory' did not attract the attention of the Government because no one knew then where it was. According to one story, it had

38. Ibid, p.4.

39. Ibid,

passed to Khalifa 'Abd Allāh after the death of the Mahdī; while according to another, it was entrusted by Mahdī to Khalifa Sharif and guarded by his wife, a daughter of Mahdī.⁴⁰ Whatever might be the fact, the stories agree in stating that the Sword completely disappeared during the campaign of reoccupation. As it was not traceable, the Government did not bother about it.

(d) The organization of Mahdism and the Government policy.

We have told earlier what the organization of Mahdism means in theory and in practice.⁴¹ Under the new Government the organization of Mahdism was altogether forbidden. They were not allowed to be re-formed. The reading of the Rātīb in public assemblies, one of the manifestations of their organization, was not permitted. In fact, under the close supervision of the Government the re-organization of Mahdism through its prescribed methods was all the more impossible. But it may be remarked that the distinction between veneration of Muḥammad Ahmad and the organization of Mahdists, even in its simplest form, was beginning to be appreciated by instructed native opinion within a few years of the new administration. Thus, in June 1910, the Acting Governor of Sennar, recorded the following observation by one of his most reliable notables: "Many people read the Ritab; it is not bad if a man reads it by himself, but if forty or fifty men collect and read it, it is ⁴²bad."

40. Ibid.

41. See above, p. 105.

42. Memorandum on the policy of the Sudan Government towards the Mahdist cult, op.cit, p.4.

The above is the outline of the Government policy towards the Mahdists and Mahdism up to the outbreak of the World War I, i.e. up to 1914. To sum up, up to that period the Government policy towards Mahdism was, in the words of Slatin Pasha, "toleration but no recognition"⁴³. This meant that they were not recognised as a corporate body, religious or otherwise, nor 'Abd ar-Rahmān as their leader. 'Toleration', here, definitely means absence of persecution of those holding Mahdist belief; but it did not, in any way, mean the liberty to propagate those beliefs.

But the outbreak of the World War I and the eventual entry of Turkey in it against Great Britain, proved to be a turning point in the policy of the Sudan Government towards the Mahdists and their leader. Turkey's entry into the World War I, in November 1914, brought Great Britain into direct conflict with the Caliph of Islam. This awkward situation inspired the Sudan Government to change its traditional policy and to utilize the influence of 'Abd ar-Rahmān to counteract any pro-Turkish tendencies or propaganda among the population of the country. The British administrators in the Sudan knew very well that 'Abd ar-Rahmān's father's arch enemy were the Turks, 'the great corruptor of Islam'. It is said that following the event of Turkey's entry into the war, the Governor-General summoned 'Abd ar-Rahmān, and asked him to go to the Jezira and to utilize his influence there against any pro-Turkish tendencies.⁴⁴ Accordingly, 'Abd ar-Rahmān went on tour with the object of allaying fear of Pan-Islamic propaganda, leaving an agent in every district he visited. After the war he was given the wood contract for the Sennar Dam construction, which amongst

43. Ibid, p.2.

44. Ibid, p.9.

other things, gave him an opportunity to acquire enormous capital. All these meant a reversal of the former policy, and the step thus taken constituted a deliberate recognition of the Sayyid as the leader of a section of the community. When 'Abd ar-Rahmān appointed agents, this action was not objected to by the Government. After this other concessions soon followed. In 1917, a party of Mahadist merchants and nāzīrs asked if they might erect a marquee at the public celebrations of the anniversary of the Prophet's birthday. Consent would definitely force the Government to admit the Mahdist community to equality with other Muslim fraternities. C.A. Wallis, then Deputy Director of Intelligence at Khartoum, argued that if the Government refused, it would be ungracious to a body of deserving and influential men. And if the Government persisted in its policy of toleration towards conscientious Mahdists, and at the same time treated Mahdism as an exploded cult, that would be illogical. He recommended that they should be allowed their marquee. Slatin Pasha, then the Governor-General of the Sudan, thought Wallis's note important enough to refer it to Wingate, then British High Commissioner in Egypt, who readily approved the measure.⁴⁵

The permission to erect the marquee was followed by a permission by which the Government allowed 'Abd ar-Rahmān to hold Friday prayer in a mosque at Omdurman. This was indeed a great concession. In December, 1918, Sayyid 'Abd ar-Rahmān wrote to the A.D.I. to ask whether there was any objection to his holding Friday prayers in his mosque at Omdurman. The A.D.I. consulted the matter with the Grand Qādi, who raised no objection from his point of view. The A.D.I. further thought that the Government should have no

45. Hill, Slatin Pasha, op.cit., p.139.

objection to this, because interference with worship of any sort, he thought, would be contrary to Government policy. The A.D.I. later communicated his decision to the Governor-General who also raised no objection. The decision of the Government was duly conveyed to Sayiid 'Abd ar-Rahmān. The Government decision was simultaneously followed by a letter from the Grand Qādi on 19th December, 1918, to Abd ar-Rahmān. The Grand Qādi wrote to 'Abd ar-Rahmān direct, ... "I authorise you personally to hold such prayers as, also, I authorise you to nominate any one else to hold them for you"⁴⁶.

The entire matter of obtaining permission to hold prayer in a mosque carried great significance for the Mahadists. It is a well known fact that when the Muslims find themselves collected together either in a mosque or elsewhere, they are free to elect anyone of their members to lead them in prayer, without any official sanction whatsoever. So what 'Abd ar-Rahmān sought and obtained was an official acknowledgment of the existence of a 'specially Mahdist mosque' and the right of the Mahdists, as such, to assemble together for prayer under their own leader. This indeed greatly helped the Mahdist leader to organise his followers.

Along with all these, the Government also relaxed the restrictions on the reading of the Rātib, which from now onwards became more and more public. With the changed policy of the Government, this of course became unavoidable. In 1917, the A.D.I. submitted the Rātib and various other Mahdist writings to the Grand Qādi for examination.

46. Memorandum on the policy of the Sudan Government towards the Mahdist cult, op.cit., p.6.

The Grand Qādi, in a letter dated 7th November, 1917, communicated his views regarding the Rātib and its use by the Mahdists, "From the beginning to the end", the Grand Qādi wrote, "there was nothing in the Rātib that showed a call for Mahdism, nor was there anything objectionable from a religious or political point of view"⁴⁷. The Grand Qādi, of course, pointed out that in 'three places' in the Rātib there were some texts from the Qur'ān which might give the ignorant readers the impression that the writer of the Rātib had composed them with the intention of calling for Jihād. But in reality, the Grand Qādi added, they are parts of texts from the Qur'ān "completing the preceding parts of the text which cannot be left incomplete". The Grand Qādi recommended that the presence of those texts should not, however, be a cause for preventing people from reading the Rātib, as they were few of many texts from the Qur'ān which are used by all the Muslims. The Grand Qādi finally advised the Government not to prevent the people from reading the Rātib, but to "give them a free hand to use it as they like"⁴⁸.

Although it is difficult to ascertain what action was taken on the recommendation of the Grand Qādi still the Government policy towards the reading of the Rātib by the Mahdists became clear in 1921. In that year the A.D.I. writing for the D.I., requested the Civil Secretary to obtain the decision of the Governor-General on the question of whether the followers of the Mahdi should be allowed to read the Rātib in congregation. The point arose out of an incident in the Funj province, where a Mahdist,

47. Ibid, p.4.

48. Ibid.

reported to be fanatical, had begun the practice of collecting some thirty-six people together for reading the Rātib. The Civil Secretary after consulting the Governor-General wrote to the A.D.I. on December 15th, 1921, that there could be no objection if a 'Mahdist teacher' following his tenets 'in an orderly manner' reads the Rātib in an assembly.⁴⁹ The Government, not only allowed the reading of the Rātib in the assembly 'in an orderly manner', but also appeared to have made no objection when the said book was published thrice between 1921 and 1924.⁵⁰

Besides the Rātib, all other specimens of the Mahdist literature such as Mahdī's circulars, proclamations etc, were submitted to the Grand Qādi for his opinion. The Grand Qādi condemned all these in the formula that 'they should not be used at all', as they contained "accounts of the Mahdī's call to his mission and the miracles which attended it, encouragements to Jihad, stories of interview between Mahdī and the Prophet, letters to Gordon and to Senussi, and so on".⁵¹

Among other things, a book on the 'sayings and conversations of the Mahdi' was also submitted to the Grand Qādi for examination. In a letter dated November 12th, 1917, the Grand Qādi gave his views to the A.D.I. The Grand Qādi wrote: " I have marked in pencil the passages which should be rejected, and what I have left unmarked is of no harm. The parts marked should be struck out, but if Sayyid Abdul Rahman decides to revise these

49. Ibid, p.7.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid, p.5.

and cut the paragraphs I have marked, then I would see no objection to its being adopted"⁵² Continuing further, the Grand Qāḍi wrote: "If you are, however, inclined to its being printed and published, it should be necessary to change the terms used, viz, 'The Mahdī said, 'peace be on him' ' by something more appropriate, such as: 'He said, mercy be on his soul', or something similar to this".

It is, however, difficult to know what action was taken by the Government on the above recommendations of the Grand Qāḍi, but whatever might have been the fact, it is certain that the year 1919, witnessed further recognition of Sayyid 'Abd ar-Rahmān as the leader of the followers of Mahdī. In that year, the Sayyid was sent to London as a leading member of the delegation which went to congratulate His Majesty the King on the victory of the Allies in World War I. This step of the Sudan Government finally completed the reversal of the policy of 'non-recognition' persistently followed until the outbreak of the war. It meant the official recognition of the Mahdists as a corporate body and of the Sayyid as their leader.

All these encouraged the Mahdists so much so, that by 1920, Sayyid 'Abd ar-Rahmān could, without any difficulty or Government objection, appoint two kinds of Agents -- emissaries sent out from headquarters, and the local representatives of the cult. But in 1921, following the rainy season, there took place amongst the Agents a sort of competition, in charitable organization. It gave rise to such confusion, that in many areas many pseudo and self-styled Agents appeared. And where this was the case, the

52. Ibid.

Sayyid had been able to disclaim the responsibility on the ground that the so called Agent was a 'mere impostor'. Hence, to clear the matter up, the Sayyid, at the instance of the Intelligence Department, prepared in November, 1921, a list of his authorised Agents in various provinces.⁵³

The Government approved the list of Agents in the same year, and thereby recognised the entire machinery of Agents of the Mahdists. This undoubtedly constituted a great gesture of friendliness and recognition on the part of the Government towards the Mahdists and their leader.

Besides recognising the machinery of the Mahdist Agents, the Government hence forward made no objection to the pilgrimage of the Mahdists to the Aba Island, 'the cradle of Mahdism'. Along with this, the collection of Zakāt by the Agents of the Sayyid was not objected to by the authority.

Thus, in view of the pre-war days, the post-war policy of the Sudan Government towards the Mahdists speaks of a radical change. The war and post-war days saw, inter alia, the recognition of the Sayyid as the leader, and of the Mahdists as a corporate body.

But it would be a gross mistake to assume that while pursuing its new and changed policy the Government bestowed absolute freedom upon the Mahdists to go as they liked. In fact, to every concession and privilege granted to the Mahdists was attached a string of restrictions. Whilst the reasons of such restrictions amidst privileges and concessions will be discussed later, let us review the restrictions firstly. It can be

53. Ibid, p.10.

recalled that following the entry of Turkey into the World War I, Sayyid 'Abd ar-Rahmān was sent to Jezira to counteract the pro-Turkish feelings there. But while sending the Sayyid to Jezira in 1915, Col. Symes, the Private Secretary of the Governor-General, in concurrence with the Governor-General, warned the Sayyid against taking that opportunity to organize Mahdists and told him clearly that he would be held responsible personally if the Government was kept in ignorance of any revivalist activity among them.⁵⁴

The Sayyid's tour in the Jezira, was, in the opinion of the Government, utilized for a great deal of Mahdist propaganda, and although the anti-Turkish cause might have been served, some of Sayyid's reported activities, in the opinion of the Government, were perturbing. So he was somewhat urgently recalled early in 1916.⁵⁵

Again, as may be recalled, the Government permitted in 1917, the Sayyid to hold Friday prayers in the mosque of Omdurman. It has also been indicated earlier, how this could afford the Mahdists to organise themselves under a leader of their own choice. But it must be remembered that before permitting the Sayyid to hold prayers in his Omdurman mosque, the Government made it sufficiently clear that the mosque should never be used for "any purposes of propaganda, but merely for religious ceremonies according to the normal rites of Islam".⁵⁶

We have also seen how the Government became quite moderate when it

54. Ibid, p.9.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid, p.5.

no longer viewed the reading of the Rātib in public; and even the Government made no objection when it was published thrice between 1921 and 1924. But when it was suspected by the authorities that, encouraged by the publication of the Rātib in 1924, the Sayyid hoped that he could equally through the same Agency, publish and get into circulation a book whose tendency would be 'to stimulate the ardour of his followers to a great degree', then at this juncture the Government considered the publication highly undesirable and it was subsequently confiscated.⁵⁷

As stated earlier, the Government in 1921, recognised the machinery of Agents of Sayyid 'Abd ar-Rahmān. But after two years, i.e. in 1923, when the Government received reports that the activities of the Mahdist Agents in the Western provinces of Darfur and Kordofan produced 'a widespread revival and extension of the cult' the Sayyid, by the order of the Government, had to withdraw his Agents from Kordofan, Darfur, the Nuba mountains and the Southern part of the White Nile province.⁵⁸

Again, for so long the Government did not raise objection with the collection of Zakāt by the followers of 'Abd ar-Rahmān, but after the Sayyid's return from England, the Mahdist Agents were so active in collecting the Zakāt, that it immediately invited Government attention. Consequently, in 1923, the whole question of Zakāt was reviewed by the Government in consultation with the Grand Qādi and the Mufti, with the result that the collection of Zakāt by the Mahdist Agents and also by other religious chiefs, was forbidden.⁵⁹

57. Ibid, p.8.

58. Ibid, p.12.

59. Ibid, p.12.

Similarly, in the post-war days, the Government put forward no objection to the pilgrimage of the Mahdists to the Aba Island. But when there was a constant and massive flow of visitors from the West to the Island, particularly after the Sayyid's return from England, the Government found it necessary to check it. The question was discussed at the Governors' Meeting, in 1922, and subsequently it emerged that "pilgrimage to Aba Island should be discouraged".⁶⁰ Even the Civil Secretary proposed certain measures to stop the stream of visitors to the Island, and those were subsequently sanctioned by the Governor-General.⁶¹ The measures devised by the Civil Secretary, are as follows. The Shaikhs of all provinces were to be instructed that the pilgrimage to the Aba Island was forbidden. In addition to this, the Governors were to be authorised to confine Fellāta pilgrims to the main routes other than via Aba, to turn back immigrants from Darfur, and to deal with other cases by blocking the approaches to the Aba Island, as far as possible, through the agency of police or Shaikhs.⁶² Accordingly, orders were issued to the Governors.⁶³

In the above have been indicated the restrictions on the Mahdists even when the Government adopted a changed policy towards them. Now attempt may be made to explain the causes of imposing such restrictions. Apart from the apprehension on the part of the Government of the widespread revival of the cult which might threaten the peace and security, the restrictions imposed by the Government had another significant aspect.

60. Ibid. p. 14.

61. Ibid. p. 14.

62. Sudan Monthly Intelligence Report, No. 347. (Marked Secret). June, 1923;

63. Ibid.

When after the outbreak of the World War I, Sayyid 'Abd ar-Rahmān aligned himself on the Allied side, from that point 'the rehabilitation of the ...Mahdists became an obvious necessity'. Moreover, at this stage the Government came to realise that it would be a tragic error to continue to treat the Mahdī's son, because of his parentage, with enmity and suspicion. Again, as the Mahdist 'sect' was numerous and powerful, the Government considered it wrong to keep them unnoticed any longer. The Government realised that the only way to control the 'sect' was through their leader. Hence, through the post-war concessions and privileges, the Government tried to conciliate the Mahdist leader and thereby to control his followers.

Perhaps, more than these, the Government through its reconciliatory policy aimed at the emergence of 'Abd ar-Rahmān as a 'potential political leader' -- which the Government considered most important to the country. But very often, Sayyid 'Abd ar-Rahmān 'over-stepped his limits' and tried to utilize the privileges accorded to him, to display his own personal ambitions. For example, soon after his return from London, in 1919, the Sayyid began to develop the idea -- which he later communicated to the Director of Intelligence -- of the Mahdist as per excellence "the Government party to the exclusion of others", and to envisage a Mahdist Sudan under British tutelage.⁶⁴ His return was followed by a crop of rumours that he was to be the 'Sultan of the Sudan'. Furthermore, his return from England saw the activity of the Agents in the West for the collection of Zakāt, and the

64. Sudan Monthly Intelligence Report, No. 346. (Marked Secret), May, 1923, p. 3.

streams of visitors to the Island of Aba. All these had to be checked for good reasons.

Early in 1923, the Government received reports that the increased activity of the Mahdist organization had been causing apprehension among the native chiefs, who felt that the Mahdist activities had been undermining their influence.⁶⁵ In order to counteract this, the Government laid down that whilst it recognised "liberty of conscience, it could not counteract any organization subversive of its own administration".⁶⁶ Thus, when the Government considered the presence of the Agents of 'Abd ar-Rahmān, in a sense detrimental to its interests, the latter was at once instructed to withdraw his Agents from Darfur, Kordofan and the Sekim Baggara.⁶⁷

Besides, there was another reason which urged the Government to put some restrictions on the activities of the Mahdist leader. The increased activities of Sayyid 'Abd ar-Rahmān coincided with an acute rivalry between 'Alī al-Mirghanī and Sayyid 'Abd ar-Rahmān. Both parties made demonstrations to show their importance and popularity.⁶⁸ The Sayyid held a mass prayer meeting at Aba Island to celebrate the end of Ramadān and had been contemplating a further demonstration in Jezira. At this point it became necessary to stop these displays, which the Government felt, "were beginning to disturb public opinion".⁶⁹ Thus, when the Government ordered for the withdrawal of the Mahdist Agents from the West, it made its policy clear that

65. Sudan Monthly Intelligence Report, No.345. (Marked Secret), April, 1923;

66. Ibid.

p.4.

67. Ibid.

68. Sudan Annual Report. (Intelligence Department). 1923; pp.3-4.

69. Ibid.

".... the Sudan Government, while admitting the principle of complete liberty of conscience to the individual in religious matters, cannot permit to encourage a belief in the possibility of a reconstitution of the Mahdist regime".⁷⁰

Although the Government was not ready to allow the Sayyid to give vent to the idea of the 'possibility of a reconstitution of the Mahdist regime', yet it never ceased to use the leader of the Mahdists for its own political purposes. With the Egyptian revolution in 1919, and the events of 1920's, the influence of Egypt considerably declined. For so long the Government had favoured Sayyid 'Alī al-Mirghani, the head of the Khatmiyya fraternity, but under the changed circumstances, and with the Egyptian influence considerably declined in the 1920's, the Government found it no longer wise to bestow favour on Sayyid 'Alī al-Mirghani, "whose dynastic history was closely bound up with that of Egyptian influence in the Sudan".* Henceforward, the pool of gravity shifted from Sayyid 'Alī al-Mirghani to Sayyid 'Abd ar-Rahmān, in whom the Government found a suitable weapon to fight the Egyptian influence in the Sudan. Towards the end of 1923, an Egyptian propaganda against the British in the Sudan assumed a menacing shape, as the result of a visit by the Watanist leader, Ḥāfiẓ Bey Ramadān to Khartoum, and in 1924 the victorious Waḥd party gave still more powerful backing to the subversive organizations in the Sudan. During these times, even more urgently than in 1915, it was felt that the Sudan Government

70. Memorandum on the policy of the Sudan Government towards the Mahdist cult. op.cit., p.12.

* Holt, P.M., A Modern History of the Sudan. London, 1961; p.145.

could not afford to neglect any available means to counteract that propaganda. Sayyid 'Abd ar-Rahmān was more influential in 1924 than in 1915, and "his influence was again used on the Government's behalf"⁷¹. Thus, the Egyptian troubles of the 1920's saw the Sayyid exhorting the people to be calm and to do everything possible to help the Government. Owing to these invaluable services, the Government adopted such a favourable attitude towards the Mahdists and their leader, that Slatin Pasha, now the ex-Inspector General of the Sudan, in a letter to Wingate exclaimed: ".....as if the Mahdī was a loyal subject to the British Government, and his off-springs have to be rewarded"⁷². In fact, one of the off-springs of the Mahdī was rewarded for his services, this was Sayyid 'Abd ar-Rahmān. An Honorary K.B.E. was bestowed upon him in 1926.

From now onwards, the Government, least interested in the revival of the doctrinal aspect of Mahdism, in which it always calculated a danger, became more and more conscious about the political significance of the Mahdists and their leader, and directed its policy accordingly. But this is another story and falls outside the scope of this work.

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71. Ibid, p.12.

72. Slatin to Wingate, 1st April, 1926; W.P. 223/11.

CHAPTER V

The Government, Missionaries and
the Sudan - North and South.

I

The Christian missionary activities in the Sudan well precede the establishment of Anglo-Egyptian administration. Long ago, Sudan was a Christian land¹. But it lost its touch with Christianity in the sixteenth century when the Funj kingdom was established in Sennar. Since then there was no attempt to revive Christianity; nor did the country attract the attention of the Christian Missions. It was only in the mid-nineteenth century that the attention of the Christian Missions was focused upon the Sudan.

To a great extent, the conquest of the Sudan by the Turko-Egyptians in 1820 "..... opened the way to first heroic missionary enterprise."² During the Turko-Egyptian period, the Church of Rome was the first to consider and attempt the missionary enterprise in the vast Sudan. By a decree of Pope Gregory XVI, the Apostolic Vicarate of Central Africa was created in 1846. The sole motive was to convert the Negroes to Christianity.³ For undertaking the missionary enterprise in central Africa, Khartoum was chosen as a suitable base of operation. There the missionaries established a church and opened a school for the 'black children'.

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1. For the history of Christianity in the Sudan, see, Trimmingham, Islam in the Sudan, op.cit. pp.39-75.
 2. Trimmingham, The Christian approach to Islam in the Sudan, op.cit, p.99;
 3. S.N.R., Vol.XXVII, 1946, p.99.

The Turko-Egyptian authority readily permitted the missions to convert the pagans; but it definitely forbade the missionary work amongst the Muslims of the Sudan -- a restriction against which the missionaries very often lodged protests.⁴ Apart from this, the relation between the Turko-Egyptian Government and the missionaries in the Sudan was, on the whole, cordial. The Government cherished no hatred towards the Christian bodies to whom it readily accorded toleration.⁵

But the toleration accorded to the missionaries by the Turko-Egyptian regime did not last long. The 'Mahadist theocracy' that replaced the sixty-two years of Turko-Egyptian regime in the Sudan 'was uncompromisingly intolerant of all dissident, whether Muslim or otherwise'. Consequently, the Christian missionaries who had good days in the Sudan during the Turko-Egyptian regime, had no chance at all under the Mahdists. Fanatical as they were, the Mahdists overran the various mission stations at Delen, El-Obeid and Khartoum. Many of the missionaries fell prisoner at their hand. The Khartoum mission staff, however, could manage to withdraw to Cairo where it became a 'Sudan Mission in exile', under the direction of the Apostolic Vicar, Bishop F.Sogaro.⁶

The misfortune that befell the missionaries in the Sudan during the Mahadist days, however, did not in any way dishearten them. The destruction of the Mahdist power in 1898 by the joint Anglo-Egyptian efforts and the subsequent reoccupation of the country was considered by the missionaries

4. Trimingham, *The Christian Approach to Islam in the Sudan*, op.cit; p.9.

5. Hill, *Egypt in the Sudan, 1820-1881*; op.cit; p.162.

6. S.N.R., Vol.XXVII, 1946; p. 125.

as an opportunity for the opening of a new era of hope and prospect for the missionary enterprise in the whole of the Sudan. Even before the actual reoccupation of the country, when in 1895 there was a rumour that an offensive against the Mahdists would not be long delayed, Major General F.T.Haig, late of the Indian Army and an extreme Evangelical, addressed a memorandum to the Church Missionary Society, wherein he outlined a plan for the evangelizing of the Nile Valley.⁷

Following the reconquest, the Sudan Government, so to say, came into a face to face confrontation with Christian missionaries who urged the opening of the whole country for missionary enterprise. Thus, at the very beginning of the Anglo-Egyptian rule in the Sudan, Cromer, then His Majesty's Consul-General in Egypt, and Wingate, the Governor-General of the Sudan, were repeatedly requested by many missionary bodies and individuals in Great Britain and the United States of America, to open the entire country to Christian missionary activities, to introduce the teaching of Christianity in Gordon College, and to make the Christian Sunday instead of Muslim Friday the universal weekly holiday. The situation was rendered so acute and difficult that in a private letter addressed to Lord Lansdowne, Cromer described his position in the following words: "I am being vigorously assailed on all sides to allow active proselytism in the Sudan. The Catholics, backed up by the Austrian Government, the High Church party, with vigorous influential Bishops behind them, the Church Mission and other societies, all join in the cry"⁸

7. M.E.S., Vol.I, No.2; p.117.

8. Cromer to Lansdowne, 9th March, 1900; P.R.O./F.O., 633/8.

Behind their demands, the missionaries, particularly those of Britain, had a strong emotional basis. The tragic death of Gordon at the hands of the Mahdists, his Christian life, the reconquest of the Sudan, the sufferings of the missionary prisoners of the Khalifa - had all caused in England a wave of proselytising and missionary zeal for the Sudan field. Even "quite big sums of money had been left under strict testamentary dispositions for the conversion of the Muslims"⁹.

From the very beginning, the problem of Christian missionary activities in the Sudan proved to be a thorny question for the Sudan Government, because the majority of the population of the Sudan, particularly of the Northern Sudan,¹⁰ were Muslims, and characteristically -- they were not only Muslims -- but 'fanatical Muslims'. Hence, the Government fully realised what would follow if the entire country, whose bulk of the population was Muslim, was laid open for the operation of Christian missions. This was really a difficult situation which required a cautious and careful handling on the part of the new Government. Now let us see whether the authority yielded to the requests of the missionaries and opened the entire country to the Christian missionaries, or whether it devised a policy of its own to protect the Muslims of the Northern Sudan from Christian evangelization.

II

Just after the reoccupation of the Sudan, the attention of the

9. Wingate, R., *Wingate of the Sudan*, London, 1955; p.147.
 10. Areas of the Sudan situated north of the 10th parallel.

Government was so much absorbed in various civil and military occupations that at the outset it became practically impossible to devise a firm and definite policy in this respect. But still there are evidences that the Government, in spite of its multifarious pre-occupations, displayed its pious intention to keep the missionary influence out of Northern Sudan. This noble intention of the Government became clear and public in 1898, when Cromer paid a visit to Omdurman just a few weeks after the reconquest of the Sudan. In Omdurman, Cromer in clear terms, assured the assembled Muslim notables that the missionaries would not follow the Xian victory and that he would uphold the interests of Islam and on no account should the Muslims entertain the fear of Christian proselytism.¹¹ Just after his visit to Omdurman, Cromer expressed almost the same feelings when he wrote to Sir John Kennaway: " Personally, I am inclined to deprecate haste in dealing with the Sudan affairs from the point of view of missionary effort".¹² Following this, Cromer made his views and attitude on the matter further clear when he explained his own attitude to Lord Lansdowne: " I have no objection to giving the missionaries a fair field amongst the black pagan population in the equatorial regions, but to let them loose at present amongst the Muslims of the Sudan would, in my opinion be little short of insane".¹³

So far as the Muslim North was concerned, the definite assurance of Cromer to the Omdurman notables and his sincere feelings expressed to Sir John Kennaway and Lord Lansdown, formed the basis for the future missionary policy of the Sudan Government. This was certainly confirmed

11. Cromer's speech at Omdurman, 1898; W.P. 453/613.

12. Cromer to Sir John Kennaway, Cairo, Dec. 7th, 1899; P.R.O./F.O. 633/8.

13. Cromer to Lansdowne, 9th March, 1900; P.R.O./F.O., 633/8.

when he directed Kitchener, the first Governor-General of the Sudan, to disallow the Christian missionaries to carry on their activities for proselytization in the Muslim areas of the Northern Sudan.¹⁴ At the same time he, however, permitted the missionaries to have full freedom of action in the pagan areas of the Southern Sudan and to maintain in Khartoum simply a depot.¹⁵

The Government policy which unquestionably tended to restrict the missionary enterprise in the Muslim North, however, was the product of two, if not several factors. The Sudanese, as the Government realised, were 'fanatical' Muslims, hence, the operation of the missionary work amongst them might injure their religious feelings, and this was particularly dangerous when there was already a feeling amongst them that the object of the English in conquering the Sudan was to make them Christian. Thus, it was quite natural that the Government, which was responsible for the administration of a population that 'displayed the excess of fanaticism', should be cautious about the effects of free permission of Christian missionary activities amongst them.

The second reason for adopting such a restrictive policy was well explained by Cromer himself. According to him, the population of the Sudan was 'ignorant and uncivilized' and hence it was quite impossible for them "to distinguish between the action permitted by the Government to the individual and the action of the Government itself".¹⁶

14. Cromer to Kitchener, 7th Dec. 1899; W.P. 269/12.

15. Ibid.

16. Reports by His Majesty's Agent and Consul-General on the Finances, Administration and Condition of Egypt and the Soudan in 1904; Egypt No.1 (1905), cd. 2409; p.140.

Hence, under such circumstances, when fanaticism was rife and ignorance amongst the mass was common, it was not at all unlikely that the Christian missionaries might have been looked upon by the Muslim population as 'the Government officials'. Thus, any official encouragement of the mission work would certainly have given the people the impression that the Government was seeking to change their religion into Christianity. All these well-founded considerations precipitated the immediate prohibition of the missionary work amongst the Muslim population of the Northern Sudan.

On the part of the Government, however, the execution of the above policy, i.e. the protection of the Muslim North against the influence of the Christian missionaries, proved to be a formidable task. As stated earlier, the Christian missionaries from the very beginning tried to penetrate the whole of the Sudan North, as well as the South, on the grounds that for the 'preaching of the word of God' there should not be any limit or demarcation of boundary. On many occasions the Government had to face the bitter criticism of various Christian missionary bodies. In the eyes and judgment of the missionaries, the policy of the Sudan Government towards the Sudanese Muslims was nothing but 'partial'. This general conviction of the missionaries was expressed in words by a churchman, the Rev.A.Shaw: "The Anglo-Egyptian Government is a machinery for spreading Mohammedanism".¹⁷ This observation makes it clear how the missionaries disliked the 'protective policy' which the Government pursued in the Northern Sudan.

17. Shaw to C.M.S., August 9th, 1910; C.M.S., G3, S/PI.

Now it can be examined what concrete steps the Government adopted to keep the Northern Sudan free from the missionary influence. The first attempt on the part of the missionaries to establish a foothold in Northern Sudan came about in September, 1898, just a few days after the battle of Omdurman. On getting hints of a Government proposal to found in Khartoum 'an unsectarian College and a medical mission', Dr.F.J.Harpur, the head of the Church Missionary Society Hospital in old Cairo asked Cromer if his Society could send a mission to the Sudan.¹⁸ Cromer, who was not prepared to consider the request alone, submitted it to Kitchener for the latter's opinion. The result was that Dr.Harpur's request was refused on the ground that it was not possible to allow missionaries in Khartoum as it could well excite Muslim fanaticism.¹⁹ But the Government refusal in no way disheartened Dr.Harpur, who, sometime afterwards in the same year, made another proposal for sending a mission to Fashoda. The Government, however, stood firm in its decision, and again refused the proposal of Dr.Harpur on the plea that "the time was still distant enough when the mission work could be permitted amongst the Muslim population of the Sudan".²⁰ The missionaries were, however, permitted to begin their work South of Fashoda, if they so liked.²¹

Failing to gain access to the Muslim Sudan by making approaches to the authorities in Cairo and Khartoum, the missionaries made further attempts on a different line. In 1898, a few months after the battle of Omdurman,

18. M.E.S., op.cit, p.216.

19. Ibid.

20. Cromer's speech delivered at a dinner party in Khartoum in 1903; W.P.

21. Ibid.

when Kitchener returned to England, a deputation from the Church Missionary Society waited on him with their plans to carry out missionary work in the Sudan. Their plan, without mistake, included the thickly populated Northern Sudan too, but the plans of the deputation relating to the missionary work in Northern Sudan was not approved by Kitchener on the solid ground that it was not the policy of the Government to do or to allow something which could lead to the fanatical outburst of the Muslims of the Sudan.²² He, of course, gave permission for the missionary work amongst the pagans of the South.²³

For the execution of its policy to protect the Muslim North from the invasion of the missions, the Government at the beginning appeared to be over cautious. In the early days of its administration, the Christians were not even allowed to have conversation with the Muslims about religion -- a restriction which lasted until 1903.²⁴ Apart from this there were other restrictions. A permit was not generally issued to anyone styled an evangelist, to enter into the Sudan for making public preachings in the open air.²⁵

In 1899, Dr.L.H.Gwynne, a C.M.S. churchman, was conscripted by the Governor-General as Chaplain to the British Forces stationed in Khartoum and Omdurman.²⁶ The appointment of Gwynne, however, as Chaplain, did not leave the British Consul-General in Cairo without anxiety. Just after a few days of Gwynne's appointment to the said post, Cromer sent a wire to the Governor-General to make himself fully sure that Gwynne's appointment

22. Trimingham, The Christian Approach to Islam in the Sudan, op.cit, P.12.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid. p.24.

25. Ibid, p.30.

26. Trimingham, The Christian Approach to Islam in the Sudan, op.cit, P.13.

as Chaplain led to no 'clandestine missionary work' and that Gwynne was not proselytizing.²⁷ The anxiety of the Government to restrict the activities of the missionaries in the North found its better expression when Cromer requested the Governor-General that the chaplains posted to the British troops in the Northern Sudan ought to be commissioned as chaplains, and not as 'casual clergymen' because they might well "turn out to be missionaries in disguise".²⁸ Again in 1904, Cromer made it very clear that proselytism formed no part of the Government programme and that the missionary enterprise was entirely in the hands of the private individuals and without any financial aid from the Government.²⁹

Apart from its direct measures to prohibit the missionary work amongst the Muslims of the Northern Sudan, the Government adopted some indirect but effective steps. It instituted a strong censorship through the Customs and postal services over all 'printed matter' entering into the Sudan, which might augment hatred and ill-feelings between the Christians and the Muslims. Thus, in 1905, it so happened that the Director of Intelligence, Cairo, cautioned the editor of an 'unnamed new Christian journal' that the circulation of the journal in the Sudan could only be permitted provided they were sent only to the Christians and that on no account were they to be sold or openly circulated in the Sudan.³⁰

All the restrictions mentioned above were not, however, officially codified until 1905, when they were formulated as well-defined Government

27. Cromer to Kitchener, 7th Dec. 1899; W.P. 269/1.

28. Cromer to Wingate, 9th March.1900; W.P. 270/3.

29. Reports by His Majesty's Agent and Consul-General on the Finances, Administration and condition of Egypt and the Soudan in 1904; op.cit,

30. Cecil to Wingate, Cairo, Jan.15th 1905; W.P.276/1.

regulations. The Sudan Government 'Missionary Regulations' finally restricted the missionary work and prohibited the establishment of mission stations "north of the 10th parallel", i.e. in the whole of the Northern Sudan;³¹ but the regulations made sufficient provision for the missionaries amongst the pagans of the South.³²

Obviously, the 'Regulations' were very much discouraging for the missionaries who were excluded from the Northern Sudan. That the regulations were extremely unpalatable for the missionaries became evident from the comment that E.Cecil made, even before they were officially announced. With his sense of humour, he called them "..... milk and water with very little milk".³³

Although the missionaries were not permitted in the Northern Sudan, still there were some exceptions to this regulation. In spite of the prohibition of the missionary work in the Northern Sudan, permission was granted, in 1903, for the opening of a Mission School in Khartoum. With warm feelings, Cromer wrote to Gwynne: "I am very glad, in consultation with the Sidar, to give permission for a mission school to be established at Khartoum."³⁴ Even earlier than this, permission was accorded to the Church Missionary Society to open a school for girls in Khartoum, in 1902. The deviation of the Government policy may also express itself in the building of an Anglican Cathedral in Khartoum in 1910.³⁵

31. Administrative Regulations, 1933, Chapt. XVIII, p.133.

32. Ibid.

33. Cecil to Wingate, Dec.28th, 1904; W.P. 275/9.

34. Cromer to Gwynne, March, 13th, 1903; P.R.O./F.O., 633/8.

35. See Papers Concerning the Missionaries; W.P. 103/6.

36. Martin, P.F., The Sudan in Evolution, op.cit., p.244.

It would, of course, be an error, if the Government action in granting permission for opening the missionary school and the Cathedral in Khartoum was looked upon as an attempt by the authority to violate regulations laid down by itself. The above actions certainly had good reasons behind them. The Government action that led to some amount of relaxation of restrictions, imposed earlier on the missionaries, can be justified on the grounds that the population of Khartoum itself was not wholly Muslim and there were Christian residents of various denominations.³⁷ Moreover, as the schools and the Cathedral were established in the heart of Khartoum, which was also the seat of the Government, the activities of the missionary bodies, the Government thought, could be carefully supervised.³⁸ Besides, the Muslim population in Khartoum, being in immediate touch with the governing authorities could more readily realise the actual policy adopted by the Government than those residing in the outlying provinces.³⁹ Above all, the Government was otherwise compelled to allow the missionaries to start schools, as it was unable at that time to meet the demand for education from its own scanty resources.⁴⁰ Hence, under such exceptional circumstances, in order to meet the educational and religious needs of the Christian population of Khartoum, the Government accorded permission for the opening of the missionary schools and the Anglican church in Khartoum.

37. In 1906 the total population of Khartoum province was 92,386; out of this, 3,578 were European Christians of different nationalities, vide, The Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of the Sudan - 1906, Part II, p.39.

38. Reports of His Majesty's Agent and Consul-General on the Finances, Administration and Condition of Egypt and the Soudan in 1904, op.cit.,

39. Ibid.

p.140.

40. Ibid.

It is also interesting that in these mission schools, Muslim students, along with the Christian boys, were allowed to be admitted.⁴¹

Should the establishment of these missionary schools in Khartoum and the admission of the Muslim students thereto be misinterpreted by the Muslims of Egypt and the Sudan, these schools were allowed to function only under strict Government regulations. The regulations were made public by Cromer in 1906. They are as follows:⁴²

- (a) "Before Mohammedan children are permitted to attend the mission school, the director or head of the school has to satisfy himself that the parents or guardians understand that the school is a Christian school".
- (b) "The full consent of the parents or guardians must be obtained by the director or head of the school before any pupil is given any religious instructions, no matter of what nationality or religion the pupil may be".
- (c) "When religious instruction is being carried out, no other children, except those whose parents have given the necessary consent, must be present".
- (d) "The School shall be open at all times to the inspection of the Governor-General or his representative".

All the regulations stated above clearly indicate a policy by which the Government tried to avoid any suspicion or doubt which might appear in the minds of the Muslims. And with all good intention, the Governor-General

41. Ibid.

42. Reports by His Majesty's Agent and Consul-General on the Finances, Administration and Condition of Egypt and the Sudan in 1906, Egypt No.1 (1907), C-3394; p.139.

43

deputed in 1907, Major Phipps, the Civil Secretary to the Sudan Government, to visit the missionary schools from time to time and to make a very careful inquiry into the manner in which they were conducted, and to report to the Governor-General whether the regulations as laid down were fully observed. All these again go to prove that the Government had no hidden intention when it allowed the opening of the missionary schools in Khartoum. And to the satisfaction of all, the missionaries strictly adhered to all the regulations. In 1907, Bishop F.X.Geyer was the first to inform the Civil Secretary that the conditions of the Government were being carried out and that no religious instruction had been given to pupils except with permission of their parents or guardians.⁴⁴ Again, after a few days of this correspondence, the Bishop brought to the notice of the Civil Secretary that the Muslim students of the school were not allowed by their parents to attend the religious instructions.⁴⁵ The Bishop further informed that at the time of religious instruction, which was obviously Christian, eleven Muslim girl students, instead of attending these classes, were sent out to play in the garden, under the care of a Sister.⁴⁶

The policy of the Government to give every protection to the Muslims of the Northern Sudan continued fairly well and uninterrupted. In 1911, Kitchener, in his capacity as the British High Commissioner in Egypt, emphasised the continuance of the said policy in the following words:

"Missionary activity cannot be allowed in the North Our policy is to avoid all suspicion of proselytizing. Missionary work is to be purely private and without financial aid"⁴⁷

43. Wingate to Cromer, Khartoum, 26th Jan. 1907; W.P. 103/3.

44. Geyer to Phipps, 16th Jan. 1907; W.P. 103/6.

45. Geyer to Phipps, undated, 1904; W.P. 103/6.

46. Ibid.

47. Lord Kitchener's Memorandum (14.8.1911) in the form of advice to Nigeria, on the Sudan Government Missionary policy. See Summary of File 46,A1., pp.26-31; W.P. 485.

The policy of the Sudan Government 'to avoid all suspicion of proselytizing' expressed itself again in 1912. In that year, the All Saints Church of Khartoum was to be consecrated. Dr.E.H.Winnington-Ingram, the Bishop of London, was chosen to perform the ceremony of consecration on the 26th January, 1912. But just before a few months of this date, the Bishop, in a speech in London, attacked Islam in a way which revealed his intolerant attitude to, and utter ignorance of, the basic and fundamental principles of Islam. The speech of the Bishop of London was immediately followed by letters to The Times,⁴⁸ in which Professor G.Margolionth of Oxford University, and Mirza 'Abbās 'Alī Baig, an Indian Muslim, criticised and reproved the Bishop. The hostile remarks of the Bishop placed the British authorities in Cairo and Khartoum in a state of anxiety. In the proposed arrival of the Bishop of London, they sensed an 'agressive missionary policy' on the part of the Bishop. Lee Stack, Director of Military Intelligence in Cairo, realised that the Bishop of London, on his arrival in Khartoum for the consecration of the Cathedral might implant the seed of 'aggressive missionary policy' in the Sudan.⁴⁹ Further, the British authorities in Egypt and the Sudan, apprehended that the coming of the Bishop of London in Khartoum might lead to considerable tension between the Muslims and the Christians, because of the Bishop's hostile remarks on Islam. Following this, the Governor-General informed Gwynne that as the adverse comment of the Bishop of London on the tenets of Islam had caused considerable trouble, and led to counter attack in Egyptian press, Kitchener (then British Consul-General in Egypt), might cancel the programme of the Bishop's visit to Khartoum for the consecration

48. The Times, London., 29th S ept. 1911.

49. Wingate to Phipps, Khartoum, March 6th, 1910; W.P. 290/3/1.

of Khartoum Cathedral.⁵⁰

The Bishop's programme was, however, not cancelled, as everything was ready for the ceremony, but when the Bishop arrived, the British authorities in Cairo and Khartoum were always vigilant. When the Bishop actually arrived in Cairo, Lee Stack, at the Sudan Agency, was very alert to see that the Bishop did not utter anything unpalatable at any gathering of the missionaries in Cairo. Lee Stack was relieved of his duty of keeping a watch on the Bishop, only when the latter boarded the train for Khartoum. It is quite interesting that when the Bishop made his return journey to Cairo from Khartoum, the Governor-General wrote to Lee Stack in advance: "The more I see the Bishop of London, the more I am convinced that he will have to be carefully taken in hand by someone in the Agency, in Lord Kitchener's absence, or there may be trouble ... I greatly doubt his being the right man to send out to Eastern Countries of the political and social conditions of which he knows absolutely nothing, to advise on the very delicate matters connected with the relations between Church and State."⁵¹

Thus, the Government took every precaution so that the 'fanaticism' and fanatical utterings of the high dignitaries of the Church might not injure the religious sentiment of their Muslim subjects. And henceforth, the Government felt it quite necessary to lay down a 'definite system of control' without which it thought that "the missionary enthusiasts in the Sudan, who were entirely oblivious to the political consequences, might create a lot of trouble for the authority."⁵²

50. Wingate to Gwynne, Oct. 10th 1911; W.P. 301/4.

51. Wingate to Stack, 31st Jan, 1912; W.P. 180/1.

52. Ibid.

From the very beginning of the Anglo-Egyptian rule, the Christian missionaries tried their utmost to introduce some Christian influence in the Sudan. This they desired to achieve by convincing the Government to made Christian Sunday instead of Muslim Friday as a day of rest. The⁵³ first attempt in this direction is appeared to have been made in 1907, when the Rt.Rev.Bishop Tailor Smith requested the Governor-General of the Sudan to introduce Sunday as a day of rest, at least for the Christians.⁵⁴ The Governor-General was not the man to yield so easily. Pointing out the difficulty of introducing Sunday as a day of rest, he replied: "You must remember that the country is Mohammedan and that we are governing it in the first instance in the interest of the Mohammedan population and I am sure if I raised the Sunday observance question in an acute form ... I should be running serious risk".⁵⁵

The introduction of Friday as a day of rest in the Sudan, however, did not pass uncriticised by Christian missionaries in Great Britain. In the year 1910, was held a World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh. At the Conference, Rev.J.K.Giffen took the opportunity to criticise the Anglo-Egyptian authority in the Sudan for introducing Friday and not Sunday as a universal weekly holiday.⁵⁶ Just after this Conference, when Bishop Gwynne again requested the Governor-General to institute a Christian Sunday, the latter replied by telling him that any idea of adopting Sunday

53. This was an Islamic innovation of Cromer, for never in the history of Islam has Friday been recognised as a day of rest. It is simply the day when the Muslims are expected to attend the congregational prayer at a mosque.

54. Bishop T.Smith to Wingate, 7th March, 1907; W.P. 280/3.

55. Wingate to Bishop T.Smith, 25th March, 1907; W.P. 280/3.

56. Scotsman, 21st June, 1910.

as a day of rest would definitely "meet with most strenuous opposition, not only on the part of the Muslims, but also on the part of the ruling authority in Egypt"⁵⁷ And this Sunday question finally frustrated the missionaries, when the Governor-General informed Bishop Gwynne that he had referred the matter to Cairo authority, but the result was that it did not receive the approval of Kitchener who "had no intention of taking up the question immediately, or in the distant future"⁵⁸

Besides their attempt to have Christian Sunday introduced in the Sudan, the missionaries tried to use Gordon Memorial College as an instrument for the spread of Christianity and its influence in the country. They greatly resented the permission of the teaching of Islam in the College.⁵⁹ This action of the Government was vigorously attacked by Rev. C.R.Waston, the Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the United Presbyterian Church of North America. Protesting [^]against ~~at~~ the teaching of Islam in Gordon College, he voiced his resentment and dissatisfaction: "This is a Christian College, founded in the name of a Christian martyr, through the contributions of Christian men and women under the administration of a Christian Government."⁶⁰ At the Edinburgh Conference in 1910, the Rev.J.K.Giffen supported the Rev.C.R.Waston and emphasised that "Gordon College ought to be a living witness to the life of Gordon".⁶¹ He also vehemently attacked the Sudan Government for making no provision

57. Wingate to Gwynne, 17th May, 1911; W.P. 300/5/1.

58. Wingate to Gwynne, 10th Oct, 1911; W.P. 301/4.

59. Teaching of Islam in Gordon Memorial College has been discussed in Chapter II.

60. Missionary Review of the World, Vol. XVIII, 1905; p.91.

61. Scotsman, op.cit.

for the teaching of the Bible in the said College.⁶² Two years after the Edinburgh Conference, the Rev.C.R.Waston, supporting the charges of the Rev.J.K.Giffen, wrote a letter to the Governor-General, in which he expressed that it was "... an extremely widespread and deep desire of the Christian public that the memorial to Gordon's name should bear a closer relation to his religious practices and convictions".⁶³ But the criticisms of the missionaries bore no fruit. The Government not only turned a deaf ear to the protests of the missionaries who failed to convert Gordon Memorial College into a purely Christian educational institution, but, at the same time, showed not the slightest intention of making the College anything else other than a 'predominantly Muslim institution' in an almost wholly Muslim Northern Sudan.

The policy of the Government to keep the missionaries and their influences out of Muslim Northern Sudan, continued fairly well inspite of every attempt of the missionaries to penetrate that region. In 1911, Bishop Gwynne made a request to the Governor-General, urging him for the absolute removal of restrictions on the missionaries, and to open the entire country for missionary work. But the reply of the Governor-General was significant, as it displayed his wide sense of duty and obligation as a representative of the Khedive of Egypt. Replying to Bishop Gwynne, he wrote, ".... although I am a Christian myself, I am in this country as the representative of the King and the Khedive, and I am responsible for maintaining an even balance over all subjects in the Sudan - whether Christian or Moslem".⁶⁴ Thus, the policy of the Government relating to

62. Ibid.

63. Waston to Wingate, May 20th, 1912; W.P. 181/2.

64. Wingate to Gwynne, May 17th, 1911; W.P. 300/5/1.

Northern Sudan stood unchanged and that part of the Country remained uninvaded by the Christian missionaries. This policy of the Government was criticised so much so that many came to believe that in the Sudan the British administrators favoured only the Muslims and not the Christians. Apart from the Rev. Archdeacon Shaw's conviction that: "The Anglo-Egyptian Government is a machinery for spreading Mohammedanism",⁶⁵ there were others who shared this belief. Even as late as 1919, Sir Richmond Palmer, a British official in the Nigerian Service, whilst coming to the Sudan from Nigeria, remarked in the same tone, "..... there is nothing more certain than the general belief that the English, though not Muhammedans themselves look with approval on Islam as a religion"⁶⁶ The same official also formed an idea from his visit to the Sudan that the English administrators were very partial to the Muslims.⁶⁷

III

The above was thus the Sudan Government policy towards the Christian Missions in the Northern Sudan. In the analysis of the policy it has been indicated how the Government, against varying degrees of pressure, succeeded in keeping the northern region free from the influence and activities of the Christian missions. This policy was so successful and so appreciated by the Muslims that it did not give rise to any form of controversy amongst the Muslim religious bodies established in the Sudan

65. See above p.134.

66. Palmer, H.R., Report on a Journey from Maidugari ... to Jeddah: (etc) Colonial office, Africa (W est) No.1072, Aug. 1919; p.13.

67. Ibid.

and that the responsible heads of the religious bodies were fully convinced in the soundness of that policy.⁶⁸

Now we can proceed to analyse the Sudan Government policy towards the Christian missions, vis-a-vis Islam, in the Southern Sudan.

The Southern Sudan is a vast region, comprising an area of over a quarter of a million square miles. It lies south of about 10° North latitude and extends down to about latitude 4°. Three provinces, namely the Upper Nile, Bahr-El-Ghazal and the Equatoria, cover this area. The Southern Sudan is the home of numerous Negroid tribes. In the Upper Nile and in a great part of Bahr-El-Ghazal, the majority of the people belong to one of the three most famous groups, such as the Dinka, the Nuer and the Shilluk. The anthropologists call them Nilotics.⁶⁹ In Equatoria there are not less than forty different tribes, each with their own traditions, beliefs and customs. The most numerous of these are Azandee and the Baria. They speak different languages and dialects. These people of the Southern Sudan, and especially the Nilotics occupying the Upper Nile and Bahr-El-Ghazal, are pagans, and due to the nature and geographical position of their country they were almost untouched by the impact of civilization - whether Arab or European.

From this brief description it emerges that the Southern Sudan contains a bewildering variety of ethnic groups and languages. Unlike the

68. Reports by His Majesty's Agent and Consul-General on the Finances, Administration and Condition of Egypt and the Soudan in 1905, Egypt No.1 (1906) Cd. 2817; p.124.

69. For greater details of these tribes see, Seligman, C.G., Pagan tribes of the Nilotic Sudan, London, 1932.

Northerners, its people are not generally Muslims nor do they claim Arab descent; so the unifying tendencies of Islam and Arab speech, which made for a broad cultural unity throughout the North, are lacking in the Southern Sudan. This difference of the South from the North is particularly important, because it is this difference which, among others, guided the Sudan Government's missionary policy in the South.

As has been said earlier, proselytism, as distinct from educational and medical activities, was definitely discouraged in the Northern Sudan, for it was felt that the natives could not or would not distinguish between the action of the Government, as such, and the individuals appearing to act with its approval. Misunderstandings as to the fundamental relationship between the secular ruler and the subject would thus inevitably arise and impair that confidence which is essential to peaceful progress. But in the Southern Sudan which was backward and where each tribe had its own primitive beliefs and code of morality, such considerations were applicable with less or no validity. Hence, from the very beginning the Government found the South to be the most suitable ground for the Christian Missions. Thus we find, while the missions had no foothold in the Muslim North, full freedom of action was accorded to them in the South,⁷⁰ and Lord Kitchener while in England in 1899 also gave the same assurance to the delegates of the Church Missionary Society in London.⁷¹

70. See above, pp. 132-133.

71. See above, p. 136.

The missionaries were thus encouraged by the Government to begin their work in the South. To avoid conflict between them, the whole of the Southern Sudan was divided into spheres of influence. The principle adopted was "one area, one mission". The American Presbyterians were allotted the Abyssian Border, the Roman Catholics and the Church Missionary Society were allotted Bahr-El-Ghazal and the Upper Nile, respectively.

It may appear to the critics that while granting the spheres of influence to the Christian Missions in the Southern Sudan, the Government excluded the Muslims by not granting them a similar zone which could well be their sphere of influence. But for this the Government cannot be blamed that by doing so it tried to exclude Islam from the South, because, as there existed no organised Islamic Missionary Society for that purpose, the question of granting a sphere of influence to such a body or group did not arise.⁷²

Again it is charged that by allowing the missionaries, and by putting restrictions on the Northern Muslim traders' entry into the South, the Government, thus excluding Islam, tried to convert the whole South to Christianity. But this charge has less solid foundation. Although the Government allowed proselytization in the South, yet behind granting the permission to the missionaries in this area the authority had another objective in mind, which it considered more important than the proselytization.

As the Southern Sudan was much more backward than the North and since the Sudan Government itself was short of money and dependent on the Egyptian Treasury for balancing its 'modest' budget, no work of construction could be contemplated or service provided in the South, beyond what

72. Artin, Y.P., England in the Sudan, p.35.

was necessary for the maintenance of Government personnel, and hence law and order. Under such circumstances, the best and the only thing that could be done by way of general improvement it was felt was to allow the Christian missions to operate in the region in the hope that along with conducting the education of the South at their own expense, their activities there would prove a civilizing influence.⁷³

Far from entertaining the intention of excluding Islam and implanting Christianity in the South, the object which the Government had in view when it allowed the Missions in the South, was educational,⁷⁴ and in the field of educational activities in the South, the Government was not unduly partial to the Missions who themselves wished to monopolise in that respect. Thus, writing on the 6th December, 1904, a letter to the C.M.S., Lord Cromer made the point quite clear: "No communications have yet been received from private individuals requesting permission to establish schools in the Southern Sudan, at their own expense, in which the religion of Islam would be taught, but in order to avoid any possible misapprehension as to the nature of the policy adopted by the Government, I wish to add that, should such requests be received, they will be favourably considered".⁷⁵

Hence, it shows that the Government was ready to allow any voluntary body of Muslims to start schools in the South, where Islam could be taught.

73. Reports by His Majesty's Agent and Consul-General on the Finances, Administration and Condition of Egypt and the Soudan in 1905, Egypt No.1 (1906) Cd. 2817; p. 125.

74. Reports by His Majesty's Agent and Consul-General on the Finances, Administration and Condition of Egypt and the Soudan in 1904, Egypt No.1 (1905) Cd. 2409; p. 141.

75. As quoted in the H.M's Agent and Consul-General's Annual Report for 1904. Ibid, p.141.

No doubt the Government put certain restrictions on the entry of the Northern traders into the South, but this action was not motivated by the intention to prevent the spread of Islam in the South. The main objective which motivated the Government to impose restrictions on the Northern Muslim traders, however, lies elsewhere.

From the very early days, for reasons historical and administrative, the Sudan Government administered the Northern and the Southern Sudan separately. The unifying tendencies of Islam and the Arabic speech, which made for a broad cultural unity throughout the North, were lacking in the Southern Sudan.⁷⁶ Again, in the Northern Sudan, the Government inherited a well rooted tradition of centralized Government derived from its Turko-Egyptian and Mahadist traditions. But this was not the case with the Southern Sudan, where the Government inherited insecurity and a host of warring tribes who were all the more backward than the Northerners. Under such circumstances, the main task of the Government, along with the maintenance of law and order in the South, was to win the confidence of the Southerners for the new regime.⁷⁷ Whilst this was the Government policy, it was reasonably thought by the administrators that if the Northern merchants were allowed a free and unrestricted entrance into the South, it would work against the success of the said policy. The Government knew very well that these Northern merchants were associated in the eyes of the Southerners as slave-raiders and ex-politers. Hence, to let loose

76. For all these reasons and for the lack of communication in the South, General Gordon, as Governor of Equatoria, also made a request to the Khedive of Egypt to administer Northern and Southern Sudan separately.

77. Reports by His Majesty's Agent and Consul-General on the Finances, Administration and Condition of Egypt and the Soudan in 1905, op.cit, p.125.

these merchants into the South, would have meant the exploitation of the ignorant Southerners at the hand of 'clever Gellabas' and this alone could shatter the objectives of the Government. Hence, with a view to winning the confidence of the Southerners, the Government built up a protective barrier against the Northern merchants.

Another incident which could well create misimpression on the minds of the Muslims, and in fact did so in the case of the Sudanese Nationalists in later days, was the encouragement and eventual introduction of English and not Arabic as the official language of the Southern Sudan. This situation becomes still more complicated when it is found that the Government adopted the said measure on the recommendation of the Christian Missions working in the region.⁷⁸ But this action of the Government was not inspired by any idea that the Government deliberately discarded Arabic, the language of the majority of the people of the Sudan. It can be recalled that Lord Cromer, in his letter to C.M.S., made it clear that any request from the voluntary Muslim bodies to establish schools in the South would be favourably considered.⁷⁹ But unfortunately, no such Muslim body approached the Government with any programme to carry out educational work in the South. This left the missionaries uncontested in the South, where day by day they gained a strong foothold.

Now, until 1910, the Sudan Government business in the Southern Sudan was conducted at the lower level, mostly in Arabic. But as the missionaries alone were actively engaged in the educational activities in

78. M.E.S., op.cit. p. 132.

79. See above, p. 151.

the South, so it was difficult for the mission school pupils to obtain government employment so long as Arabic was the official language. As the missions were allowed, so the Government had to see that the mission school pupils were suitably employed. And it is further more interesting to learn that the introduction of English into the South, at least in the first two decades, only gave the Christian missionaries some slight chance and not the overwhelming advantages which Islam seemed to possess in the Southern Sudan at that time.⁸⁰

Of course the critics may say that instead of English, the Government could select Arabic as the language of the missions and of the schools.⁸¹ Surely its introduction in the Southern Sudan would not have been as fantastic as it might appear at first sight to a Christian missionary. Because Arabic is one of the historic languages, if not a liturgical language, of Christendom. But unfortunately, Wingate and his advisers in Khartoum had little idea of the merits of Arabic. After all, in 1910, when English was chosen and selected for the South, there was no sign of an Arabic revival in the West; only few schools of Arabic and Islamic Studies were open, and Western Orientalists were still writing Arabic grammars for grammarians.

The introduction of English, the predominance of the Christian Missionaries and the restrictions imposed on the entry of the Northern Muslim merchants -- all these undoubtedly brought a strong Christian

80. Gwynne to Wingate, 26th Dec. 1910; W.P. 103/7/2.

81. As early as 1886 and 1890, Major General F.T.Haig, late of the Indian Army, and an extreme Evangelical, made two tours to the Red Sea, on behalf of C.M.S., for the purpose of examining sites for Mission Stations. In his report, the Major General insisted that the language of the future Sudan Mission must be Arabic. M.E.S., op.cit, p.117.

influence in the South. But in spite of this, the Government was quite aware of the religious needs of the Muslim civil officials and Muslim garrisons stationed in the Southern Sudan. For them the Government made necessary provisions for the construction of mosques, a fact which beyond doubt exercised a great influence on the pagan minds. But the missionaries, both Catholics and Protestants, vehemently opposed the building of mosques in the South. In 1911, one named Gordon, a British official in the Egyptian army, built a mosque at Wau, the capital of Bahr El-Ghazal, for the Muslim civilians and garrisons. In the same year, Bishop Gwynne lodged a complaint to the Governor-General, that the erection of the mosque at Wau definitely encouraged the growth of Islam in that region.⁸² In fact, the building of this mosque at Wau had the effect of attracting many of the natives to it.⁸³ One of the impacts of constructing the mosque was felt when it was found that the boys attending the mission school had so decreased in number that "... the Mudir (Governor) had to hunt up boys for them from outside".⁸⁴ Even the army too could not escape the influence and impact of the mosque which "undoubtedly had the effect of turning pagans into Muslims, simply by its example".⁸⁵

When all these outcomes of the Wau mosque became quite evident, Gwynne complained to C.M.S., "whoever appointed such a man (the officer who built the mosque) --- a libertine and sensual to a degree --- ought to be told of his error of judgment. I would to God it was possible for married men to work amongst these pagan tribes".⁸⁶ The Governor-General, in

82. Gwynne to Wingate, 29th Aug, 1911; W.P. 301/2.

83. Vide, the Report of Col. Assier, on his tour to Bahr-El-Ghazaland Malakal, Sept. 8th, 1911; W.P. 301/3.

84. Ibid.

85. Ibid.

86. Shaw to the Church Missionary Society, 1st March, 1910; C.M.S., G3,S/P1.

a letter to Gwynne, admitted that the building of a mosque at Wau helped to encourage the growth of Islam there.⁸⁷ But Wingate did not order for the withdrawal of the Wau mosque. On the otherhand, in a letter to Gorst, he defended his officers from what he called the calumnies of "wrong-headed and fanatical missionaries".⁸⁸ The Government never paid any heed to the missionary protests and by 1915, there were three public mosques, (one at Wau, one at Renk and the third at Kodok) in the Southern Sudan.⁸⁹

Thus, the Sudan Government missionary policy, whilst favouring the missions in the South, took into account to protect the interests of the Muslims and of Islam in the North. This the Government had to do even by dissatisfying the well-organized Christian missionary bodies.

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87. Wingate to Gwynne, October 9th, 1911. W.P. 300/3.

88. Wingate to Gorst, October 10th, 1911. W.P. 300/5.

89. Martin, P.F., The Sudan in Evolution, op.cit, p.247.

CHAPTER VI

The wartime British Muslim policy
and its Sudanese phase, 1914-1918.

I

In preceding chapters we have discussed the policies of the Government in relation to different aspects of Islam. We have also noticed how the Government protected the Northern Sudan from the possible invasion of the Christian missions. All these reflect a good amount of wisdom which the Government displayed in pursuing its policies towards Islam. In this chapter, however, we shall try to outline how at a time of crisis the Government exploited the religious sentiment of the people to achieve a purely political end.

The Turkish entry into World War I and the subsequent British declaration of war on Turkey, placed Great Britain in a very difficult position, for the Sultan of Turkey was the spiritual head of the Muslims. He was the Caliph, who in the eyes of the orthodox Muslims is the living emblem and personification of the temporal and spiritual unity of the 'house of Islam'.¹ The root of the trouble was, within the British Empire there were millions of Muslim subjects. The bulk of the Indian army was Muslim, Egypt and its army - all Muslim, and its ruling classes Turkish; the Sudan all Muslim.

1. For full discussion on the institution of Caliphate, see -
Arnold, T.W., Caliphate, O.J.P. 1924.

Thus, when Great Britain declared war against the Sultan of Turkey, the Caliph of the Muslims, for the British Government the loyalty of all its Muslim subjects became a matter of doubt. The British Government perfectly realised how difficult a task it would be to explain to its Muslim subjects that war against Turkey -- and as such, against the spiritual head of Islam -- was not inconsistent with the loyalty of British Muslim subjects to their King, and Emperor, in the case of India, and with the loyalty to the protecting power in the case of Egypt. The British apprehension had some solid grounds; and indeed it was a difficult task to convince the Muslim subjects, as such. Although at that time the principle of nationality was beginning to gain ground in the Eastern countries, still the bond which held the Muslim societies together was religious rather than patriotic. So it was not unrealistic on the part of the British authorities to fear that when the Caliph of the Muslims was threatened, their British Muslim subjects would react. This situation demanded the British Government to re-define its policy towards Islam and Muslims, even when war against Turkey was not declared; and also, of course, when war with Turkey became inevitable.

Just before the outbreak of the war, the question of the British Muslim policy received due attention of both Houses of the British Parliament. The subject was debated -- though not hotly. In his parliamentary speech on August 12th, 1913, Sir Edward Grey, the then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, clearly outlined the policy of the British Government towards Islam.² In his speech, the Foreign Secretary

2. See, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 1913; Vol. LVI; July 28th to August, 1915. pp.2291-2292.

assured that the 'racial sentiments' and 'religious feelings' of the Muslim subjects of the Crown, would be respected, and that the British policy would never be one of 'intolerance or wanton and unprovoked aggression' against a Muslim power. At the same time he made it clear that Great Britain could not undertake the duty of protecting Muslim Powers outside the British Dominions 'from the consequences of their own action'. But he admitted that under 'exceptional circumstances', say, 'if a pilgrimage to Holy Places was interfered with', it was absolutely necessary, in the interests of the Muslim subjects, to see that 'the outrage was not done to the Muslims of the Empire'.

This was the policy outlined by the Foreign Secretary. But the discussion of the policy was confined not only to the House of Commons. Even in the House of Lords there were some who took up the matter quite seriously. A prominent member of the House of Lords drew up an important memorandum wherein he indicated the steps to be taken by the British Government when the latter would enter into war with Turkey. The author of the memorandum³ was Lord Cromer who had a long association with the Muslims of the East. In his memorandum, Lord Cromer urged his Government to draft a proclamation stating the causes which brought about a war with Turkey and England. He also suggested that to make it more fruitful, the proclamation was to be signed by an English minister. In the proclamation, Lord Cromer suggested, it was to be made quite clear that it was Turkey and not England, who was the aggressor.

3. Memorandum by Lord Cromer respecting the steps to be taken in the event of war with Turkey - Oct.16th, 1914; from a copy in W.P. 193.

Next, he suggested that the British Government should state in 'suitable language its promise to preserve the sanctity of the Holy Places of Islam'. He also advised the Government to assure the Muslim subjects that whatever might be the issue of the war, the Government and administration of the Holy Places would be left entirely in Muslim hands. The memorandum further indicated that it would be a great advantage if, in addition to the English proclamation, some manifesto could be issued and signed by the influential Muslims themselves. These were some real steps suggested by Lord Cromer to the British Government when war with Turkey became imminent. The causes which led Great Britain to declare war on Turkey do not come within the scope of this thesis and may be read elsewhere. The fact is, Great Britain had to declare war against Turkey on November 7th, 1914; and when this came about, it devolved not only upon the British Government, but also upon the British authorities in India, Egypt and the Sudan to materialise the policy enunciated by Sir Edward Grey⁴ and to translate into action the third suggestion⁵ of Lord Cromer.

II

During these days the Governor-General of the Sudan was in regular correspondence with Lord Cromer who was still watching the affairs of Egypt and the Sudan with utmost interest. Naturally, Wingate at once received a copy of Lord Cromer's memorandum which, beyond doubt, gave him a good deal of guidance. At first sight it might appear that in a state of war against Turkey it would be easier in the Sudan than anywhere else,

4. See above p.159.

5. See above p.159.

to work on the lines suggested by Lord Cromer. For the Sudanese Muslims had genuine grievances against the misrule of the Turks whom they once drove out from the Sudan. But in spite of this, it could not be denied that whatever grievances the Sudanese might have against the Turks, as Sunnī Muslims they had some sympathy for the Sultan of Turkey, who was the Caliph of Islam and the only independent Muslim power. Sometime before the outbreak of World War I, Wingate was able to realise it fully. Describing the reactions of the Sudanese Muslims to the Balkan war he wrote to Bryan Mahon: "The effect of the Balkan troubles in this country is not as serious as one might have expected. As a matter of fact, the old horror of rule of the Turk still rather holds the people, and except that they are co-religionists, I do not think they much care what happens to them: but on the other hand, one must never discount the tremendous power of Islam as a building force, and if at any time the actual jihad⁶ were declared, it would be a different story"⁷. This was how Wingate fathomed the depth of the Sudanese Muslims' sympathy for Turkey. Wingate quite rightly calculated the amount of danger which the declaration of jihād could bring about; and this time Wingate had to face the trial, for Turkey really declared jihād against the infidels. In Turkey were issued calls to the jihād. An extract from such a 'call' may be given in the following:-

"My brethren in God, the nations of Europe, the worshippers of the Cross, have determined from hundreds of years ago to fight Moslems,

6. Holy War.

7. Wingate to Bryan Mahon, Khartoum, Dec. 12th, 1912; W.P. 183/3.

wipe out their religion and abolish their Sultanate from the face of the Earth these infidels, who have ignored the Faith of God and His Apostle, intend surely to destroy the Kaaba and the tomb of the Prophet and to burn the honoured Quran, wipe out Islam, convert Moslems to Christianity and baptise them by all possible means

.....Unite in the Union of Faith and gather together against these infidels and drive them out of your countries and homes

Help one another in this Holy War which is incumbent on you. ^{8 "}

This was the thing that Wingate feared most. Moreover, apart from the possibility that the Sudanese Muslims might respond to the call to jihād, the situation in the Sudan contained other elements of danger. The Egyptian army stationed throughout the Sudan and many civil officials of the Sudan Government constituted no less a potential threat, because there could be no doubt, wrote Wingate, that a large number of officers and officials in the Sudan Government sympathised with the Turks.⁹ This sympathy of the Sudanese officers and officials for the Turks was far from being only superficial, for many of these officers came from Egypt and had not only Turkish connections but many of them had Turkish blood in their veins. So the declaration of jihād by Turkey was most likely to incite them to rise against the British authority in the Sudan Government. Hence, during the war period and in a critical situation like this, it became one of the main objects of the Government to maintain the loyalty

8. From the translations of call to the jihād, issued in Turkey. This copy was obtained by the Intelligence Department, War Office, Cairo, on November 5th, 1914; from a copy in W.P. 193.

9. Wingate to Savile, Khartoum, Aug. 19th, 1915; W.P. 195/2.

of the Sudanese Muslims and to counteract any attempt of Turkey to spread the ideas of jihād in the Sudan.

In his estimate of the situation, Wingate was quite correct. Out of 14,000 troops in the Sudan almost all were Muslims. When it became quite evident that Great Britain was to go to war with Turkey, reports reached Wingate that " in Khartoum, El-Obeid and large garrison towns, a distinct feeling of uneasiness prevailed among the army and Moslem officers"¹⁰

The war against Turkey was not yet declared, but meanwhile Wingate fully prepared himself as to what he would have to do when the war was declared. He arranged with Colonel Symes, the Sudan Agent in Cairo, to write to him at once the text of the war proclamation against Turkey that was to be issued in Cairo. At the same time he obtained authority from Cairo to modify his Sudan proclamation in any way he thought fit, and also, if necessary, to issue 'some expression of views' from the leading Muslim religious authorities of the Sudan.¹¹ With the latter object in view he had prepared a very carefully worded Arabic Address, from him to the Religious Shaikhs and 'Ulamā; and thousands of printed copies of the Address were ready at hand.¹² But he kept all these quite secret until the war against Turkey was officially declared.

The 7th of November, 1914, was an eventful day. On this day Great Britain declared war against Turkey. Now Wingate exposed everything

10. Wingate to Cromer, Khartoum, Nov.27th, 1914; P.R.O./F.O., 633/23.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

that he had so long kept secret. At 10 a.m. on the 8th November, 1914, the Governor-General assembled about fifty of the Senior Regimental Officers, British and native, in the Palace, and addressed them in English and Arabic, reading out the war proclamation and calling upon them all to scrupulously carry out their duties. Writing later on to Cromer, Wingate wrote that "all was received in silence, and the disclosure of the war proclamation came to them as a thunder clap"¹³ And when the Governor-General called upon some of them present to get up and make any statement they wished, they one and all expressed their complete readiness to carry out all orders "but none of them made any attempt to address the meeting"¹⁴ The Governor-General was wise enough to order a similar procedure to be carried out in all the principal garrison towns by the governors or commandants, at practically the same time.

To achieve success in ensuring the loyalty of the army, the Governor-General had long ago taken some major steps. He knew very well that the majority of the younger officers came from Cairo schools, which he believed were the 'home of Nationalist and anti-British propaganda, and in some cases, pro-Turkish'. All these young officers were, in Wingate's view, 'dangerous elements'. To keep these young officers in order, the Governor-General used some of the older and senior officers, who in his opinion, "had everything to lose and nothing to gain by disloyalty"¹⁵ Even before the Governor-General addressed the Army officers, he had warned the senior officers that he would punish any young officers who would show

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

the slightest sign of disaffection.¹⁶ This action of Wingate produced the desired effect, and in playing their roles to keep quiet the young officers, "the senior Egyptian officers played well".¹⁷

After the Army came the turn of the Religious leaders and 'Ulamā whose loyalty was to be ensured. It was quite evident that if they could be controlled then their followers were automatically controlled. With this end in view, the Governor-General, on November 8th, 1914, assembled the principal Religious Shaikhs and 'Ulamā in the Palace and gave them an Address which he had prepared beforehand, but kept secret until then.¹⁸ This Address of the Governor-General to the religious Shaikhs and 'Ulamā commands great significance, for in clear terms, it expressed what would be the war-time policy of the British Government towards Islam and the Muslims. As it does so, it will be necessary to quote frequently from the English version of that Address. Reminding the Sudanese 'Ulamā of the past services that the Sudan Government rendered to Islam, the Address read:

"God is my witness that we have never interfered with any man in the exercise of his religion. We have brought the Holy Places within a few days journey of Khartoum. We have subsidised and assisted the man of religion. We have built and given assistance for the building of new mosques all over the country"¹⁹

Further, in the course of his speech, the Governor-General assured the 'Ulamā and religious Shaikhs that the 'world policy' of Great Britain

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. See, Wingate's Speech to the 'Ulamā, Nov.8th, 1914; W.P. 192.

19. Ibid.

would remain unchanged; she would ever maintain and enforce 'on others the maintenance of the sanctity and inviolability of the Holy Places'. Referring to the past policy, the Governor-General said that Great Britain would shelter and protect all Muslims and mosques within her border, in the same way as for over one hundred and fifty years she had guarded the interests of the sixty-two million Muslims in India. The Governor-General finally stressed that Great Britain would continue to improve in every possible manner the 'facilities for pilgrimage and for the practice of the Mohammedan Religion'.

The assurances of the Governor-General did not end there. The speech continued, "you in the Sudan have had bitter experience of the evils of Turkish rule ... But you may feel -- and believe me I sympathise with you truly in this matter a certain sorrow at this war. You may fear, some of you, that the result of this war may in some way affect the situation of Mohammedans in other parts of the world. I assure you before God that your fears are groundless, and that in the British Empire the position of no single Mohammedan will be changed one iota and no single privilege granted to Islam will be repudiated".

At the end of the speech, the Governor-General asked the Religious Shaikhs and Ulamā to take back his message to the peoples of the Sudan. The speech was concluded thus:

"Now I ask you at this present time, you men of religion, learning and experience, to give honourable and wise counsel to the people who will listen to you; for here in the Sudan, as elsewhere in the world, the fools

will listen to the wise, the ignorant to the learned, and the common people to men of wisdom and education.

I ask you then, and I rely upon you to publish true reports, to be careful and wise in your words, and by your example to allay baseless and ignorant fears, to contradict false or alarmist rumours, and by all means in your power to ensure a sane and reasonable judgment of events by your co-religionists and the natives of the country". In this way, the Governor-General indicated what was to be the duty of the Religious Shaikhs and 'Ulamā, in the crisis of the war.

The speech of the Governor-General clearly brings out the war-time Muslim policy of the British Government and its representatives in the Sudan. Amongst other things, it reassured with greater emphasis the continuance of the tolerant policy of the Government. A few days later, the Governor-General, in a letter to Lord Cromer, expressed how the speech had a very enthusiastic audience and how the S haikhs and 'Ulamā "vied with one another to get up and make protestation of Loyalty"²⁰ to the Government. In the same letter the Governor-General wrote that in making the 'protestation of Loyalty' the person prominent was a descendant of the Prophet, Sharīf Yūsuf al-Hindī, who had enormous influence in the country. He also reported that the Mahdī's eldest son was very enthusiastic and 'vouched for the loyalty of all the Mahdists'.

But all these 'protestations of Loyalty' on the part of the Religious Shaikhs and the 'Ulamā did not fully satisfy the Governor-General

20. Wingate to Cromer, op.cit., P.R.O./F.O., 633/23.

who wanted something more from them. To determine how keen all were to show their loyalty to Great Britain, the Governor-General sent them all down to one of the offices in the Palace and asked them that if they wished to put their feelings on paper in a form which he could communicate to the British Government, they could do so.²¹ They applied for some clerk or secretary to assist them, but the Governor-General refused and asked them to do it entirely by themselves. After threequarters of an hour's deliberation, they produced an excellent document which was signed by fourteen of the principal religious dignitaries of the Sudan. As the valuable document unequivocally expressed the loyalty of the Religious Shaikhs and the 'Ulamā, extracts from it may be quoted:

"We, the Ulema, Religious Sheikhs and Notables of the Sudan" runs the declaration, "beg to submit to our just Government the expression of our deepest and most cordial sincerity and loyalty. We affirm hereby that we have never experienced other than the greatest respect for our religion; that material support has been given to our Places of Worship; that Ulema have been appointed to teach the precepts of our religion, and judges to settle all questions pertaining to the Mohammedan Law; that facilities have been given for us for the performance of the Holy Pilgrimage to Mecca and for visiting the Holy P laces;"²²

Then, repudiating the action of Turkey, the document concluded: ".....The action of Turkey has been inspired by the advice and example of Germany, we have therefore no connection whatever with the present acts of

21. Ibid.

22. The text is from, The Sudan Book of Loyalty, Khartoum, 1915; p.1.

Turkey or with the war which she is now waging against Great Britain and Her Allies, and which war is in no way whatever waged for the benefit or interest of Islam or the Mohammedans". When the Religious Shaikhs and the 'Ulamā produced the above document, the Governor-General gave them numbers of printed copies of his Address to distribute to their friends.

Although the Religious Shaikhs and 'Ulamā seemed to be easily convinced, yet it remains that the Governor-General's actions tried to, and succeeded in, exploiting the religious sentiment of those Muslims for some political ends. And the principle set by the Governor-General in the Capital was followed everywhere else.

Before meeting and addressing the Religious Shaikhs and the 'Ulamā in Khartoum, the Governor-General had sent to the principal towns of the Muslim provinces, copies of his Address and detailed instructions as to how the Governors were to address their Religious Shaikhs. In the provincial headquarters the Governors read out the Governor-General's speech in the presence of the Religious Shaikhs. Some of the Governors even undertook tours of the districts of their provinces with the object of reading the Governor-General's speech to the religious and other Shaikhs. In the provinces too, response was quite satisfactory. The Governor of the White Nile provinces, K.U.P. Struve, wrote to the Private Secretary of the Governor-General that he had interviewed eighteen religious Shaikhs and many other Shaikhs and notables, and that he had gained "an excellent impression of the general feeling with regard to the war with Turkey".²³ Further, the same Governor wrote that the various messages, notably the

23. Governor of the White Nile Province to the Private Secretary to the Governor-General, Duem, November 23rd, 1914; W.P. 192.

Governor-General's Address to the 'Ulamā, the declaration of integrity of the Holy Places, all these had a very enthusiastic reception. Even many of the Shaikhs, the Governor mentioned, were sincere in their offer of volunteers and some one even made a suggestion for a war tax.

The strategy of the Governor-General worked perfectly well, Some time after, with complete satisfaction, he could write to Lord Cromer: "The result of all this has been little short of a miracle"²⁴ Indeed, in the next few days which followed his Address to the Religious Shaikhs and the 'Ulamā in Khartoum, there poured in letters and telegrams to the Governor-General from all parts of the country; all of them contained the words of Loyalty. From Kassala, 'Alī al-Mirghani, whose influence had greatly increased in the Sudan during those days, sent on November 12th, 1914, an excellent telegram to the Governor-General. Expressing his loyalty to Great Britain he wrote: "we regret exceedingly and our hearts are filled with grief at Turkey's action in participating in a war against Great Britain. This act is assuredly against the desire of the Sultan and his councillors and has given great offence to the Moslems in all four quarters of the Globe"²⁵ Further, attacking and accusing Germany for drawing Turkey into the war, the message concluded: "The Germans have sacrificed Turkey upon the altar of their ambitions and purposes which must end in complete and utter ruin. This war (of Turkey) is against the interests of the Muslims and has nothing whatever to do with religion".

..... we hereby beg to declare our most sincere and loyal attachment to Great Britain, that just Government whose great respect for our religion

24. Wingate to Cromer, op.cit., P.R.O./F.O., 633/23.

25. The Sudan Book of Loyalty, op.cit., p.2.

and interest in our welfare is proved by the progress which has been made in our country through justice and civilization". On the next day the Governor-General received a similar letter from Ahmad al-Mirghani, the younger brother of 'Ali al-Mirghani. Ahmad al-Mirghani accused the Turko-German alliance and said, "we dissociate ourselves from this action, as she (Turkey) has exceeded all limits and committed a crime at the instigation of the Germans, which is contrary to the interests of the Moslems and of Islam."²⁶ Praising Great Britain for the respect which she accorded to Islam by adherence to the laws of the 'Mohammedan jurisdiction', he proclaimed his loyalty and adhesion to the British Government in all circumstances. There were also similar letters of loyalty from other Religious Shaikhs and the 'Ulamā from various parts of the Sudan.

A study of these letters of loyalty surely surprises the reader. It is really hard to believe that the Muslim religious dignitaries could pay such a tribute of loyalty to a non-Muslim power. However, it cannot be denied that all this was inspired by the Government itself. As stated earlier, the Governor-General pressed the Religious Shaikhs and 'Ulamā to 'put their feelings on paper'²⁷ and it is not unlikely that a similar process was followed by the Governors of the provinces.

But whatever it might be, the assurances given by the Governor-General to the Religious Shaikhs and the 'Ulamā in his Address,²⁸ were fulfilled. 'No single privilege' granted earlier to the Sudanese Muslims was 'repudiated' during the war period. In the turmoil and crisis of the

26. Ibid, p.3.

27. See above, p.168.

28. See above, pp. 165-166.

war the religious life of the Muslims of the Sudan remained undisturbed and uninterfered. In spite of the fact that Mecca was still under the control of Turkey, now the enemy of Britain, the Sudan Government made no attempt to check the Muslims to go to that Holy Place to perform pilgrimage. Moreover, in an answer to a question what he would do with the pilgrims for Mecca if Turkey entered into the war, the Governor-General categorically wrote to W.D.Kenny: "In any case I am not going to interfere with the departure of any pilgrims from the Sudan who wish to visit the holy places of Islam".²⁹ Even when there arose the question of sending warships to Jeddah, Lord Cromer strongly doubted the advisability of doing so.³⁰ For he believed that the action might create a bad impression in the minds of the Muslims, who would view the presence of warships in Jeddah as a menace to their Holy Places. When the war was going on in full swing, the crossing of the Red Sea on the part of the pilgrims became a highly risky job; but the risk was greatly minimised when the Sudan Government Red Sea Patrol Order, 1915, provided a great relief for the pilgrims. It declared the Holy Places of Islam free from all molestation and that no hostile operations were to be undertaken in those waters.³¹ Thus, the Red Sea waters became quiet and the pilgrims were safe.

But in spite of the Sudan Governments' extremely pro-Muslim policies, the Sudan could not enjoy complete tranquility while the war with Turkey was going on. During this period, there were obvious indications

29. Wingate to Kenny, Khartoum, Sept. 23rd, 1914; W.P. 191/3, see also above,
 30. Memorandum by Lord Cromer respecting the steps to be taken p. 41.
 in the event of war with Turkey, op.cit.
 31. The Red Sea Patrol orders, 28th May, 1915. Vide Patrol Order No. 28/1(a);
 W.P. 195/6; see also above, p. 41.

that the Turko-German propaganda and ideas of Pan-Islamism were infiltrating into the country. A few months after the Turkish entry into the war, the Governor-General came to realise that the Turko-German propaganda which was then so rife in Egypt, had been "gradually filtering through to the Sudan".³²

With the declaration of war with Turkey, Egypt was proclaimed to be a British Protectorate and Khedive 'Abbās Pasha II, was deposed for his 'pro-Turkish leanings'. Under the title of Sultan, Ḥusain Kamel, the senior representative of the line of Muḥammad 'Alī Pasha, succeeded 'Abbās Pasha II. The British authorities in Egypt and the Sudan believed that the deposed Khedive, then in Constantinople, was doing everything to inspire the peoples of Egypt and the Sudan with the ideas of jihād. In April 1915, the Sudan Government authorities detected some undated circulars under the caption, "Circular by the mouth of Abbas Pasha Hilmi II, the Khedive of Egypt".³³ It was also found out that 'one Murgan Khairullah, a Sudanese officer' had been entrusted with the task of distributing those pamphlets.³⁴ The circulars could have been a good weapon in subverting the minds of the Sudanese Muslims, had they not been timely intercepted. "This is to make you, the natives of the Sudan", read the circular, "understand that the English are making every contrivance for the eradication of the Mohammedan religion and that they are trying and thinking their best to eradicate the Islam faith totally".

32. Wingate to Henry, Khartoum, March 10th, 1915; W.P.194/2.

33. Translated copies of these 'Circular Jihad Propaganda' are in W.P.253/5.

34. From the note attached to the 'Circular Jihad Propaganda', W.P., Ibid.

The circular proceeded, "Emir-el-Mumineen, i.e. the Sultan, orders you not to mention but his name in your prayers, otherwise your prayers are in vain They (English) state that they are protecting the Holy Land, while they are throwing their bombs on it". The circular needs no comment as to how it could work on the minds of the average Sudanese Muslims. Besides the above, some more copies of the same circular were found by the customs people in a bale of cotton at Port Sudan, and significantly, they were all addressed to the Sudanese Shaikhs.³⁵ But the timely intervention prevented the circulars from reaching their proper destinations.

Still in 1915 there were two small risings. Fakī 'Alī, one of the most loyal Nuba chiefs in Southern Kordofan, revolted against the Sudan Government. Another fakī in Gedir, one of the strongholds of the Mahdists, declared jihād against the Government only with a handful of followers, numbering between thirty and forty. Both these risings were, however, promptly suppressed.

The most serious of all the pro-Turkish risings, however, was the revolt of 'Alī Dīnār, the Sultan of Darfur. The case of Sultan 'Alī Dīnār needs a bit of elaboration. A member of the royal house whom the Egyptians had overthrown in 1878, 'Alī Dīnār had filled a minor post in Mahadist Omdurman where he had been compelled to live. But profiting from the confusion that arose from the defeat of Khalifa 'Abd-Allāh, 'Alī Dīnār fled westward with a few followers in a bid to gain his patrimony before any rival should forestall him. He succeeded in installing himself as the

35. Wingate to Fitzgerald, Khartoum, April 10th, 1915; W.P. 195/2.

Sultan of Darfur and became a tributary to the Sultan Government.³⁶

Since the inception of the new Sudan Government, the relation between Sultan 'Alī Dīnār and the Sudan Government was quite cordial, but in the winter of 1914-15, the Sultan began writing to the Sudan Government in abusive terms. Moreover, he went so far as to make an agreement with the Turks. At last he wrote to the Governor-General they had declared a jihād against the English at the order of the Sultan of Turkey.³⁷ Thus, the Governor-General was forced to take action. In the course of 1916, an Egyptian force assisted by three British aircraft conquered Darfur and killed 'Alī Dīnār.

The cause of all these pro-Turkish risings were attributed by the Sudan Government to the Turkish propaganda of jihād which the Government believed was being propagated all over the Sudan by the Fellāta pilgrims who "were soaked with the Jihad propaganda when they were on pilgrimage".³⁸ Long before the Sudan Government adopted appropriate measures to check the menace. As early as 1914, the Governor-General wrote to Doughty Wylie, "..... at the moment, the Sudan Government is chiefly concerned with the probability of dangerous views and teachings being disseminated by the pilgrims returning from the Hedjaz and well primed by the Turks for the purpose".³⁹ But the remedy for this was ready at hand. "..... all such (pilgrims)" wrote the Governor-General, "have to undergo a kind of moral disinfection at Khartoum, carried out by the local

36. For details of 'Alī Dīnār and his reign, see, Theobald, A.B., 'Alī Dīnār, Last Sultan of Darfur. 1898-1916, Longmans, 1965.

37. Wingate to Brigadier General N.M.Smyth, April 12th, 1916; W.P.195/6.

38. Wingate to Owen, April 20th, 1915; W.P. 195/1.

39. Wingate to Wylie, Khartoum, Dec.21st, 1914; W.P. 192.

religious chiefs, before being allowed to return to their homes." ⁴⁰
 Particularly, the pilgrimage applications from the followers of Sultan
 'Alī Dīnār were carefully examined, for the pilgrimage aspect of their
 desires was greatly suspected by the Government. ⁴¹

Besides instituting 'a kind of moral disinfection' for the
 pilgrims returning from Mecca, the Governor-General also tried some other
 methods to counteract the Turkish jihād propaganda and any pro-Turkish
 feelings. For this, he instituted a sort of 'mild press campaign' by
 having inspired articles inserted principally in the Arabic portion of
 the Sudan Times. These articles tried to clarify the position of Great
 Britain and to explain the real nature of the war between Great Britain
 and Turkey. On November 9th, 1914, there appeared in the Sudan Times an
 article under the title, "This is what 'Hind' was trying to avoid".
 The following extract from the translation of the article will show how
 the Governor-General conducted his press campaign in collaboration with
 the Muslim religious dignitaries. The English translation of some
 portions of the article is as follows:-

"In a crisis like this, people of little intellect and weak
 judgment may think that the Christians have risen against the Moslems
 purely from religious motives in an endeavour to secure the ascendancy of
 one faith over another..... He will find that the Christians have divided
 into two parties, each party fighting the other and sparing no pains to
 destroy and crush one another. The reason for this deadly strife has
 nothing whatever to do with religious considerations. It is simply due to

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

the ambitions of each party which so much differ from the other. Everybody knows that England and Russia differ in their religious ideas and still they are Allies. The fact that Mohammedan Turkey has thrown in her lot with Germany (which is certainly not a Mohammedan power) in this war does not denote that she is undertaking a religious war in order to uphold the word of God. This is simply an ordinary civil or political war....."

The writer of the article, however, did not sign his name, and in its place stood the pseudonym "By a prominent Mohammedan writer". Of course, from a letter which the Governor-General wrote to Clayton, we come to know that the 'prominent Mohammedan writer' was "no other than the Grand Qadi of the Sudan"⁴².

But the measures adopted by the Governor-General by no means confined themselves only to the clarification of the situation. When occasion arose, he did not hesitate to launch a vigorous anti-Turkish campaign. In the anti-Turkish campaign, the Governor-General took great initiative. He himself admitted that as early as in August, 1914, he had started an anti-Turkish propaganda.⁴³ Moreover, with every frankness he could write to Lord Cromer: "Publicly I keep the people's mind on the German menace and privately let some of my principal native friends know that our real enemy would probably be Turkey...."⁴⁴ In carrying out his anti-Turkish propaganda, the Governor-General got a good advisor in the person of Khan Bahadur 'Abd al-Qādir of Aden. The Khan Bahadur who was

42. Wingate to Clayton, Nov.12th, 1914; W.P. 192.

43. Wingate to G.F.Archer, Aug.13th, 1916; W.P. 201/4.

44. Wingate to Cromer, Khartoum, Nov.27th, 1914; P.R.O./F.O.633/23.

once the Governor-General's Arabic teacher⁴⁵ used to advise his pupil as to how the Arabs of the Sudan could be stirred up against the Turks. In a private letter⁴⁶ to the Governor General, the Khan Bahadur drew the latter's attention to the famous tradition, namely, "The first people who will deprive them (my nation) of their possessions and what God has granted them are the children of Kawitura (i.e. Turks)"⁴⁷ by which the Prophet had denounced the Turks before their appearance. He also assured the Governor-General that the tradition could be found in the most approved books of the Prophet's tradition; and further told that the Prophet's predictions came true, for the last 'Abbāsids were conquered by the Turks and one of them was put in a bag and kicked until he died. The Governor-General highly appreciated the advice of the Khan Bahadur. He even thanked the Khan Bahadur for quoting the extracts from the tradition and considered them invaluable for propaganda purposes.⁴⁸ Continuing further, the Governor-General wrote that he was taking steps to have "articles written in the Morattam and other papers"⁴⁹ on the lines suggested by the Khan Bahadur.

The result of the efforts of the Governor-General was that during the war period, the Jihād and Turko-German propaganda could make almost no headway in the Sudan. Explaining the causes of the 'comparative failure'

45. Hill, Slatin Pasha, op.cit., p.106.

46. Khan Bahadur 'Abd al-Qādir to Wingate, Aden, May, 1916; W.P. 200/4.

47. The text of the tradition is from the Khan Bahadur's letter;
W.P. Ibid.

48. Wingate to Khan Bahadur 'Abd al-Qādir, June 1st, 1916; W.P. 200/5.

of the Turko-German propaganda in the Sudan, the Governor-General wrote to Lord Hardinge,⁵⁰ the Indian Viceroy, that "..... the past events of Turkish misrule and the anti-Turkish movement which I encouraged as much as possible in the earlier days of the war....." largely accounted for the comparative peace which the Sudan enjoyed during the war period.

* * *

III

A few months after the Turkish entry into the war, the British Government, through a Proclamation issued to the Arabs in Arabia, Sudan and the Western Desert, gave an indication that the Arabian Peninsula and its Muslim Holy Places would remain independent at the end of the war.⁵¹ But the facts indicate that even before the war ended, the British authorities shaped its policy towards the Muslim holy places of Mecca and Medina. The policy was mainly directed to free these two Holy Cities, which were then still under the Turkish control. And for the actual working of this policy, Egypt and the Sudan were used as the bases of operation.

While the war was well in progress, Turkey possessed the suzerainty of the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina. Well beforehand, Turkey had made arrangements for an access to one of the (Medina) by railway. This greatly

50. W ingate to Lord Hardinge, Sept.23rd, 1915; W.P. 196.

51. From The Proclamation issued to the Arabs in Arabia, Sudan and Western Desert. Copies are in W.P. 104/17/3.

strengthened her moral position, for she could assert that, as guardian of the Holy Cities, she was fulfilling one of the duties of the Caliph -- who could not indeed claim to continue as such if she lapsed in this respect. So England, with several million Muslim subjects in her Empire, did not fail to see the 'danger of a resurgent Islam based on the possession by the Caliph -- however nominal he might be -- of the Holy Cities'. For, the pilgrimage to Mecca is obligatory for true believers. England, long before, had attained her influence over the Muslim subjects not only by permitting the free practice of their religion, but by facilitating and encouraging, through her sea power, the pilgrimage to Mecca by the easiest route available.

As long as Turkey had been no more than a potential enemy, Turkish control of the Holy Cities was only a potential practical menace, and an imponderable moral menace to England. But Turkey at war with England turned the Holy Cities into a definite moral and political counter which England was determined to play on her side of the table. The key position of the Hezaj was universally recognised, and everyone was convinced that free access to the Holy Cities for pilgrimage would have to be assured. The British policy makers realised that the Muslim subjects of their King might forget about the Sultan of Turkey being the Commander of the faithful --- for he was only mentioned automatically as such in Friday prayers --- but if the pilgrimage was stopped, every Muslim would hear of it.⁵²

52. Wingate, R., Wingate of the Sudan, op.cit., p.181.

The British apprehension that Turkey might deny access of the Muslim pilgrims of the British territories, however, does not seem to have a very solid ground. For whatever animosity might have existed between Turkey and England, it was not possible for the former to stop the Muslim pilgrims from anywhere in the world from entering into the Holy Cities. This she could not do, as it would have been an irreligious act which would have undermined her position at the bottom.

Thus, driven by her wrong logic or motivated by 'some other ends' England was urged by Lord Kitchener to set herself at once to find out ways and means to free the Holy Cities from the Turkish control.⁵³ Contact was established with Sharif Husain, the Amir of Mecca. England tried her best to persuade the Sharif, by offers of assistance and guarantees of his future autonomy and independence, to throw off the Turkish supremacy and to keep open the Holy Cities for the Muslim pilgrims of the Allies.⁵⁴ In December, 1914, a letter was despatched to the Sharif through the British Residency at Cairo.⁵⁵ After that date, Henry MacMahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, pursued the negotiations with the Sharif until June 9th, 1916, when the latter formally and finally declared his independence of Turkey.

In organising the revolt of Sharif Husain and in instigating the latter with the object of freeing the Holy Cities from the Turkish control, the Governor-General of the Sudan was destined to play a great role. Indeed, he was the right man to do it. Ever since England's rupture with Turkey,

53. Ibid, p.181.

54. Ibid,

55. Ibid,

Wingate had been an enthusiastic advocate of a policy which the British Government just now adopted.⁵⁶ He was even quite confident that should the policy succeed it would bring enhanced prestige for the British Government from her Muslim subjects.⁵⁷ He also keenly felt that to help the Muslims to maintain the dominance of their faith, it was essential to set up an independent Arab Kingdom, which should be entrusted with the guardianship of the Holy Places of Islam.⁵⁸

As he was so much interested, so the burden of the task fell upon him. At the joint request of the High Commissioner of Egypt, and the G.O.C., Egyptian Expeditionary Force, Wingate accepted the general control of the military matters connected with the assistance of the Sharif. Wingate sent Wilson Pasha, the Governor and Commandant of the Red Sea province, to Jeddah as a pilgrimage officer. By doing so, Wingate hoped that Wilson's presence at Jeddah in an official capacity would enable him to get in close touch with the Sharif who might be advised with regard to the various matters connected with the revolt.⁵⁹

The British policy was successful in inducing Sharif Husain to cast off the Turkish allegiance. The Holy Cities were now free from the Turkish suzerainty. Even after the revolt was accomplished, Wingate kept him busy in strengthening the Sharif by various means. He proposed to Sir William Robertson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, that on the successful termination of the East African operations, as many Muslim

56. Wingate to W.G. Thesiger, Erkoit, July 13th, 1916; W.P. 201/3.

57. Wingate to Wigram, Erkoit, July 26th, 1916; W.P. 201/3.

58. Ibid.

59. Wingate to Sultan of Egypt, Erkoit, July 26th, 1916; W.P. 201/5.

troops as possible should be sent to assist the Sharif.⁶⁰ Wingate was wise enough not to send any Christian soldiers to Hezaj, because he believed that this action might put a dangerous propaganda weapon in the hands of the Turks. "..... the religious question is a serious bar", he wrote to Maxwell, "to giving more practical help in the way of an expeditionary force (composed of Christian soldiers), as the Hezaj Arabs are particularly averse to anything like Christian interference in proximity to the Holy Places of Islam".⁶¹ The result was that Wingate had to employ only the Egyptian Muslim soldiers, and also to borrow the services of some specialist Indian Army Muslim personnel.

* * *

IV

It is a firm conviction of the majority of the Muslims that the dignity and welfare of Islam are inseparable from its perpetuation as an independent political system, as contrasted with a creed or a mere school of ethics; and demand firm guarantee for the perpetual sanctity and inviolability to access by Christians or other non-Muslims, of the lands containing the holy shrines, particularly those of Mecca and Medina. It is worth noting that on the ability of the Ottoman Sultans to give such guarantees, by reason of the military supremacy and geographical position of the Ottoman Empire, was based their surest claim to the

60. Wingate to Robertson, August 17th, 1916; W.P. 201/4.

61. Wingate to Maxwell, Erkoit, August 23rd, 1916; W.P. 201/6.

Caliphate. This brings into light the importance of the Caliph for the Muslims.

Thus, when the prospect of the war was in favour of the Allies and when it was quite evident that the doom of Turkey was inevitable, the question of who was to replace the Turkish Sultan as the Caliph of Islam, appeared as a sign of interrogation in the minds of many educated Muslims. In view of the importance of the institution of Caliphate for the Muslims, it was indeed a problematic situation. As the defeat and fall of Turkey became quite certain, the "young Arab P arty" vigorously placed their case to fill the vacuum:

"Without the guarantee afforded by an independent Caliphate, the future of the Muslims will be that of the Jews - viz, complete political dependency; the independence and territorial integrity of the (Asiatic) Arab countries are essential to the existence of such a Caliphate; the inviolability of the Holy Places of Islam to access by non-Moslems can best be secured if their approaches by land are allowed to remain under independent Arab control." 62

But it was not the Muslims who were alone troubled with the future state of the Caliphate. Significantly enough, a few of the Englishmen closely associated with the affairs of the Muslims, quite rightly shared the anxiety of the Muslim in respect of the future of the Caliphate. Wingate, perhaps, was the first to express his concern, "I am inclined to think" he wrote to St.Loe Strachey, "that with the trend of events in the Constantinople direction it is about time that the public mind is, to a

62. As quoted by Col.G.S.Symes in his article (Typescript): "The Caliphate and the Future of Islam". It is in W.P. 194/2.

certain extent, concentrated on the general question of Islam and what is to happen if Turkey finally collapses".⁶³ "In other words", he concluded, "the much vexed question of the Moslem Khalifate will have to be faced". Wingate even did not stop there; he went a step further with his own suggestion. To Charles Edward Grey he wrote: "..... I hope that with the downfall of the Ottoman kingdom and Khalifate, it may be possible to reward the splendid loyalty of Indians, Sudanese and other Empire Moslems, by holding out some hope that their co-religionists in Arabia would be allowed to establish an independent Arab Caliphate under British aegis".⁶⁴ One of the chief architects of the Arab Revolt, he with great eagerness expressed to Lord Cromer that the British Government should declare the name of Sharif Husain of Mecca for the future post of the Caliph.⁶⁵ To circulate his own views in the British press, Wingate instructed Col.G.S.Symes, his private Secretary to prepare articles⁶⁶ justifying his support for an Arab Caliphate. For the future post of Caliph, Wingate so much recommended the name of Sharif Husain that, without hesitation, he wrote to Sir Edward Grey: "..... as far as we can see at present, the most likely candidate (for the future Caliphate) --- when the house of Ottoman disappears from the scene --- is the Sharif of Mecca".⁶⁷ Within the Sudan, Wingate tried to convince the religious authorities on the same issue and in this he believed to have achieved considerable success. "As far as

63. Wingate to Strachey, Khartoum, April 7th, 1915; W.P. 195/2.

64. Wingate to Grey, Khartoum, March 13th, 1915; W.P. 194/3/1.

65. Wingate to Cromer, August 3rd, 1915; W.P. Ibid.

66. "The Caliphate and the future of Islam". (Typescript) and "A further note on the British Policy in Arabia and its relation to British Moslem policy" (Typescript). Both articles are in W.P. 194/2.

67. Wingate to Grey, Khartoum, July 20th, 1915; W.P. 196.

I can make out", he wrote to Gen.C.E.Callwell, "there seems to be a concensus of opinion amongst Sudan religious authorities that the Sharif Husain of Mecca has all the qualities and attributes to fill the important position and they are strongly in favour of this nominee".⁶⁸ Even before writing to Callwell, he wrote to Lord Hardinge, "Syed Ali al-Mirghani plumps for the present Sharif of Mecca as a suitable man as Khalifa in succession to the present Sultan".⁶⁹ He also advised the Indian Viceroy to prepare the minds of the Indian Muslims to accept the Arab Caliphate.⁷⁰ Wingate was so keen in this matter that he, at his own initiative, arranged for a messenger to establish connection between the Sharif and 'Ali al Mirghani'.⁷¹ He hoped this would facilitate good understanding between the two.

While chapioning the cause of Sharif Husain for the Caliphate, Wingate greatly disfavoured the pro-Turkish attitude of the Indian Muslims.⁷² But in spite of the Indian Muslims' inclination for the Ottoman dynasty, he suggested to Clayton that "a propaganda on the line of Pan-Arab Pan-Islamic movement"⁷³ was the need of the hour. "On the otherhand" he further stressed, "if we hesitate to support by every means in our power the Pan-Arab Pan-Islamic movement, we shall find our enemies running it for all they are worth the moment the Ottoman Dynasty begins to crumble".⁷⁴ It seems it was only this apprehension which urged Wingate to advocate the cause of Pan-Arab Pan-Islamic movement and that of the

68. Wingate to Callwell, Oct.19th, 1915; W.P. 197/1/2.

69. Wingate to Hardinge, May 14th, 1915; W.P. 195/6.

70. Ibid.

71. Wingate to Cromer, Nov.11th, 1915; W.P. 197/2/1.

72. Wingate to Clayton, October 20th, 1915; W.P. 197/1/2.

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid.

Arab Caliphate. He did not want to see his enemy stealing a march upon him in matters of establishing a new Caliphate for the Muslims.

While Wingate was doing everything in his power to back Sharif Husain, he was at the same time aware that the Egyptian nationalists might argue and claim the new Caliphate on the obvious grounds that Egypt was far more prepared than any other Muslim State to run arrangements, as it took the lead in religious education and had a good number of highly educated Muslims who could be entrusted with the affairs of the State.⁷⁵ But far from supporting the Egyptian views, Wingate was greatly against it. The reasons for his opposition are quite evident. He believed that if British Government sanctioned such an arrangement, it would pave the way for re-asserting Egyptian independence. For, the new independent Caliph and Sultan would not owe his position and title to a 'Christian Protector'. He warned Clayton, "..... a recrudescence of Egyptian nationalism under the guise of the embryonic sovereign State and Khalifate is something to be watched for."⁷⁶

The policy of the Governor-General to influence the British Government to render support and help for the creation of an Arab Caliphate, however, could not draw any support from the official circles in England. On the point of establishing either an Arab Caliphate or an Arab Kingdom, the stand of the British policy makers was clear. It can be read from a letter of the Governor-General of the Sudan to the Indian Viceroy. "His Majesty's Government" wrote Wingate to Lord Hardinge, "have decided that an essential condition of peace will be that the Arabian Peninsula and its

75. Wingate to Clayton, Erkoit, May 15th, 1915; W.P. 195/4.

76. Ibid.

sacred shrines shall remain in the hands of an independent Sovereign State;⁷⁷ that the question must be decided by the Moslems without the interference of the Powers, but that should the Moslems decide and declare their adherence to an Arab Caliphate, their decision will naturally be respected by His Majesty's Government; this decision, however, is one for the Muslims to make.⁷⁸ Thus, the policy of the British Government was to favour the creation of an independent Arabian Kingdom and not an Arab Caliphate. "..... the future of the Caliphate" stressed the Marquess of Crewe, "Must be a matter for the Muslim world itself, It is not for us to attempt to impose a Caliph on the Muslim world".⁷⁹ Even he considered it highly impolitic to bring about by any forcible means a situation which would in practice compel the choice to fall on a particular individual.⁸⁰ This view gathered so strong a support in England that S.Loe Strachey refused to publish the articles⁸¹ of Col.Symes in *The Spectator*, only because the articles put forward the case of Sharif Husain for the future Caliph. Making a pointed reference to the British policy with regard to the question of Caliphate, Strachey remarked: ".... we are not going to impose any conditions on their (Muslim) faith or impose any candidate for the Caliphate. The matter is a holy mystery which only Mohammdans can deal with".⁸²

Here, at this stage an attempt may be made to explain the indifferent attitude of the British Government to the future question of the Caliphate. Apart from the fact that the matter was 'a holy mystery'

77. It may be noted that this independent Arab State was not created as promised; and this constitutes one of the tragic chapters of the Arab Revolt of 1916.

78. Wingate to Hardinge, Erkoit, April 28th, 1915; W.P. 195/3.

79. Speech of the Marquess of Crewe in the House of Lords, April 20th, 1915; found in a press-cutting in P.R.O./F.O. 633/32.

80. Ibid. 81. See above p.185.

82. Strachey to Cromer, August 9th, 1915; W.P. 196.

which could be dealt with only by the Muslims, the whole affair involved some major complications which prevented the British Government from participating in the debacle. In the first place, it was undoubtedly a matter which was purely for the Muslims to decide; and on this ground the British Government, a non-Muslim and above all a Christian Power, was right not to interfere.

Secondly, many in England held the opinion that in the event of the Caliphate being abandoned by the Sultan of Turkey it would not be at all impossible that the Muslim world would revert to the state of things which existed before the Ottoman Sultan Selim had 'usurped' the title in the sixteenth century. This was particularly the view of Lord Cromer who duly communicated it to Wingate.⁸³

Thirdly, by no means could the British Government afford to disregard the general sentiment of the Indian Muslims who supported the cause of the Ottoman dynasty. "Indian Moslems and Ulema" wrote Lord Hardinge, "are very pro-Turkish".⁸⁴ This is also indicated by the trend of the Caliphate movement in India.⁸⁵ The pro-Turkish tendency of the Indian Muslims is best illustrated by Maurice -de-Bunsen, who on behalf of the Secretary of State, wrote to Sir Henry McMahon, "The Agha Khan came to see me today, and dwelt very strongly on the fact that the Moslems of India are not well disposed towards an Arab Caliphate".⁸⁶ And continuing

83. Cromer to Wingate, August 28th, 1916; W.P. 153/7.

84. Hardinge to Wingate, Simla, Sept. 1st, 1915; W.P. 196.

85. The Indian Muslims really favoured the Turkish Caliph and they almost showed no feelings for an Arab Caliphate although many of them fought for the British against the Turks in Mesopotamia.

86. Maurice-de-Bunsen to Henry McMahon, Nov. 2nd, 1915; W.P. 197/2/1.

further he said, "It would, therefore, be a great mistake for us to get mixed up in a movement for such a Caliphate and it would cause a great trouble in India".⁸⁷

Lastly, the British Government greatly apprehended that its initiative to back the case of Sharif Husain could bring them to 'loggerheads' with France which would then "run the Sultan of Morocco as a candidate for the Caliphate".⁸⁸ Certainly at that critical hour the British Government could by no means create a rivalry with a friendly power like France.

These are briefly the reasons that explain British Government action with regard to the question of the Caliphate. To repeat, what the British Government was ready to concede was to favour an independent or autonomous Arabia in the country inhabited by the Arabs. But anything they promised to the Arabs, or any action they were prepared to take to support the Arabs was to be of a political and secular character. The British Government regarded the Caliphate question as a thing which it preferred the Muslims to settle without the interference of any non-Muslim power.

Although an independent Arab Kingdom was not created as was promised, yet the trends of events revealed that in matters of the question of Caliphate, the policy of the British Government prevailed upon that of Wingate. And significantly enough, the question was finally

87. Ibid.

88. Cromer to Wingate, August 28th, 1916; W.P. 153/7.

settled, as always held by the British Government, by the Muslims themselves, when Mustafa Kamal of Turkey abolished the institution in 1924.

* * *

CONCLUSION.

To conclude, an attempt may be made to evaluate the Islamic policies of the Sudan Government with a view to showing its impact on Sudanese Islam and Sudanese Muslims.

From the very beginning of their rule, the British administrators in the Sudan, as they claimed, had been strictly observing the principles of tolerance and non-interference in matters of Muslim religion.¹ Lord Kitchener, the first Governor-General of the Sudan through his remarkable directives to his subordinates in the provinces made it quite clear that there would be no interference with the religion of the Muslims.² Again, during a period of great crisis, Wingate re-emphasised the said policy in his speech to the 'Ulamā.³ Trimmingham called the Islamic policy of the Government as one of "protective to the extreme".⁴ Now what were the factors that helped the British administrators follow such a tolerant and liberal policy?

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1. Here it may be that the Muslim approach to religion is quite different from that of the West. While West divides life into two watertight compartments, viz, secular and religious, to the Muslims this division is quite alien. Hence to the Muslims their religion, i.e. Islam, is not merely a religion -- it is a political, social and legal way of life. As the term religion calls up quite different perceptions with the Muslims from those it calls up in Western minds, so from the Muslim point of view, the expression 'non-interference into religion' has no legal basis.
 2. See above, p.7.
 3. See above, pp 165-166.
 4. Trimmingham, J.S., The Christian approach to Islam in the Sudan, op.cit, p. 26.

To the critics, the British religious policy in the Muslim territories had always been "devoid of crusading spirit".⁵ This charge of the critics is certainly true. For, the British never embarked upon a policy of large scale conversion of the Muslims under their rule to their own faith. There were, of course, ample reasons for such a non-crusading policy. While engaged in the administration of a Muslim country, the British administrators always took into account one important fact. They could correctly realise that for their Muslim subjects, Islam provided a religious and cultural ideal which they would most stubbornly defend. Thus, it is found that although very often the British administrators defamed many of the Islamic institutions "behind the backs of the religious community in their European publications",⁶ yet they did not make any attempt to destroy the Islamic institutions under their administration.

Apart from the realization of the fact that the Muslims would render a tough resistance to defend their own cultural and religious values, there was another factor which made the British religious policy devoid of every crusading zeal. It was the training and religious outlook with which the British administrators were equipped. For example the very nature and character of the British officials at once made them non-crusaders. The reason was that almost all of them were the products of the British public schools; and naturally they inherited the attitudes prevailing in them, which made these people 'indifferent to religion and

5. Lenczowski, G, *The Middle East in World Affairs*, (second edition), New York, p.520.

6. *The Muslim World*, Vol. LII, No.3., July, 1962, p.228.

all kinds of religious speculations'. It is a fact that as a body the British officers of the Sudan Government had almost no knowledge of or interest in the history of Christianity and Islam and their doctrines, 'what they had of religion was its moral rather than doctrinal content'.⁷ Naturally this religious attitude of the British officers, which was largely shaped by the British public schools and also by the environment in which they grew up, made them most tolerant and least fanatic. So, armed with these ideas and attitudes, they could never consider the reconquest of the Sudan as a God-sent opportunity to avenge the death of General Gordon and to convert the whole country, particularly the Muslim North, to Christianity which again was once the religion of the land. On the contrary, there are evidences to show how resolutely they prevented every such attempt.⁸

Another version of the criticism of the British policy of religious non-interference manifests itself in the assertion that the British Muslim policy was "one of extreme conservatism"⁹, which again is attributed to two factors, namely, "a genuine concern for the fate of the 'subject peoples' and a shrewd understanding of the interests of the home country".¹⁰ Hence, it is alleged that the religious courts, the religious law and the traditional Muslim educational institutions were left to their own fate and allowed 'to go their own way.'

7. This point is thoroughly discussed by Hill, see, Slatin Pasha, op.cit, p. 80; and also M.E.S., Vol.I, No.2, January, 1965; pp.114-115.

8. See above, Chapter V.

9. Muslim World, Vol.LII., op.cit; p.231.

10. Ibid, pp.228-229.

From two earlier chapters¹¹, it will appear that these charges mainly levelled against Cromer's Islamic policy, are not wholly true in the case of the Sudan. Beyond doubt, an exhaustive programme of reforms of Islam and its institutions was certainly not launched. Apart from the fact that in the early years the Government was mostly preoccupied with greater internal and external security, sound finance, and good communication, there were other practical difficulties which stood in the way of executing such a reforming policy. Undoubtedly, in the Sudan as elsewhere, Islam was in a stagnant and degenerate state, and no one could deny that it needed urgent reforms. But to introduce reforms in Islam and in its institutions by a Government with its non-Muslim facade and pillars outside and inside, was in every sense a dangerous proposition. This move was most likely to encounter the opposition from the vast majority of the conservative peoples.

In spite of this, it is not fully correct to presume that the British administrators did not think in terms of reforms in Muslim institutions. What probably troubled Cromer was not how to destroy the institutions of Islam, but "how, without shattering all that is worthy and noble in Moslem religion, the quasi-religious institutions of the country can be reformed to such an extent as no longer to constitute an insuperable barrier to progress."¹² Furthermore, at the beginning of this century, Cromer suggested to the leaders of the Islamic community that they introduce some moderate reforms in the Islamic Courts, which

11. See Chapters, I and II.

12. Reports by His Majesty's Agent and Consul General on the Finances, Administration and Condition of Egypt and the Soudan in 1906; Egypt No.1. (1907) c. 3394; p.116.

were utterly inefficient and corrupt. But the conservative circle opposed; and in 1903, when a member of the Egyptian Legislative Council announced that nothing connected with the religious courts stood in need of reform, a majority confirmed the proposition.¹³ Even the sincere attempts to initiate reforms by the reformist and modernist like Shaikh Muhammad 'Abdu and his followers, also came under heavy fire. "Their task" wrote Cromer, "is one of great difficulty, for they are constantly exposed to criticism that their action is not merely illegal but also sacrilègious".¹⁴

Thus, in the face of opposition from the conservative and orthodox circles, the British policy was naturally bound to be 'conservative' in matters of reform in religious institutions. Hence, throughout the period, the stand of the British was that "..... the demand for reforms should spring spontaneously from the Moslem population, and that the nature of the reforms to be executed should, in the main, be indicated by component Moslem authority with a minimum amount of European interference or assistance".¹⁵

The above arguments and contentions were true, not only in the case of Egypt, but were similarly applicable to the conditions of the Sudan, which was even more backward than Egypt. In the Sudan the people were so backward and religiously conservative, that any reform, secular or religious, by a non-Muslim Government, was indeed a task next to impossible.

13. Colvin, Sir Auckland, *The Making of Modern Egypt*, London, 1906; p.285.

14. Reports by His Majesty's Agent and Consul-General on the Finances, Administration and Condition of Egypt and the Soudan in 1905; Egypt No.1 (1906) cd. 2817; p.15.

15. Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of Egypt and the progress of reform. Egypt No.2 (1897) C.8332; p.18.

But to his credit, Wingate, the successor of Kitchener, was shrewd enough to realise it, and fortunately, his actions as the Governor-General of the Sudan, go a long way to mitigate the charge that the British administrators were extremely 'conservative' and 'devoid of reforming zeal' in matters relating to Islam.

From the very beginning, Wingate was quite aware of the fact that many of the reforms that would be necessary for a Western power to introduce might "at first prove unacceptable to a people still living largely in the Mosaic tradition".¹⁶ Thus, while the new administrative reforms were inevitable, at the same time he felt it necessary to avoid wounding their susceptibilities by the introduction of these reforms. To persuade the Muslims to accept the 'innovations', he carefully prepared the ground in advance. One of his first steps, therefore, was to appoint a Board of 'Ulamā who "could not only advise on matters of religious procedure but, where new measures of social reform were to be introduced, to use their influence in order to get them adopted without friction".¹⁷

The above point can be nicely illustrated when this Board of 'Ulamā came to help the Government to introduce various hygienic reforms in and around Khartoum. In the old days of the Turko-Egyptian rule, Khartoum had been a very unhealthy city owing to the fact that malarial mosquitoes bred unchecked. In time, a Sanitation Squad was formed, whose duty it was to hunt down mosquitoes wherever they happened to be. As these mosquitoes

16. Papers concerning the Proposed Memoir (by? of ?) Gen. Sir. Reginald Wingate, 1946; op.cit.

17. Ibid.

could breed in wells, stagnant water in the compounds of the houses, and even in the saucers that caught the drippings from earthenware water-coolers that were to be found in every house, it was necessary for the Sanitary Inspectors to visit every house in the town. This visitation was not only unwelcome in itself, but it might mean intruding into the privacy of the womens' quarters, which in a Muslim country, was almost unthinkable. This difficulty might have proved insuperable without the influence and support of the 'Ulamā. To have made a forcible entrance into the houses would have aroused bitter hostility and might well have resulted in violence and bloodshed. But the 'Ulamā carefully explained to the people the reason, and arranged that at certain hours of the day, when the Sanitary Inspectors would call, the women should be safely secluded. This was done, and malaria was combated.¹⁸ This is indeed, a nice example of how a necessary reform was effected without offending the religious prejudice of the people.

Apart from one or two minor reforms of this type, no attempt was made by the British administrators to initiate reforms in the main body of Islam owing to the complications that involved the entire question. This greatly hampered the eradication of many social customs that became unduly interwoven with religion. Thus, we find that the obnoxious practice of female circumcision continued until 1936, when the 'Ulamā only took a step to suppress it.

18. Ibid.

While this was the actual picture, it would still be wrong to hold that the first twenty-five years of joint Anglo-Egyptian rule, and particularly the British participation in the administration of the Sudan, had no effect on Islam and its institutions. It may be recalled that during the Anglo-Egyptian rule the Muslim Qādis, administering religious law had been retained. We have also seen how these laws were even sometimes modified by Government Ordinances or Regulations.¹⁹ But the most remarkable thing in this respect is how these Muslim jurists under the new administration were beginning to feel the need to adapt their methods to the times in which they lived, in order to avoid that inelastic formalism which made Islam completely stagnant. The words of the Grand Qādi bear eloquent testimony to this changed attitude.²⁰

The new Government's recognition of the 'Ulamā 'as belonging to representative body of educated Muslim opinion, either as judges or as counsellors' had surely a solitary effect upon the Muslims of the land. The benefits of this action of the Government manifested itself in that it beyond doubt worked to solidify the people of the Northern Sudan as Muslims by promoting 'a feeling of sober responsibility'.

Thus, while Egypt's nominal association in the administration of the Sudan had resulted in the 'Islamic cultural reinforcement' through Egyptian teachers and Egyptian books, the various reformatory measures of the English rulers had also produced some beneficial effects. The

19. See above, Chapter I.

20. See above, p. 19.

reforms and improvements of the civil and criminal codes of law, reforms in education, even agricultural and other programmes -- all of which manifested the scientific and technological superiority of the West, were just beginning to produce a profound effect, not only upon the 'Ulamā and official religious hierarchy, but even the Heads of the great tariqas - 'the inheritors of the mantle of the great Fakis of the past' - began to feel the impact of the new trends set by the new administration. Slowly these religious leaders came to realise that the time had come to choose the 'path of progress'. Once imbued with this new sentiment, these leaders with their enlightened leadership had been of much value to the new administration. Perhaps it is this alone which had played a great contributory role to lessen the hazards which accompanied later days' rapid transformation from the old ways to the new.

* * *

APPENDIX I

THE ANGLO-EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT OF 1899.

Agreement between Her Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of His Highness the Khedive of Egypt, relative to the future administration of the Sudan.

WHEREAS certain provinces in the Sudan which were in rebellion against the authority of His Highness have now been reconquered by the joint military and financial efforts of Her Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of His Highness the Khedive; and WHEREAS it has become necessary to decide upon a system for the administration of and for the making of laws for the said reconquered provinces, under which due allowance may be made for the backward and unsettled condition of large portions thereof, and for the varying requirements of different localities; and WHEREAS it is desired to give effect to the claims which have accrued to Her Britannic Majesty's Government, by right of conquest, to share in the present settlement and future working and development of the said system of administration and legislation; and WHEREAS it is conceived that for many purposes Wadi Halfa and Suakin may be most effectively administered in conjunction with the reconquered provinces to which they are respectively adjacent;

NOW IT IS HEREBY AGREED AND DECLARED by and between the undersigned, duly authorized for that purpose as follows:

ARTICLE I

The word 'Sudan' in this agreement means all the territories south

of the 22nd parallel of latitude, which --

1. Have never been evacuated by Egyptian troops since the year 1882; or
2. Which, having before the late rebellion been administered by the Government of His Highness the Khedive, were temporarily lost to Egypt, and have been reconquered by Her Majesty's Government and the Egyptian Government, acting in concert; or
3. Which may be hereafter reconquered by the two Governments acting in concert.

ARTICLE II

The British and Egyptian flags shall be used together, both on land and water, throughout the Sudan, except in the town of Suakin,¹ in which locality the Egyptian flag alone shall be used.

ARTICLE III

The supreme military and civil command of the Sudan shall be vested in one officer, termed the 'Governor-General of the Sudan'. He shall be appointed by Khedivial Decree on the recommendation of her Britannic Majesty's Government and shall be removed only by Khedivial Decree, with the consent of Her Britannic Majesty's Government.

ARTICLE IV

Laws, as also orders and regulations with the full force of law, for the good government of the Sudan, and for regulating the holding,

1. A separate agreement was signed about Suakin on the 19th January, 1899 but was repealed in July of the same year and the administration of the town became the same as the rest of the country.

disposal, and devolution of property of every kind therein situate, may from time to time be made, altered, or abrogated by Proclamation of the Governor-General. Such laws, orders, and regulations may apply to the whole or any named part of the Sudan, and may, either explicitly or by necessary implication, alter or abrogate any existing law or regulation.

All such Proclamations shall be forthwith notified to Her Britannic Majesty's Agent and Consul-General in Cairo, and to the President of the Council of Ministers of His Highness the Khedive.

ARTICLE V

No Egyptian law, decree, ministerial arrete, or other enactment hereafter to be made or promulgated shall apply to the Sudan or any part thereof, save in so far as the same shall be applied by Proclamation of the Governor-General in manner hereinbefore provided.

ARTICLE VIII

The jurisdiction of the Mixed Tribunals shall not extend nor be recognized for any purpose whatsoever, in any part of the Sudan, except in the town of Suakin.

ARTICLE IX

Until and save so far as it shall be otherwise determined by Proclamation, the Sudan with the exception of Suakin shall be and remain under martial law.

ARTICLE X

No Consuls, Vice-Consuls, or Consular Agents, shall be accredited in respect of nor allowed to reside in the Sudan, without the previous consent of Her Britannic Majesty's Government.

ARTICLE XI

The importation of slaves into the Sudan, as also their exportation, is absolutely prohibited. Provision shall be made by Proclamation for the enforcement of this regulation.

ARTICLE XII

It is agreed between the two Governments that special attention shall be paid to the Brussels Act of the 2nd July, 1890 in respect to the import, sale, and manufacture of firearms and their munitions, and distilled, or spirituous liquors.

Done in Cairo, the 19th January, 1899.

(Signed) BOUTROS GHALI.
CROMER.

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A. MANUSCRIPT MATERIALS.

1. Sudan Archive, School of Oriental Studies, University of Durham.

Wingate Papers: Wingate Papers which form a major constituent part of the Sudan Archive in the School of Oriental Studies, University of Durham, have been most extensively used for the preparation of this work. These are the papers of the late General Sir Reginald Wingate. They consist of many thousands of letters, ranging from the most important to the most trivial. Sir Reginald kept all the letters he received, and copies of many that he wrote. He was on terms of personal friendship with some of the leading statesmen and soldiers of the day, and conducted a voluminous personal semi-official correspondence with them and with his subordinates in the Sudan. Although these papers require a little more classification, arrangement and organization, still their existing classification and arrangements in different boxes have been extremely helpful. Following are the boxes that have been frequently consulted:

Nos. of Boxes: 100; 101; 103; 131; 153; 180; 181; 183;
 184; 191; 192; 193; 194; 195; 196; 197;
 200; 201; 204; 223; 248; 269; 270; 271;
 272; 273; 275; 276; 279; 280; 282; 284;
 290; 300; 301; 400; 453; 457; 485;

2. Public Record Office, London.

(a) F.O. 78 Egypt. Official correspondence between the British Consul-General in Cairo and the Foreign Office in London.

(b) F.O. 633 Cromer Papers. These include letters and various correspondence between Lord Cromer and the contemporary leading statesmen and soldiers of Great Britain. Many of these letters contain valuable information about the Sudan.

3. The Church Missionary Society Archive, London.

The Sudan Mission Precs Book, 1905-1934: This book contains many letters from the leading C.M.S. missionaries, then working in the Sudan, to the Church Missionary Society, London. These letters contain valuable information regarding the Sudan Government's policy towards the Christian missions. But unfortunately, the entire book is not open to the readers.

Letters and documents only up to 1917 have been made available for the use of research works.

B. PRINTED MATERIALS.

1. Foreign Office Library, London.

(a) F.O. Confidential Print Series, Egypt 45: These include Intelligence Reports on the Sudan up to the year 1924. These reports were prepared by the Egyptian Military Intelligence and transmitted to the War Office in London, where they were printed for confidential circulation. These reports have been very useful in explaining the Government policy towards the Mahdists and their leader.

(b) F.O. Confidential Print No. 13169: Memorandum on the policy of the Sudan Government towards the Mahdist cult, by R. Davies, Acting Director of Intelligence, Khartoum, December 11, 1926. This is a very valuable memorandum and the Chapter V which deals with the Government policy towards the Mahdists and their leader largely draws upon this memorandum.

2. Library of the University of Durham.

(a) The main section of the Library, Palace Green

Parliamentary Papers: The Parliamentary debates of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Of the many volumes of these 'Blue Books', only those from 1900 to 1924 have been consulted.

(b) The Oriental Section.

(i) Marshall Collection: This includes many books and printed reports on the Sudan. But those which have been most extensively used are the Annual Reports on the Finances, Administration and the Condition of the Sudan from 1903 to 1914.

(ii) Egypt No.1: Reports by H.M.'s Agent and Consul-General on the Finances, Administration and Condition of Egypt and the Soudan, 1899-1919.

(iii) Egypt No.2: Reports on the Finances, Administration and Condition of Egypt and the progress of reform.

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