Editorial

This Issue of the Review is primarily devoted to the Sudan and touches on a variety of aspects of the socio-economic terrain of that country, including the current economic crisis, processes of class formation, the agrarian sector, the problem of national integration and the practicality of various political strategies. Much of the impetus for the initiation of the Issue and for encouraging contributions came from one of our Overseas Editors, Ibrahim Kursany, whose efforts have been greatly appreciated by the Editorial Working Group. We are also grateful for the assistance of Mahdawi, particularly for translating a number of items.

Several years ago, Sudan’s future was optimistically encapsulated by the prediction that it would become the ‘breadbasket of Africa’. As O’Neill shows in Briefings, considerable funding from foreign sources — particularly from the Middle East and from international bodies — has flowed into the country in recent years, much of it directed to large scale agricultural projects. The discovery of oil in the south of the country has induced the further inflow of funds. But the country’s development has remained no less elusive during the last decade than in the past. A Sudanese Economist outlines the scope of the present economic crisis in Briefings, noting that over the last half of the 1970s, all sectors recorded negative growth rates. He argues that the prescriptions of the IMF, to which the government turned for assistance, will hardly serve to remove the structural difficulties which the economy faces, nor halt deterioration in the agricultural sector.

It was on agricultural exports that the colonial government's developmental efforts mainly concentrated, as exemplified by the Gezira Scheme, initiated in 1925 and oriented toward production of cotton. As the breadbasket theme suggests, concentration on agricultural production and the processing of foodstuffs remains a fundamental focus of government policy. Three of the main articles of this Issue deal with the agrarian sector, though each centres on a different group within it. Taisier Ali focuses on tenant farmers on state and private schemes. Though in some cases hirers of labour, tenants were themselves squeezed by scheme license holders and were moved by a sense of collective grievance to form unions as early as the 1950s. The Government declined concessions to the tenants’ union and continued to favour the licensees and large-scale capitalist farmers, and a
deteriorating situation ultimately resulted in the tragedy in 1956 at Jouda where over 300 died. Although an event of the past, this incident points to the class implications of agricultural programmes and policy which persist and continue to require close examination. As O'Brien relates, it was the initial lack of a significant and reliable pool of agricultural labour which led to the system of tenant farming rather than private estate agriculture. But the viability of capitalist agriculture was always premised on the existence of wage labour in some degree, and over the years a rural labour force has grown to substantial proportions. O'Brien traces its development and examines the differential effects experienced by communities supplying labour. The variability, he suggests, rests upon such factors as the production relations characterising such communities, the relative cash needs of their inhabitants, the possibility of alternative means of meeting these needs and the nature of the crop being harvested in the capitalist sector. In the past such factors have led to variant patterns of seasonal labour migration and various degrees of marginalisation or incorporation of communities with respect to the capitalist sector. Increasingly, however, it is possible to see the emergence of a more unified labour force, a breakdown of former systems of recruitment and, with these, according to O'Brien, the increasing destruction of autonomous systems of social reproduction within communities supplying agricultural labour.

One set of such communities — in the region of the Nuba Mountains — is the concern of Kursany's article. The Nuba peasants supply some labour to the large capitalist farms at Habila and indeed to some degree hire labour — on an occasional basis — to work on their own small plots. Yet Kursany suggests that they essentially remain petty commodity producers, concentrating on 'traditional' crops. They remain, moreover, largely neglected by the Government, thus constituting a part of the vast bulk of the African peasantry subject to increasing marginalisation.

One component of the agricultural labour force during the colonial period was made up of the Takari, immigrants from northern Nigeria. Indeed the colonial government encouraged their settlement as a partial solution to the pressing need for labour on the Gezira and elsewhere. As Duffield explains, the Takari initially were perhaps most important as suppliers of unskilled manual labour in the urban area, their greater dependence than the indigenous population on wages predisposing them to fitting into a specific location within the class structure. Duffield examines the basis for and implications of this as well as the changes undergone by the Takari as they have increasingly moved out of the working class and into the petty bourgeoisie during the post-independence period.

A further component of Sudan's class structure — indigenous capitalists — is the object of analysis in the Debates section. F.B. Mahmoud surveys the political affiliation and practice of the bourgeoisie during the colonial and post-colonial periods as a basis for addressing the question of whether a national bourgeoisie can be said to exist in Sudan, with whom alliance on the part of progressive forces might bear fruitful results. The question, she states, is clearly an important one as regards political strategy and one which has directly engaged the Left and especially the Communist Party of the Sudan (SCP) over a period of several decades. Certainly her own
research is directed toward making or suggesting a link between intellectual analysis and political practice. Mahmoud concludes that the interpenetration of 'foreign' and 'national' capital is such that no specific and independent national bourgeoisie can be identified and, moreover, that the political role of indigenous capital to date indicates a conscious pursuit of its own interest which is clearly at variance to that of the oppressed classes. Kursany offers a contrasting view, suggesting that it is, in fact, possible to discern a national section of capital.

The Left has played an active role in Sudan, precipitating changes of government and, for a brief period following 1969, participating in government at the highest levels. Within the broad Left coalition, the Sudanese Communist Party has historically played a significant role. The various articles and briefings in this issue present a variety of perspectives and are certainly not confined to any party position. But one item has been included which specifically relates to the SCP, in recognition of its importance, not least, as one of the oldest communist parties on the continent of Africa. This is the court statement of El Tigani El Tayyib Babikir delivered in the summer of 1982, which offers not just a review and critique of the present political situation, but also a clear statement and attempted justification of the SCP's position, including that regarding the question of the South.

The question of national integration is once again a matter of urgent concern for the nation as a whole. The Civil War in the south which raged for a number of years was ended under international auspices in 1972, but recent rumblings threaten renewed open conflict and call for close attention. In Briefings a set of items deal with the question, giving its historical background and examining possible ways forward.

Finally, and in addition to material relating to the Sudan, the issue contains Briefings treating other matters of current, pressing significance — famine in nearby Ethiopia, Eritrea and Tigre and the resistance to the Ethiopian regime on the part of the Tigre People's Liberation Front.

Carolyn Baylies
The Road to Jouda*

Taisier Mohamed Ali

From the early 1950s, tenant farmers in Sudan sought to alter the arrangements governing their contributions to and returns from agricultural operations in government and private schemes. The main vehicle through which they hoped to realise this change was collective union activity. Repeated attempts by tenant farmers to gain formal recognition for their organisations from the colonial government, however, proved unsuccessful. Following the election of a transitional government in 1953, tenant farmers’ hopes were raised and they intensified their efforts to obtain the new government’s endorsement of their unions. As events were to show, however, the government was neither able nor willing to grant any group (least of all the farmers) the immediate fruits of its victory. It was preoccupied at the time, moreover, by pressure from indigenous agricultural capitalists in Egypt for and against negotiating the Nile Waters Agreement. In the meantime the tenant farmers’ movement, with support from Sudanese workers and other radical forces within society continued to strive for its members goals. The collision of the conflicting forces of the tenant farmers and agricultural capitalists led to an incident of horrific proportions. Here Taisier Ali describes that tragedy and the events leading up to it, placing the crisis in the wider context of the relation between class conflict and the state.

Just a few short weeks after the celebration of the Sudan’s independence in January 1956, cotton farmers on the Jouda private pump scheme near Kosti went on strike. In the wake of state violence which was unleashed on the community in response to their action, over 300 tenant farmers were either shot in the fields or suffocated in overcrowded and poorly ventilated detention cells.

Despite the many studies of Sudanese agriculture and politics, the incident at Jouda has never been merited with more than a footnote. Basically, the importance of this event is that it typified, albeit in overtly violent terms, the reaction of the Sudanese ruling class to the needs of its rural communities. The incident sheds light on an inherent characteristic of successive regimes which consistently acted with almost total disregard for not just the interests, but the very essence of the human worth of the

*A much fuller version of this article appears in the volume, *Politics and Agriculture in Africa*, edited by Jonathan Barker and published by Sage in 1984. (For Map, see page 34).
nation’s greatest asset — its rural communities. Jouda, rather than simply being a passing episode, is representative of the continuous failure of the dominant power bloc to resolve its contradictions with the farmers in a democratic fashion.

Central to the ethos of agricultural strategies in the Sudan have been the twin objectives of a horizontal expansion in state owned irrigation schemes and massive state support for the private sector. By 1959 the total irrigated area was about 2.4 million feddans. Of this total, the public section schemes including the Gezira accounted for 1.3 million feddans and the private schemes totalled more than 1 million feddans or about 45 per cent of Sudanese irrigated agriculture.

In the literature on Sudanese agriculture, this rapid growth is attributed to the modern irrigation techniques employed by the colonial state and the international demand for cotton. Most of these studies invariably stress the technical benefits of the Gezira and its Sennar Dam, while the expansion of private pumps is treated in a similar fashion and is related to the construction of the Jebel Awalia Dam along the Nile in 1937. In addition, much emphasis is placed on the fact that cotton production on private schemes was further stimulated by the high prices which accompanied the Korean War. Although such insights are useful for understanding the overall expansion in cotton cultivation, they do not fully explain the specific phenomenon of explosive growth in the numbers of private pump schemes. The basis of this private sector growth in fact rests largely on certain socio-economic and political considerations.

A sample study of private pump schemes along the White Nile indicated that about 70 per cent were established during the years from 1950 to 1958. In that same sample, although unnoticed by the researcher, the figures showed that over 60 per cent of the schemes were set up in the short period of 1953 to 1957. These were also the years during which self-rule was initiated and independence obtained. It was a period characterised by intensive political jostling, particularly within the capitalist class with economic interests in the agricultural sector, and this contestation was mirrored in the state and its policies. In short, a direct correspondence existed between the political developments of that period and the rapid growth in private pump schemes. This link cannot be explained away on grounds of technical innovations and international price structures for cotton.

However, the connection between the pump schemes and politics was not simply a by-product of the self-rule era and the transition to independence, but rather, in many ways, a continuation of a pattern initiated earlier by the colonial state when private licences were granted to the religious aristocracy for its role in pacifying the countryside during World War I. Since that early date other loyal religious leaders, tribal chiefs and prominent businessmen had been rewarded with scheme permits. In this manner, not only were the cotton exports of the government and therefore its income enhanced but, more important, support for the colonial state’s policies was procured. This dual function of the private schemes was unchanged by the post-colonial state when huge schemes are said to have been allocated to individuals with close connections to the ministers and the Prime Minister himself.
In its efforts to maintain a favourable price structure for the Lancashire consumer, the colonial state formulated a variety of laws to control the distribution and cost of land, water resources and the labour of Sudanese farmers. Hence, the Nile Pump Control Ordinance of 1939 governed irrigation matters, the Nile Pumps Control Regulations of 1951 established the types of licences, and the Nile Pumps Control Regulation of 1947 dictated the terms for the sharing of proceeds between tenant farmers and licensees. The latter piece of legislation burdened the tenant farmers with the responsibility for the performance of all agricultural operations including maintenance of canals, harvesting and clearing of fields in return for 40 per cent of the proceeds from cotton production after the deduction of several other expenses. The licensees, on the other hand, were given full control over management, ginning and marketing of cotton, as well as 60 per cent of the profits; they were free, moreover, of any obligation to provide social services.

Further examination of this sharing arrangement between tenant farmers and private pump scheme owners is necessary for two immediate reasons. First, the terms of this arrangement have remained to date the single most important issue confronting tenant farmers, private landowners and the Sudanese state; conflict over this very issue precipitated this gruesome incident at Jouda. Second, these tenant/owner relations were reproduced, with only a few cosmetic changes, throughout all of the other state and privately owned agricultural schemes.

Mainstream social scientists who have touched on the profit-sharing issue implicitly suggest that the division of the proceeds is on the whole reasonable, and thus imply as well that the tenant farmers are either misguided idlers or nefarious troublemakers in comparison to the responsibility-laden, all risk-bearing licensees. Consider, for example, this archetypal presentation in which, on the one hand, the scheme owner must approach the Nile Pump Control Board in order to:

... produce certificates of soil tests and must convince the Board of his ability to provide the necessary funds for developing the land. . . . (then) the licensee is made responsible for making all the necessary expenditure, the management of the scheme, the maintenance of the major canals, the marketing of the crop, the payment of rents and taxes, and the advancement of appropriate loans to the tenants . . .

The tenant, on the other hand, remained according to the terms of the agreement:

... responsible for the performance of all the necessary agricultural operations as dictated by the management of the scheme. He was also required to maintain the smaller canals within his tenancy. When the crop was harvested he was requested to hand it over in a clean state to the licensee. . . . He also disposed as he wished, and to his exclusive benefit, of any crops which he chose to grow in the two and half feddans allotted to him free of rent within his tenancy. These crops also received free water from the licensee pumps. . . . the tenant could keep his tenancy so long as his performance was satisfactory, otherwise he was liable to be evicted without compensation . . . (or the licensee) could employ direct labour to improve the work and he could then charge . . . the tenant's account. The tenant had a separate account containing the expenses which he had to incur (and for which he could obtain loans from the licensee), such as plowing, ridging and weeding.

However, the moment that the tenancy agreement provisions and their actual implementation are scrutinised, the picture which emerges is
substantially different from that implied by the term partnership. In the case of the licensee, it is often suggested that they were ‘burdened’ with such obligations as soil tests and the payment of taxes. In fact, as subsequent events showed, ‘many of the schemes ... were hurriedly set up, ... without adequate soil testing’. Furthermore, by 1966, unpaid Business Profit taxes of scheme owners had exceeded £3.6 million, with even larger amounts of outstanding loans from public as well as private facilities. The power of the licensee over the tenant farmer was immense, for the former could impose fines or ultimately requisition plots, while the latter was obliged to surrender all of his cotton produce. Most of the ‘sharing’ was confined to the transportation and ginning expenses which were charged to a joint account. Even then the licensee had the unquestionable right of ginning the cotton wherever he pleased and at whatever cost. This has often meant that landowners would process cotton in their own ginneries and at higher costs rather than in other nearby establishments which they did not own. Moreover, since the grading of cotton excluded any tenant participation, tenants were routinely quoted prices for grades which were inferior to their produce. Monopoly over the marketing process allowed landowners to settle personal financial obligations by dispensing cotton at lower prices to their creditors without any regard for the tenants’ rights or interests.

Not only were the tenants responsible for the basic agricultural operations — land clearing, ploughing, seeding, picking of cotton and the maintenance of all canals as well as roads — but they were also saddled with the expenses of dredging the main canals and installing pipes, and all of this in addition to the cost of the cotton seed. As for the provision for growing food crops free of rent and water charges, on most schemes, this right remained a mere privilege. More often than not, licensees discouraged tenant farmers from this practice by delaying the pumping of water in order to a) increase the area under cotton, b) avoid exhausting the land, and c) save the cost of pumping water. The tenant farmers’ tolerance was tested even further by the agonising delay in the settlement of their accounts and in the receipt of their shares of the cotton proceeds, for which the average waiting period was two years. As a result, tenant farmers were forced to resort to trader money lenders to obtain the basic necessities.

Implementation of the profit-sharing arrangement and the arbitration of disputes in these schemes were supervised by joint boards comprised of government Agricultural Inspectors, licensees, representatives of native administration and tenants selected by the government after consultation with scheme owners. As the meetings of these boards were irregular and infrequent, power rested almost exclusively with the Agricultural Inspectors. However, since these inspectors shared many more mutual socio-economic interests with the licensees than with the tenants, they invariably ruled in favour of the former group. Given this state of affairs, it is almost natural, as Mohammed Awad (1972) relates, that:

Evictions ... became quite common. The tenants complained of high-handed behaviour by the licensees, undue delay in the settling of their accounts, arbitrary evictions for the sake of turning tenancies into (tax-free) experimental farms, irregular flow of water to their private plots, etc. They also claimed that they found no protection from the Agricultural Inspectors, whom they accused of conniving with the pump scheme owners.
The situation was far different for the licensees, as K.M. Barbour has observed:

Along the Blue and White Niles . . . a major transformation . . . was taking place . . . profits . . . were so high that the usual period for the return of the capital sum was three years only, and some lucky and skilful scheme owners were clear of debt within one year.

Against this background of uneven obligations and rewards prevalent in private and public schemes alike, the tenant farmers, in their struggle to redress the balance, began to form unions. The evolution of this movement, its form and direction, were greatly influenced by the radical forces in Sudanese society. The combined efforts of these forces, which represented the popular class alliance in Sudanese politics, were behind most of the gains that rural communities had realised since independence.

The modern history of Sudanese farmers' organisations dates back to 1946. In that year, the Sudanese Plantation Syndicate, which administered the Gezira scheme, decided to retain a large portion of the cotton sales proceeds in order to create a tenants' welfare fund. This decision triggered a widely supported strike by the Gezira farmers, who refused to plant cotton. The movement was led by local religious and tribal chiefs. It was based solely on economic considerations and was devoid of all political motives. The strike was short-lived and after the mediation of national leaders a compromise about the size of payments into the fund was reached. This event was significant in that it alerted the colonial state to the need for a body to represent the tenants. Accordingly, a Tenants' Representation Board (TRB) with a purely advisory capacity was created.

Nevertheless, the lesson of the strike was recognised by tenant farmers elsewhere and by the early 1950s tenants in various parts of the country struggled to form unions. The spread of the movement has been attributed largely to the global economic crisis and the low cotton prices which resulted in even lower returns for the tenant farmers. The first union to achieve official recognition was that of the Nuba Mountains tenants. At first the colonial government claimed that the Union was dominated by traders — 'Gallaba' — and Communists and therefore not representative. The Union, however, maintained an anti-colonial stance and was able to launch a successful strike which lasted for one month. Attempts by the colonial state to impose a TRB similar to that of the Gezira failed and the state was finally forced to acknowledge the tenants' chosen representatives. Of significance here also is the attitude of traditional political parties, who until that time had shown little interest in the tenant farmers' conditions. Following the events in the Nuba Mountains, however, politicians scrambled for the tenant farmers' support.

The government decision in 1952 to increase land taxes and water charges in the Northern Province stimulated tenants in that region to form unions. At first, the movement was limited to a few areas and did not include all of the schemes in the Province. By the end of the year, however, a general meeting was called for in Atbara. The city was the centre of major railroad junctions and workshops and it also housed the militant Sudan Workers Trade Union Federation (SWTUF). The location of the meeting and the declared support of the SWTUF for the tenants' movement brought accusations of a
communist conspiracy from the government. The tenant farmers succeeded in forming a General Congress for tenant unions in the Province and demanded the release of farmers imprisoned during previous strikes. More important, the Congress declared itself independent from all political, sectarian or tribal allegiances and called upon all Sudanese farmers to form their own democratically elected bodies.

During this period, the Tenants' Representation Boards of the Gezira scheme were replaced by Tenants' Associations. This change was in fact purely cosmetic and it was initiated by the scheme administration in order to preempt any unionisation movement. The associations were dominated by religious and tribal leaders, some of whom were big landlords or were engaged in trade and as such did not represent tenant farmers' interests. As a response, agitation for the creation of tenant unions increased and a number of committees were elected which in a relatively short period of time covered all of the Gezira. These committees subsequently united under the umbrella of a single Gezira Tenants' Union.

In the private pump schemes, the tenant farmers' movement began in 1952 but took several more years to establish itself. This was on the whole due to the fact that most of the schemes were held by religious dignitaries and their families as well as by tribal chiefs and wealthy businessmen. In short, this area was the bastion of the dominant social class. Moreover, in a traditional setting, defying religious men or committing acts that might anger them was often thought to bring down the wrath of heaven.

From the early days of the transitional period in 1953, before the election of the first parliament and the formation of a self-rule government in 1954, the movement towards unionisation among Sudanese tenant farmers had accelerated. The movement was widespread, encompassing tenant farmers in the Northern Province, the central area of the Gezira, the Blue and White Nile schemes and as far west as the Nuba Mountains. In all of these regions tenant farmers demanded recognition for their own unions in place of government sponsored Tenants' Associations, which were dominated by traditional chieftains or their sympathisers. However, it was mainly in the fertile triangle between the two Niles, the Gezira and private cotton schemes, that the unionisation movement was the most vigorous. For the Gezira tenants, whose share of cotton sales proceeds remained at the 40 percent level stipulated by the foreign syndicate in 1925, unionisation aimed at a more equitable arrangement.

Of specific concern to the tenant farmers were cotton marketing policies. Until 1952, the sales strategy centred upon yearly bulk contracts at fixed prices with the British Raw Cotton Commission. After 1953, a system of closed auction was introduced in which private companies acted as agents for West European buyers and Liverpool remained the ultimate arbitrator. As reported in *Al-Saraha* (4 August 1953), the Gezira tenant farmers called for an open cotton auction 'in international markets regardless of the differences between Eastern and Western blocs . . . for the important issue is a higher price be it from Russia or America'. Despite the government’s refusal to extend official recognition to their union or even to consider their demands, the tenant farmers persisted, holding public meetings in the Gezira and elsewhere to discuss taxation problems, credit facilities, the cost
of agricultural operations, as well as their need for improved transportation networks, and health and educational services. In addition to mass rallies in their respective regions, the tenant farmers presented a steady stream of petitions and telegrams to local government officials, the Governor General and newspapers in Khartoum.

While British colonial administrators officially ignored the unions and left their petitions unanswered, unofficially the colonial state used all possible means to stifle union organisations. District Commissioners actively solicited the support of traditional leaders and chieftains for the state sponsored Tenants' Associations, while government loans for scheme owners were made available at more lucrative terms by nearly doubling the grace period, extending repayment time from three to five years without raising the interest rate from its six per cent level. In comparison, tenant farmers in the Northern Province, who had had a poor winter harvest of wheat and beans and who had requested a reduction in their irrigation tax, were denied access to water until the tax had been paid in full; others who requested loans to re-condition run-down water wheels were completely ignored. Also, in the Gezira, the colonial state reactivated a 1925 Land Settlement Act and requisitioned over 250,000 feddans from small landowners who held less than five feddans each. At about the same time, several private pump schemes averaging between 15,000 and 30,000 feddans were licenced to politicians, tribal chiefs, retired civil servants and businessmen. Such schemes, the farmers argued, were harmful not solely because they allowed a few individuals to control huge tracts of land, but mainly because they monopolised water resources, the scarcity of which the government itself often claimed had obstructed the growth of co-operative schemes.

Towards the closing months of 1953, farmers' unions in the Gezira declared their intention of merging into one representative body. Only then did the British administrators of the Gezira acknowledge earlier petitions, but they remained adamantly opposed to the union and reaffirmed their view of the official Tenants' Associations as sole representatives of the tenant farmers. This intransigent attitude by the administration had little effect on the tenant farmers, who eventually organised well attended mass meetings in which hundreds of union representatives embraced the idea of a unified organisation.

Impressed by the huge gatherings, about three quarters of the Tenant Board’s membership publicly resigned from the government sponsored bodies and joined the Gezira Tenants' Union (GTU), born but a few weeks prior to the formation of the first self-rule government in 1954. By mid-1955 the GTU called, among other things, for an improved rural credit system and improved social services; a meaningful partnership in production, marketing and administrative operations; a requirement that tenant farmers’ expenses not exceed 50 per cent and that their share of the proceeds be increased in a similar fashion; and the replacement of British personnel in the Gezira by Sudanese civil servants untainted by collaboration with colonial rule.

Concerned with the escalating nature of the GTU demands and worried about the movement’s near complete alliance with other radical forces in
society, not to mention the economic consequences of a strike in the Gezira, the government finally granted a tacit and de facto recognition to the union. As for the remaining set of demands presented by the GTU, the government left no hope for realising them and decisively pushed them aside. In what must be considered a sudden bout of uncustomary candor, the Minister of Finance and Economics commented in Parliament that:

... the effects of these demands extend far beyond the Gezira scheme as they will tend to cause repercussions on other agricultural schemes, Government or private; and, at the same time have a direct bearing on the national economy and the Budget. ... The Government ... hopes that the tenants will cease to use threats to realise their demands in order to establish the tranquil atmosphere needed by all the responsible authorities to achieve continued prosperity ... (Parliament of Sudan, Session 3, Number 9, 1955).

Subsequently, other cabinet members as well categorically dismissed any possibility of extending formal recognition to other tenant farmers' unions in the private pump schemes and emphasised the need for law and order.

The preoccupation with stability was not unique to the NUP, the Party in control of government at the time, but was a common concern shared by all the political organisations of the dominant power bloc. This determination to maintain the status quo was rooted in certain objective conditions. It was not that the contemplation of any notion of socio-economic transformation was a matter of alien ideas which were beyond the consciousness or imagination of these parties, but rather that in simple truth, there was a great fear of change. Indeed, any attempt to restructure the social and economic order would jeopardise the power, privileges and interests of the dominant power bloc, which was nurtured by, and entrenched within, the structures of colonial economic relations. In this sense independence was but another stage in the development of the social formation and not a change in the structure of the formation. Therefore, in this early period, economic policies and agricultural strategies, insofar as they existed, were directed towards the control, distribution and consumption of the national wealth according to the already established interests of the dominant power bloc. However, with time and the increased entry of Sudanese into state agencies, the national characteristics of the post-colonial state evolved and reflected the struggles between classes and fractions as they had interacted in society at large. As a result, in later years it became increasingly difficult for the dominant bloc to use the state apparatus to fulfil its class interests without first attempting to mute the class struggle and silence the opposition.

In its early stages the movement towards unionisation lacked solidarity and was fragmented along lines of individual schemes where the main concern was to replace state sponsored Joint Boards and Tenants’ Associations with democratically elected Tenants’ Committees. Following in the footsteps of the GTU and with its support as well as that of the SWTUF and the Sudanese Communist Party, the tenant farmers of the pump schemes improved their tactics and organisation. As a consequence, the campaign was carried to the seat of political power in Khartoum, where delegations from private schemes met with officials in the government and Parliament.

By mid-1955 tenants' unions in the White Nile schemes had overcome the handicap of their fragmentation and amalgamated themselves into one
organisation for the whole region, with their counterparts in the Blue Nile schemes following along the same path. It was during this period that tenants in the private schemes first began to brandish the strike weapon. In certain areas — around Sennar, El Sheikh Talha, El Massarra, El Gomirat and El Bousata — the weapon was used, although unsuccessfully, with tenants demanding, among other things, payment of overdue accounts and recognition for their committees. The most significant of these strikes occurred in Kassab scheme which was owned by none other than Sayed Ali, patriarch of the Khatmiyyah sect, who together with the Mahdi family represented the religious aristocracy of the country par excellence. Not only did the religious aristocracy command the adherence of thousands of Sudanese, but it also held extensive financial, real estate and agricultural interests. It possessed spiritual power and material wealth with all of the accompanying social trappings, including large palaces with spacious gardens in the capital and elsewhere, fleets of cars and swarms of servants and attendants. Considering the semi-divine status of the leading sectarian families, the strike at Kassab connoted a challenge which went far beyond local economic or political concerns and threatened the very fabric of the age-old national social order.

The immediate challenge which faced the new government which assumed power in June 1956 was that posed by the rising tide of union agitation in the private pump schemes. Shortly before the inception of the new regime, the White Nile Tenants' Union (WNTU) had submitted to the authorities a memorandum detailing their demands. Among other changes, they asked for: a) effective and meaningful partnership in schemes management by reversing the division of cotton proceeds, i.e., granting the tenants a 60 per cent share of instead of the customary 40 per cent; b) the appointment of independent chartered accountants to review scheme accounts; c) the participation of tenants in decisions concerning the ginning and marketing of cotton; d) and official recognition for their union.

Once again the government adopted the position of earlier times and the tenants' demands were ignored. Nor did the regime budge at the union's warning of the possibility that sporadic strikes might lead to a massive stoppage. All subsequent calls for negotiations were met with official silence. Moreover, with the installation of the new government, intransigence gave way to a more aggressive policy by local authorities. Thus, early in February leaders of the WNTU who were touring private schemes urging farmers to postpone strike action pending an attempt to set up negotiations, were themselves arrested. These and similar acts set the stage for a chain of profoundly tragic events which left a lasting impression on agrarian relations in the whole country. Since such developments have never been studied thoroughly or documented systematically, the following discussion will trace in some detail the essential sequence of events.

The backlash to the arrest of the union leaders was phenomenal. No fewer than 4,000 farmers swarmed into Kosti, the administrative centre of the White Nile, and demanded the release of their leaders from detention as well as the opening of negotiations on the items presented by their union. The tenants warned that failure to comply with these demands would lead to their withholding of the cotton crop from the scheme owners. In an
attempt to defuse the tense situation without losing face, the government representatives released the union leaders while simultaneously ordering the arrest of 150 tenants who had struck. Of these tenants, a first group of 53 were summarily tried and received sentences ranging from 18 months imprisonment to 10 whip strokes. Feelings were inflamed even further by the fact that the native administrator who presided over the trial owned a private scheme and held a partnership in two additional ones. Understandably then, tension mounted and following a union sponsored mass rally, more farmers as well as workers and a union representative of government employees were detained, while all public gatherings were banned. In an effort to avoid further complications, not to mention the unwelcome attention of the Khartoum newspapers, the trial of the remaining 97 tenants was moved out of the administrative centre to an adjacent village of Jouda.

Within the boundaries of this new location for the trial at Jouda, there was also a major private pump scheme, whose tenants had threatened to strike. The owner of this scheme, one of the Sudan’s foremost financiers and a brother of the post-Sudanisation Chairman of the Gezira scheme, welcomed the court as a sign of law, order and stability. Instead of subduing and dissuading the Jouda tenants from supporting unionisation, setting up court in their midst had the opposite effect. Provoked by this show of force, the tenants demonstrated against the court and refused to pick cotton or to deliver what had already been picked to the licensee pending the settlement of their share in the annual cotton proceeds which, by then, had entered a third year of delay.

Reaction to this situation by government officials and agricultural capitalists was harsh and uncompromising. The latter warned against a communist conspiracy, while the former moved in police reinforcements and announced that the Jouda farmers would be charged with the unlawful and criminal possession of goods, i.e. cotton, which did not belong to them. The tenants, however, refused to give in or surrender the cotton, and in an attempt to disband them, a police contingent was moved in. In the confrontation which ensued, the spears and axes of the farmers proved no match for the fire power of the state’s apparatus of violence. Initially, government communiques suggested that three policemen had lost their lives and three others were injured, while the tenants’ casualties were ‘difficult to assess since they had fled into the fields’.

Subsequently, however, when the WNTU announced that 150 farmers were killed and over 500 wounded, the government at first acknowledged the deaths of 18 farmers, then raised the figure to 35 and finally suggested that no exact number could be determined since many of the deceased had been buried privately by their families. Controversy over these numbers was quickly overshadowed by developments of even greater horror. Following the clash in Jouda, the security forces rounded up about 680 farmers for further interrogation in the administrative centre of Kosti. Out of these, 281 were interned in a disused armoury without proper ventilation, food or water. Because of these conditions, 189 farmers were discovered the morning after to have died of suffocation during the night and the final death toll reached 195.
As expected, a state of emergency was declared in the Blue and White Nile areas, in which all meetings and processions were made illegal. More troops were rushed into the region, which was declared a 'closed district' which could only be entered with a government pass. All of the WNTU leadership was arrested together with representatives of various workers' trade unions, who were charged with fomenting hatred and who received sentences of several months' imprisonment. The only other group taken to court was composed of 15 Jouda tenants, some of whom were jailed for 18 months. Victims who died in the armory were buried in mass graves while each family was paid in compensation a maximum sum of £S20, and the government assured everyone that justice would take its course.

In the aftermath of these hideous events, religious and tribal leaders fanned out among the schemes to persuade mourners that what happened was dictated by destiny and fate, renewing the plea that all should submit to the will of Allah. A few of the minor state functionaries responsible for using the armory as a detention centre were at first charged with negligence and were suspended from their official duties, but even this measure was temporary and shortly thereafter charges were dropped. An inquiry into the whole Jouda tragedy was promised but no evidence of its work exists. In fact, existing evidence suggests that far from being punished, the individuals who held positions of direct administrative responsibility for the events were in fact rewarded. The commissioner in charge of the Province at the time was promoted to the rank of permanent under-secretary of a major ministry within about three years and eventually became the managing director of a major state trading concern.

After Jouda, the government came under fierce criticism from every trade union organisation in the country. A national strike was declared by the Sudan Workers Trade Union Federation in which students and the press joined and there were renewed calls for a genuine national unity government with representation from workers, farmers and the left-wing party, the Anti-Imperialist Front. However, the government weathered the crisis and attributed the tragic events to a supposed failure of communications between native authorities and government representatives. Few of the lessons of Jouda were learned by the government as the lines of class division became sharper and workers-farmers unity became more pronounced.

Bibliographic Note
The Formation of the Agricultural Labour Force in Sudan

Jay O'Brien

Seasonal recruitment was a primary means of obtaining agricultural labour in Sudan during the colonial and much of the post-colonial period. And as in many other African nations, agricultural labour was predominantly migrant labour. The supply of labour increased as government policies and increased penetration of capitalism expanded cash needs. But as O'Brien relates, responses to such needs varied among different groups and in different parts of the country. Hence the agricultural labour force displayed a variety of patterns of migration and a diversity of forms of integration into the capitalist economy depending — among other factors — on the nature of the crop harvested and the internal characteristics and local conditions of the communities from which labour was drawn. In recent years, however, the segmented nature of the agricultural labour force has begun to give way to the development of a national labour market. O'Brien reviews the background to and implications of this change.

In the past decade Sudan has been hailed as the potential ‘breadbasket’ of the Middle East due to its supposed large reserves of uncultivated land and its supply of cheap agricultural labour. The Six Year Plan adopted in 1977 proposes to bring more than six million feddans (1 feddan = 1.039 acres) of new land into cultivation, producing grains, oilseeds and animal products for mainly Arab markets.*

Much of the land for the proposed expansion projects can be made available without large-scale expropriation of settled farming populations, although considerable encroachment on grazing lands of pastoralists is required. Promises of finance have been made by Arab sources, though funds have been slow in coming. However, Sudan is a relatively sparsely populated country, with a population density of less than six persons per square kilometer, and many planners and administrators have begun to worry that the available labour supply may be insufficient to meet the demand generated by such rapidly expanding agriculture.

Concern over labour supply has centered on two main problems. In the

*Shortly after the beginning of the Plan period, an IMF/World Bank ‘stabilisation plan’ imposed on Sudan dictated that plans for all new projects be deferred indefinitely and that only projects already under implementation be carried forward. Accordingly, the pace of expansion has been slowed, at least temporarily. However, a number of large projects started before the moratorium are being pressed forward.
irrigated schemes — where cotton is the principal crop — production is organised around the cultivation of small plots by tenant families. These families have not, however, been contributing much family labour to the work in their fields, but rather have for years been hiring wage labour. In response to this circumstance attempts have been made to increase family participation in agricultural labour through reducing tenancy size in new irrigated schemes and altering the structure of tenant incentives through changes in the terms of tenancy designed to increase the observable correlation between productivity and incomes.

At the same time, worries have been growing that the limits of supply of cheap seasonal labour for cotton picking and other agricultural operations would soon be reached. However, as the ILO Comprehensive Employment Strategy Mission to Sudan observed, the economic indicators to support the proposition that a long-term labour shortage was emerging in the 1970s were lacking: during the two decades of rapid expansion from 1955 to 1975, the average daily wage to seasonal agricultural labour actually declined in real terms suggesting that an oversupply of labour was persisting. Nevertheless, two sorts of agricultural development policies have been adopted in response to the perceived problems of labour shortage: the mechanisation of some key operations despite the higher costs of production usually involved and an increase of interest in the productivity of ‘traditional’ agriculture.

This brief outline of the conventional terms of discussion of agricultural development in Sudan at least points to the centrality of influence of the large, migratory seasonal labour force, even if such discussions are rigidly limited to debates over whether or not it is large enough and what should be done if it is found to be too small for desired expansion. Indeed, between 1.5 and 2 million seasonal labourers, mostly peasants and pastoralists for the rest of the year, work in weeding or harvesting operations in state and private plantations annually. More than 300,000 of them pick cotton in the Gezira Scheme alone.*

Yet, when the British occupied Sudan in 1898 there was virtually no wage labour market at all. Thus, in a very real sense, the story of the development of capitalist agriculture in Sudan has been the creation of the agricultural wage labour force. Viewed from the historical perspective of the formation of this wage labour force, the question of labour shortage immediately becomes more complex than head-counting and is revealed as a social and economic question having to do with the circumstances under which non-wage producers become wage labourers. It is the purpose of this essay firstly to describe and analyse what these circumstances have been and how they have changed since World War II and secondly to illuminate the structure and dynamics of the labour force which has resulted. The focus of concern here is with the period of rapid expansion of capitalist agriculture and the seasonal labour force in Sudan since independence in 1956, culminating in the late 1970s crisis in Sudanese agriculture and the simultaneous appearance of transforming trends in the dynamics of the agricultural labour force.

*Estimating numbers of migrants is hazardous guesswork at best. The estimates given here are developed in O’Brien (1980). See also Galal-el-din (1978) and ILO Report.
Before proceeding, however, it is important to note that the development of the agricultural labour force in Sudan since British conquest has passed through three distinct phases and by 1975 was entering a fourth phase. These phases have each been characterised by distinct policies toward labour and agriculture and by different patterns of expansion of both agriculture and the agricultural labour market. The development of the agricultural labour force should thus be approached within the framework of a periodisation of its principal phases.

**Phase 1: 1898-1925:** British strategic goals in occupying Sudan dominated policy in all fields. Agricultural development was limited to small-scale experimentation with cotton cultivation and was rigorously supervised by government. Out of fear of renewed nationalist uprisings, the use of taxation and other classical colonialist methods of stimulating labour supply was severely restricted.

**Phase 2: 1925-1950:** Ensuring a secure supply of seasonal labour to the Gezira Scheme, opened in 1925, and a few pump-irrigated private cotton estates opened later dominated all labour policy and virtually all other economic development was restricted. The settlement of large numbers of West African Muslim immigrants in and around the Gezira area as a supply of agricultural labour was encouraged by the British. This phase corresponds to the concession period granted to the Sudan Plantations Syndicate (SPS), a British corporation, for management of the Gezira Scheme.

**Phase 3: 1950-1975:** This period began with the nationalisation and Sudanisation of the Gezira Scheme and saw a rapid expansion of capitalist agriculture, both irrigated and rainfed, including the beginnings of large-scale private Sudanese investment in agriculture. The corresponding expansion of the seasonal labour force was accomplished through an elaborate system of recruitment and resulted in the formation a labour force which was highly segmented into virtually distinct markets for different agricultural tasks.

**Phase 4: 1975 to the present:** Deepening economic crisis accompanied by accelerating inflation beginning in 1973 began to have noticeable effects on agricultural labour markets by 1975, when wage rates began to rise sharply. The recruitment system and the barriers between segments of the labour market began to break down. The significance of these events and tendencies can only be assessed in the context of a full analysis and is examined below.

**The Development of Capitalist Agriculture**

The development of large-scale capitalist agriculture under the British in Sudan was preceded by some centrally organised estate agriculture during the period of rule by Ottoman Egypt in the 19th century, which in turn was antedated by more diffuse forms of estate agriculture under the Funj sultanate in central Sudan and the Keira sultanate in Darfur. However, both these earlier forms exploited predominantly resident or settled captive populations through tax/tribute, direct labour service and/or chronic indebtedness. Nothing resembling a significant market for mobile
agricultural wage labour emerged in these states as it did on a large scale under British rule.

The Sudanese economy has been dominated by cotton since the British opened the irrigated Gezira Scheme in 1925. This was a three way ‘partnership’ involving the colonial government, a British company known as the Sudan Plantation Syndicate (SPS), and several thousand households of tenant cultivators. The government built and maintained the irrigation works in return for a 40 per cent share in net cotton revenues. The SPS managed production on a 25 year concession and supplied all other capital inputs in return for a 20 per cent share. The remaining 40 per cent share went to the tenants in return for labour, including costs of wage labour hired to work in their plots. Costs attributable to substitutions for labour were deducted from tenant shares.

The lack of a significant wage labour market in Sudan, together with British fears of the potential power of a class of large landowners and the volatility of a landless proletariat, led to the design of the tenant farming system as an alternative to private estate agriculture. A quarter of each plot of 20 to 40 feddans was devoted to long staple cotton, the crop the British were interested in. In addition to receiving their share of cotton proceeds, tenants were allowed to grow sorghum for household consumption on an eighth of the plot, plus fodder for their animals on another eighth. The remaining half of each plot was left fallow.

The SPS and the government enjoyed substantial profits, despite several years of cotton blights and the depression. The most generous estimate of tenant income for the first 20 years from cotton is about 20 Egyptian pounds (£E) annually on a 40 feddan plot. The main benefit to tenants lay in their secure subsistence crops.

The area devoted to cotton in the Gezira rose from 80,000 feddans in 1925 to over 200,000 feddans by the late 1930s. Sudan assumed second place, behind Egypt, as a major supplier of long staple cotton to the world market, with Britain the main buyer. All other agricultural developments were tightly restricted until independence out of fear of threatening the vital supply of seasonal labour to the Gezira Scheme.

Gezira remained unrivalled as an agricultural production complex. Even after other schemes began producing cotton, it still produced over 80 per cent of Sudan’s cotton and dominated all aspects of the economy and related policy. By independence in 1956, the colonial administration had nationalised the management function under the Sudan Gezira Board (SGB), and the total irrigated area had been raised to a million feddans. Within a few more years, a new dam was built on the Blue Nile and the irrigated area doubled.

An explosive expansion of capitalist agriculture outside the Gezira Scheme followed independence. Sudanese merchants, attracted by the soaring cotton prices of the Korean War boom, invested heavily in pump-irrigated schemes along the White and Blue Niles. Even extended recession in world cotton prices in the late 1950s did not slow this expansion for another decade. By then an attractive alternative had emerged and an obliging
government freed up capital invested in the floundering pump-schemes by nationalising them on generous terms.

The alternative was mechanised farming of sorghum, the main food crop, in the central rainlands. The beginnings of rainfed mechanised agriculture date back to 1943, when the British had started a small project near Gedaref to feed troops stationed in the region. By 1953, the government had reduced its role in this project and begun to lease large plots to private Sudanese investors for operation on a commercial basis. This enterprise proved so profitable to the Sudanese petty bourgeoisie and the budding agrarian bourgeoisie that crop areas expanded to 1.2 million feddans within five years.

These mechanised crop production schemes were distributed at a nominal rent mostly to urban merchants, tribal leaders in the Native Administration, and some co-operatives in blocks of 1000 feddans. In 1968, the World Bank, active in financing the expansion of irrigated agriculture since independence, became involved in rainfed agriculture. It helped set up the parastatal Mechanised Farming Corporation (MFC) to supervise rainfed agriculture. Standard machinery specifications were introduced and plot size was increased to 1500 feddans to maximise tractor unit efficiency. Three mechanised farming projects were implemented over the next ten years with World Bank loans. Mechanised farming in Sudan's rainlands expanded rapidly during the 1970s, to about four million feddans of regulated projects and a similar area of illicit farms by 1977. A goal of 10 million feddans was projected for 1982/83, most of the increase to be financed by loans and direct investment organised through the Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development.

The Stimulation of a Seasonal Labour Supply
The colonial regime mobilised all its powers to meet the large demand for wage labour in the Gezira Scheme. With the regime securely entrenched and the countryside 'pacified', taxes were raised and more rigorously collected. The time of rural tax collection in key labour supply provinces was shifted from the end of the dry season (May-June) to the beginning of the cotton-picking season (January-February) by 1943 in order to ensure that peasants and pastoralists were relieved of their cash at the most opportune time. The regime aggressively pushed the marketing of Manchester cotton goods, tea, coffee and sugar into new areas and vigilantly monitored their sale and manipulated their supply and price in relation to local crop yields and grain and livestock prices. In times of critical labour shortage (e.g. 1942/43 cotton harvest) they stopped supplies of consumer goods to rural districts and channeled them through the administrative offices of the Gezira Scheme. Traditional handicraft production which withstood the effects of competition from manufactured goods came under direct assault, as when the British banned and then destroyed cotton cultivation (and thus independent cloth production) in provinces abutting the Gezira.

Conscripted labour — euphemistically known as 'imported' labour — was tested on a small scale in the early years but abandoned because it proved too costly to supervise and police. This form of recruitment was replaced in the 1930s by a subtler form which came to assume an important role in the
elaborate recruitment system which developed in the 1950s. Village sheikhs and other local notables were contracted to supply agreed numbers of labourers from among their followings in return for a per capita fee, and were given the responsibility to ensure that those agreed numbers showed up in the fields and remained picking throughout the harvest. The field staff of the colonial administration were used for this purpose as well as general propagandising in the countryside on behalf of the Gezira Scheme. In times of labour shortage in the scheme, reduced rail fares were made available for passengers to Gezira stations.

Meanwhile, any sort of agricultural or other economic development in Sudan which might compete with the Gezira for labour was suppressed by the government. In some areas where such developments were necessary for colonial aims, particularly in pump-irrigated schemes in Northern Province, a conscription of local labour was used as a means of preventing the emergence of a demand which might divert labour from the Gezira Scheme.

Most significantly, the British took advantage of the Hausa exodus from the Fulani sultanates, encouraging and facilitating the immigration and settlement in and around the Gezira Scheme of these and other West African groups.* In the 1930s, dwelling sites were allocated to these settlers, subsidies made available to build their huts, and small rainland plots set aside for them to cultivate grain crops for household consumption. A sparsely populated region to the southeast of the scheme was set aside as a dar ('tribal' homeland in the Native Administration structure), under the sheikship of the Fulani Sultan Mai Wurno, where West African immigrants were encouraged to settle.

The settlers within the scheme area provided a virtually landless pool of cheap labour available year round for sowing, weeding and other operations in addition to cotton picking. This group in particular was used by management to insure tenant discipline. Any tenant failing to carry out an operation on the cotton crop to the satisfaction of the field inspector risked having the work done by locally recruited settled labour at double wages charged against his cotton account. Tenants who regularly failed to give satisfaction or who absconded (as many did during the lean depression years) were replaced by West African settlers. Meanwhile, Mai Wurno's dar provided a nearby pool of cheap seasonal labour on a migratory basis.

Unlike many indigenous Arab Sudanese cultivators, most of these West African settlers had long become accustomed to hard agricultural labour under conditions of systematic exploitation and low incomes. The fact that they were such hard competitors in the labour market combined with their use by management against the tenants in the scheme to create great resentment against them on the part of Arab Sudanese and to enhance the ability of capital and government to manipulate the labour market through them.

Another practice which was developed by the tenants for attracting cotton picking labour came to be reflected in SPS policy. Many tenants found that they could attract pastoralists from surrounding areas to pick cotton by

*See article by Duffield in this Issue.
offering grazing in their fodder plots to pickers’ animals as part of the wage payment. Thus many pastoral family groups came to spend the dry season picking cotton in the Gezira where their animals had ample grazing and water in the months when these were scarcest elsewhere. Although the SPS staff preferred to eliminate the fodder crop from the rotation because it made their job of protecting the cotton crop from diseases more difficult, the role the crop played in attracting labour forced them to accept it as a permanent component of the agricultural regime, particularly in the border areas of the scheme.

The System of Seasonal Labour Recruitment
The organisation of labour recruitment involved a number of participants, including scheme managements, government bodies, tenant committees, growers’ associations and private contractors. In the Gezira Scheme about 75 per cent of cotton picking labour came to be recruited by tenant committees assisted by management. Representatives of these committees would travel to principal labour supply areas to make contacts and recruit labour. In some cases independent labour contractors or hired agents undertook recruitment on behalf of such committees or management. Generally, recruiters would make a trip a few weeks before the harvest began in order to negotiate arrangements with a group of migrants. Advances would be paid at this time to the contracted workers and arrangements would be made to send lorries to pick them up for the trip to the scheme at an appointed later date. Usually, negotiations took place through an influential member of the local community, sometimes the village sheikh, but frequently through persons not holding any formal position but known simply as ‘sheikhs of migrants’ for the roles they played in recruiting and organising parties of workers. In addition to negotiating the wages to be paid to the migrants, the sheikh of migrants would negotiate his own reward for supplying workers, usually a per capita commission for each recruit of 5 pt or 10 pt plus a small cash grant or loan. The pattern was similar in other irrigated schemes.*

In the rainfed schemes, the management of the state farms followed similar procedures in recruiting seasonal labour. In the private schemes, recruitment was generally carried out by the growers’ association of each project area, a task which was one of the main functions of such associations. In many areas, self-recruiting labour would assemble in the major towns near schemes, where labourers were contacted and employed by recruiters who then trucked them out to the schemes.

Such recruitment of course added an important non-wage component to the total wage bill — roughly one quarter of a million pounds annually for the Gezira Scheme in the 1970s. However, a central feature of the pattern of demand for seasonal agricultural labour, which undoubtedly made the recruitment strategy less expensive to capital in the long run than raising wages would have been, is the fact that the demand for seasonal labour fluctuates widely from year to year in response to variations in yields and

*The Sudanese pound (£S) is divided into 100 piastres (pt). A series of devaluations beginning in 1978 has reduced its official exchange rate from £1 = US$2.87 almost to parity with the dollar.
crop prices. Accordingly, the common practice in the schemes has been to estimate the volume of each season’s crop shortly before the harvest and to calculate recruitment goals on the basis of estimates of how much labour is needed to harvest a crop at that anticipated yield level. Reliance on spontaneous market forces to supply labour to the schemes would very likely have resulted in relatively unstable wage rates — especially when the additional complicating factor of the influence of peasant yields on propensity to migrate is taken into consideration. Furthermore, wages would have had to have been sufficient at the level of the labour market as a whole to cover the costs of transportation incurred by labourers coming from great distances. Without large-scale organised recruitment, wage rates for seasonal agricultural labour would undoubtedly have risen considerably more between 1950 and 1975 than they did.*

In effect, a critical inelasticity of demand for seasonal labour in capitalist agriculture came to play an increasingly important role in the expansion of the seasonal labour market after 1950. Although the actual number of labourers needed varied considerably from year to year, a stable supply was required which could meet the demand created by high yields in any given year. The impact of this inelasticity was muted in the early years when the labour market was dominated by tenant-based agriculture where tenants had the ability to replace hired labour by family labour instead of paying higher wages if sufficient labour failed to come forward at the going wage. But in the years following 1950 the spread of educational opportunities for tenant offspring and other factors reduced the availability of family labour in tenant-based agriculture while the expansion of capitalist farming in the rainlands restructured demand for seasonal labour. Consequently, the proportion of the seasonal work force which could be replaced by family labour dwindled to insignificance as far as the dynamics of the agricultural labour market were concerned.

Coupled with systems of recruitment, wage-setting policies practiced by scheme managements helped to keep wage rates stable. Before each season the SGB, for example, announces the rate of the picking advances it will give to the tenants per guffa (basket) and disburses to the tenants or recruitment committees advances to cover the costs of recruitment. The tenants, whose cotton incomes have been low, of course try very hard to keep negotiated wages within the amounts advanced to them. Their ability to do so throughout most of the history of the Gezira Scheme was enhanced by the general stability of wage rates over long periods of time. When a conventional wage rate, announced by the SGB, prevailed from year to year, workers were unlikely to hold out for a higher wage unless they had reason to believe that a general rise was imminent and other recruiters likely to visit their village, or else had more attractive comparable alternatives.

It is hardly possible to overestimate the historical importance in the formation and regulation of the Sudanese agricultural labour force of the mediating role between labour and scheme management played by the tenants. In this role they have served as foremen, supervisors and agents for

*These features of the agricultural labour ‘market’ reveal that it did not, at least until the late 1970s, properly constitute a true market. The term is thus used in this discussion in a general sense in order to avoid cumbersome expressions.
disciplining the work force. Instead of one 2.1 million feddan plantation under a single central management unit negotiating with a labour force of over half a million, the Gezira Scheme, for the purposes of labour relations, is broken down into nearly 100,000 autonomous units, each of which hires a handful of workers and separately negotiates wage rates. Moreover, the managers of these small units depend for their livelihood on their ability to hold the wage bill down to the absolute minimum, by means which include doing a variable portion of the work themselves. Apart from the obvious economic advantages for management, this situation creates an element of antagonism between tenants and seasonal labour which acts as an obstacle to the emergence of solidarity of the two groups against management. Furthermore, the tenant (or his agent) is present in the field supervising the work of his small number of hired labourers to ensure that they maintain the productivity, both quantitatively and qualitatively, which is so vital to the tenant’s own well-being, given the structure of the scheme which sets returns to tenants on cotton yields in proportion to world cotton prices.

Expansion of the Labour Supply 1950-1975
The strategy of expanding labour supply through aggressive recruitment after 1950 reinforced, on a large scale, patterns of seasonal migration which had emerged in the previous period. The agricultural labour force continued to have a core, or rather several cores, of regular participants and a periphery of irregular migrants who sought seasonal wage labour in some years but not others, depending on village yields, livestock prices, incidence of special expenses for marriage, circumcision, and so on. With the vast expansion of capitalist agriculture, the growing agricultural labour force in Sudan came to be highly segmented in a number of cross-cutting ways.

Government policies discussed earlier combined with the effects of spreading capitalist agriculture in penetrating village economies to stimulate and expand cash needs. Although local productive systems were altered by the decline of traditional handicrafts, increased cultivation of cash crops and participation in wage labour, many of them remained basically self-sufficient peasant and/or pastoral communities in the limited sense that local production of subsistence and cash goods, irregularly supplemented by wage labour, generally was sufficient to reproduce the community from one year to the next. When local production was insufficient to meet all needs, seasonal labour was resorted to in order to make up the difference. The frequency with which this was necessary varied from community to community.

However, the wholesale disarticulation of domestic economies was not widespread in this early period and was mainly restricted to the core labour supply areas of Blue Nile Province and central Kordofan. But even in these areas it was not generalised. Such disruption seems first to have affected nomads and relatively recently settled former nomads more than others, especially in the drier areas. Many pastoralists found the availability of dry season grazing and abundant water for their animals in the Gezira very attractive, and began from the start to work in cotton picking, with grazing rights to irrigated fodder crops as part of their wage payment.

Also from an early date a process gained momentum in which unsuccessful
nomads, unable to meet rising cash needs and maintain the minimum viable herding unit, settled in thinly populated areas adjacent to the schemes. Many of these former pastoralists had long regarded cultivators with contempt and regarded heavy agricultural labour as degrading. The practice was adopted by many of them of cultivating small plots sufficient to meet only family needs for part of the year and then spending the entire cotton-picking season in the schemes picking cotton, where food was provided as part of the wage payment. Not only did they thereby save the crops they had cultivated for consumption during the rainy season, but they used the cash wages they earned to buy meat and other food to supplement their diet and to meet other recurrent cash needs such as for clothing. In addition, they were saved the rigours of digging dry season wells to supply themselves with water. The productivity, and consequently the cash wages, of such groups tended to be relatively low, as the food, water and grazing with which they were provided were the primary things they were interested in, and small amounts of cash were sufficient to meet other needs, particularly as in most cases several of the members of a family were working.

An alternative response to new and increasing cash needs, particularly in higher rainfall zones, was increased effort in local production. That is, peasant cultivators could avoid migrating annually for wage labour by expanding household agricultural production and growing cash crops through extending and intensifying the working day and the working season as a whole. This option was pursued by some peasant communities in which no stigma was attached to hard agricultural labour and a high value was placed on maintaining local autonomy. This was not merely a matter of sentimental attachment to peasant independence, but involved fundamental questions of the maintenance of patriarchal authority and intergenerational axes of appropriation within the household. In such villages, migration for wage labour was generally irregular, and usually took place as a result of poor harvests or high consumer prices.

These alternative responses illustrate but do not exhaust the range of variation in responses to the development of capitalist agriculture in Sudan by different communities based on the internal characteristics and local conditions of these communities. What is important in this context is that the development of the peripheral capitalist economy in Sudan, and of the agricultural wage labour force in particular, proceeded in such a way that the manner and extent of incorporation of individual communities depended largely on their location and internal characteristics.

A consequence of this condition of the agricultural labour force was a diversity of forms of incorporation which allowed continued reproduction of the organising social relations of specific communities. This in turn led to the emergence of a variety of patterns of labour migration. These patterns varied along a number of axes, including frequency and duration of migration, composition and organisation of the work group, pattern and intensity of work, social relationships to employers and the type of work done. Limitations of space do not allow full discussion of these axes of variation here. However, the main principles involved can be illuminated through the description of the two primary patterns of labour migration in Sudan.
Primary Patterns of Labour Migration
One of the most salient features of the agricultural labour force in Sudan has been the operation of virtually separate markets for cotton picking on the one hand and sorghum and sesame harvesting on the other hand. The labour force for cotton picking has been dominated by family groups, including women, children and old people, migrating and working together. In contrast, sorghum and sesame harvesting has been dominated by men migrating and working without their families. Cotton picking is less arduous work than harvesting (including threshing) sorghum and sesame, and even children 10 to 12 years old work as productively as most adults. In contrast, sorghum and sesame harvesting is difficult not only for children but also for women who are pregnant or encumbered by small children and for old people to carry out productively.

Although extensive data on wages in seasonal labour are lacking, such figures as do exist from a variety of limited studies strongly suggest that the average daily wage in sorghum and sesame harvesting in the rainfed mechanised schemes has been on the order of 50 per cent higher than the daily wage in cotton picking. It would be a mistake, particularly in light of the post-1975 developments which are discussed below, to view this difference as a simple reflection of any essential difference in the quality of the types of work involved. Rather, this wage differential derived primarily from the differential costs of the social reproduction of the specific labour forces involved. Put simply, cotton picking wages have been relatively low because so many of the cotton pickers worked in family groups in which several family members earned incomes to meet the consumption needs of the family. Conversely, wage rates in the rainfed schemes have been relatively higher because the work force there has been composed principally of individuals who leave their families at home and go out in search of an income to help meet the family's consumption needs.

This difference stems from differences in the social organisation of production within peasant and pastoral productive systems. Where women traditionally participated prominently in agricultural work and public life, the migration of the whole family for wage labour in the slack season was a possibility. Where the traditional division of labour excludes women from some or all types of agricultural work, especially when this exclusion is accompanied by a more or less strict seclusion of women within the homestead, the requirements of the reproduction of the village productive system as a viable site for the reproduction of a seasonal labour force restrict the availability of women for wage labour.

These contrasting requirements of village reproduction explain why labour from the latter type of village had to be paid a higher wage than what labour from the former type would require in order to ensure the reproduction of the village economy as a source of seasonal labour. It does not, however, suffice to explain why it in fact comes to receive such a higher wage. The fact that higher wages have been paid to the latter type of labour is the result of the conjunction of the specific historical processes of the expansion of capitalist agriculture and the penetration of village economies. New schemes, even to some extent new cotton schemes, established during the period of rapid expansion had to pay somewhat higher wages initially than
the going rate in order to attract labour. Because the labour the rainfed schemes attracted was of a different type with different reproduction requirements, higher wages had to continue to be offered in the context of continuing expansion in order to attract it. Thus, the fact that these workers could command higher wages than the current rates is not surprising. What needs to be explained is the fact that the market for cotton picking labour remained relatively isolated from the influence of these increased wage rates.

This can only be explained by reference to the historical process of penetration of peasant and pastoral systems of production. The bulk of the labour force that was most successfully and regularly recruited to seasonal wage labour in the period from the opening of the Gezira Scheme until about 1950 was made up by what could be called 'reluctant cultivators', and secondarily by members of communities which had been disrupted and/or uprooted in the preceding period of turbulence. Many (but not all) of the 'reluctant cultivators' were sedentarised or partially sedentarised nomads who regarded heavy agricultural labour as undignified but found themselves confronted with the necessity of cultivating. Some of these were members of groups whose animal wealth had been confiscated or otherwise seriously depleted during the Mahdia. Others were from individual pastoral units which found themselves unable to maintain minimum viable herding units. The numbers of such units would of course have been increased significantly by colonial taxation policies, for a pastoral unit is inherently more vulnerable to such measures due to its dependence on animal reproduction rates not immediately governable by expenditure of labour power, and its dependence on the sale of animals — its main productive assets — in order to raise cash. Furthermore, the threat of herd sizes declining below the optimum was sufficient to induce many nomads owning viable but dangerously small herds to seek wage labour as an alternative source of cash to selling animals.

These groups shared an aversion to heavy agricultural labour as well as, in many cases, a traditional division of labour in which women did some agricultural tasks, sometimes taking complete responsibility for regular small-scale cultivation of grain crops. The first characteristic predisposed them to look more favourably on the relatively light work of cotton picking than the arduous work in the rainfed schemes. The second made it easy for women to be involved in agricultural wage labour along with men. The two characteristics combined made it more desirable from their point of view to work in family groups in cotton picking than to have individual members have to work harder to earn enough for all.

The response to the growth of seasonal demand for labour and the expansion of cash needs by established peasant cultivators was quite different. In most rainland areas cultivable land was abundant, at least until recently. Thus, for most rainland peasant cultivators the sale of agricultural land was neither a necessity nor a possibility as a means of meeting new and growing cash needs. On the contrary, they had the possibility of increasing their commitment of family labour to their cultivations and extending the area cultivated to meet these needs. Thus, initially, they had only to resort to wage labour when low rainfall, pests or other factors reduced their
harvests in bad years. Of course, they did also have the alternative of engaging in regular seasonal wage labour instead of increasing local production, and some did. But many such groups seem to have preferred to increase local production and to resort to wage labour only when they experienced shortfalls in local production.

Whether the migration for seasonal labour of members of such groups was in family groups or by individual adult men depended to a great extent on the traditional division of labour in each group, and secondarily on the location of their homes in relation to the schemes. Groups which practiced a strict seclusion of women — most especially rural Takari and related groups — generally kept women and children at home and sent only adult men out in search of wage labour, usually in sorghum and sesame harvesting, unless cotton picking was available much closer at hand.

This broad characterisation of two dominant patterns of involvement in seasonal wage labour is only indicative of the extent to which the market for agricultural labour in Sudan has been segmented. Within each of these patterns additional factors produced further variation segmenting the market. The boundaries between the various segments of the agricultural labour market were defined in the first instance in ethnically identifiable terms, modified to a greater or lesser extent by geographical location. That is, knowing an individual's ethnic identity was the single most reliable indicator of the manner and type of his or her involvement in agricultural wage labour.

Towards the Formation of a National Labour Market in Agriculture after 1975

Significant changes in the character of agricultural labour markets in Sudan began to become apparent in 1975. The chief visible sign of these changes was the rapid rise in wages for agricultural labour which occurred in the late 1970s after two decades of relative stability of wage rates. By 1978/79 the standard piece rate in Gezira for cotton picking had risen to 30 pt per guffa (about 35 lb) from 10 pt, and rates of 45 to 60 pt were not uncommon. Similar rises were evident in other irrigated schemes. Data for wages in the rainfed schemes are harder to come by, but indications there also suggest significant though less dramatic increases in the same period.

Of greater significance to the structure and dynamics of the agricultural labour force than the overall rising trend of wages has been the tendency for wage rates in the segments of the market outlined above to converge. Wage rates in cotton picking have increased by a greater proportion than wage rates in sorghum and sesame harvesting. Moreover, wage rates in smaller local markets have been increasing by greater proportions than wages in the big schemes, thereby making them more comparable to wage rates in the wider market. These processes of increasing wages and the equalisation of wage rates across the traditional boundaries of the segmented agricultural labour market cannot be accounted for in terms of growing labour shortages or simply by reference to the general inflation in the economy. Rather, it is my contention that they reflect a fundamental restructuring of the previously highly segmented market for agricultural labour toward the formation of a truly national labour market. This restructuring was by no
means complete by the end of the 1970s. At this point it is only possible to point to a number of suggestive indications and indisputable changes which only such an interpretation can account for.

The Breakdown of Market Segmentation

The most suggestive indication of the nature of this process is given in the trajectories of wage rates for agricultural labour of different types. What they suggest is that the boundaries between the various segments are breaking down and that labour is beginning to flow across them, particularly the boundary between cotton picking and sorghum and sesame labour markets, as labour begins to move more freely between types of work. This and related changes which began to take place in the late 1970s are intimately bound up with the effects which expansion of involvement in wage labour had on peasant and pastoral productive systems during previous periods and must be analysed in that context. These effects can be summed up in terms of the spread of capitalist penetration to all areas of the country and the beginning of the rapid wholesale disarticulation of domestic economies as self-reproducing systems.

Until the 1970s the dominant process of penetration and incorporation of peasants and pastoralists into the capitalist economy operated on the basis of absolute surplus value rather than relative surplus value. That is to say, surplus value was extracted from them, either directly through wage labour in the schemes or indirectly through taxation and the market, by creating conditions which required them to extend their working day and/or their working season. Thus, their contribution to the national and international economies was obtained through increasing the amount of time they had to work beyond what had been necessary to produce their own requirements. This entailed drawing out surplus labour from peasant and pastoral communities in such a way as to maintain their ability to produce most of these requirements on the basis of existing patterns of division of labour and organisation of work. The limits of absolute surplus value which could thus be extracted were therefore largely defined by the flexibility required to allow family group labour in one type of work and the individual labour of one or two male representatives of each family in another. The first form enabled more surplus labour to be extracted from each family unit involved, while the second captured more labour from each individual drawn into the market. However, the conditions of reproduction of this sort of labour force did not allow the two to be combined on a large scale.

The processes which began to dominate the dynamics of the labour force after 1975 are breaking down this last barrier to absolute surplus value and increasing the importance of relative surplus value. This can best be seen in recent trends in the migration of family work groups for cotton picking. Heads of migrant families have been facing a declining ability to mobilise large family groups for work in cotton picking at the same time that the ability of family groups to earn sufficient incomes working at the old relatively low wages obtainable in cotton picking has been declining. Their children, particularly sons, have found growing opportunities for earning an income at an earlier age and it thus becomes difficult for parents to get their children to work with the family group, much less to contribute all of their incomes from this work to the general household budget.
Those smaller numbers of family members picking cotton have had to lengthen and intensify their periods of wage labour or seek other higher paying jobs. It has become increasingly common, for example, for male members of such families, particularly those between about 18 and 45, to work in sorghum harvesting while the rest of their families pick cotton. As increasing numbers of cotton picking families have begun to succumb to these pressures, wages for cotton picking have had to rise sufficiently to retain their labour against this competition.

An important consequence of this sort of shift is a tendency of the agricultural labour market to become more uniformly a market for the labour power of individuals, and for more members of all families to be pressed out in search of wage labour, regardless of traditional divisions of labour or practices of female seclusion. Thus, by the late 1970s there was evident a rapid rise in the participation of women and children in agricultural wage labour generally. In many cases, male household heads continued to harvest sorghum and sesame while their families began to go to the cotton schemes without them.

While wage rates for different tasks appear to be converging and more men, as well as significant numbers of women, seem to be moving into the heavier tasks, we should not necessarily expect wage rates to reach full parity or all differences in work group composition according to task to disappear. It seems rather more likely that some differences more directly reflecting the differences in physical effort required by different tasks will remain. Thus, wage rates in sorghum and sesame harvesting seem likely to remain somewhat higher than in cotton picking, but not by anything like as much as previously. At the same time, the shift in composition of the respective labour forces appears to be moving towards the concentration of the able-bodied and unencumbered, meaning women without small children as well as men, in the heavier tasks, while the cotton picking labour force, which formerly closely reflected the age and sex structure of the general population, draws more heavily on the aged, young children, and women encumbered by small children.

The Breakdown of the Recruitment System
As classical market mechanisms have begun to operate more freely in the movement of seasonal wage labour, the chief non-market mechanisms organising this movement have begun to break down. In particular, the effectiveness of elaborate centralised systems of recruitment has begun to decline. By 1978 the managements of several large irrigated schemes, including the Gezira, had suspended cotton picking labour recruitment activities. As cotton picking wage rates destabilised in the mid-1970s, migrants increasingly elected to finance their own travel to the scheme areas in order to negotiate the highest rates they could find. In turn, tenants and other employers of seasonal labour, facing mounting costs, began to employ the increasingly available self-recruiting labour and sought to trim their wage bills by reducing or eliminating recruitment and transportation expenses. As this trend gained momentum, many migrants found, as Tait* discovered in visits to a number of villages in the traditionally important

*John Tait, personal communication.
recruiting ground west of Tendelti in December 1978, that they no longer could count on being recruited in their villages and transported to the schemes.

The costs of finding work and travelling to the place of work, which have previously been a separate part of the wage bill incurred by employers, are now entering into the general labour market as elements of the wage rate. Paradoxically, the formation of a national labour market thus entails a regionalisation at the same time, as workers seek to cut costs by finding work as close to home as possible. Regional disparities in wage rates may persist, but only within limits regulated by costs and risks of employment-seeking travel between regions. In addition, large, but uncounted, numbers of villagers from the outlying provinces in which employment opportunities are fewest, particularly Darfur, have been resettling on empty, often marginal, lands in the regions where the big agricultural schemes are concentrated. In the rainfed mechanised farming schemes where plots generally go out of commercial production after five to seven years, migrants from other areas often settle on the land as share-croppers or renters. In the areas around new irrigation schemes, new settlers often take over fields abandoned by local inhabitants who have become tenants in the scheme.

These changes do not mean that recruitment activities of all kinds are necessarily disappearing altogether. Rather, recruitment seems to be becoming decentralised and shifting to more open market arenas. Recruitment seems to be undertaken more often, as I found in the Rahad Scheme, by individuals or small groups of tenants. Instead of travelling to distant villages, they seem instead to be going to small regional market towns, sometimes within the schemes themselves, where numbers of migrants collect and negotiate with several potential employers.

The Disarticulation of Peasant and Pastoral Productive Systems

These transformations which have been occurring in the nature of the agricultural labour market are part of broader changes in the national political economy which affect peasants and pastoralists in a variety of ways that make them increasingly dependent on markets in general and wage labour markets in particular. The variety of effects can only be briefly indicated here.

At a time when small producers are facing rapidly deteriorating terms of trade everywhere, peasants and pastoralists in Sudan have been facing serious problems of declining productivity. As large projects encroach on grazing and fallow lands, as ecologically sub-optimal production units are enabled to persist with the help of wage labour, and as relative prices come to dictate crop and livestock selection in place of ecological considerations, crop yields per unit area in peasant cultivations and animal off-take rates in pastoral herds have been declining. Accompanying these trends and the expansion of large-scale and clear-cut plantation agriculture have been accelerating processes of desertification and deforestation. These lead to difficulties in supplying villages with wood and straw for fuel and building materials, thus creating new markets and expanding cash needs among rural producers. The commercialisation of some key household tasks,
particularly those of women, has had similar consequences. The spread of mechanical flour mills and of government wells (which charge money) and commercial water carriers not only increases cash needs but, by supplying a cheap substitute for two of the previously most time consuming tasks of women, makes many women both available for and dependent on wage labour — though, like the Kassala woman above, they still collect wood.

This last named change points to the really fundamental aspect of overall transformation which has been disrupting peasant and pastoral productive systems — the transformation of traditional divisions of labour and the destruction of autonomous systems of social reproduction. With the disruption of traditional divisions of labour between the sexes and the undermining of patriarchal authority over wives, sons and sisters, large
extended family production/consumption units become dissolved by commodity relations.* The clear tendency in Sudan’s rural areas is toward the nuclearisation of production units producing a narrow range of goods and facing increasing economic individualisation within them and greater dependence on wage labour to make ends meet. Stripped of their imbrication in local circuits of social reproduction and transformed in a multitude of ways, peasant and pastoral units have increasingly been subsumed by a generalising process of expanded reproduction of labour power and capital.

Implications of the Transformation of the Agricultural Labour Market
The transformation in Sudan’s agricultural labour market which I have described constitutes a restructuring of the labour force on a new basis, a shift away from the predominantly ethnic structure of the labour force mobilised through extra-economic mechanisms. The development of a national labour market which operates freely on the basis of unfettered market forces would, of course, be disastrous for capital in a cheap labour economy such as that of Sudan. However, such development is unlikely to be unfettered. It is rather the nature of the constraints and the level of the economy at which they operate which is changing. A series of key government policies pursued in the late 1970s is important in this regard and will undoubtedly have profound effects on the evolution of the labour market in the coming years.

In particular, policies related to the Nationality Act of 1948 and its narrowly restrictive definition of Sudanese nationality have assumed a broader role in the stratification of the labour force. Access to government employment, trading licences, charcoal-making permits, etc., is restricted to holders of valid Sudanese nationality certificates. Descendants of West African immigrants and members of a number of other non-Arab groups are systematically discriminated against with respect to certification of nationality and its benefits, as well as in de facto if not de jure access to schooling. On another level, the provisions of the Nationality Act are used in the programme to resettle Eritrean and Ethiopian refugees in and around major agricultural schemes as permanent pools of wage labour. The status of these people as statutory foreigners in perpetuity ensures that they cannot own or cultivate land, take other employment or gain access to schools. The effect of such policies is to foster hostility between sections of the labour force and a primary stratification of the labour force into groups defined as ‘Sudanese’ and ‘foreigners’. In the process, the earlier ethnic structure of the labour force which integrated various cultural groups into different sectors based on their varied internal characteristics is replaced by a specifically social structure defined ideologically in the first instance by nationality.

Another vital government policy has been technical in form but carries tremendous social consequences. This is the policy of capitalisation, particularly mechanisation, of key agricultural operations, especially the introduction of mechanical picking of medium staple cotton, mechanical

*I do not mean to imply here any nostalgia for patriarchy, but only to suggest how powerless it is in the long run to resist the ravages of capitalist penetration.
harvesting and threshing of sorghum, and chemical and mechanical weeding. This is taking place in spite of the demonstrated fact that the costs involved are frequently much higher than when performed manually, as in Rahad, for example, where experiments showed that mechanical cotton picking costs on the order of five times as much as manual picking. Moreover, the prevailing justification for such expensive changes in methods, the threat of long-term labour shortage, is manifestly baseless at a time when, as I have indicated, the number of peasants and pastoralists being thrown onto the labour market is expanding rapidly.

It is only an appreciation of the transformation of the agricultural labour markets in Sudan occurring in the late 1970s (together with an understanding of the broader arena of class struggles in Sudan in articulation with the interests of international capital) that can make sense out of such seemingly irrational policy within the framework of the Sudanese political economy. From this perspective, the importance of agricultural mechanisation lies in the thousands of jobs it eliminates in a context of abundant labour supply in an increasingly competitive labour market and in the way it concentrates labour demand into a relatively compact harvest season. In other words, the significant consequence of mechanisation is not the elimination of labour shortages (conceived as absolute shortages of labourers) but the creation of unemployment and underemployment. The result is that structural unemployment and underemployment together with increased competition among workers have begun to replace the recruitment system and other extra-economic devices in regulating the supply of cheap labour to the agricultural schemes.

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Bibliographic Note


Peasants of the Nuba Mountains Region

Ibrahim Kursany

Since Sudan's independence three development plans have attempted to re-orient the agricultural sector and stimulate the process of social and economic development. Believing that their inadequacies have been largely due to a misunderstanding of existing and evolving production relations, the author has attempted to focus on one region of the country where state sponsored capitalist agricultural schemes have been introduced and are leading to the modification of pre-existing pre-capitalist forms. He argues that production relations among the peasantry of the Nuba Mountains should best be described as consistent with simple commodity or petty commodity production. But this mode is itself undergoing a process of change as the peasants interact with the capitalist system through sale of their labour power on the nearby capitalist schemes and purchase of their agricultural implements.

Predominantly pre-capitalist agricultural production characterises most of Sudan's Southern region as well as the Kordofan and Darfur provinces in Northern Sudan. It engages perhaps 12 million persons of whom some three million are believed to be in the Southern region. But alongside this pre-capitalist production and gradually encroaching upon areas where it predominated is capitalist farming. Historically speaking, farming along capitalist lines for the production of dura began in the Gadaref area of Eastern Sudan. From there it moved southward first to the Damazin area of central Sudan and then to the Nuba Region in the west. It is still 'creeping' towards the southern part of the country. The major factor behind this movement is technical. The non-usage of chemicals and fertilisers by the owners of schemes sponsored by the government ultimately increases their cost of production, since the land loses its fertility in a very short time. The average is five years. As this has occurred the state has allocated new schemes to the owners leaving the old ones to regain their fertility.

The Nuba Mountain Region

The Nuba Mountains region has been selected by the state to serve as a spearhead for the penetration of private capital into the pre-capitalist social formations following the declining fertility of capitalist rainfed farming in the Dadaref and Damazin areas. The area has also attracted the attention of a number of those international organisations which have elsewhere characteristically laid the foundations for the penetration of foreign as well
as state capital in the underdeveloped world. The British Ministry of Overseas Development, the EEC and the Harvard Institute for International Development are some of the agencies engaged at present in executing projects in the area. At the present time, therefore, the Nuba Mountains permits the analysis of the confrontation of capitalist and pre-capitalist forms. In order to gain some insight into the process, a survey was carried out by the author in several villages in the Nuba Mountains in 1979. Data collected allows us both to describe the present relations of production and speculate on the implications of these for the formulation of effective strategies.

Southern Kordofan Province, which incorporates the Nuba Mountains region, is one of the poorest areas of the country. The province encompasses approximately 136,000 km of the western savanna of the Sudan, an area larger than England, approximately half the size of West Germany and four times that of the Netherlands.

The British colonialists followed a secessionist policy towards the Nuba Mountains similar to that adopted towards the Southern Region. They declared the area to be a closed district in 1913 and allowed no one in who had not obtained special permission. They intensified the role of the missionaries in introducing Christian education and religious beliefs. But it was too late for the British to carry out their policy of westernising the region successfully because most of the Nuba were already converted to Islam. Due to the anti-colonial struggle both inside and outside the region, the policy of closing the region was abandoned in 1929.

But British colonial policy did succeed in relegating the region to being one of the least developed in the country. It kept the Nuba tribes almost as they were centuries ago. Like all inhabitants in the rest of the pre-capitalist sector, the Nuba peasants were always looked on as conservative, lazy and essentially non-responsive to the ‘modern’ stimuli of ‘civilisation’, in particular to the market mechanism.

**Development Strategies**

In the years after independence the development strategy which has taken concrete shape among Sudanese academics and top government officials for tackling the problems facing the agricultural sector, and its pre-capitalist part in particular, is in many ways derived from the colonial government’s attitude toward the peasants. This strategy is based on the assumption that the problems are primarily of a technical nature and are reflected in the shortage of capital. Its proponents argue that since Sudan has abundant resources within its agricultural sector, it should specialise in the production of agricultural commodities, even though such a policy would remove even the slightest possibility for the industrial development of the country. The theory goes on to suggest that since the return on investment is far greater in the ‘modern’ (i.e. capitalist) sector than in its ‘traditional’ (non-capitalist) counterpart, investment should be concentrated mainly in the ‘modern’ sector with almost total neglect to the pre-capitalist part. The result has been virtual exclusion of the pre-capitalist part from the development process.

What we would like to stress is that in defining the problem merely on a
technical basis, the strategists have been blinded to 'non-technical' factors which we would consider the pre-requisites for the success of the technological aspect. It is precisely here that we can locate our disagreement with the prevailing strategists and their strategies. While they have essentially omitted the 'non-technical' factors such as the social and environmental from their model, we regard these as central to the development process. It is clear that the issue is one not just of emphasis but of entire approach to the problems of development. While the prevailing strategy puts 75 per cent of the Sudanese people at the margin of the development process, considering them non-effective for its positive acceleration, we consider them at its heart. We assume that they ought to constitute both the object and subject of the development process. Indeed as the experience of two decades of development planning in the Sudan have shown, any neglect of them by a development strategy will bring development to a standstill. We consider that without the conscious participation of the people in the pre-capitalist sector, any efforts to develop the country will be doomed to failure.

Agriculture Production in the Nuba Mountains

Capitalist agricultural production in the Nuba Mountains area is a comparatively recent phenomenon and still in its infancy. It started with the creation and development of the rainfed, private, large-scale mechanised schemes at Habila at the centre of the region in the early 1970s under the sponsorship of the state's Mechanised Farming Corporation. Major agricultural products of the region are dura, cotton, groundnuts, sesame, millet and gum-Arabic. Groundnuts and sesame are cultivated primarily in order to supply local handicraft oil production. Cotton, produced in the area long before colonialism, was also originally grown to meet local needs. Together with dura it began to serve as a cash crop after the integration of the area into the capitalist system.

Within the pre-capitalist social formations of the Nuba Mountains, land is the major object of labour. Two minor ones are wood and livestock. Our study provides no evidence for the existence of a landless peasantry. Twelve per cent of all households owned five feddans or less and 87.4 per cent more than five. What is important is not, however, the amount of land possessed by the peasant family, but the actual amount of land under cultivation every year. This amount cultivated is itself related not to the size of the family but to the number of its economically active members. The greater this number, the bigger the volume and variety of production.

The system of land tenure in the savanna belt and the rainlands, where most of the pre-capitalist social formations of the Sudan are located, is very different from that which prevails in the riverain areas. In the latter, land is privately owned. Legally it is registered under a definite, named, owner. In the former, land is considered to be state property. Therefore the native population in the savanna belt and the rainlands, and even those who occupy the capitalist sector in this part of the country, are not entitled to the private ownership of land. This legal aspect, however, is not crucial to the production process. The main factor influencing production is the conventional or customary law pertaining to the utilisation of land. According to this, land is communally owned and the village's Sheikh is
responsible for its distribution among village members. The head of the household and family members have only the right to utilise land, not to own it. In practice, however, possession of land as opposed to ownership makes little difference since land can be utilised when one is alive and inherited after death. If land is abandoned or an individual moves to another village, then the land is retained as communal property. Therefore, three levels of land rights can be differentiated: a) the legal level in accord with which land is owned by the state, b) the conventional level by which land belongs to the community and c) the family level by which land is actually cultivated by the family unit.

Although the Nuba Mountains region is located in the heart of the rainlands of Western Sudan, its land tenure system differs from that generally prevailing there. It is rather similar to the tenure system characteristic of the riverain areas. Land is privately owned by the Nuba, a fact which serves to exaggerate the extent to which the development of capitalist farms at Habila has entailed expropriation of peasant holdings. The demarcation of land for the capitalist schemes and the displacement of the peasants which usually accompanies it is not only inhumane and wrong on the part of the state, but can also be considered as absolutely illegal. In light of this there is clear justification for the strong resistance shown by the Nuba to the construction of those schemes: they have a strong legal case against both the state and the capitalist owners of the schemes, unlike their counterparts in Eastern Sudan who cannot pursue a legal initiative since in that part of the country the land is under the legal ownership of the state.

Were democratic institutions present, it would have been impossible to proceed with the construction of the capitalist schemes and the displacement of the occupants of the land they appropriated. It is thus the absence of institutions representing the conscious and democratic choice of the Nuba peasants which has facilitated the process of distorted private capitalist development in the region and has led to the marginalisation of most of its population.

Of three primary means of land acquisition: inheritance, purchase or leasing, only the first applies to any great extent among the Nuba peasants. No land is rented and only 1.3 per cent of total land is purchased. The overwhelming prevalence of inheritance as a mode for the transfer of land underlines the extent to which land retains exclusively a use value. It has not yet been transformed into a commodity. Since land is the primary object of labour in the Nuba Mountains region, its method of acquisition indicates that the mode of production there remains predominantly pre-capitalist. This signifies that the process of separation of the peasants from their own means of production has not proceeded very far. This mode of production can be further specified through examination of the concrete form which the utilisation of labour takes.

**Production Relations and Instruments of Labour**
The means of labour — essentially the tools employed in the production process — combine with labour itself and its object for the necessary transformation of nature. The more developed and sophisticated these means are, the more rapid and effective is the transformation process. The
less developed the level and sophistication of these means, the more this process will be held back.

The Nuba peasants use a very simple type of technology in their agricultural production. Three main instruments of production are almost universally used: the Toriya for land clearing, Hashasha for weeding and Mungal for harvesting. The simplicity of their hand tools gave rise to a simplistic notion of 'traditionalism' which always confuses the 'technical' with the 'social' aspect of the production process. But the most significant fact relating to Nuba technology is that most of it is purchased on the market. 88.7 per cent of the families surveyed purchased their tools and implements from the market and only 11.3 per cent manufactured theirs at home. The life duration of the three tools varies, those used in heavy operations, like tree cutting being mostly short-lived. The average life for the tools used in the light operations, such as harvesting, is five years, while for the others it is two to three years. The initial cost of the tools constitutes as much as 25 per cent of the family's annual income, but when this cost is distributed over its life time the proportion decreases to 5 per cent. But it is not the amount of money spent which is important but the fact of the purchase itself.

This, together with the purchase of other consumption items, refutes the assumption that types of societies like that of the Nuba are mostly closed and characterised by subsistence economies. Extensive purchase of tools also suggests the possibility of developing a capital goods sector. This sector is already there, even if still very small and very primitive. Its low level of development is one of the main manifestations of the under-developed nature of Sudan as a whole.

There are three basic sources of labour supply in the Nuba Mountains region. The main one is the family itself, the second is the nafeer, the communal work party, and the third is hired labour. People usually resort to the nafeer or to hiring in activities which are highly labour demanding, such as the weeding or harvesting of crops. Almost all the inhabitants of a village who are available at the time of the nafeer are invited to participate in it. The host is obligated to provide food, mostly marisa which is made out of dura, for the participants. Therefore no cash payments are involved. Generally villagers readily accept the invitation. Only 13.4 per cent of those surveyed had never had, or participated in, a nafeer. Those who had never had a nafeer amounted to only 4.7 per cent. Nafeer activities are a product of historical necessity. The nature of agricultural operations and the technique of production employed determine the value and volume of the usage of outside labour. So nafeer activities correspond to an historically determined technique of production and may be expected to develop and disappear with the development and disappearance of that technique. At present, therefore, nafeer remains a necessary condition for the reproduction of the whole mode of production of the pre-capitalist social formation.

The figures from our sample reveal that 83.3 per cent sold their labour power; almost a quarter not only rendered their services to others in exchange for cash payments but also, on occasion, hired labour to work on their own farms. So, although they sell their labour power primarily to the capitalist farmers at Habila, wage labour on the peasant farms is not
altogether absent. The figures indicate the start of social differentiation among the Nuba peasantry.

That the great majority of the sample sold their labour power substantiates the assumption that the development of capitalism in the Sudan utilises peasant labour. But it is also clear that the agricultural labour force has not been transformed into a fully fledged proletariat. The Nuba peasant spends no more than two months in seasonal wage employment. Even so, the income derived from this labour is slightly higher than that derived from peasant farming. Affan estimated that in 1975/76, £s64.5 out of an annual income of £s.126.1 was derived from seasonal employment and £s.61.6 from peasant cultivation. When he classified the response of the peasants to the importance of seasonal income for them he received the following picture:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking of Income from Seasonal Employment in Relation to Income from Peasant Farm, (1975/76).</th>
<th>% of Peasants:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income from Seasonal Employment is:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than income from peasant farms (p.f.)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal to income from p.f.</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>More than half income from p.f.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half income from p.f.</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>One third of income from p.f.</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>One quarter of income from p.f.</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than one quarter of income from p.f.</td>
<td>33</td>
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Rather than transforming the peasantry into a proletariat, capitalism has to the present led to their marginalisation.

This finds clearest expression in the system of migrant labour. The agricultural worker continues to depend on the labour of his family, who remain largely outside the capitalist system, for the reproduction of a large proportion of the migrant’s labour power. For the net income gained for work in the capitalist sector is hardly sufficient to maintain the migrant for the remaining ten months of the year.

In addition to selling their own labour, 37.2 per cent of our sample resorted to hiring outside wage labour in order to carry out their production activities. While it may appear contradictory on its surface to hire wage labour when at the same time selling one’s own labour power, in reality this is not the case. The whole situation rests on the cash needs of the family, for both consumption and taxation purposes.

The mode of production which governs the lives of the Nuba peasants is neither natural, subsistence, primitive nor even traditional. All of these terms are incapable of showing the exact nature of the prevailing mode of production. It is not even feudalistic. It is commodity producing. But it is not a capitalist mode of production, in spite of the fact that wage labour is occasionally used. Rather it is an example of petty commodity or simple commodity production, elsewhere described by Banaji (1976) as a mode where producers are not only free and equal vis-à-vis one another, but
owners of the means of production which they operate. Banaji goes on to suggest that at a certain stage of development, capitalist commodity production replaces simple commodity production, that is, the worker ceases to be the owner of his or her means of production.

The replacement of petty commodity production by capitalist production has started outside the private capitalist farms at Habila, but has not gone very far in spite of the usage of wage labour by individual peasants. Producers have not been separated fully from their own means of production. The situation thus accords with Chayonov's (1966) general description of peasant agriculture where both the family labour farm type and the half-labour farm are found side by side. In the latter case paid labour is used in addition to family labour power, but not to such an extent as to give the farm a capitalist character.

Conventional Islamic teachings hold that the most appropriate, if not the only, place for women is in the house where their main function is the reproduction of the human race by giving birth and looking after the children. If women have no children, then their duty is to look after their husbands! The basis of this argument is the assumption that women are physiologically weaker than men. The division of labour among the Nuba peasants however, shows that, far from being confined to the home, women play a significant role in agricultural production. 82.1 per cent of all basic agricultural operations were carried out by the whole family, irrespective of the sex composition; only 17.9 per cent were performed by different sexes. As well as participating together with men in almost all agricultural operations, they also labour in the home. Clearly women's contribution to the reproduction of human life in general is far greater than that of men.

Costs of Production
Agricultural production in the Nuba Mountains is centred around a single crop: dura. Although groundnuts, sesame, chilli and cotton are also grown, dura both constitutes the main ingredient of the Nuba diet and serves as the primary cash crop of the area. But sale of dura in the pre-capitalist sector is not intended for profit making or capital accumulation. It is rather for meeting cash needs like tax payment and the purchase of necessary consumption items not produced in the home. 53.2 per cent of the families surveyed consumed the larger part of their production and 46.8 per cent sold more of their produce than they consumed. The closeness of the figures indicates that the society of the Nuba has not been transformed into a fully fledged commodity producing system.

The cost of production is relatively high. Only 22.1 per cent of the families surveyed in 1978 had a cost of production less than 10 Sudanese pounds. This relatively high cost is not surprising given the primitive nature of production techniques and the resulting low level of productivity. Nuba Mountains peasants depend for subsistence on the combined labour of family members. Only 4 per cent of households received remittances from family members working outside the area.

The average annual income of the Nuba peasants is far below the national level of 150 Sudanese pounds. Yet 62 per cent of the families surveyed
reported spending more than a pound a day or more. In addition to the more ordinary consumption requirements, the Nuba are even compelled to buy water, the essential element for the existence of both animals and humans, a phenomenon rarely found in other parts of the Sudanese countryside.

52.7 per cent of the families surveyed brought their water supplies by themselves while 47.3 per cent purchased water from the Sugga (water merchant). Those bringing it themselves only eliminated the transport cost; for most of the water, all over the Nuba Mountains region, is a commodity, its price depending on its source. If the Sugga obtains it from a well, it is free, but if obtained from the Hafeer, it must be paid for. There is no definite criterion for the determination of its price level, so it varies from one village to another.

Peasants generally are subjected to two forms of exploitation, the unequal exchange which takes place frequently between the industrial and the agricultural sectors, on the one hand, and the working of usury capital, on the other. The most notorious is the latter. In the Sudan, usury capital is known as the Shail system. Through this system the peasant mortgages his crop long before harvesting time to the village merchant at an already determined price, far below the actual one at the time of the harvest. This is done in exchange for basic consumption items and necessary cash which are sold to the peasant for higher than their normal prices. The merchant gets a profit, thereby, amounting in some cases to over 300 per cent.

Only 11.3 per cent of the families surveyed had resorted to the Shail system; 88.7 per cent had been self-sufficient vis-à-vis their financial requirements. It may be presumed, however, that there is an element of under-reporting of the amount borrowed because borrowing from someone rather than from a financial institutions is regarded as 'bad' practice, and people are usually shy in talking about their financial commitments to others. The indicative lesson of the figures is the sign of the existence of the Shail system rather than its absence.

Social Services
Most social services were sadly lacking or even non-existent in the villages surveyed. There were only two dispensaries in the area, one at Habila and the other at Tukma, both staffed by non-trained Farash. Medicines were very scarce. Apart from a very small quantity of penicillin, none were available at Habila dispensary at the time of the survey. Even where present medical facilities were beyond the reach of most of the population, given the inadequacy of transport facilities between the different villages. They could not deal with emergencies because they closed at 2 pm and over the weekend.

The population of the villages was also deprived of educational facilities. The only school in the area — and this offering just primary education — was at Habila and provided places only to boys. Consequently the illiteracy level among the Nuba peasants was as high as 77 per cent. Even the single school offered very irregular services, being forced periodically to close because of shortage of food supplies. It is almost beyond imagination to see pupils starving while their own district produces thousands of tons of grains.
every year. A major portion of the blame for the situation must be laid at the door of the growing monopoly trend among the class owning the means of production. The supplier of foodstuffs to Habila School and almost all other schools throughout the entire Nuba Mountains region was an individual who owned a large number of the capitalist schemes at Habila and monopolised the grain trade in the area. He usually dictated high prices for the supplies to the schools, far beyond the means of the local authorities. When the authorities failed to provide him payment, he held back his supplies, forcing the schools to shut down. This individual has thus positively assisted in depriving the Nuba children from their right to free and stable educational facilities. This in itself is a sharp manifestation of their state of underdevelopment.

Security of both life and property among the Nuba peasants is the sole responsibility of every family. The only sign of a state body attending to law and order in the area was a very small police station at Habila. It was staffed with only two policemen who had no transport. Given the frequent clashes between the peasants and cattle owners of the pre-capitalist social formations, on the one hand, and the entrepreneurs of the private capitalist schemes at Habila, on the other, the number of policemen available was entirely inadequate. The conditions of general services reflected the passive role of the state towards their provision, a reflection in part, perhaps, of the fact that the Nuba villages had no representatives on any state body, either on the local or the national level. Only 5 per cent of family heads had ever held positions either on the Native Administration before 1970 or the State Institutions after that. This raises a question central to any strategy which might be recommended for the transformation and development of the region, namely that of the democratic participation of the mass of the people in the running of their own affairs at the local level. The very low degree of this participation is manifested in the very limited presence of the co-operative movement in the area; there is only one co-operative society, located at Taital.

**Concluding Remarks**

The results of the survey of the Nuba peasants can be summarised in respect of four major features of which account must be taken by any plan aiming to transform the prevailing situation. First, the system of socio-economic relations existing among the Nuba is pre-capitalist. Concretely it may be described as simple commodity or petty commodity production. Historically, the petty commodity mode of production has never existed independently. In present day Sudan it exists in articulation with the capitalist mode of production. The interrelationship between the two modes manifests itself in the fact that the pre-capitalist is dominated by the capitalist mode. A high degree of integration between the petty-commodity mode of production and the capitalist one does exist and is growing; this is reflected in both the prevalence of peasants working for wages on capitalist mechanised farms and their buying from and selling to capitalist merchants.

Secondly, the Nuba peasantry, far from being a closed society outside the orbit of modern life and civilisation, are being progressively subordinated to the market, on which they are dependent for both their personal consumption items and their farming necessities (e.g. tools and
implements). Here they are progressively integrated in the market economy and through it are subjected to the domination of the capitalist mode of production over a greater part of their material as well as cultural life.

Third, there is a very low degree of democratic participation among the Nuba peasantry in the running of their own affairs which must be reversed if local institutions capable of developing production are to be created and successfully operated. Finally, the practice of money lending to the peasants must be taken account of in development plans. The Shail system, which is responsible for the development of usury capital, is in its infancy. But the low percentage of reported money lending taking place gives an indication of its possible flourishing and development, a process which must be guarded against. This is central to the recommendation for the creation of efficient credit institutions which might alleviate and remove altogether the possibility of the development of this most notorious and exploitative institution.

Bibliographic Note


Change among West African Settlers in Northern Sudan

Mark Duffield

In this article Duffield traces the change in the economic location of the Takari — immigrants from Northern Nigeria — between the colonial and post-colonial periods, noting the extent to which this change parallels and reflects a more general societal process of the increasing dominance of capitalist over pre-capitalist production. The Takari were formerly manual labourers and peasant cultivators, but have increasingly moved into new positions, becoming independent artisans, small capitalist transporters and merchants. As their form of economic integration has changed, so too have relations within their families. In addition it is possible to see a change both in the nature of the self identity of the Takari and in the manner in which they are perceived by other groups in Sudanese society. Ultimately the case of the Takari reveals an important relation between class, ethnicity and nation.

From available evidence it can be estimated that about a million people or 10 per cent of northern Sudan's present population have come either directly or indirectly (second or later generation) from northern Nigeria or its vicinity. The majority of these are of Hausa origin, with significant minorities of Bornu (Beriberi) and especially Fulani, and are mainly settled in a belt varying between 100 and 300 miles in width which runs from west to east through the agricultural regions of Darfur, Kordofan, Gezira, Blue Nile, Gedaref and Kassala. Together these groups, and in some cases other groups of Westerners, are generally known to the Sudanese as 'Fellata', but because of the derogatory nature of this term, especially on the two Niles, it is seldom used by these groups as a means of self-ascription.

Hausa settlement in Sudan only became significant in terms of numbers with the colonial conquest of Nigeria and Sudan at the turn of the century, and was primarily characterised as a settlement of rural peasant cultivators and agricultural labourers drawn largely from the poorest sections of the Hausa peasantry. A larger number of Hausa, however, also formed their own quarters in the towns of northern Sudan, the majority in occupations which could all be subsumed under the heading of unskilled manual labour.

The bulk of Sudan's present population of Hausa descent has been born in Sudan, indeed there are many of the third, fourth, and even fifth generations. For this reason it is inappropriate to continue to use the term 'Hausa' insofar as this implies what is patently not the case: a cultural or
'ethnic' continuity between the communities of Hausa and their descendants in Sudan and the Hausa of northern Nigeria. Here I shall use the term Takari (sing. Takruru or Takruri) which has been widely adopted by Nigerians settling in Sudan, especially the Hausa, to the exclusion of other groups of Westerners, as a means of self ascription. The use of the term is apt since it implies a discontinuity between Hausa settled in Sudan and those in Nigeria and reflects the specifically Sudanese origin of the socio-economic determinants which have shaped the appearance of these settler communities.

The character of present day Takari settlements is different from that of those established under colonialism. Whereas previously the bulk of settlers, as peasant cultivators or manual labourers, occupied a similar social position, often linking these two occupations through seasonal migration, the internal contradictions amongst the Takari have changed and multiplied in the course of the post-war transformation of the Sudanese colonial economy through the expansion of capitalist relations of production. The Takari have emerged from the bottom, so to speak, of Sudanese society to fill a number of occupations characteristically associated with the tertiary infrastructure of the capitalist economy such as tailoring, barbering, baking, metal work, carpentry, mechanical repairs, lorry driving, and the like.

This development has been uneven, being most pronounced in the towns and those areas of the countryside where irrigated or mechanised agricultural schemes have been developed, the majority of which are in the central and eastern regions of northern Sudan. The implication of this transformation is that, for the purpose of analysis, the urban settlement and development of the Takari cannot be treated as a linear process. Rather, Takari settlement and development falls into two phases, the elements of which constitute interrelated processes of production which combined to form, in the first place, aspects of a wider and more general colonial mode of production and, in the case of the present, a neo-colonial mode of production. The intent of this paper is to examined urban Takari settlement and development from the point of view of its appearance and operation in each of these two phases of production.

To begin this analysis, it is necessary to pass a few critical remarks on the generally accepted ideas on Hausa migration, or for that matter on the migration of all Westerners, into northern Sudan. The common characteristic of these ideas is the basic functionalist framework in which they are couched. They attempt to portray migration and settlement as a natural process, free from contradictions, which takes place outside of, and unconnected with, the existence of a colonial or neo-colonial society. This set of ideas, aspects of which were elaborated by colonial officials and post-colonial academics alike, contain a number of general parameters one of which is the assertion that the settlement of westerners in northern Sudan resulted from a 'natural' process involving the eastward spread of virile agriculturalists from the west into the fertile though largely nomadic and underpopulated regions of the east. In the case of the Hausa, the overland pilgrimage to Mecca, which colonisation is considered to have enhanced by stabilising political conditions along the route, is seen as being the chief
'motivation', though less so with other westerners, behind this eastward migration. Settlement is usually explained as resulting from the 'problems' associated with the overland pilgrimage. These include the hardship of the years spent working and saving along the way and, since Hausa pilgrims commonly travel as families, the growing numbers of mouths to feed and increasing local commitments. In other words, the problems associated with the pilgrimage are considered to have been mainly brought about by the actions of the pilgrim himself including his initial decision to make the pilgrimage. The problems of the pilgrimage are seen to combine with the existence of land and employment in Sudan to produce permanent settlement. The colonial or neo-colonial economy, insofar as it is treated at all, is generally considered harmonious or 'functional' with regard to the settlers and, because of the settlers' greater efficiency as workers, enables them to 'maximise' their earning capacity through internal seasonal migration and the pursuit of several different jobs.

It is apparent that these ideas lend themselves to a flat dualism. That is, the division of society into a 'traditional' and a 'modern' sector, where the 'traditional' is made to appear an inverted form of the 'modern'. The latter is expressed as an idealised form of western capitalism, which it is assumed, given the elimination of a number of 'problems', it will one day become. In the case of Hausa settlement in Sudan, the functional-dualism theorists fail to consider seriously the effects and requirements arising from the politico-economic reorganisation and transformation of Nigeria and Sudan in the wake of colonial conquest; whereas it is clear that Hausa settlement in the towns of northern Sudan represents one aspect of a transfer of labour from one part of the British Empire to another.

In northern Nigeria the key factor underlying both the introduction of capitalist relations of production and the rendering of the Fulani Emirs dependent upon the colonial state was the gradual elimination of captive or slave labour on which the Fulani aristocracy had been particularly dependent. It is estimated that captives constituted between a quarter and a half of the total population of the Fulani Emirates and the disappearance of their labour, through manumission, personal ransom, legal ruling and especially their migration to other areas, coincided with its reappearance in the form of an enlarged poor peasantry. This transformation occurred either directly through, for example, migration to another area or indirectly by rich peasants losing their captive labour force.

Moreover, this poor peasantry was no longer that of the pre-colonial period but was re-organised under the colonial regime, through the system of 'indirect rule', to produce exportable agricultural raw materials for cash. The lot of the peasantry, especially the enlarged poor peasantry, was not improved by colonialism. Not only had the elimination of captive labour made the aristocracy more directly dependent on the exploitation of the peasantry as a whole, this exploitation now took place as a secondary aspect of a more fundamental relation of exploitation arising from the integration of Nigeria into the British Empire. The increasing exploitation of the peasantry was, for many, the active principle behind the initial decision to make the pilgrimage and ultimately the emigration of large numbers of Hausa from Nigeria to Sudan. Upon this active principle, which was felt
more keenly amongst the poorest sections of the peasantry, extraneous factors such as drought, famine, economic stagnation and land shortage, acted mechanically, by either speeding up or retarding the process.

That the majority of Hausa settling in Sudan during the colonial period were drawn from amongst the poor peasantry is indicated by the lack of traders and craftsmen whose presence characterised the Hausa dispersion in various parts of West Africa, southern Nigeria and Chad. Also, it is clear that many more entered Sudan than the available figures for those entering and leaving on pilgrimage would indicate. This would suggest that for many the desire to leave Nigeria was stronger than that to reach Mecca. Indeed, such sentiments expressed by certain settlers were seized upon by colonial officials who sought to prove the 'functionality' of the relatively direct form of colonial administration existing in Sudan by claiming that it gave the settler a 'greater freedom' compared to the indirect form of administration in his homeland. Finally, and most importantly, those who originated from the central and north-western regions of the former Fulani Empire, especially Hausa of Kanawa, Demagarawa, Gobirawa, Kabbawa and Zanfarawa origin, are over-represented amongst the Hausa settling in Sudan. It is precisely these areas which, from the evidence at hand, were characterised by the widespread migration of former captives following colonial conquest. Significantly, very few Hausa from the Zaria area, in which such migration was not significant, can be found settled in Sudan.

Apart from factors associated with the politico-economic re-organisation of the Fulani Empire, we must also consider the specific requirements and problems associated with the establishment of the colonial economy in Sudan. The initial problem was not, as some have argued, underpopulation (which itself only became significant once the economy had begun to expand), but the fact that the existing indigenous population was not yet socialised into dependence on wage labour. This situation lasted until the 1920s and, in some areas, even later. Nigerian immigration into Sudan, which gathered momentum soon after colonisation, was quickly recognised as being a solution to the labour problem and a means of reducing its high cost. In 1908 it was considered by the colonial administration that:

The influx of West African tribes will materially benefit the labour market as these people, unlike most of the Sudanese, are anxious to make money.*

In 1912 Wingate struck the chord which was to characterise the attitude of the colonial administration until the end of World War II:

When settled down they are hard working and law abiding people and it is for the good of the country that they should be encouraged to make it their permanent home.**

Although no official policy was ever introduced, this was the spirit in which successive colonial officials, through grants of land, building materials, tax concessions, even small sums of money, and other lesser means, variously tackled the question of Nigerian immigration. We have already mentioned that some Hausa immigrants never intended to return to Nigeria; for the

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rest, however, the element of choice was reduced, even eliminated, by the deliberate colonial policy of encouraging Nigerian settlement whilst at the same time depressing wage rates to their lowest possible level.

Thus, the greater efficiency of Hausa over Sudanese labour, which was much acclaimed by colonial officials, did not result from 'innate' characteristics but the fact that as immigrants Hausa settlers were from the start more dependent than the indigenous population on wage labour. Indeed, they were amongst Sudan's first modern wage labourers. Their earlier dependence on wage labour, especially in the towns, and the low level to which these wages were deliberately reduced is the key to the greater productivity of Hausa immigrants through multiple occupations. Rather than it being an 'innate' tendency to 'maximise' their earning capacity, thus showing the 'functionality' of colonialism, occupational adaptability was the natural outcome of a mode of production in which individual wages were pitched below the level of subsistence making it impossible for labour to remain 'idle'.

During the colonial period the rationale of Hausa settlement in the towns of northern Sudan can be simply stated as meeting the demand for unskilled manual labour created by the establishment of the colonial economy. The towns of Kordofan and of the Gedaref/Kassala region exhibit typical patterns of urban colonial settlement. In Kordofan and to some extent around Kassala, unlike the Blue Nile region, an adequate rural population existed, the main problem being a shortage of urban manual labour. In 1910 it was reported that during the wet season in Kordofan the urban labour supply was almost nil. In El Obeid, this shortage was accentuated with the extension of the railway there in 1912; this precipitated a sharp rise in the price of gum, which was widely cultivated in the area, and this in turn led to:

... a disastrous effect on the labour market. Almost the only unskilled labour available (was) that of the fluctuating Fellata population.*

From this period the predominantly Hausa quarters established in the railway towns of Kordofan began to increase in size and to meet the bulk of the province's requirements for unskilled urban labour, especially that for head and donkey porterage. By 1917 a definite policy had evolved to encourage Hausa to settle in their own quarters in the Province and District Headquarter towns. The following description given by Tomlinson and Letham in the 1920s conveys a vivid impression of some of the urban areas that had developed in the west:

The settlements in the Western provinces resemble in some ways the Hausa towns of West Africa outside the Hausa provinces and the Bornu and Hausa settlements of Cameroon, Bagirmi and Wadai, but they lack the trader element prominent in these. They do not have the individual character of some of the settlements further east on the Blue Nile. They are found for the most part as untidy and rather miserable suburbs adjoining the Government stations and larger towns. The inhabitants mostly get a living as casual labourers. Many cut and market wood and grass. In fact they have much likeness to the labour colonies now common in the Northern Province of Nigeria of natives from the French districts on the upper Shari and are similarly useful to the administration. The standard of comfort and prosperity in these settlements is low, and their inhabitants are despised by the local population.

There were also urban areas in the east of the country where the Hausa's situation was similar. In 1912, for example, those settled in Kassala were described by colonial officials as:

... a useful class, the men working either as cultivators on their own account or as hired labourers, and the women as daily house servants or durra grinders.

This pattern of employment, with men working as manual labourers, wood and grass collectors, and rainland farmers (especially in eastern Sudan and the railway towns of Kordofan), and women acting as domestic servants, grain pounders, cooked food producers, etc., characterised Hausa urban settlements until the end of World War II. In some towns, such as Wad Medani and Kassala, whole families would also migrate seasonally to the nearby agricultural schemes to pick cotton. But this list of primary occupations and the descriptions by colonial officials tend to simplify and obscure the internal division of labour around which urban Takari settlements were organised.

Until the end of World War II the main principle of organisation centred on the differences between the long-established and the newcomers. According to informants in Gedaref, during the 1920s and 1930s the long-established could immediately be distinguished from newcomers on account of their Sudanese dress, their ability to speak Arabic and their adoption of various aspects of Sudanese customary practice. Moreover, they lived in the permanent half of the quarter whilst the newcomers generally occupied grass huts, collectively known in Hausa as zongo, which afforded the pilgrim temporary respite. The zongo institution is a clear-cut example of the economic advantage the long-established in general held over the newcomers. Prior to the 1950s all the major towns along the pilgrimage routes in northern Sudan had a zongo attached to the permanently settled Takari quarter. The zongo occupied a specific area and comprised numbers of temporary grass shelters which the pilgrim and his family could occupy for a small fee payable to the zongo master, usually one of the principal sheikhs in the Takari quarter. Zongo residents were dependent upon the permanent settlers for a number of things such as the purchase of grain, foodstuffs, building materials (especially the better-off who wished to fence their shelters), domestic utensils, etc. and, not least of all, patronage and advice in finding employment.

The zongo also supported a number of occupations amongst the permanently settled such as labour recruiting agents for the agricultural schemes and those associated with the pilgrimage as guides and sellers of charms and religious tracts. The majority of male newcomers worked as casual porters or, more frequently, wood and grass sellers or water carriers. Women generally worked as domestic servants, grain pounders, or as in El Obeid for example, gum gleaners. It was from amongst the newcomers that the majority of seasonal cotton pickers were also recruited. The economic advantage enjoyed by the long-established expressed itself in their monopoly of the porterage and carrying trade especially that involving the use of donkeys. Many of the long established in El Obeid, Gedaref and Kassala for example, also had rainland farms on the outskirts of the town or in Takari villages further afield.
Prior to the 1950s married women were generally secluded within the compound. From within the compound, however, through their younger children and unmarried daughters, the wives of the permanently settled dominated the lucrative trade in various kinds of snacks and cooked foodstuffs. In this manner the Takari have, from the inception of the railways, been the main suppliers of snacks and refreshments to rail passengers at the stations and halts.

The politico-economic advantage enjoyed by the long-established was obscured during the colonial period by the emergence of an ideology of shared identity amongst Hausa settlers. This may appropriately be referred to as the Takari identity. The basis of the identity lay in the socio-economic position occupied by Hausa settlers as a whole in the colonial social structure and, in particular, in the needs of the long-established amongst these settlers. The Takari identity thus operated against earlier forms of self-identity, especially those of regional origin. This is important when it is realised that although the bulk of Hausa settling in the towns of northern Sudan were from the Kano region of Nigeria (Kanawa), important minorities of other groups, especially Demagarawa, Sokattawa, Katsinawa, Daurawa, Gobirawa, Kebba, Zanfarawa, Fulani and Bornu (Beriberi), also settled within Takari quarters, usually occupying their own sections. To overcome this heterogeneity the Takari identity emphasised the religious, moral and physical superiority of Nigerian settlers as a whole, and the Hausa in particular, vis-à-vis the groups amongst whom they had settled. Apart from providing a means of including all settlers, the identity also served to distinguish the long-established from the newcomers. The religious and moral superiority emphasised in the Takari identity demanded that married women should be secluded and compounds fenced — a condition impossible for newcomers to emulate.

Other contradictions exist within the Takari identity showing it to be a complex phenomenon operating at a number of levels of production and reproduction. The identity, insofar as it represented a positive assertion of superiority, can be seen as a form of resistance to becoming marginal within the colonial economy and the resulting depreciation of manual labour as opposed to tertiary and intellectual labour. On the other hand, since the Takari identity promoted the regional and local interdependence of Hausa settlers, it facilitated the development of occupational adaptability which is itself a direct expression of marginal status. On all accounts, however, the Takari identity can be seen to have served the interests of the long-established since it provided a means of incorporating, and thus exploiting, newcomers of various regional origins and backgrounds within a single unit. But, in the last analysis, this unit was none other than the unit of colonial administration; thus the identity not only served the interests of the Takari sheikhs, it also provided a means whereby Hausa settlers as a whole were integrated through their sheikhs into the colonial social structure. Even after the move towards indirect rule in 1926, the Takari were generally treated by the administration as being independent of the groups amongst whom they had settled. The Takari identity thus provides us with another example of the colonial origin of ‘tribes’.

The fundamental contradiction of the colonial regime established in Sudan
was that it had both to implant capitalist relations of production in the course of establishing the colonial economy and, in order to maintain its monopoly, oppose the only classes capable of developing and extending the capitalist process of production: the educated and commercial classes of northern Sudan. This contradiction was intensified as a result of the weakening of the world domination of British territorially-based imperialism during World War II and its supersession by American non-territorial imperialism (neo-colonialism), the long term interests of which demanded precisely what British colonialism had opposed: the development of an indigenous capitalist class.

The course which this development took has been a rapid increase in the area under crop in irrigated and mechanised agricultural schemes, the diversification of industry and growth of motor transport, a rapid increase of urban as opposed to rural population and, in order to support this enlarged urban population, the marked expansion of the tertiary or service sector. These developments, for which the political independence of Sudan in 1956 was a precondition, have manifested themselves unevenly, being most pronounced in the towns and in those rural areas of central and eastern Sudan in which irrigated or mechanised agricultural schemes have been developed. The people of the remaining rural areas have been largely incorporated into the flow of seasonal and extended migration, formerly dominated by Westerners, to urban areas and the more developed rural areas.*

The post-war politico-economic transformation of Sudanese society has drastically altered the whole character of the urban Takari settlements. The census of 1955/56 revealed that the Takari component of the population of some of the larger towns in northern Sudan could be measured in thousands and varied from around 13 per cent of the total population in El Fasher, Nahud, Kosti and Kassala to 20 per cent or more in Nyala, Um Ruwaba and Gedaref. It also revealed that the Takari had begun to enter the service sectors as tailors, barbers, bakers, carpenters, metal workers, and the transport business as mechanics and drivers. My observations in Takari quarters in El Obeid, Khartoum, Wad Medani, Demazin, Gedaref and Kassala during 1974 confirmed the importance of this trend and the fact that for many these occupations represented but one step on a larger cycle toward capital accumulation.

The present appearance and setting of the Takari quarters in the major towns share a number of common characteristics, many of whom derive from government policy. Takari quarters are either situated on the edge of the town and/or separated from the rest of the town by an open space. Apart from their spatial separation they are also physically distinct, the majority of the buildings generally being overcrowded, of poor appearance and lacking many of the facilities, such as piped water and electricity, which are found in the surrounding quarters. Although the Takari constitute a majority of all dwellers in such quarters, other Westerners such as Fur, Borgu, Masaleet, Daju, and Bagirmi, and since the 1960s, numbers of Southerners, are invariably found in the same areas divided into smaller

*It is estimated that more than a million people are annually on the move across Sudan in search of employment.
subsections. Attached to, or in the vicinity of, any Takari quarter one usually finds an area of native beer or *merisa* huts which are supplied and staffed almost exclusively by the other groups of Westerners. Although some of the younger generation may drink, most Takari frown upon the production and consumption of alcohol.

Within any Takari quarter one finds a wide diversity of economic activities. These commonly include the selling of cooked food, charms, and firewood; the making of ropes, mats, sandals, water pots; the trade of blacksmiths; and, in a number of cases, the ownership of lorries, taxis and shops. Beyond the Takari quarter and within the town itself, there commonly are, apart from numerous porters — the more established of whom now work exclusively with horses and carts — whole ranks of Takari barbers and tailors, as well as a few shop owners and more affluent merchants. The better-built houses, often of brick, which are scattered throughout a Takari quarter are usually the homes of the merchants and owners of the larger shops and of lorries and taxis.

Symptomatic of the post-war changes in Sudanese society is the disappearance of the *zongo* from the urban Takari settlements. There are a number of reasons for this including the relative decline in the overland pilgrimage, increasing competition in the unskilled labour market from other groups and, more importantly, the fact that the biggest post-war demand for labour has been in agriculture. Other reasons concern Sudanese independence and the tightening of the legal requirements for entrance into Sudan. Since most overland pilgrims still travel without any form of documentation they naturally prefer the anonymity of the rural Takari village or the agricultural scheme as opposed to the possibility of exposure in the town. Even in the Takari quarters of Mayo in Khartoum and of Hillet Miskini in Wad Medani, which for a variety of reasons still attract significant numbers of pilgrim and migrant Takari, the centralised outside *zongu* had disappeared. Here, temporary accommodation takes the form of privately rented huts, several of which are located within individual compounds. In this manner many of the permanently settled residents of these quarters supplement their income through landlordship.

The sharp decline in the number of newcomers entering the majority of established urban Takari settlements is indicative of the change in the internal contradictions amongst the Takari as a whole. Whereas in the colonial phase of production the major contradiction amongst the Takari could be expressed as that between the long-established and the newcomers, in the present phase of production it has been transformed into what can be conveniently expressed as that between the rich and the poor. In many cases an actual transfer has occurred between the terms of these two contradictions, that is, the long-established have been able to use their existing advantage in order to place themselves in a favourable position with regard to the post-war expansion of capitalist production. Newcomers on the other hand have often been integrated into the more stable post-war urban Takari settlements as their poorest members.

The terms 'rich' and 'poor' only become meaningful when we relate them to two interrelated processes of production that can be found amongst urban Takari. Since the end of World War II a process of production involving the
small scale accumulation of capital in the form of sewing machines, business premises, horses and carts, lorries, taxis, and the like, has developed and expanded amongst the Takari in the more developed rural areas and especially in urban areas. This process of production, besides capital accumulation, also requires the separation of capital and labour, that is proletarianisation and the spread of wage relations. The specificity of this capitalist process of production is that it has transformed and dominates an earlier production process forged amongst the Takari within the colonial mode.

The earlier process in its most advanced form is centred on the relations of personal dependence within the household, admits of no separation of household labour from the means of production or the intervention of wage relations actually within the labour process itself and, in many cases, exists as an adjunct to and precondition of small-scale cash crop production. The domination of the capitalist process of production over this earlier form of production manifests itself as an ability to adversely affect and change its conditions of production and reproduction. Given the absence of capital accumulation within the family itself, the spread of wage relations changes the relations of personal dependence within the household by reducing the ability of the household head to retain family labour — a precondition of this process of production. The result of this domination is to transfer labour from earlier forms of production based on the integrity of the household to those where capitalist relations of production predominate. Thus the modern sector grows and develops at the expense of what is usually referred to by the functional-dualists as the 'traditional' sector. In the towns and more developed rural areas, this transfer of labour amongst the Takari is usually permanent. It involves a process of proletarianisation through apprenticeship and wage labour within the service and transport sectors which are based upon the small scale accumulation of capital. In the less developed rural areas the transfer is generally seasonal and unskilled in nature.

Viewed in this light production based on the household in urban Takari settlements has only been able to develop and maintain itself in those spheres which have been left open to it by the dominant process of production, in the supply of a number of cheap domestic utensils and articles of attire. The Takari in different towns usually monopolise or specialise in the production of one or several particular products. In El Obeid, for example, a number of Takari families monopolise the production of sandals from old inner tubes and tyres. While this is common amongst Takari in other areas, in El Obeid it reaches a degree of craftsmanship which is uncommon. The sandals made are replicas, complete with studs, buckles and other decorations, of those sold in the state-controlled shoe shops with which they attempt to compete by underselling. In Wad Medani the Takari monopoly is in the production of clay water-pots, whilst in Khartoum a major occupation is the production of aluminium domestic utensils, such as ladles and spoons by casting. In all these areas household production also supports a number of small traders amongst the Takari who purchase a quantity of such items to sell at a profit in the countryside.
In rural areas the viability of household production, lacking the potentiality of the urban market, has declined greatly in recent years and one does not find the sort of specialisation that exists at this level in the different urban settlements. Even in the towns, however, household production is threatened. It occupies a niche solely at the discretion of capitalist production, either through its temporary inability or its disinclination to expand. It also undersells its products and its returns are therefore smaller than are those in the capitalist sector such as in tailoring or lorry driving. There is thus a tendency for dependent household members to be always on the look out for 'something better' and to abandon these crafts.

Porterage is an interesting case of the domination of household production by the capitalist process of production, since it represents a mid-way position within some urban Takari settlements. In El Obeid, as in other towns like Gedaref and Kassala, the horse and cart began to replace the donkey during the 1940s and increasingly so in the 1950s. This change represented a rationalisation of the labour process since the cart, of which there are two and four-wheeled varieties, makes for greater efficiency. It also allowed capital accumulation to occur within porterage itself, in some cases three or four horses and two or more carts being owned by a single family.

Cart-owners usually work for individual merchants and are involved in the transportation of gum, groundnuts, grain, beans, and other goods to and from the railway station and between premises within the town. A merchant, besides employing several cart-owners, may also employ a number of manual labourers who just work within the shop or grain warehouse. In this manner an individual merchant may have a labour force of between four and ten people. Cart-owners and labourers are usually paid daily according to how many sacks they move. A number of cart-owners, however, are paid a regular weekly wage by their employer. The returns for cart-owners are greater than those for manual labourers. Since the horse and cart represents a far greater capital investment than is normally found within household production, and yet porterage only occasionally admits wage labour within the process of production itself, it can be seen as a transitional form mid-way between household and capitalist production. This position is reflected in the ideology of the cart-owners themselves who are quick to point out the new-found respectability of the profession. Since 1969 cart-owners have been affiliated to Sudan's National Labour Union, and in El Obeid and Gedaref they have their own social club. Insofar as cart-owners are themselves employees they serve as a good example, together with many lorry and sewing machine owners, of how peripheral capitalism, the dominant aspects of which are based on commerce, extends itself through purchasing the labour of others who in many cases are themselves owners of their own means of production, by subcontracting.

Amongst the urban Takari, occupations which fall squarely within the dominant capitalist process of production include tailoring, baking and lorry driving. Each of these requires an apprenticeship, that of lorry driving generally being the most arduous. After this varying lengths of time are spent working for others before, for a number at least, the cycle ends in their buying their own machines, premises, and lorries, and becoming
employers themselves. The labour force for these capitalised occupations is generally drawn from the younger elements of the urban Takari population whose families lack capital or viable forms of household production.

For the sake of illustration, and because it is very popular amongst the Takari, I will briefly example tailoring. Although one can find many tailors in rural Takari settlements, it is only within the town that the cycle of accumulation within tailoring can complete itself. The completed cycle takes the form of a shop, usually rented, rarely owned, containing three or four machines worked by their owner and his employees. The first stage in the cycle is that of apprenticeship. Although relatives, friends and neighbours may help a lad find a tailor to learn from, family and ‘ethnic’ relations do not play a dominant role in the apprenticeship relation. A tailor who takes on an apprentice usually owns his own machines and takes only one apprentice at a time. An apprenticeship may last several years during which time, if the lad is a stranger to the town, he lives with the tailor or in lodgings which the tailor has found for him. The apprentice is provided with breakfast and lunch which he takes with the tailor at the place of work. In addition, he usually receives occasional pocket-money or tips. The apprentice takes messages, fetches tea, cleans and stores the machine, cuts cloth, and the like. With growing skill, gained by watching and with practice when the machine is idle, he is gradually entrusted with the more straightforward aspects of the job.

After a couple of years the apprentice has usually mastered enough of the basic techniques to seek his own employment. In the towns the majority of Takari tailors are found working in the central market area on machines located outside shops or merchants’ premises. Cloth merchants in particular usually have several tailors working outside on the verandah. Where Takari merchants are found, Takari tailors will also be working nearby. But since the number of the latter is far greater than the former, it is more common to find Takari tailors working on the premises of Arab merchants. In some towns, such as El Obeid, Gedaref and Kassala, whole ranks of young Takari tailors can be found working under the same verandah. In all they form a large proportion of the total number of tailors working in these towns. The merchants outside whose premises tailors work either own the machine themselves, in some cases owning six or seven, or they rent part of their verandah to a machine-owning tailor. Thus, a merchant with a number of tailors working on his premises may own several machines and collect rent on several more. In some cases, an individual tailor may own more than one of the machines on which rent is collected.

Once a youth has finished an apprenticeship he will usually seek employment on another’s machine, the owner taking half of what he earns. It is generally held that after about two or three years working in a town a tailor, if he saves hard and has no heavy financial commitments, would be in a position to purchase his own machine. After several more years a tailor may be able to afford to purchase more machines, which he hires out to other tailors, and eventually moves into his own premises. This is especially the case with those who specialise in women’s clothes where a central market position is not necessary or even desirable.
In El Obeid, Gedaref and Kassala where in pre-war years it was usual for the long-established to carry out small scale cash crop production together with their urban occupations, there is now a definite tendency amongst the practitioners of occupations such as those we have already discussed to give up direct participation in agricultural production. This is especially the case in the capitalised occupations such as tailoring, baking and driving, and takes the form of the renting out of farm land to the poorer and generally older members of the Takari quarter who combine their farming activities with the marketing of wood and grass, latrine digging, roof and fence repairing, and the manufacture of caps, rope and beds. The land-owner usually takes a half or a third of what the occupier produces on the farm. In many cases tailors or others involved in the modern occupations, usually the younger generation within the Takari quarter, have fathers whose primary occupation is farming and casual work. The domination by capitalist production over earlier forms of household production is such that sons engaged in the former invariably have to subsidise the small scale farming activities and casual employment of their fathers thus effecting a complete transformation of the relations of personal dependence within the household.

The position of women has also changed with the expansion of capitalist production. Whereas previously only the wives of newcomers and those still in the process of settling were not secluded, now the only married women in urban Takari quarters who remain in seclusion are the wives of the more affluent shop-owners and merchants, and the religious class of teachers and diviners (H. mallamai). Of the rest, the poorest engage in grain sifting and pounding or act as unskilled manual labour or domestic servants. The better-off produce cooked food, which they and their children sell. In Gedaref, for example, the married women occupy one corner of the main market whilst their children hawk their merchandise through the streets and at the railway station.

The expansion of a capitalist process of production, and more especially the political changes that this has involved, have greatly altered the nature of self-identity amongst the Takari. Whereas Hausa and other Westerners had generally been encouraged to settle in Sudan during the colonial phase, within the present phase the ‘Fellata’, especially on the two Niles, are openly disliked. This change in attitude is illustrated in the nature and operation of Sudan’s nationality laws (1948, 1957), which define as Sudanese by descent, those people whose ancestors were in Sudan prior to 1897, before British occupation and the establishment of the colonial economy — the very engine which was responsible for creating a sizeable proportion of northern Sudan’s present population. Sudan’s nationality laws attempt to fly in the face of history so to speak and, like the functional-dualists, ignore colonialism and its effects.

Of course, provision is also made for naturalisation, the grounds for which rest upon the applicant’s continuous residence in Sudan for ten years previous to the date of application, adequate knowledge of Arabic and good character. Citizenship through naturalisation however bars the holder from high or important public office and is hedged with a number of limitations and restrictions which can result in nationality being revoked.
The main effect of the nationality laws in regard to the Takari is their bearing on the licensing regulations to which they are related. Basically, any occupation other than small scale cash crop production or unskilled manual labouring requires a licence which, in turn, requires proof of Sudanese citizenship. It can be appreciated that the post-war economic differentiation amongst the urban Takari has necessitated many of their number obtaining Sudanese citizenship.

With the promulgation of the nationality laws the post-war expansion of capitalist production in Sudan has largely been the prerogative of 'Sudanese citizens'. Since the licensing laws do not affect the pursuits of most of the Takari living in the less developed rural areas or of the poorer sections of those living in the more developed rural areas or in urban areas, either by their design or because of the difficulty of enforcing them, the expansion of capitalist production has introduced a new potential element of identity amongst the Takari based on the notion of nationality. Amongst the Takari this new element manifests itself as a contradiction with the emergence of a petty-bourgeoisie which in the majority of cases established itself through lorry ownership and trading. This petty-bourgeoisie is distinguished by the relatively high degree of capital accumulation and by diversity of commercial and economic pursuits in which its members are engaged.

This diversity, which can encompass the ownership of lorries and taxies, shops and commercial premises, tractors and large-scale mechanised farms, and garages and mechanical repair shops is resolved within the family, different members of which are responsible for the different areas of production into which any family has expanded. Unlike household production, however, the family amongst the petty-bourgeoisie appears as the owner of the means of production and intervenes in the labour process at the technical or managerial level. An important addition to the economic division of labour amongst the Takari petty-bourgeoisie in recent years is the provision of higher education for certain family members and thus the emergence of a small professional class. It is especially amongst the petty-bourgeoisie that a Sudanese identity has replaced the Takari identity which emerged during the colonial phase of production.

There has been a profound transformation of the internal contradictions and character of urban Takari settlement between the colonial and neo-colonial phases of production. In the former case the ideology of a Takari identity served to mask the relation of exploitation that existed between the long-established and the newcomers. At the same time, since the long-established were the medium of colonial administration and control, the Takari identity served as a means of integrating Hausa settlers as a whole into the colonial mode of production. It is indicative of the needs both of the long-established residents and of the colonial regime for cheap labour — hence the encouragement of Hausa settlement — that the Takari identity was, and to some extent remains, an inclusive ideology.

In the post-war transformation of the internal contradictions amongst the Takari, the active principle has now become the distinction between 'rich' and 'poor'. Within the present phase of production it is only amongst the poor that the Takari identity retains any positive meaning, thus revealing that the contradiction of the colonial phase of production has become
transformed into its opposite. This transformation was achieved by the
emergence of a petty-bourgeoisie who now choose to identify themselves as
Sudanese. This change of identity, as we have shown, cannot be understood
at the level of ideology alone but is based on a transformation of the
material process of production involving the expansion of peripheral
capitalism. The nature of this expansion is such that the rich no longer need
the poor, and have been led to adopt an exclusive ideology. The reality
behind this adoption, however, is being structured by a mode of production
in which capitalist production has achieved a position of dominance over
earlier household forms of production. This change is itself symptomatic of
the heightening of contradiction within the neo-colonial phase of
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The process of uneven development imposed by British colonialism, through which only three regions of Sudan — the Gezira Scheme, Khartoum, and the Blue Nile Province — underwent any major economic development, has been extended and deepened by the subsequent penetration of foreign investment capital. The reason for this phenomenon is crystal clear. Both British colonialism and more recent foreign capital share one primary objective: a high return on investment; British manufacturers wanted cheap cotton, and the oil rich Arab states now want cheap food. This is the economic reality behind the oft-quoted reference to Sudan as 'breadbasket of the Arab World'. Most significant in this respect is the massive Kuwaiti and Saudi financing of development projects employing Western firms and technicians. These projects include large irrigation schemes like Rahad and Khashm al Girba, and the construction of the Jonglei Canal, designed to by-pass the Sudd and thereby increase the River Nile flow. These, and other developments such as Kenana Sugar (involving the British firm Lonrho), the one million acre commercial cattle farm being developed by AZL International (a subsidiary of the Arizona, Colorado Land and Cattle Company), the mechanised farming project in the Damazine area, the Western Savannah Development Scheme, the IDA financed New Halfa agricultural rehabilitation scheme, and many other smaller projects, will undoubtedly integrate many more peasants into capitalist property relations, extend agricultural wage-labour, and tend to even out the existing differential rates of pay within the economically advanced agricultural sectors.

The scope of planned investment is enormous. A multilateral Arab Fund, now known as Triple Aid, was inaugurated in 1977 under the auspices of the Kuwaiti-based Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development. It envisaged a 10-year investment programme, costing over six billion dollars, to finance a large number of interrelated schemes designed to bring the annual growth of Sudan's agricultural sector to an estimated 6 per cent.

Financial and infrastructured difficulties (and related doubts concerning the economic viability of very big schemes) delayed the implementation of
Triple Aid's investment programme, but a start has been made on smaller and more manageable projects in the fields of horticulture, dairy processing, glucose production and poultry farming. Companies were formed in 1981 and equity distributed between the Sudan Government (37.5 per cent), Triple Aid (25 per cent) and the governments of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Iraq (12.5 per cent each). Tenders were issued in March 1981, and contracts awarded to Ritz Pompen of West Germany to supply water pumps for the 25 million dollar vegetable scheme. Other European companies were earmarked for the construction of a slaughterhouse and packing plant for the 75 million dollar Arab Sudanese Poultry Company, a 37.5 million dollar starch and glucose factory and the 88 million dollar dairy plant for the Arab Sudanese Dairy Company. Furthermore, feasibility studies by HVA of Holland (for a 92 million dollar edible oils project) and Sweco of Sweden (for a 36 million dollar feedmill scheme) were under consideration, and tenders were received from companies in Britain, France, Holland and West Germany for construction contracts related to phase 2 of Triple Aid's schedule. By 1982 AAAID's total investment in Sudan exceeded 250 million dollars.

The marriage of Arab and western finance capital has also been seen in deals like the 200 million Eurodollar loan arranged by Adnan Khashoggi, the Saudi financier, and the increasing investment in indigenous companies producing textiles, match, soap and glass. Some of these have been taken over by the Kuwaiti owned Gulf International, whose Sudanese director Khalid Osman owns considerable real estate in the capital. Khartoum, as the location for the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (ABEDIA), is explicitly conceived in terms of linking Arab oil money and the exploitation of African resources through the utilisation of capital goods purchased from the West. All members of the Arab League make contributions to this fund, but most of it comes from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Without such finance it is obvious that Sudan would have few of the development projects now in progress.

The number of funding organisations in Sudan that have Islamic or Arab credentials has increased considerably over the past five years, and includes the Opec Special Fund, the Kuwaiti based Inter-Arab Investment Guarantee Fund, the Saudi Development Fund, and the Islamic Development Bank. The spectacular success of Saudi Prince Mohammed Feisal's own Islamic Investment Company testifies to the extent to which an appeal to Islamic principles in banking can result in the accumulation of enormous financial reserves. Within the first four hours of its opening, the Fiscal Bank in Khartoum took ten million Sudanese pounds. By the end of its first year of operation, the bank's profits exceeded 45 million dollars — a staggering figure.

European firms involved in recent projects in Sudan include Bonifica of Italy (to examine the feasibility of reviving Old Suakin as a Red Sea port), Rhein-Ruhs Industrie of West Germany (commissioned to study river transport) and a large number of French companies such as the Compagnie de Constructions Internationales (CCI) (Jonglei Canal and Juba airport), Rhone-Poulenc and Roussel-Uclaf (agriculture), Omnium Techniques de
Pipelines (OTP), and Thomson-CSF (telecommunications — with Siemens of West Germany).

Assisting these projects, and their infrastructural support, is aid from the European Economic Community (which in 1981 increased its official aid grant under the Lomé Convention to around 110 million dollars for improvements at Khartoum Airport), the Islamic Development Fund (39.3 million dollars for petroleum products from Kuwait, 12 million dollars for fertilisers, and 5 million dollars for the Damazin Agricultural Development Company), the Opec Special Fund (7.7 million dollars for the Kassala-Haiya road) and the Kuwait Fund (4.7 million dollars for the Sennar-Demazin road and 5.2 million dollars for the Rahad project).

Similarly, World Bank and EEC funds are supporting important rehabilitation work, and contracts have been awarded to, among others, British Leyland (for trucks), KSG Handels of West Germany (for pumping equipment), International Harvesters of Canada (for tractors) and Hunslet Engines of UK (for engines for the Gezira Light Railway). Most of these contracts are related to rehabilitation work, currently being undertaken in the very large schemes. The aim is to boost food production, not for local consumption but for export. Assistance to small, mixed farm projects, and to the subsistence farmers who make up the vast bulk of the population is very small indeed. Even here, however, foreign influence is dominant. Shareholding in the new Sudan Rural Development Finance Corporation (SRDFC) is weighted heavily in favour of Britain (the Commonwealth Development Corporation), France (Caisse Centrale Cooperation Economique), and West Germany (Deutsche Gessellschaft fur Wirtschaftliche) who between them hold a 60 per cent share of the capital, compared to the Sudan Development Corporation’s 40 per cent. This ratio is clearly designed to encourage yet more external investment — particularly by Arabs, and by companies in the EEC and North America — and is supported by the 1980 Investment Act which codified existing investment guarantees and was specifically designed to remove any remaining constraints in foreign private investment.

Much of this investment finance derives from the accumulated surpluses of oil production — either directly, or re-cycled in the international money markets — and through multinational companies. This is ironic because it is now clear that Sudan itself possesses considerable oil deposits.

The fact that Chevron spent 75 million dollars on oil exploration in Sudan in 1981 alone, bringing its total financial commitment to that date to over 200 million dollars, ought to be sufficient to indicate that there is far more oil under Sudan’s deserts than has previously been intimated. Of the 31 wells drilled up till last year, 25 belonged to Chevron; but the tiny trickle of oil companies wanting a slice of the action has recently turned into a small flood — another sure indication that oil experts have good reason to suppose that it is there in abundance.

Phillips Petroleum of the US has secured an agreement to explore an area of 120,000 square kilometres north west of Omderman, Canada’s Transpacific is looking at 70,000 square kilometres north of Port Sudan, and Sunmark, a division of Sun Oil of Texas, is investigating 170,000 square kilometres
between El Damer and El Obeid. Other companies involved in exploration are the Texas Development Corporation of Geneva, Eastern and Union Texas, Burmah Oil of the UK and the Eastern Petroleum Company of the US. It is anticipated that soon Shell, Mobil, Atlantic, Richfield, Elf and Enserch will all have joined in the search. As an indication of the known reserves, Chevron's Unity field has at least 23 million barrels, and some estimates put the figure as high as 400 million barrels. An economic review published by the Economist points out that even the former figure would amount to sufficient oil to '... run the proposed 25,000 b/d Kosti refinery by itself for 50 years without even using crude fields further west such as Abu Gabra, Tabaldi, Sharaf and Talh, where flow rates of up to 8,000 b/d have been tested in half a dozen wells'.

All this will undoubtedly stimulate foreign investment, but the corresponding concessions on profit repatriation, wrenched by the multinationals, and the concommitant pressure on Sudan to develop its infrastructure, will tend to minimise even more the rate of rural development. It will also fuel inflation, and therefore price many small peasants out of the market.

Sudan remains one of the poorest countries in Africa in terms of per capita income. It has a huge balance of payments deficit, and a mounting backlog of debt. The balance of payments figures actually understare the seriousness of the problem, because many of the externally financed projects referred to above are recorded elsewhere. The credits are simply directly transferred from aid-donor to contractor without entering the country. Deficits in the balance of payments have frequently made it difficult for Sudan to pay for essential imports - such as pesticides and insecticides. Yet, luxury imports like motor cars jam the narrow streets of Khartoum and Omdurman, and the very latest stereophonic sound recorders from Japan fill the shop windows, often giving foreign visitors to the country a superficial impression of affluence. Import controls have been a constant problem. In the recent past the Sudan government operated a so-called nil-value import system. This was designed to encourage the 400,000 or more expatriate Sudanese, who work in oil-rich Arab countries (a serious 'brain-drain' of professional and skilled workers), to remit foreign earnings through the customs licence revenue paid on imported luxury goods. The result was a prodigious increase in these imports, which were subsequently sold at vastly inflated prices. The financial proceeds were frequently exported to foreign-based bank accounts via the currency black market.

In August 1981 the government convened a special conference of expatriate Sudanese through the external relations office of the Sudan Socialist Union to reconsider the whole subject of customs and excise duties. The immediate outcome was the imposition of a 10 per cent tax on foreign earnings to be remitted to the Bank of Sudan. In return, various concessions on import duty were to remain, and others were to be extended. The government anticipated that the new arrangements would raise over 120 million dollars in the short term and assist in closing the foreign exchange gap of 600 million dollars. The latter, combined with expectations of a poor economic performance in 1982, induced the IMF to insist upon (a) an 'austerity budget' in which the Sudanese pound was devalued (90 piastres to the dollar
instead of 80), (b) the removal of subsidies on petrol, sugar and other commodities and (c) the implementation of an 18 point economic programme (conceived in monetarist terms) that included a 10 per cent increase in import duties. These measures — draconian in their effects — led to strikes and demonstrations, involving most notably railway and factory workers and Gezira tenants. President Nimeiri faced the most serious political crisis of his 12 year rule. The cabinet was divided, the South in uproar, and both Left and Right were expressing opposition to the government’s economic policy. Nimeiri’s response was swift. He sacked his entire cabinet, blaming it collectively, for economic mismanagement, cracked down hard on the Left (relying on the acquiescence of the Ansar and Muslim Brotherhood — with their ardent anti-Communism), and stood firm, with the army behind him. The pattern is a familiar one. Economic measures inspired by the IMF result in (a) opposition from the urban working-class and rural proletariat (who suffer most from the immediate effects of devaluation and loss of subsidy) and (b) opposition from traditional religious groups who perceive these economic ‘reforms’ as being at odds with long-standing values born of Islam. Nimeiri’s political skill has always resided in his being able to stress a personal commitment to Islam (and thereby to offset the influence of the Ansar and Muslim Brotherhood), while calling for ‘modernisation’ based on foreign investment capital which corresponds to the current needs of the indigenous commercial bourgeoisie. This class opposes religious fanaticism as much as communism because concessions to either would now threaten its economic security: a security linked to the continued penetration of foreign investment capital upon which it has come to rely. The greater this reliance, the fewer the political options open to the regime, a fact evidenced by Numeiri’s own shift from left to right. One enduring feature of this political manoeuvre has been Numeiri’s outstanding ability to maintain national integration. Till now, that is. He knows better than anyone that in placating either the Ansar or the Muslim Brotherhood too much, he runs the risk of uniting the South against the North. And whatever else may be said about Jaafar Nimeiri, his lasting achievement has been to have won the confidence (however slender) of Southerners against their undoubted fear of Muslim-Arab domination. The 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement ended a civil war that had left over half-a-million dead in 17 years and which had precluded all hope of sustained economic development. It also created a political climate that could attract finance capital.

The above-mentioned concessions made to international finance capital have served at once to integrate and undermine subsistence agriculture, making it even more clearly a source of cheap migrant labour for technologically advanced agri-business. The latter is designed primarily to produce food for export, and to enable those who invest in it the opportunity to make enormous profits.

Norman O’Neill

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SUDAN: A POLICY OF INCREASING DENATIONALISATION OF NATIONAL WEALTH

The tremendous campaign of propaganda of the mid-70s accompanying what seemed to be a real solution to the problems of the ailing Sudanese economy has faded away. The Sudanese regime has abandoned its ambitious dream of turning Sudan into a breadbasket of the Third World (or more modestly, the Middle East) through an anticipated 'happy marriage' of Arab capital and untapped domestic agricultural resources. By the end of 1981 President Nimeiri had declared new austerity measures, admitting in a nation-wide speech that during his rule, agricultural production and services had suffered rapid deterioration, manufacturing production had been levelled down by foreign currency constraints, imports had reached a level more than twice the country's capacity to export and an unprecedented immigration of skilled and semi-skilled workers and professionals to neighbouring Arab states had occurred. Thus, the mid-70s dreams have proved to be grossly unfounded. All indicators of the late 70s pointed towards a crisis of unprecedented intensity and dimensions.

Despite vast horizontal expansion of the agricultural sector, output has been characterised by serious deterioration with stagnant — sometimes declining — productivity per hectare. The World Bank estimated the annual growth rate for the sector at only 2.6 per cent for the period 1970 to 1980. In fact, following 1975/76 there were negative growth rates for all sectors, and consequently a declining GDP.

During the period 1970-1980 the estimated annual growth rate of the industrial sector was only 1.3 per cent, contrasting sharply with that of 5.5 per cent for the 1960-1970 period. Despite substantial additions to industrial capacity during the 1970-1980 period, manufacturing output as a percentage of GDP declined from over 9 per cent in 1981 to 8.2 per cent in 1981, with food products, beverages, tobacco and textiles representing approximately 80 per cent of the total value added and the public sector contributing slightly less than half of industrial GDP.

The vast expansion of capacity in sugar and textiles (mostly public sector) and edible oil (mostly private) did not yield anticipated self-sufficiency and the country fell far short of meeting targets for the six year plan (1976/77-1982/83) according to which Sudan would have supplied 42 per cent of the Arab countries' consumption of edible oils, 58 per cent of their foodstuffs and 20 per cent of their sugar requirements. Following its apparent failure, the plan was replaced by a three year public investment
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programme with more modest targets. Problems underlying the failure to achieve even these targets can be elaborated through reference to sugar and weaving factories.

The acute shortage of foreign exchange over the last five years has led to a serious deterioration in the performance of the two sugar mills established in the 1960s and has hampered operations of newly initiated ventures in the industry. Of four sugar plants established during the early '70s, two remain totally idle, one through lack of raw materials and the other because of obsolete boilers. A third has operated at 25 per cent capacity through lack of adequate inputs. The fourth (a joint venture between the Sudanese government and several MNC's) has started operation but at a cost of production four times that of the two public sector firms established in the 1960s.

In textiles the picture is much the same. The six public sector weaving factories installed by the mid-70s to process 155,000 tons of cotton yarn remain idle because of the failure of the Elhag-Abdalla spinning factory which had been intended to supply inputs into the weaving units.

Poor performance of the agricultural sector, combined with lack of foreign exchange, inadequate physical and institutional infra-structure and an acute shortage of financial and human resources, have thus limited expansion and indeed have led to serious deterioration in the former level of manufacturing output.

The severity of Sudan's economic crisis is seen in the fact that the average annual growth rate of exports was negative (−5.7 per cent) during the period 1970-1980, while that for imports was increasing at 3.5 per cent annually. By 1980 the balance of trade deficit stood at the equivalent of over a billion dollars. As seen below, a deficit trend was also apparent in the current account of the balance of payments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>73/74</th>
<th>74/75</th>
<th>75/76</th>
<th>76/77</th>
<th>77/78</th>
<th>78/79</th>
<th>79/80</th>
<th>80/81</th>
<th>81/82</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deficit (In millions of Sudanese pounds)</td>
<td>-30.5</td>
<td>-160.5</td>
<td>-107.6</td>
<td>-15.1</td>
<td>-42.8</td>
<td>-77.9</td>
<td>-133.8</td>
<td>-182.9</td>
<td>-310.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bank of Sudan, Annual Reports No.20, 21 and 22.

The declining physical output of all major exports from the irrigated, modern sector of agriculture during the 1970s was the major cause of the poor performance of exports as a whole. As a result, the proportionate contribution of the traditional sector to total value of exports has increased. Thus, gum arabic, sesame and livestock — products largely of the traditional sector — contributed almost 50 per cent to the total value of exports during the period 1974-81. The importance of cotton output has fluctuated, but production of this crop has exhibited a downward trend over the same period.

With the steady deterioration in the balance of payments and the unfavourable world market situation during the 1970s, Sudan's external outstanding debt amounted to $6.3 billion by December 1982, divided as follows:
The context of capitalistic development, manifesting itself in the following:

The fallacy of these recommendations and their irrationality, even within a developmentalist perspective, which must be addressed is whether the IMF is capable of meeting the IMF's proposals 40 per cent reduction on public expenditure.

As a result of this situation, new capital inflow has had to be channelled to meet the balance of payments deficit. The 1981 Bank of Sudan report of June 1981 (the final devaluation since June 1978) pointed out that the Sudanese dinar was devaluated by 31 per cent since its creation in 1961, and subsidies on essential consumer goods and agricultural inputs have been derived from the balance of payments deficit of the IMF and the World Bank. By the end of 1982 the Sudanese dinar was devaluated by 31 per cent (the third devaluation since June 1978).

The fallacy of these recommendations and their irrationality, even within the context of capitalistic development, manifesting itself in the following:

1. The basic aim of IMF recommendations is to increase production of exportables in response to better incentives and reallocation of resources, thereby increasing the surplus of agricultural crops far exceeded by the mechanization of agricultural surplus appropriation/expropriation whereby the problem of incentives would be better tackled through examining the problem of expropriations. The proposition of exportables cannot be solved by devaluation measures. The problem of exportables arises out of the agricultural sector, the exportables in response to better incentives and reallocation of resources, of which:

1. Multilateral (international and regional) $1.5 billion
2. Bilateral (of which)
   a. Arab countries $1.0 billion
   b. Developed capitalist countries $0.3 billion
   c. Others
3. Multilateral (international and regional) $0.3 billion

the returns to the farmers (including the big farmers of the mechanised rain-fed schemes).

Essentially the 'supply rigidities' of agricultural production would be best understood within the whole complex interaction between the variables affecting agricultural production: the ownership structure, the credit system, the marketing system, supply and cost of inputs, infrastructure facilities, lack of misorientation of agricultural research, the impact of the rapid destructive expansion of mechanised rain-fed agriculture, etc. Even if this whole complex were reduced to one or two variables (e.g. incentive and allocation), all the indicators suggest a negative rather than a positive impact for the devaluation.

2. The devaluation and the accompanying policies aimed at reducing imports will increase rather than decrease shortages throughout the productive structure of the economy. As IMF Staff Papers themselves acknowledge, 'in a situation of acute foreign currency scarcity, which has acted as a binding constraint on output growth, a devaluation aimed at the expansion of the external sector would have to be backed by the availability of considerable foreign exchange to alleviate existing shortages and to generate a supply momentum in the economy'.

3. The full implementation of the export promoting measures outlined by the IMF is bound to increase the overall level of current government expenditure, particularly in areas governed by the Ministries of Agriculture, Irrigation and Transportation. The IMF admits that there is a need to broaden the tax base and to reduce the deficit financing which has fueled inflationary pressures in the past. Indeed the institution's experts grant that Sudan has one of the lowest sources of government revenue from direct taxes in the world, ranking 34th among 35 developing countries. Yet the measures taken by the regime, following IMF recommendations, aim at increasing the already heavy burden of taxation on the toiling masses through removal of subsidies, increasing the prices of essential commodities and reducing the supply of essential services. But to demand a more even distribution of the tax burden, i.e. through direct taxes on business profits, is to deny the class nature and origin of the present regime. The result of recent policies is simply the strengthening of past trends, with the increasing impoverishment of the toiling masses and the inflating of profits accruing to the tiny minority.

4. The devaluation measures taken in 1972, 1978, 1980 and 1981 did not lead to any increase in exports (96 per cent of which are primary products whose prices are determined by the world market); on the contrary they have led to a decline in the production of certain products in consequence of bottlenecks created through shortages in the supply of imported inputs. At the same time remittances from immigrants to neighbouring Arab countries failed to show a positive impact on the balance of payments. With the exception of a small portion which the initiation of the preferential exchange rate and the right of immigrants to deposit hard currency in Sudanese banks has redirected toward local investment, the bulk of remittances are channelled either through the sending of luxury goods back to the country to sustain dependents' standards of living or through the widespread smuggling trade. Such patterns only serve to increase local
demand for imported goods and services, thus creating further inflationary pressures, not to speak of their effects on exaggerating income inequalities and encouraging conspicuous consumption.

5. The measures recommended by the IMF and taken up by the regime to dismantle public sector enterprises (which have been labelled as inefficient) and to strengthen capitalist development in the large agricultural schemes (Gezira, Managil, Rahad) go beyond the limits of protecting the economy against inevitable bankruptcy. Policies being put forward — the substance of which is little different from that met in previous years by the staunch resistance of the working class and peasant movements — are unlikely to achieve intended results. For the vents for broadening the production base of the economy are not in fact blocked by the so-called inefficiency of the public sector. Quite the opposite, the development of agricultural and indeed of the whole economy is rather blocked by the activities of the parasitic bourgeoisie, the outdated and archaic relations existing in the traditional sector, the increasingly uneven distribution of wealth, the huge waste of the economic surplus by the regime, the harmful expansion of capitalist mechanised agriculture, the accelerating disparities among the regions and the lack of restrictions on the activities of MNC’s.

6. The IMF’s universal prescription of ‘more loans to improve the export capacity of the economy’ is certainly not the right cure for the Sudan. The debt service obligations of the country stood at $381m in 1980 (equivalent to over 70 per cent of export earnings for this year). By 1983 when the Sudan is expected to start paying arrears, the debt service obligation will stand at $772m, reaching $88m in 1984 and £855m in 1985. Even if it were assumed, against all other real indicators of growth rates for the economy, that an annual growth rate of exports of 4 per cent could be reached, the debt service burden, including payment of arrears, would amount to 51 per cent of export earnings by 1984. This implies a dilemma far beyond the wisdom of the IMF PPP theory.

A Sudanese Economist

THE DEFENCE STATEMENT OF EL TIGANI EL TAYYIB BABIKIR BEFORE THE SUDAN MILITARY COURT, 15 JULY 1982

El Tigani El Tayyib Babikir was one of the founders of the Communist Party of Sudan (CPS) in 1946 and among the leaders of the Anti-Colonialist Front (a broad leftist body that played a major role in the anti-colonial struggle of the early 1950s). He was the CPS representative on the editorial board of the Prague-based quarterly Peace and Socialism in the 1960s and in Sudan was editor of the CPS daily paper, Al Midan. Tigani was one of the organisers of CPS under-cover activities against the Nimeiri regime, from 1971 until his arrest in November, 1980. He languished in solitary confinement in the State Security complex for two years without trial. In the summer of 1982 he was brought before a military court where, in his defence, he made a long statement condemning the regime, excerpts of
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which follow. The court sentenced him to 10 years imprisonment and at present he remains in the infamous Kober prison.

Mr President, and honourable members of the court! With this trial, once again I join the long queue of patriots who, since colonial times, have been persecuted for their political beliefs in accord with fascist laws. Fundamental human rights, e.g. the right to free expression, are transformed into punishable offences. Yet, no such harassment will deter our people from their struggle against repressive law. In fact, our fight for independence and our struggle against the colonialist's anti-democratic legislation were one and the same coin. The post-independence struggle for socio-economic change has been inseparably wed to the unceasing fight for democracy. Undoubtedly, the modern history of our people's political and social movement is knit together by one long thread of struggle for democratic rights and civil liberties. The most colossal success in this respect was the October uprising* which demonstrated the resolve of our people in pursuit of democracy.

The present regime is intent on obliterating this resolve. They are institutionalising their endeavour through one man rule, the one-party system, the famous State Security Law, the foiled trade union laws, the state controlled media and various other methods of repression. Paramount among the means of oppression are the State Security Law and the notorious State Security Organisation (SSO). These are the regime's vehicles for inflicting unprecedented maltreatment of citizens; they infringe on one's right to personal freedom, confiscate his right to a livelihood, arrest him indefinitely without trial and subject him to physical torture. Peaceful demonstrations are fired upon with live ammunition, with intent to kill. The citizen is denied his basic legal rights. No political detainee can be released on parole and, even before investigation starts with him, he is treated as if he were convicted. Physical and psychological torture are invariably used to squeeze information and confessions out of detainees.

Moreover, as evidenced by my case, the political detainee is often the object of a media campaign full of lies and slander, without giving him a chance to defend himself. Following my arrest, the regime-controlled newspapers published a series of statements by SSO officials accusing me and the Communist Party of being agents for 'foreign circles'. On the 20th of August (1981) El Sahafa published an interview with the chief of the SSO, quoted from an Egyptian paper, in which he reiterated the regime's allegation that 'the communists have always been receiving their instructions from abroad'. As a patriot who has uncompromisingly dedicated his entire life to his country and people, I find these allegations slanderous, cheap and cowardly. These lies, however, failed to materialise among the accusations with which the prosecution panel have faced me inside this court. Obviously, they have failed to find a single shred of evidence in the hundreds of CP documents presented before the court.

Any judgment of the CP would not fail to perceive its positive role in the history of Sudanese nationalism. The CP is in fact the only party in this

*The civilian coup of October 1964 which deposed the military dictatorship of General Abboud.
country completely innocent of foreign allegiance. Rather than tutelage, it is friendship that binds the CP to the progressive movements the world over. It has global relations built on parity, mutual respect, solidarity and joint struggle for the joint noble goals.

The aforementioned propagandistic paper describes the CP as 'the outlawed party'. Isn't this tautology clear evidence for the absence of democracy? Parties are banned in favour of the one-party system decreed by the regime's constitution. The state party, the Socialist Union (SU), is claimed to be an alliance of the working people — a format which unifies the people in place of party rivalries. In reality, these are self-defeating arguments, for the SU is by no means a popular alliance. It is just another class-oriented party, speaking for the interests of the state and commercial bourgeoisie. It is a deformed institution at the beck and call of its boss, the head of state. The recent liquidation of its leading bodies and the appointment of a new central committee by presidential decrees are further evidence of its precarious and rickety nature.

Independent of the SU, the Sudanese people actually proceed to conduct political activities of which the SU is never capable, notwithstanding its facilities. Recent proofs of this are the all-out railway strike, the Dar Fur uprising and the nation-wide uprisings of December 1981-January 1982.

There are, however, some parties which are allowed some degree of open political activity. The repressive laws and machinery of the regime deliberately turn a deaf ear to those activities. These are mainly the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Republicans. The head of the regime has declared in the meeting of the Central Committee of the SU of 22 June 1982 that political parties have also reappeared in the Southern Region. Add to this the fact that the leaders of some other rightist parties actually move about with relative ease thanks to the matrix of economic and social relations that bind them to the state commercial bourgeoisie in power. The regime, to all intents and purposes, is fully aware of the activities of the Muslim Brothers. These parties are being tricked into coming to the surface to be contained, manipulated and eventually crushed.

Obviously, the only object of strict illegality is the CP. No wonder it is singled out in this way, for it is radically different from the other parties. It is the only party that never entertained compromise with the present dictatorship. Experience has shown that the attitude of any regime towards the CP is an indication of its attitude towards democracy. It is axiomatic that the victory achieved in October 1964 by our people was not merely in deposing a military dictatorship but in restoring democratic rights.

Another allegation levelled at the CP and myself is 'the attempt to sabotage national unity'. The evidence produced by the prosecution is the equation 'the CP calls for power to be put in the hands of the working class, therefore the CP is instigating class antagonisms'.

How simplistic and naive! The prosecution counsel speaks for a regime that identifies itself with the interests of a minority. It has usurped power through the use of force, and it subjugates the absolute majority of our people by means of repression. It reaps the toil of the masses and plunders
the resources of the country, heeding nothing but their narrow interests and
those of their imperialist masters.

It is in fact true the CP's long term strategy pertains to the slogan of power
to the working class. But it is far from true that what would ensue in the
circumstance would be class antagonism. If we ever achieve such a success,
power will lie with the broadest sector of the masses — the majority rather
than the minority. Government would be not by repression or subjugation,
but by the willful consent of the absolute majority of our people. Only then
can we enjoy real national harmony and unity. The working class is not
exploitative and it is only the national unity built around the interests of the
workers that can transcend the parochialism, chauvinism, and religious
strife that bisect our society.

It is worth mentioning that the working class movement has always been
conscious of the vital need for unity. Experience has shown that unifying
the ranks of the workers often results in colossal successes and
achievements. That is why the adversaries of the working class always try
untiringly to sow divisions within its ranks. It is also common knowledge
that the working class cannot ultimately eradicate capitalist exploitation
without aligning itself to the broad masses. Unity is vital for the working
class in its struggle for the twofold goal of securing the interests of the
workers and the overall interests of the nation.

The modern history of this country is illuminating about the working class's
quest for unity. The workers have always come to the assistance of the
peasants, the students etc. in their struggle. The massive solidarity on the
part of the trade union movement with the police force strike of 1951 bears
testimony to the positive attitudes of the working class. The workers' movement was even in alliance with the national commercial bourgeoisie
during the struggle for economic and political independence.

The CP identifies itself with the ideology of the working class. That is why
the CP is an incarnation of national unity, as it spreads all over the country,
cutting across tribalism, sectarianism, regionalism and religious divisions.
The programme of the CP suggests solutions for the problems of the whole
Sudan, by no means favouring one sect or region or social grouping to the
others. It is the only party in Sudan whose leaders are composed of workers,
women, Southerners and intellectuals who come from different religions,
tribal backgrounds and all the regions of the country. They have been
democratically elected, not appointed by a presidential decree or an
ordinance from the leader of a sect. The merits that qualify them for
leadership are their dedication to the struggle and their ideological and
moral integrity.

Moreover, the CP is well known for its broadminded and undogmatic
approach. We played active roles in all the nationalist and anti-colonial
fronts, even those that included bourgeois parties. We were a party to all
political groupings, co-ordinating efforts or fronts that endeavoured to
unify the masses, starting from the Front for the Struggle Against the
Legislative Assembly in 1948 until today.

One of the most outstanding achievements of the CP in the field of national
unity is its theorising for and handling of the issue of Southern Sudan. It
was the first party to adopt the 'special status' concept, as early as the 1953 pre-independence elections, in recognition of the objective differences between the two parts of the country. During the 1955 mutiny, the CP was the only party that did not succumb to the emotions of revenge and call for bloody reprisals. We provided a cool and objective analysis of the situation, calling upon the government and the (Northern) army to exercise self-control. We demanded the rescinding of the death sentences issued against the leaders of the mutiny and we appealed for magnanimous treatment of the convicts. In its Third Conference, which convened six months after the mutiny, the CP came forward with the slogan 'regional self-autonomy for the South'. That was an utterly unprecedented achievement in the history of Sudanese politics.

The CP was unmatched in issuing a daily English paper called _Advance_, addressed to the Southern readers, since 1958. It has also issued a series of publications in English tackling the problem of Southern Sudan, always calling upon our Southern brethren to align themselves to the Northern movements of the working class and democratic forces in a unified struggle for a national democratic Sudan.

The CP's efforts culminated in the Declaration of 9 June 1969, which was extracted from the CP's manifesto. The Declaration was broadcast by the Minister of Southern Affairs, the late Comrade Joseph Garang (who was a member of the CP's Politbureau until he was executed by Nimeiri during the counter coup of 22 July 1971). The CP's ideas on the problem of Southern Sudan were embodied in the Declaration, as evidenced by this quotation:

_We deem it of paramount importance that a democratic and socialist movement should be allowed to develop in the South as a prerequisite for the realisation of our aspirations of progress both in the North and the South. Only when the progressive movement matures in the South can we be assured of a lasting application of the principle of Self-Autonomy, and that is the most powerful antidote to the colonialist intrigues currently going on in the South._

The regime started in 1969 by adopting the CP's programme for the South. No sooner had they staged their counter coup of 1971 than they reneged on everything they declared on 9 June 1969. That accounts for the series of crises ravaging the South at the moment. The realities of the situation in the Sudan look like the following:

1. National unity is jeopardised primarily by the present anti-democratic policies of the regime. National unity cannot thrive except in democracy, and the free will of the Southern people cannot be realised except in a democratic atmosphere.

2. Because the regime follows a capitalist path, the problem of the South as a region that needs special care is sustained. Capitalists are motivated by nothing except quick profit. The traditional sector is henceforth subjected to ruthless plunder on the part of the imperialists and Arab finance capital in collaboration with the local compradors. Regions such as the South suffer from the neglect of long-term projects in favour of short term investments that bring fast gains for the investors. Our resources have waned, in the process and the already existing social and economic structures have been obliterated. Consequently, development continues to
be uneven between the various regions of Sudan, and the Southern situation in particular has gone from bad to worse. Likewise, the capitalist's foul intervention has created other problems along the 'Savanna Zone',* where the indigenous nomadic tribes have been frustrated by the phenomenal spread of mechanised plantations owned by urban compradors and Arab princes. The regime has drawn a veil of secrecy upon the news of the tribal wars going on currently in the 'Savanna Zone'.

The regime's propaganda machinery explains all these problems away in terms of administrative complications. They preach decentralisation as the remedy. As a matter of fact, the regime is capitalising on the under-development of such regions as the South to consolidate its dictatorial grip. It is the same old tactic of divide and rule; that is why they have done little to reconcile the warring tribes along the 'Savanna Zone'. And from that, not from the working class nor the CP, the real menace to national unity is posed.

Mr President and members of the court. Another accusation I and the CP are facing is 'opposition to the government'. According to the prosecution, this is against the law. The right to oppose, like the right to support any particular regime, should have been an automatic and irrevocable right of all citizens. Confiscating it runs counter to human nature.

The experience of our people shows that a serious and deep-rooted opposition will be impossible to eradicate by force. The objective causes of such an opposition are related to the distinctions between the various social forces in the society. Contradictions are natural and inevitable in a multi-class society. Add to that the ethnic, cultural and religious divisions within our own society. What a great pity the Sudanese people have always been denied the opportunity to air those differences in a healthy democratic atmosphere!

Nor is the present regime the first to be opposed. Since the first days of independence the bourgeois parties have been involved in conflicts and squabbles. Simultaneously, consciousness grew of another contradiction — that between all bourgeois parties and the classes they represent on the one hand, and the masses of workers, peasants and revolutionary intelligentsia, on the other. The former tried to perpetuate the colonial political and economic structures, while the latter aspired to translate independence into better living conditions for the masses. The progressive camp wanted to participate in the building of a new Sudan by means of a national democratic revolution that paves the way for socialism.

In the aftermath of the October uprising, two major programmes came to the surface, one adopted by the national/democratic forces and the other propagated by the forces of capitalist development. The first called for a democratic constitution and the liberation of the economy from the dominance of foreign capital pursuing following a national/democratic path of development and an anti-imperialist foreign policy. The latter, that of the reactionary bloc, called for a presidential republic and the

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*This is the vast area north of the Southern region that runs across central Sudan from East to West. Enormous plantations have been appropriated in it by oil-rich Sheikhs to the detriment of the local population.
curtailment of democratic rights as a precondition for imposing the capitalist path of development.

When the present 'May' regime first came to power it adopted the programme of the national democratic forces. However, it did not take the leadership long to renounce it in a dramatic reversal that antagonised the progressive forces who had found the regime's programme favourable. The differences with those forces grew when the regime started to confiscate freedoms. By July 1971, the political turbulence reached a crescendo when the national democratic forces within the army staged a coup that lasted for three days. Their defeat at the hands of the present regime marked the beginning of a reign of terror. The leaders of the July movement were summarily court martialed and three of the leaders of the CP were executed. Hundreds of communists and democrats were detained and dismissed from their jobs.

The counter revolution unleashed in the wake of July 1971 laid the foundations for the capitalist path, thereby achieving the most important goal in the rightist programme. Total lack of democracy descended on our country. The trade unions were transformed into puppets and all parties and organisations were completely banned.

Mr President and members of the court. Eleven years have elapsed since this regime came to power. On the economic level we still export the same crops, among which cotton is still predominant. We import the same manufactured goods. If there is change, it is for the worse. The regime has encouraged the influx of foreign monopoly capital, namely from the Arab countries, the multinationals, and neo-colonialist institutions. The country is drained of foreign exchange while indebtedness to the IMF and foreign commercial banks has exceeded $5 billion. The loans were actually squandered on ill-conceived projects, on augmenting the bureaucracy of the SSO and the SU and on luxurious and ostentatious installations.

Bad planning, impetuosity and inefficiency are rampant throughout the economic sectors. Productivity has deteriorated to the lowest ebb in our modern history. The downward spiral in the balance of payments and the chronic deficits in the budgets have been worsened rather than remedied by the accelerating taxes, loans from local and foreign banks and finance from abroad. In short, the country's economy is in shambles. The five-year plan has been abolished. The trend is just to encourage foreign investment, irrespective of the fields which the foreign investors choose for their activities. Curbing of government expenditure has resulted in mass unemployment, and of course no alternative employment has ever been considered. Thousands of people are left with no alternative but to emigrate. The government has embarked on a plan of weakening the public sector. Their objective is its ultimate disintegration, with a view to transferring the profitable projects to the private sector. Our people bear the brunt of these policies by having to cope with the ever rising direct and indirect taxes. They suffer the consequences of the inflation in the form of ever soaring prices and dwindling incomes.

Economic activity is in the hands of neo-colonialism and the parasitic capitalism. A plethora of non-ethical channels for quick wealth have been
opened up by the regime for a close-knit elite. Our society is beset by corruption, graft and malpractice of all types. The atmosphere is rampant with the moral disintegration and the scandalous behaviour of ministers and government officials. The majority of our people, on the other hand, live from hand to mouth, even worse. They are deprived of facilities in the fields of housing, sanitation and education. They live in horrible conditions of dire poverty and epidemics.

The regime's foreign policy is one of relinquishing the country's independence and jeopardising its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The regime has aligned itself to Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the US. I would like to make three points in this respect.

1. The regime has been producing quixotic noises about an impending Soviet invasion through neighbouring countries. Everybody knows that the Soviet Union has no geopolitical stakes in our country and it has always been the noble friend of our people and of all the Arab peoples. The imagined invasion is merely the regime's pretext for backing away from non-alignment and falling onto the lap of American imperialism. The head of the regime has shamelessly declared that his regime is a pawn of the American led alliance directed against the peoples of the region. The US has now been offered naval, air and other facilities in the Sudan, to be used by the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) to subjugate the Arab and African peoples and to protect American interests.

2. The regime has signed a military pact with Egypt according to which any internal turmoil in either of the two countries is tantamount to foreign invasion. Under the circumstance the other signatory should come in with instantaneous assistance, even if not asked to do so. The regime has recently signed a 'treaty of economic and political integration' with Egypt. It is to be viewed in the light of the American hegemony over both Sudan and Egypt. Within this context, joint military manoeuvres were recently conducted on Sudanese soil by American, Egyptian and Sudanese troops (Operation Bright Star).

3. The regime has always been outspoken in its support of the Camp David Accord. It is now more forthcoming than ever; following the fierce Zionist/imperialist attack on the Palestinian and Arab people, the regime is no longer shy of fully assuming it's role as an American puppet.

Our independence was priced at heroic sacrifices, and our people have never ceased defending it. They defeated all the post-independence American attempts to turn Sudan into a client state, c.f. the Middle East Alliance, the Eisenhower Plan, the American Aid Project and the Islamic Pact. Yet, the regime deliberately oblivious of this history, has transformed our country into a tunnel through which military aid is syphoned to other puppets in the area e.g. Mobutu of Zaire, the French-backed regime of Central Africa and Hussein Habre of Chad. Our country is involved in aggressive activities against Libya, Ethiopia and Southern Yemen. Our role as supporters of the Arab and African Liberation movements has been reversed. The regime flagrantly violates the principles of non-alignment.

Mr President and members of the court. I was asked in a previous session about the CP's position concerning the so-called 'national reconciliation'.
The CP has issued a number of statements on the issue of reconciliation. As you know, the campaign for the so-called ‘national reconciliation’ was a consequence of one of the regime’s political crises. It was a fake slogan designed for local consumption. If they were in any way genuine the regime should have accompanied their offer with the restoration of democracy. They failed to do that.

The CP was not intransigent as regards the dialogue with the regime. We were actually involved in preliminary talks with some of the regime’s leading figures. We asked them a vital question to which we have hitherto received no answer. What would happen to our negotiating team if they emerged from under-cover, took part in the negotiations and failed to arrive at an agreement with the regime?

The reconciliation was a thinly veiled attempt by the regime to mark time and distract people’s attention from their economic dilemma. Their promises to rescind the anti-democratic laws were just a camouflage for further repression. Five years after the reconciliation was launched, the country is still under emergency laws. At this moment 250 political detainees are languishing in the abodes of Kober, Port Sudan and Medani. Some of them have been in detention for 3-7 years, without trial. Political prisoners are still tortured, and only two weeks ago one of them was physically tortured in my hearing.

Mr President and members of the court. Our country is in the crux of a crisis. We appeal to all the patriots of Sudan to rally round two slogans, if we are to salvage our country:

1. The abolition of all fascist laws and the release of political detainees.
2. The recovery of our identity and national sovereignty by condemning the Camp David Accord and withdrawal from all treaties and pacts with the US and Egypt.

Achieving these two objectives will pave the way for building the Sudan of the future. We can then proceed to achieve the following strategies:

1. The erection of a democratic society on the firm foundations of a just and democratic constitution that safeguards civil liberties and basic rights. It should guarantee the independence of the judiciary and restore the rule of law. Legislative authority should rest with a democratically elected parliament to which the executive authority should be answerable. The head of the state should have limited mandatory powers vis-à-vis the sovereign’s ceremonial activities.

2. We should once again revert to our positive role among the Arab and African progressive movements. We should follow an independent foreign policy built on vehement opposition to neo-colonialism, on the one hand, and cordiality with the socialist and non-aligned countries on the other.

3. We must release our economy from the fetters of foreign monopolies. We should begin by an urgent action programme to salvage the services’ sector and parastatal corporations. Another urgent priority is a new fiscal policy and a development programme that should aspire to uplift the sufferings of the masses. The wage structure should be revised so that the
highest salary should by no means exceed tenfold the lowest. The basic commodities should be made available at stable and affordable prices.

Simultaneously, we should embark on a long term development plan whose primary objective is redressing the uneven development between the various regions. Closely connected to this is the gradual modernisation of the traditional sector.

Mr President and members of the court. This is not my first time to be tried for my political convictions. I have been involved in our people’s struggle since my very early days. I have not been stimulated by any individualistic tendency to make the above statements. I find no gratification except in welding myself to the whole which is the Sudanese revolutionary forces and in claiming no gratuity for that. I realise myself only through identification with the values and aspirations of my people’s struggle. I identify myself with the heroic history of our people, and I am a product of that history.

That is why this trial is not intended for me alone. It is a desperate attempt on the part of the despot May regime to uproot the movement and obliterate the history which I represent. This will prove an intractable mirage.

INSTANT JUSTICE AND FLOGGING TO SECURE THE PEACE
Notes on the Latest Legislation

The Protection of Public Tranquility Act 1982 was enacted, and came into effect upon signature by the President of the Republic on 28 December 1982. It confers on the police additional powers to arrest, detain, try and punish persons found in breach of the peace under the 1974 Sudan Penal Code.

The Act provides for the right of the President of the Republic or the Regional Governors to extend the application of its provisions to combating offences specified under Chapter 12 of the 1974 Penal Code. Powers of arrest without a warrant and detention for up to 72 hours have been conferred on the police.

For the purpose of carrying out their duties under the Act the police may recruit the direct assistance of (a) a force of volunteers, (b) any other regular force, (c) any citizen who is present or (d) the army. Anyone whose assistance is sought by the police shall automatically have the powers conferred on a policeman by the laws in force.

Offences punishable under sections 117, 125 and 127 of the 1974 Penal Code (dealing with breach of the peace) are triable on the spot by the chief of the regular force sent to keep the peace or by any officer of the force authorised by him. By implication, the defendant could be deprived of legal representation and the prosecutor and the judge could be one and the same person.
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The penalties provided by the Act are as follows:

1. In addition to any punishment provided under Chapter 12 of the 1974 Penal Code, culprits are subject to (a) flogging by whip — not less than 15 nor more than 25 lashes in any individual case, or (b) a fine of not more than LS100 or a maximum of 50 lashes in lieu of fine.

2. Persons charged with any of the offences under section 118, 119, 121, 122, 126 and 127(a) of the Penal Code (offences against public peace), which were previously triable by ordinary criminal courts, shall be tried before state security courts or any other special court to be constituted by the order of the President of the Republic or the Regional Governor in consultation with the Chancellor or President of the Regional Court of Appeal, respectively. A person convicted by any of these courts, irrespective of the offence of which he or she is convicted, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years, or a fine, or by both.

A Legal Correspondent

STATEMENT OF JUDGES OF SUDAN'S PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT COURTS IN RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT NIMIERI'S DISMISSAL OF 44 JUDGES. ISSUED 11 JUNE 1983, KHARTOUM.

Sudan's deepening crisis is reflected on many fronts. In early June 1983, a presidential decree was issued ordering the dismissal of 44 judges on grounds of corruption and other matters. Given that this time they were themselves the target of the apparently arbitrary exercise of power, the judiciary as a whole were moved to offer their resignations. With the courts out of action, the judiciary gave the following explanation for their collective action, thereby adding to criticism issuing from elsewhere in Sudanese society an indictment of the regime from a relatively privileged group. In this instance as in others, the President remained unmoved. He accepted their resignations and ordered that the ensuing vacancies be filled by suitable individuals with experience or otherwise.

Allah says in verse no.134 of Surat An-Nisa in the Quran, 'O ye who have believed, be furnishers of justice, witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourselves, or your parents and relatives, whether (the person) be rich or poor — Allah is the most concerned with both; so do not follow desire so as to waver; if you swerve (towards one) or turn from (another), verily, Allah of what ye do is well-aware.'

Allow us, Sir, to hereby address you as a follow-up to our previous letter dated the 5 June 1983, to which we received no answer. It is incumbent on us to clarify our position on an important issue concerning us as individuals and pertaining to one of the three organs of-power — the judiciary. As you know, justice is the foundation of society, the cement of collective societal co-existence and the safety net for stability and progress. Societies have known judiciary discipline since olden times in all sorts of countries, cultures and civilisations. The independence of the judiciary has been guaranteed by all kinds of laws, legislative systems, conventions and
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constitutions of our contemporary world; it has become a fundamental principle meticulously guarded by judges. There is no escaping responsibility for any judge who violates this principle.

At the recent inauguration of El Fasher Appeal Court, you spoke of corruption among the judiciary. Thanks to the media, those accusations have come to be the talk of people all over the country and, in the process, judges as well as the whole judicial system have suffered severe defamation. We strongly reject and condemn these accusations as baseless slander.

The court judges of the Sudan have always undertaken their duties under difficult and complex circumstances with utmost efficiency and integrity. They have maintained a high standard of professionalism, honesty and respect for ethical considerations.

We, the judges of province and district courts, have been doing our best, at the same time, to explain the problems facing the judiciary and to point out the difficult conditions under which judges conduct their duties. We have acknowledged the shortcomings and suggested solutions in a one-way correspondence to the judiciary headquarters which has deliberately turned a deaf ear to our pleas and demands.

One of our demands has been for the dismissal of every judge who has been proved guilty of corruption, partiality or inefficiency, through the appropriate legal procedures. This principle is upheld by the law and the constitution. We, therefore, absolutely refuse to accept that a judge can be summarily dismissed by virtue of a presidential decree, without a specific accusation being brought and without being given an opportunity to defend himself. Why should the judges be denied the basic rights stipulated in the constitution and, specifically, the Judiciary Act which outlines the disciplinary procedures for judges?

The judges who have been dismissed are known for their honesty and high calibre. Some of them have been our representatives, negotiating on our behalf with the headquarters. Others among those dismissed are judges who refused to succumb except to the rule of law despite pressure having been brought to bear against them.

These dismissals constitute an act of violation of the independence of the judiciary. Judges are subjected to arbitrary and unconstitutional interference with their lives and their work. This is a constitutional crisis of the first magnitude.

Mr President, in our previous letter, we called for the removal of the incumbent Chief Justice. Experience has affirmed the justness of this demand. Instead of briefing you with fact, he apparently provides you with the kind of counsel that has precipitated the present crisis. The Chief Justice needs to be a career judge who has battled with our kind of work in practice and not in mere theory. He should be a man who has experienced what we have experienced; a man whose mind and heart are open to the members of the judiciary and who can be entrusted with their professional and personal problems; a man who engenders an atmosphere of co-operation and good will, not one of back-biting and hitting under the belt. For this sensitive office, we want a man with an impeccable record of service; a man who is
not obsessed with trivia and who does not give in to unwarranted pressure. We want a man worthy of our appreciation and respect.

After having received no reply to our previous communication, we hereby submit our collective resignation. Our consciences will not allow us to stay in office for even one more day given the violation of the independence of the judiciary through the campaign of slander and the dismissals of our colleagues without due process of law.

As we submit this resignation, we insist on the following three demands as the only way out of the crisis:

1. The reinstating of the judges dismissed according to the presidential decree of 4 June 1983, giving them the guarantee that their record of service will not in any way be affected by this incident. Reassurance should be given that no judge will in future be dismissed except in accordance with the procedures and ruling of the law.

2. The replacing of the present Chief Justice by an able and qualified judge.

3. Consolidating the principle of the independence of the judiciary by revising the Supreme Judiciary Council Act of 1976 so that no loophole is left whereby any encroachment is possible on the independence of the judiciary.

4. Finally, this is our position, and we are confident that truth and justice will triumph.

In Sudan problems of establishing national unity have been particularly acute; with a considerable proportion of the post-independence period spent in civil war between the North — which is predominantly Arab and Islam — and the South. Cultural differences have assumed political salience because — as in many other instances — they have coincided with differing economic experience. From the early colonial period the South was differently treated from the North, being designated as a closed area. If ostensibly to ‘protect’ the indigenous population from external intrusion, this also served to retard its developmental progress relative to that of the North. Over time, regional disadvantage was to be coupled with political under-representation and the stage set for cleavage which has, at times, erupted into violent conflict. In the last few years, murmurings of discontent and threatened mutiny have again occurred. And the peoples of Sudan have had to confront more emphatically the issue which has never been far from the top of the list of national priorities: the very fact of nationhood itself and the integration of peoples in such a way that all regions gain an equitable share in development.

Below are three items dealing with the question of the South. The first is drawn from an address given by Joseph Garang in 1970. A prominent member of the Sudan Communist Party, Garang was appointed Minister of Southern Affairs following the establishment of the Leftist regime of 1969 and was instrumental in the formulation of the 9th of June (1969) Declaration which supported the need for regional autonomy in the South. His speech,
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part of which is reproduced below, treats the South within the broader context of the national question and has an enduring theoretical relevance not just for Sudan but for the African continent as a whole. Garang was executed in 1971 along with many other members of the CPS when the regime took a right turn. The second item, a statement of the Student Union of Southern Sudanese in the UK and Ireland addressed to the President of Sudan and released in April 1983, makes an embittered plea that the problem of the South be effectively confronted by the government. While assessing the situation as grounded in differential rates of development, the view put forward remains, by its very nature, couched in the language of regionalism rather than that of solidarity among all those disadvantaged under the current regime. Finally, the third item is a general review of the problem of the South, tracing its historical background, examining the aftermath of the Addis Accord of 1972 which brought an end to the civil war, and evaluating prospects for the future. The piece refers us to the continuity of principles embodied in the position of the Left — and particularly of the CPS — on the South over the years. (The Court Statement of El Tigani El Tayyib Babikir, elsewhere in this issue, gives further details concerning this point). Written by a Sudanese Leftist, the account ultimately affirms that the problem of the South can be solved only in the context of a programme giving full rights of democratic participation to the whole of the population and priority to the development of those areas ‘left behind’.

ON ECONOMICS AND REGIONAL AUTONOMY

Excerpts from an address by Joseph U. Garang, the then Minister of State for Southern Affairs of the Sudan Government, in 1970 and originally printed as No.6 of the series Revolution in Action, by the Public Relations Bureau, Ministry for Southern Affairs.

For years many politicians have raved, cried, shouted and threatened about inequalities between North and South. But they never understood that these inequalities cannot be overcome except by the economic and social development of the Southern Provinces and the lifting of the Southern masses out of centuries old backwardness and superstition. These leaders drew up plans which would satisfy the interests of the small intellectual elite but not once did they demand social change.

Thanks to the untiring efforts of the progressive forces and the May Revolution the problem of social change in the Southern Provinces has now
been placed on the agenda and is capturing the increased attention of the people.

It is said in the World press and elsewhere that the core of the Southern Problem is slave trade or that it is religious strife between Christianity and Islam. But slave trade came to an end more than 70 years ago. How can it be the cause of a movement that began recently? As for religion any attempt to introduce it into politics has always met with decisive opposition by both the Northern and Southern masses. The Southern problem is a manifestation of the national question in the conditions of transition through which Africa is now passing, and where questions of social change and the new democracy which must necessarily accompany it are on the agenda of the day. You will remember that the national question first arose in Western Europe in the period roughly beginning with the French Revolution in 1789 and ending in 1871 with the Franco-Prussian war and German unification. Rising capitalism and therefore the need of extensive commodity production required, as against feudal particularism, politically united territories or states of people speaking the same language.

The tendency of every national movement was the establishment of a national state. Hence the appearance of French, German, Italian and other national states in Western Europe. You will also remember that while national states appeared in the West, feudal absolutism, for various historical reasons, had established large multi-national states in the East such as the Russian and Austrian empires in which one or more privileged nations dominated and oppressed the others. But capitalism also began to develop in Eastern Europe including among the oppressed nations. In the period 1905 to 1919 these nations — such as the Poles, Ukranians, Serbs, Croats, Czechs, Armenians, Georgians etc., also raised the slogan of self-determination and in time set up national states, independently or in federation with others. Relying on this European experience, some of our friends in the South among the intelligensia have raised the slogan of self-determination claiming that since the North is of Arab stock the Southern negroids have the right to an independent state or federation. Northern nationalists have answered from positions of more sentimentalism about the ‘unity of the fatherland’, resisting the view of those ‘half-educated Southern imperialist stooges, etc.’ The approach of both sides is unscientific and wide off the mark. To arrive at the correct approach it is necessary to proceed from a study of our concrete conditions in Africa and in the Sudan in particular.

Certain features of African states must be observed, namely: First, at the time of the European scramble for Africa in the second half of the last century most African peoples lived in conditions of natural economy which could not give rise to a political system higher than tribalism. They have not developed into nationalities because of their primitive economic conditions which do not provide for a social division of labour and development of the language and culture. In such pre-capitalist conditions a national movement proper cannot arise.

Second, the boundaries of most African states are artificial in the sense that they do not represent the aspirations of some homogeneous cultural or
linguistic group to achieve statehood as was the case in Europe. They were drawn up by colonialists on the basis of mere administrative convenience and therefore the population of these states is heterogeneous, being composed of national groupings at various stages of development.

Thirdly, within these territories economic development has been uneven. The areas where colonialism concentrated its exploitation became more developed than others and the national grouping or groups in the selected areas achieved more progress over their neighbours and developed cities, trade, a working class, an intelligentsia and national capital. We may cite the case of Southern Ghana, Southern Nigeria, Buganda, the Northern Sudan, Southern Chad, etc.

Fourthly, while the first period of capitalist development was marked by national particularism and the growth of national states, our era is marked by the international unity of capital and its expansion into imperialism, exploiting and oppressing all and every class within the colonies.

Consequently, the national movement arose not as a movement for the establishment of a national state but as an anti-colonial movement embracing all or most national groupings in varying degrees of participation. The slogan of self-determination was raised not in the interests of a given national grouping but in the interests of all. Alongside purely political slogans, the masses also raised slogans of fundamental social change in the direction of socialism. Naturally the movement for independence was led by the national groupings in the more advanced areas of the colony and, within them, by intellectuals representing the interests of national capital or the petty-bourgeois in town and country. Having thrown out the colonial power it was they who got the benefit of independence in the form of state power, high posts in the state, government contracts, etc.

Because of its class composition and orientation, the new leadership invariably fails to solve the problems of social change, particularly the problem of uneven development of the country. On the contrary they take the road of capitalist development and consequently the gap between the more developed areas and the backward areas continually widens. Experiments with liberal democracy lead to corrupt institutions not expressing the interest of the people. A bitter struggle ensues between the people and the ruling strata. To the people of the national groupings or groupings from whom the rulers come the problem appears in its true light as a class struggle. But to the people of the national groupings in the backward areas, who are excluded from power, the problem appears as one of struggle between their people on the one hand and the whole national grouping in power on the other.

The struggle is led by the intellectual petty-bourgeoisie who rally their people behind them. Naturally these petty-bourgeoisie intellectuals mistake their own aspirations for power and prestige as the interest of the masses of their national grouping. It is not surprising, therefore, that this petty bourgeois leadership does not raise the issue of economic and social development of their area nor problems of raising of the standard of living of their people. They raise only the problem of their own share in power and in the state apparatus.
Attacked on grounds of racism or national oppression the ruling classes or strata of the dominant national grouping replies with suppression and to justify this suppression appeals to the national sentiments of the masses of their grouping seeking to rally them against the complaining national grouping as 'separatists' or 'imperialist stooges'. Thus in consequence of this struggle, the real issue of social progress is lost sight of. The forces of the masses in the country are effectively divided. And the problem of social progress is substituted by the problem of rivalry between national groupings.

The position is further complicated by the intervention of neo-colonialism which seeks to exploit the position in its interest by encouraging these divisive movements. Thus Africa is presenting a new type of national struggle arising out of her peculiar economic and social conditions. In answer to this new challenge the call for self-determination is out of the question and therefore, irrelevant.

The paramount question is that of the unity of all the masses in the entire country for the purpose of liquidating the remnants of colonialism in all fields — economic, social, political and cultural — and the advance to progress and socialism. The golden test, therefore, is — Does the movement of a given people advance or retard the cause of social change? If the answer is positive then progressives should support that movement. If not they should oppose. The national question is secondary to the question of progress.

To turn to the question in hand, namely the relations between the South and what we loosely term the North. Because of her great distance from the sea, her being sealed off by swamps, her difficult jungles and woodland and the low cultural standard of her people which did not create the demand for manufactured goods, British capitalism considered the South too expensive for exploitation. It was not willing to risk huge investments for uncertain returns. Nothing was therefore done in the South by way of the exploitation of her natural resources. She was to be reserved for pressing times in the future.

The North, or to be more exact, the territories of the Arab tribes were for them more suitable for exploitation. They were nearer the sea; the Niles provided cheap transport for bringing in goods and taking out raw materials; the cultural standard of the people was higher and they would thus consume more manufactured goods; a huge plain gently sloping to one side and conveniently near the two Niles offered ideal conditions for cheap gravitational irrigation; with Egypt, the main supplier of long staple cotton making troubles which might end in the expulsion of Britain from Egypt and the loss of Egyptian cotton, the Gezira plain offered a good alternative. In the West trees bearing the best Gum Arabic in the world awaited exploitation at minimum cost. It is this combination of circumstances that encouraged British capitalism to concentrate its exploitation on the territories of the Arab nationality.

Hence railways were built, trading centres opened, schools turned out cheap office workers. In short, the North developed in a wav. Modern social
classes appeared on the scene. Within 50 years the North was far ahead of the other outlying areas.

The rest you know well. The colonial liberation movement was naturally led by the North and power fell into the hands of the Northern intellectuals representing the interests of national capital and semi-feudalism. The Northern intelligentsia occupied nearly all posts in the service. Southerners had neither national capital nor trained intelligentsia. They were left out in the cold. There followed the familiar story of incompetent and unconcerned leaders, and corrupt parliaments, which could not and did not take interest in problems of progress or the redress of the uneven development between the North and the outlying regions of the country. It is essentially these problems, problems of uneven development, that constitute the objective roots of the Southern movement.

Thus the June programme rightly emphasises problems of development of the Southern Provinces. But it has not stopped at that. It recognises the right to regional autonomy and ‘the right’ of the Southern people to ‘develop their respective cultures and traditions’. Why regional autonomy? Why this right to develop cultures and traditions? It has to be repeated that there is no real national entity in the South, and for this reason alone the principle of self-determination cannot apply. But there are national groupings in the South each inhabiting a definite territory, speaking a definite language and with its distinct customs and traditions.

What is the future of these groupings? Will they merge with the rest of the country to form one Sudanese nation? It seems obvious that the majority of Southern national groupings will disappear or merge into others if only because of their weak numerical strength. It will not be profitable for them to cling to their languages, traditions or other peculiarities. Even this will take a very long time as national sentiments die hard and people cling to the lands inhabited by their forefathers.

The merger of these peoples with others in the North to form one Sudanese nation has become impossible. More than 50 years of relative development through which the Arab tribes have passed have had their effect.

A real Sudanese Arab nationality has appeared with its distinct traditions, culture and sentiments. It has left tribalism behind in view of the clear appearance of its social classes and division of labour. Since independence it has made great strides forward. There is no probability anymore of other national groupings entering this closed ring. Thus given democratic conditions, the large Southern national groupings might develop into nations within the Sudan. At any rate it is impossible to forecast today how things will look after the next 50 years.

A revolutionary democrat would therefore do best by not closing the door before these peoples. What is needed is such democratic conditions as would enable the Southern national groupings to develop in freedom preserving or developing their languages, cultures, and traditions as they think best. It is for this reason, among others, that the revolution stands for regional autonomy and observes the right of the Southern people to develop their cultures and traditions. Another important reason is that regional autonomy will tend to unite the Southern and Northern masses. At present
the Southern petty-bourgeoisie are able to ally the Southern masses behind them by appeal to national sentiment. But with the application of the democratic solution the wind will be taken out of the sails of Southern chauvinism and the way will then be open for the broadest unity of the progressive forces in the South and the North.

The June declaration says that, 'the building of a broad socialist oriented democratic movement in the South, forming part of the revolutionary structure in the North and capable of assuming the reins of power in that region and rebuffing imperialist penetration and infiltration from the rear is an essential pre-requisite for the practical and healthy application of regional autonomy'. It is not for small reason that the joint session of the Revolutionary Council and Council of Ministers emphasised this point. A study of the past of the Southern movement shows that right-wing leaders have been dominant on the scene. At critical moments in the national struggle for independence or social progress the traditional leaders of the Southern movement have invariably stood side by side with Northern reaction against the forces of progress. Moreover, with a socialist oriented regime holding the reins of power, the danger of a secessionist movement is on the increase and will increase to a much greater extent the more this regime goes left.

A STATEMENT ADDRESSED TO PRESIDENT NIMEIRI BY THE STUDENT UNION OF SOUTHERN SUDANESE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND, 4 APRIL 1983

Deteriorating Political Situation in the Southern Sudan

We the Southern Sudanese students in the UK and Ireland have been following with concern past and current political events in the Southern Sudan. It is our legitimate right to express our deepest regrets and concern over the repressive measures used by your government. We are particularly concerned about the violations of people's and Regional government's constitutional rights as represented in the old spirit of Addis Ababa, which made yourself and the Sudanese people heroes of justice in the eyes of the whole world.

The present crises have their roots in the series of inconsistent and contradictory policies adopted by your government, calculated to underdevelop the Southern Region. Despite the painstaking patience of the Southern Sudanese people since 1972, the Region has been persistently strangled economically with the intention to submit it to whims of the ruling minority in Khartoum. The failure of all the development projects in the Southern Region, while their counterparts in the North are currently yielding results, is a proof of your discriminatory policies in your allocation of development funds. For example the Gezira Province budget is more than the total budget for the six Southern Region Provinces. In addition, your failure to project the true social and economic development situation
the Southern petty-bourgeoisie are able to ally the Southern masses behind them by appeal to national sentiment. But with the application of the democratic solution the wind will be taken out of the sails of Southern chauvinism and the way will then be open for the broadest unity of the progressive forces in the South and the North.

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in the Southern Region created the false impression to the northern Sudanese that the South is a favoured region. This gave rise to envy and hatred of the South by the North. The following projects initiated since 1972 which have either not taken off or have been abandoned completely illustrate your lack of seriousness to effect any meaningful development in the Southern Region:

1. Malut and Mongalla Sugar Projects.
3. Tonj jute and kenaf project.
5. Juba town Electricity Power Supply project.
6. Awiel and Jonglei Rice Schemes.
7. Wau fruit and vegetable canning factory.
10. Regional Medical laboratories in Juba, to mention just a few.

In addition to the above anomalous policies, the denial to the Southern Sudanese of the right of political participation in the so called central government has further alienated the Southerners from being effective participants in directing their national affairs. Cases to this point include the non representation or appointment/recruitment of Southern Sudanese into the following national institutions:

1. Central Cabinet.
2. Foreign Service.
4. Central Ministries (civil service).
7. Central Police and Prisons forces and
8. Underrepresentation of the South in the National Assembly (only 29 out of 151 members; while the South constitutes more than one third of both the total population and area of the Sudan; thus the representation of the Southern Region is less than one fifth of the total members of the National Assembly).

Further reasons for the deteriorating political situation in the South include: your attempted creation of the so called Unity Province which was intended to annex part of the South to the North; your refusal to locate the oil refinery in Bentiu (the area of production), locating it instead in Kosti for the benefit of your people; the current rapid digging of the Jonglei canal to siphon off the water from the south to the North and to Egypt for their further development without any safeguard and construction of critical infrastructures and social facilities for the people and their animals whose habitat is going to be radically changed when the canal is opened; your failure and refusal to construct a hydro-electric power scheme on any of the huge water falls located on the Nile (Bedden Falls and Fula Rapids) in the Southern Region that would have provided a cheap source of electricity for the development of industries in the South; some of the power could have been exported to the neighbouring countries and have brought in the badly needed foreign currency; your continuous disregard for the inalienable
rights of the people of Abyei democratically to determine their own destiny as stipulated in the Addis Ababa agreement; your frequent and persistent interference with the democratically elected institutions in the Southern Sudan; your unconstitutional integration of the Sudan with Egypt in disregard to the national interest and aspirations of the African people of the Southern and other parts of the Sudan; your illegal use of foreign troops to suppress the internal discontent which has resulted from your government’s unpopularity; and finally, your illegal detention incommunicado of innocent Southerners without proper charges or right to speedy trial.

The policy of concentrating economic and industrial development activities in the north, particularly in Khartoum and Gezira, has attracted the influx of Southerners and Westerners into the two areas, where they now inhabit shanty towns in these places. The shanty towns are being suspected by the authorities of being a source of a potential danger to the ruling minority. To eradicate this imaginary danger, the authorities have deported and continue to deport these poor citizens to their supposed places of origin (South and Western areas) — bearing in mind that the Sudan is represented as being a united and democratic republic. The people who are being deported are sent to areas where there are no development activities to utilise their energies on.

Having enumerated these facts, the 17 year war (1955-1972), must and should be a lesson not to be repeated. The old spirit of Addis Ababa settlement which created the present Sudan should not be lost. In that spirit, we call upon you Mr President not to undermine your greatest achievement — PEACE — that the Addis Ababa Agreement brought to the Sudan. The solution to the present crises to us does not lie in the use of military might, but in the correction of the present unjust and unfair economic and political policies and practices adopted and employed by your government to the Southern Sudanese people. We are therefore appealing for equality and justice for all Sudanese throughout the social, economic and political activities of the country.

THE SOUTHERN SUDAN: PEACE OR WAR

On the 24th of May 1983, official Khartoum resounded with rhetoric marking the 14th anniversary of the coup d’état that brought Major-General (now Field Marshal) Nimeiri to power. President Mubarak of Egypt was present to co-inaugurate the Nile Valley Parliament amidst extravagant theorising about Egyptian/Sudanese integration. The occasion, however, was marred by the Nile ferry tragedy on the same day in which about 300 Sudanese died — burnt alive, drowned or stung by deadly cobras and scorpions on the banks of Lake Nasser. And, in fact, the atmosphere was already impregnated with macabre ironies, as tales of the Bor massacre trickled northwards from the southern region. Even as President Mubarak spoke of the sacred waters of the Nile that bind the North and South, word had arrived that Egyptian military aircraft had taken part in the Bor incident. This was an unprecedented Egyptian involvement. Not even
rights of the people of Abyei democratically to determine their own destiny as stipulated in the Addis Ababa agreement; your frequent and persistent interference with the democratically elected institutions in the Southern Sudan; your unconstitutional integration of the Sudan with Egypt in disregard to the national interest and aspirations of the African people of the Southern and other parts of the Sudan; your illegal use of foreign troops to suppress the internal discontent which has resulted from your government’s unpopularity; and finally, your illegal detention incommunicado of innocent Southerners without proper charges or right to speedy trial.

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during the North/South civil war that dragged on from 1955 to the signing of the Addis Ababa Peace Accord in March 1972 had such ‘assistance’ occurred.

Turmoil and instability in southern Sudan are nothing new, but this time the insurgency has lasted so long and is of such magnitude that the shadow of civil war is hovering over Sudan and the fragile peace in real jeopardy. In February of this year the garrison composed of Southern soldiers in Bor opened fire on incoming replacements. There were no injuries, but the government was forced to back down on a policy of garrison ‘integration’ through rotation agreed upon in the Addis Accord of 1972. Two months later, in April, troops headed from Juba to crush the Bor mutineers, but were ambushed outside the town, leaving an unknown number of casualties. The town was later subjected to indiscriminate air raids that left hosts of soldiers and civilians dead. A para-military group calling itself Anya Nya II has now emerged and claims responsibility for wide-ranging sabotage and insurgency throughout the entire region. It is believed to have been responsible for the killing of 11 northern merchants in the southern town of Aweil on 18 January. Its members have also held up a group of expatriate technicians at an oil field near Bantiu and have killed soldiers in ambushes.

The recent insurgence in the South has occurred against a backdrop of two issues which have focused tension between the central government and the autonomous regional government — the High Executive Council (HEC). These are the redrawing of boundaries between the South and the North and the division of the South into three separate regions. It would appear that, for Nimieri, these issues are less important in themselves than as means for exercising dictatorial powers in an arena heretofore protected by the international status of the Addis Accord.

In late 1980, President Nimeiri directed the National Assembly to discuss the redrawing of boundaries between the North and the South. The two areas in question were firstly between Bahr el Ghazal and Kordofan and, secondly, between Upper Nile and adjacent northern provinces. The National Assembly passed legislation to validate the new map. But the regional government argued that it was unconstitutional and mass demonstrations in the South indicated the extent of popular opposition. Nimeiri was obliged to back down by appointing a committee to study the issue and make further recommendations; and there the matter was left to lie.

The second incursion on the autonomy of the South concerns the issue of further regional sub-division. Rather than referring this matter to the National Assembly, a now more experienced Nimeiri initially turned it over to the southerners for discussion. One consequence was exacerbation of internal divisions within the South. For the proposed sub-division appeared to free the small Bantu tribes of Equatoria of the prevailing hegemony of the Dinka, the largest ethnic group within the region. For the regime, preoccupation with the issue of regional sub-division served to divert attention from the more fundamental problems faced by the southerners as a whole: a virtual stand-still of development projects, lack of funds for rehabilitation of refugees and ‘returnees’ and conditions of dire poverty and
backwardness. Instead of a united focus on these, southerners have been turned toward internal squabbling over division of the region's highly limited spoils among the proposed new administrative units.

Many people argued against the proposal on the grounds that the central government was not in a financial position to keep additional regional bureaucracies and that new regional governments in the South could not sustain themselves. Nimeiri, however, put an end to discussion on 24 May 1983 by suddenly announcing the division of the South into three regions by presidential decree, by-passing both the constitution and the Addis Ababa Agreement and specifically ignoring Article 34 of the Self Government Act of 1972 which stipulated that such a change required approval by a three-quarters majority of the National Assembly and a two-thirds majority in a referendum of citizens of the Southern Region.

Roots of the Problem
The problem of the South, if not created, was certainly perpetuated under British colonialism, when the area remained a 'Closed District' for 57 years. Apart from missionary activities, the South remained utterly undeveloped until independence in 1956. Change thereafter remained minimal, and grievances flared into the long and bitter civil war.

When the Nimeiri regime first came to power on 25 May 1969, it adopted the manifesto of the communists and progressive forces; four of its ministers were CPS members, including the late Joseph Garang, who was a member of the politbureau of the CPS. Garang was appointed Minister for Southern Affairs and was entrusted with devising a programme for the solution of the 'southern problem'. Within two weeks of the advent of the 'May regime' the 9th of June Declaration was issued proclaiming the need for regional autonomy. The regime thereby declared its recognition of the historical and cultural differences between the North and the South and the fact that Sudan's unity could only be built upon these objective realities. It further affirmed the right of the southern peoples to develop their respective cultures and traditions within a united, socialist Sudan. The Declaration emphasised as essential prerequisites for the success of regional autonomy complete democracy for the masses and an urgent regional socio-economic development programme.

In the event, however, adoption of the programme of the democratic forces was only temporary. Once its position had been consolidated, the Nimeiri regime turned ruthlessly against the progressive forces, backing down on all its leftist programmes in a dramatically mercurial fashion. As a military regime of the petit bourgeoisie, the so-called 'May Revolution' was interested mainly in short-term solutions for the problems of the Sudan. They gave the June Declaration a trial of only one year, and when the problem appeared scarcely alleviated, they abandoned it; though, ironically, the 9th of June remains a public holiday and an occasion for paying lip service to the Declaration. Joseph Garang was executed in the blood bath of July 1971, together with other leaders of the CPS. Communists and leftists across Sudan were annihilated; hundreds were sent before firing squads and thousands to detention. In the process the regime also annihilated the proponents of a peaceful and socialist solution to the problem of the South.
The Addis Ababa Accord
The same regime that rid itself of leftists in 1971 embarked upon negotiations in Addis Ababa with the Anya Nya the following March. The result was the Addis Accord and the handing over of the 'southern problem' to the Anya Nya. In July 1972 the Central Committee of the CPS issued a statement on the Addis Accord welcoming the end to the bloodletting of the war, but warning that the agreement of itself would not lead to stability and development from which the southern masses might benefit. Instead, the Central Committee concluded, the Accord had laid the foundations 'for the coming to power by untrustworthy figures in the South and to the consolidation of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie who spearhead the Anya Nya movement'.

What in fact have been the consequences of this agreement? What changes have come to the lives of the southern masses?

The Aftermath
Regional autonomy for the South has in practice been little more than a window dressing exercise. The creation of a regional cabinet and parliament has in no sense meant a real devolution of power to the region. The southern problem and its solution, however, need to be seen not just in terms of actual power relations between the South and the central government, but also in a much wider context. In a sense, Nimeiri was awarded the Addis Accord under the auspices of the World Council of Churches and Emperor Haile Selassie and with the encourgement of western capitalist powers only after he had inflicted what appeared to western powers to be a devastating blow to the leftists and progressive forces in the aftermath of 22 July 1971. Praise for Nimeiri still resounds in the West. The Accord, then, was essentially a means to assist Nimeiri consolidate his power and institutionalise his anti-communist stance. In effect the Addis agreement served to create a sub-puppet, as it were, in the form of the autonomous government of Southern Sudan which would always be in the hands of this or that faction of the Anya Nya.

While superficial institutions of regional government may have been initiated following the Addis Accord, the fundamental issues of economic and social development were essentially dodged. According to the agreement, a million refugees who returned from neighbouring countries should have been rehabilitated in well-equipped farms. Nothing of the sort occurred. The funds allocated for this purpose it has been alleged, were subject to unparalleled embezzlement by high level officials.

Development projects remain at a pilot stage. The sugar projects planned for Mongalla and Melut were abandoned in the mid-1970s. So were the Tonj Kenaf and the Wau fruit canning factories and the Kapoeta cement factory. The only project that seems to be still alive is the Jonglei canal, scheduled to bypass the Sudd area north of Bor and destined — through draining most of the lakes in the area — to jeopardise the wild life and ecology of the region. Neither the South nor the North will benefit from this project; it is essentially an Egyptian priority as it will add to their share of the Nile water. And because the project is being executed with the help of massive and sophisticated machinery, it offers little employment to the locals, apart from a handful of bureaucrats.
Very little has been done towards bridging the economic gap between the North and the South or towards building channels of communication, cultural or otherwise, between the two regions. This is symbolised by the absence of all-season roads and railway lines. The only means of transport between Juba and Khartoum throughout the lengthy rainy season are the ancient Nile ferry that normally takes a month to cover the distance between the two cities, and a single Boeing 737 of Sudan Airways. The regime’s endeavours concentrate on festivities and propaganda campaigns much more, it would seem, than on development.

Following the Addis Accord, the officers corps of the Anya Nya was assimilated into the national army and enjoyed the privileges offered by a military regime. The non-commissioned officers and soldiers, however, were left out. And it is therefore not surprising perhaps that these latter are the ones responsible for the series of mutinies from the coup attempt in February 1977 in Juba to the Bor incident of February 1983. They have resisted integration into the national army because this would involve their transfer to metropolitan centres in the North where a soldier with an extended family would be hard pressed trying to live on a monthly salary of £s33. They have a strong sense of betrayal; for it was they who did the bulk of the fighting during the civil war which raged from 1955 to 1972. Yet the subsequent ‘division of spoils’ was essentially an exercise confined to the politicians. The leaders of the Anya Nya became part of the parasitic bureaucratic bourgeoisie now in power, in both the North and the South, enjoying fat salaries and privileges of high office in the SSU and the state apparatus.

In the South, the bureaucratic bourgeoisie in charge of the regional government have aligned themselves to the ‘Jallaba’ institution — the northern merchants and compradors who monopolise business in the region, and who have inherited the small stores formerly run by Italians and Greeks. The efforts of the southern government to create its own southern merchants were foiled by the ‘Jallaba’ through their buying off of all import/export licences issued by the regional authorities. Talk of corruption is the order of the day in the South. The most notorious case involved allegations against Joseph Lagu in 1979 when he was president of the HEC. Accusations were made by four of his ministers, and documents produced before the regional assembly claiming that he had pocketed the whole of a $2½ million grant from one of the Gulf states, depositing it in his account in a Nairobi bank. The assembly exploded in fury, politicians spitting insults at each other. Instead of investigating the matter, Nimeiri disbanded the assembly, sacked the four ministers and put the leader of the opposition in prison. Soon after the regional cabinet was also disbanded. Joseph Lagu, for his part, was later appointed Vice-President, resident in Khartoum. In fact, the dissolving of the regional government by presidential decree was a violation of the Addis Accord and of the Constitution. But that was but a foretaste of things to come, as evidenced by the incidents of the spring of 1983. The institution of military dictatorship has brought the South firmly under its hegemony.

There has been a tendency among the northern bourgeoisie, especially those with no interests in the South, to view the whole ‘southern problem’ as a
drain on the meagre resources of the North, whether during peace or war. The consequences of the Addis Accord, they maintain, have not been particularly encouraging. Fifteen years after the agreement, the South still depends on the North for 80 per cent of its budget revenues and 100 per cent of the funds for development projects, with those in power in the South, moreover, just part and parcel of a corrupt and repressive military regime. A real fear is that such a tendency might well grow into a call for secession of the South, coming from the North, to leave the South to the kind of banditry and chaos which is ravaging Uganda at present. The desperate tendencies among some of the southerners, as embodied in Anya Nya II, play into the hands of those northern extremists who want either abrupt secession or the solution of the problem by means of force, along the lines of Saddam Hussein’s dealings with the Kurdish problem in Iraq. But neither of these ‘solutions’ is in the interests of the mass of the population in either the North or the South.

Conclusion
The Addis Accord was the product of an inept petit bourgeois regime that viewed the problem of the South as a token in a power game and that continues to deal with it in terms of short term convenience. It has not yet addressed itself to the social, political and economic roots of the problem. And the situation remains one of acute social and economic underdevelopment. Respect for the rights of the southern peoples to self-rule within a democratic Sudan, moreover, is hardly feasible under a regime that has forsaken the independence of the country, turning it into an Egyptian hinterland and an American client state by proxy, dotted with American military bases.

The solution of the southern problem lies not in going back to the pre-Addis days of civil war, nor in accepting the status quo. It lies simply in the dismantling of the incumbent dictatorship through the joint struggles of the Northern and southern peoples. The people must first retrieve their independence, freedom and democracy to pave the way for the ultimate solution to the southern question. Only a national democratic government treading the path of socialism is capable of solving the problem. The principles declared on 9 June 1969 require such a government to reaise them.

Mahdawi

TIGRAY: FAMINE AND NATIONAL RESISTANCE
Developments within Sudan are complex enough, but in recent years they have been further complicated by the impact of upheavals, not of its own making, in various parts of the Horn of Africa, next door. The most tangible effect is the hundreds of thousands of refugees that have to be maintained in the Sudan. But there has also been a political dilemma for the present regime. It is drawn, like its reactionary Arab allies, to support movements that oppose a proclaimedly socialist and Soviet-backed regime like
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Ethiopia's, and it does promote the more conservative groups, for it is uneasy about the radical, anti-imperialist stance of the more dominant national liberation groups.

The wider conflicts in Eritrea, in the provinces of Ethiopia and between Somalia and Ethiopia also pose a dilemma for the left in Sudan. It tries to tread a difficult, diplomatic path between criticism of the Numeiri regime's automatic anti-Soviet anti-socialist stance whilst keeping its distant but open lines of communication with the more progressive movements in the Horn. Our final Briefing does raise one such issue on which many of our Sudanese collaborators maintain a diplomatic silence, one of a set of issues that nevertheless is part of the context of Sudanese politics. The Review has concentrated its attention within the Horn on Eritrea, but has also hosted some on-going debate on the national question in that region. But this is the first contribution to that discussion which focuses on Tigray, an area which famine has brought very much into the headlines as we go to press. We hope this overview of present conditions and review of the position of the Tigray People's Liberation Front, by a recent visitor to areas the TPLF controls, will both inform but also stimulate further contributions to the debate.

The perennial issue of nationalities in the Horn has once again been drawn to public attention by the onset of the severest drought in the region since the 1970-73 disaster. Amidst a fanfare of humanitarian concern, little note has been taken however, of the current engagement of almost 60,000 Ethiopian troops in the northern province of Tigray. Indeed, at no time previously has Ethiopia been so torn within by structural dislocation and civil war, at present on four fronts. As long as the current regime is still wedded to a military solution, supported by a huge Soviet and Cuban arsenal, the problem of nationalities will persist irrespective of the outcome.
of the wars in Eritrea, Tigray, Western Somaliland and the Oromo regions. But the issue at stake is a political one, a realisation which seems to be completely absent from the policy of the ruling Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC — the Derg). In their approach, national conflict seems to be relegated to the realm of ‘cultural pluralism’, and the only class antagonism is that associated with a now-overthrown feudal configuration. A negotiated political solution to the question is thus necessarily precluded.¹

Debate on the status accorded to national minorities in the post colonial order has often given way to questions of power and ‘externally’ imposed political interests. Superpower interests in the Horn will undoubtedly continue far to outweigh ideological niceties. Nonetheless, emphasis on the global strategic importance of the region might easily obscure the fact that in the last 22 years in Eritrea and eight years in Tigray irreversible social and political trends have evolved, reaching levels of maturity which suggest that the liberation fronts are here to stay.

Armed struggle — ‘the extension of politics by other means’, in Von Clausewitz’ famous phrase — is but one facet of an emerging ideology of liberation within the more progressive movements of northern Ethiopia and Eritrea. As David Poole (ROAPE 19) has demonstrated, the success of the EPLF (Eritrean People’s Liberation Front) can be attributed to a symbiosis of military and political strategy: ‘. . . a military strategy of armed struggle divorced from a political strategy was fundamentally reactionary in peasant society based on subsistence agriculture’. Such is also the case with the movement under review here, the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF). Our intention is not to document the full extent of TPLF activities, but to indicate how it is that a movement which began with a mere 20 or so advocates in 1975 has now grown to occupy such a powerful position in Ethiopia today.

Tigre People’s Liberation Front
The TPLF began its armed struggle in February 1975, though prior to this there had been underground cultural and political agitation groups set up in the major towns of Ethiopia, including Addis Ababa. These were organised through the 1960s and 1970s under the umbrella organisation, the Tigray National Organisation (TNO). It comprised mostly intellectuals discriminated against by the increasing Amhara domination of civil and public posts; and indeed the TPLF still retains a network of informants working in underground cell structures in the major towns. In 1975 a small group moved ‘to the hills’ and declared armed struggle against the central regime.

Now, eight years later, the TPLF lays claim to over 85 per cent of Tigray with Ethiopian government forces being unable to control any but the major towns along the main road through to Eritrea. As the resistance movement has increased, so too have reprisals aimed at the civilian population. From April 1978 to July 1979 the bodies of urban youths were dumped in the streets for public display, victims of the infamous Red Terror that spread through the urban areas of Ethiopia. The events spawned a huge
exodus of refugees into neighbouring Sudan. In February 1983 the
Ethiopian government launched another intensive campaign of aerial
bombardment in the western districts of Tigray — their seventh such
incursion to date. Yet no significant inroads have been made into the deeply
entrenched guerrilla forces whose increasingly effective ‘hit and run’ tactics
have targetted supply routes, army garrisons and ammunition depots.

The dismissive labelling of the TPLF by Derg propaganda as ‘secessionist’,
‘bandits’ and counter-revolutionaries’, might have confused some
observers. So it is useful here to examine the claims and rationale of the
movement. The TPLF is, by its own admission ‘... fighting for the
national self-determination of the Tigrayan people and waging a people’s
democratic revolution (Memorandum to 36th Session of UN General
Assembly, September 1981). As this formula does not preclude the
voluntary unity of Tigrayans with other nations and nationalities in a larger
state, the TPLF is not fighting for secession. However, socio-historical
antecedents have, according to the TPLF’s analysis, so far pre-empted the
possibility of such unity. Until the conditions in the state as a whole are
conducive to an accommodation and political representation of the various
nationalities, ‘... the people (will) opt for the formation of an independent
and democratic republic.’

For the TPLF, then, self-determination is a question of political democracy
and theoretically implies a right to independence. The Derg, in proclaiming
radical reforms whilst at the same time suppressing dissident forces within
the state, has persistently exhibited a narrow parochial nationalism. Indeed,
the consolidation of a military dictatorship in Ethiopia today is palpably
anti-democratic and strikes at the very root of the principle of self-
determination. The Derg’s manipulation of the Leninist position in this
respect has been adequately demonstrated by Bereket Selassie’s Conflict
and Intervention in the Horn of Africa.

One salient issue emerges from Lenin’s discussion of the principle of
national self-determination: his position ultimately hinges on the policy
most likely to promote development of forces of production in a specific
region and the development of the proletariat as a class in the region. To
substantiate claims to self-determination in Tigray, therefore, the TPLF
seeks to demonstrate in practice that a national movement is a pre-eminent
condition for social and economic progress in the present historical
conjuncture, given the political bankruptcy of the central government and
the legacy of historical underdevelopment in Tigray.

The position was expanded upon during the TPLF’s protracted political —
and later military — conflict with the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary
Party (EPRP), the most influential left-wing organisation in the early years
after the overthrow of Haile Selassie in 1974. Prior to being liquidated by
the regime’s Red Terror of 1977-78, the EPRP had called for a
multinational, pan-Ethiopian struggle, charging that the national question
was a ‘bourgeois distraction’ secondary to the class struggle. Questions
concerning the self-determination of nations should, they claimed, be
postponed until the realisation of socialism in Ethiopia. To this the TPLF
replied that the objective conditions in Tigray are such that national
oppression and contradiction are acute and have become an obstacle to
class unity, arresting socio-political integration of the region:

. . . the national question at the present epoch is part and parcel of the working class struggle and at a certain historical stage can assume a primary role (Woyeen, official TPLF organ, August 1978).

The TPLF have gone on to assert the historical conditions where . . .

national subjugation has engendered a deep-rooted national contradiction which has manifested itself in mutual hostility and mistrust, (Tigray 2, No.1, December 1978 — paper of Union of Tigrayan Students of North America).

The ‘first condition’ of a people’s emancipation must, therefore, be self-determination.

A further issue in the TPLF/EPRP debate concerned the latter’s rejection of rural armed struggle. They claimed that since the Derg had enacted a rural land proclamation the peasantry was alienated from the revolution. Thus the revolution could not, because of the ‘peculiar conditions in Ethiopia’ create a base in the rural areas. Rather, it was urban armed insurrection that was promoted by the EPRP. Indeed, such a strategy created splits within the EPRP itself. By 1978 the land reform programme announced by the Derg was far short of implementation and was to have a minimal effect in Tigray: and the very success of the TPLF rural based guerrilla movement was to disprove this EPRP argument.

The tentative TPLF/EPRP co-operation broke in 1976, erupting in open warfare between the two fronts. By the beginning of 1978 the EPRA, the EPRP army stationed in Tigray, had been driven in disarray to the ELF areas of Barka in southwest Eritrea since which time they have either deserted to the TPLF or crossed into Sudan.

A further contender for power in Tigray was the Ethiopian Democratic Union, an organisation headed by Ras Mengesha, the last Governor-General of Tigray before 1974. The EDU leadership comprised former feudal aristocrats, disaffected government officials, and the remnants of a feudal-bourgeois class. In its relentless propaganda campaign the EDU attempts to win the support of the Tigrayan peasantry with its appeal for Ethiopian unity against the Derg, coupled with a rejection of national aspirations for Tigray, or indeed Eritrea. From January 1976 through to March 1978 the TPLF were engaged in armed conflict with the EDU, with the latter initially having the upper hand numerically. The dispute here was qualitatively different than that with the EPRP, for the TPLF and EDU had had few prior associations. The ultimate failure of the EDU can be attributed not only to its transparent neo-feudal base, but also to its field strategy of exacting further taxes from an already over stretched peasantry to support its army. Again, parallels can be found here with the activities of the ELF in Eritrea (Pool, ROAPE 19). The TPLF had, on the other hand, from its inception adopted a policy of strict self-reliance on the military front, firmly rooting its struggle in the lowest strata of the Tigrayan populus.

One of the political repercussions carried forward from the eventual dismissal of the EDU was a further understanding amongst the Tigrayan masses of the implications of protracted people’s war. For this clash, primarily taking place in western Tigray, involved the mobilisation and
participation of far greater numbers than those engaging the EPRP in the eastern highlands. The TPLF's vigorous politicisation campaign over this period of time included the publication of a number of internal papers: *Woyeen* (revolt), the official TPLF organ; *Tegedel* (Struggle), mostly for fighters; *Itet* (Get Armed), published especially for the peasantry; and *Nikah* (Get Conscious), an aid to political theory. The efforts, both political and material, to win the confidence of the peasantry have paid great dividends for the TPLF who have subsequently been able to depend heavily on their support to counter recent Ethiopian military offensive. Significant diplomatic gains were also made through the defeat of EDU, for now for the first time TPLF were recognised as the legitimate representatives of the Tigrayan diaspora in countries which had previously given unqualified support to the EDU. In spite of often volatile diplomatic relations, TPLF offices could now be open for refugees in Sudan and Middle Eastern countries, as well as Western capitals.

EDU and EPRP intellectuals still command a certain influence in refugee communities in Sudan, and in academic institutions in the West. More pernicious, though, have been attempts to expropriate 'charitable' funds in the West and elsewhere through the auspices of 'humanitarian' organisations such as ETHROS (Ethiopian Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation Organisation in Sudan). Most ironically, mergers have also taken place on the political front recently, with the announcement in August 1981 of an EDU/EPRP merger calling itself the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Ethiopia (DFLE), though the previous EDU leader, Ras Mengesha Seyum, is no part of the new alliance. A further contender, the Liberation Front of the Ethiopian People (LIFREP), declared itself in late 1981; and the accelerating factionalism could at least be indicative of a general mood that there will soon be a political vacuum to fill.

**Development in Guerrilla-held Territories**

Tigray is an area of 102,000 sq km and has a population of approximately 4½ million. The extreme neglect of central governments down to the present is evident when one looks at statistics relating to health and education. There were in the region, up to 1976, only four hospitals and 40 health stations, which together served less than 5 per cent of the population. Access to medical facilities has been further hampered by the fact that the military government has now almost entirely commandeered these centres in its much-sloganised 'everything to the warfront' campaign.

The TPLF has, for its part, attempted to redress the social and infrastructural imbalance by instituting far-reaching development programmes in all guerrilla-held areas. This is no more apparent than the land reform measures currently under way in the province.

Investment in Tigray was discouraged by Haile Selassie and the large commercial farms seen in southern Ethiopia are in little evidence here. Nonetheless, large portions of land in western Tigray were given to Begemda Province in the early 1950s and from southern Tigray to Wollo in the late 1950s. Though sparsely populated, these areas were traditionally used as 'reserves' in times of drought and hardship. The fact that the land was no longer available put great strain on the ever-increasing population
who, due to an age-old feudal tenure system, already had little land of their own. To attain personal profit and keep up with external market forces the landed aristocracy transformed some communal land into private holdings. This had two results: first, the build-up of a rootless, landless labour force chasing the few available jobs; and second, the fragmentation of land holdings (almost half the family holdings in Tigray are less than one acre). Both processes have led to general impoverishment made worse by periodic drought, the most recent being 1970-73 when an estimated 200,000 died in Tigray and Wollo alone. It is likely that the widespread drought currently ravishing the countryside following the failure of the rains in 1982 will also exact its toll.

The Derg’s 1975 Land Reform measures have been criticised by the TPLF for having exacerbated class distinctions between the lower stratum peasants and the emerging agrarian bourgeoisie which had used its power to accumulate property during Haile Selassie’s reign. The TPLF claims that a series of secret circulars issued by the Derg have been sent to local authorities instructing them to give land to those who have the means to plough it, which more often than not excludes the poorer peasants. The TPLF have worked consistently to introduce more favourable power relations within existing village administrations responsible, amongst other things, for the redistribution of land.

In attempting to transform property relations in the countryside, the TPLF have encouraged the formation of organisational structures made up of the most class-conscious and politically advanced elements of the peasantry. Their land reform has not meant a return to the pre-1975 ‘communal’ tenure system, for during the struggle new social actors have come to the fore. The TPLF have, for instance, distributed land amongst women and Muslims for the first time, and youth and peasant associations assist in the tilling of land.

What has emerged is the most thorough land survey ever undertaken in the region, and even in the eastern Danakil lowlands TPLF agriculturalists are working on a scheme to settle Afar nomads on simple irrigated plots along the Regaila river. Many problems remain, though, not least the fact that an equal distribution of land has not automatically entailed equal access to means of ploughing. It is still necessary for poorer farmers to hire out their labour in exchange for the loan of ploughs and oxen.

Medical and educational facilities have also been given priority in guerrilla-held areas of Tigray. In 1978 a group of Tigrayans established the Relief Society of Tigray (REST), and through it have laid the foundations for a rural public health service and primary school system. Constitutionally and in practice its administration and personnel are separate from that of the TPLF, though the situation on the ground demands co-operation and co-ordination with TPLF and with local councils in Tigray. The Ethiopian Government Relief and Rehabilitation Commission have no access to more than 85 per cent of Tigray Province; hence REST is the only organisation through which relief assistance can be channelled. The health programme works through a total of four hospitals, 36 clinics and 65 mobile teams. REST has also taken on the training of midwives and distribution of essential food supplies to drought-affected areas.
With a mere five ill-equipped high schools and less than 50 functioning elementary schools, the literacy rate was by 1976 running at less than 5 per cent. Apart from adult literacy classes the TPLF, with the assistance of REST, have established a network of 43 schools in the guerrilla-held areas using Tigrinya, the mother tongue, as the medium. Moreover, following the large-scale military operations by the Derg in 1982, REST have co-ordinated the resettlement of more than 600 families in the western towns of Rahwa and Kalawalo. A further three resettlement areas are under preparation. Road construction, well-digging and the provision of medical and educational facilities for the disabled have been a testimony to the discipline and popular support this organisation enjoys.

Mass Organisations and People’s Militia
The TPLF guerrilla army comprises three main sections: regular fighters who engage Ethiopian troops and help establish administrative networks in areas they pass through; mobile guerrilla units — kirbit — who operate around enemy-held towns and establish propaganda units behind enemy lines; and home-based people’s militia recruited from the peasantry who protect their respective villages and report any government moves.

The regular fighters carry with them not only guns (most of which are of Soviet origin, captured from the enemy), but often farming tools and basic medicines. The TPLF has established a cadre school which provides courses for both fighters and civilians enabling them to take on the responsibility of organising and educating the population as a whole. To break the stifling hierarchical feudal administration and agrarian bourgeois hegemony previously referred to, popular administration in towns and villages is shouldered by the people themselves in the form of People’s Councils. Such councils carry out the work of land distribution, judiciary, provision of schools, and are elected by the various mass associations.

The mass associations, divided as they are between women, youths, farmers and merchants, constitute a forum where problems of a particular social group can be expressed. Regular meetings are also used as an important means of relaying news and providing political education at all levels. It is these bodies which also elect representatives for the TPLF civil and administrative structures. A Congress is held every three years (the first being 24 February 1979), where various posts are elected, including a 15-person Central Committee, which in turn nominates a Polit Bureau which has overall responsibility for the three major departments: political, military and social/economic.

One of the more interesting aspects of the TPLF and mass association structures is the emphasis on the participation of women, a particularly radical departure from usual practice in this part of the world. About 30 per cent of TPLF fighters are women and an important innovation at village level has been the setting up of women’s associations. Members have attempted to change the patriarchal political, economic and social structures of this traditional society into a more democratic distribution of power. Through patient politicisation at village level, women cadres of the TPLF have initially made studies of the socio-economic conditions and the social status of the various inhabitants. By talking to both wives and
husbands they have urged women to participate in literacy classes as well as medical and technical training. The judicial processes relating to marriage, divorce and land ownership have been radically changed, with equal rights in divorce and equal property division.

The full extent of TPLF activities cannot be detailed in a short briefing. We have attempted to show, however, that the move towards political maturity has been deeply entrenched in practical experience in the field, an experience informed by a thorough understanding of the historical antecedents of the current crisis. The move from popular consensus to people’s participation, something rarely achieved in Africa’s liberation movements, has provided the Tigrayan people with their first practical experience of self-determination, a decisive factor in allowing the front to occupy such a powerful position in Ethiopia.

Jon Bennett

Notes
2. For example, a recent work by Fred Haliday and Maxine Molyneux, The Ethiopian Revolution, Verso, 1981, states incorrectly, ‘The TPLF claimed to represent all who spoke Tigrinya and called for an armed struggle, based on the thought of Mao Tse-Tung, ‘to establish an independent Tigray Province’, p.206 and similar.
Debates

The question of whether a Sudanese national bourgeoisie can be identified which is capable of serving as a reliable ally of the oppressed classes in an anti-imperialist campaign, as the first stage in an anti-capitalist struggle, is one which has engaged the Left in Sudan for several decades. F.M. Mahmoud takes up the issue, first surveying the stance of the Communist International in earlier decades and then looking at more recent literature focused on the African context. She then explores the political affiliation and orientation of the indigenous bourgeoisie in Sudan throughout the colonial and post-independent periods. On the basis of its demonstrated practice she questions the validity of assertions that a national bourgeoisie exists which is truly anti-imperialist and national in orientation and with whom alliance would serve any (lasting) progressive ends. I. Kursany offers a contrasting view, asserting that sections of the bourgeoisie with clearly distinguishable interests can be identified and that alliance with the ‘national’ section is not only possible but necessary. We offer these views as part of an ongoing and clearly important debate.

INDIGENOUS SUDANESE CAPITAL — A NATIONAL BOURGEOISIE?

F.M. Mahmoud

The role of the national bourgeoisie in the colonies received attention as early as the Second Congress of the Third International in 1920. Lenin never considered the national or the industrial bourgeoisie as capable of playing a leading role in the national democratic revolution. On the contrary, he pointed out that the bourgeoisies of colonial countries very often worked in harmony with the imperialist bourgeoisie after the success of national liberation movements. But he did suggest that in some instances the bourgeoisie in oppressed countries might support national movements and serve as an ally in the struggle of workers and peasants against imperialism.

At the same Congress the Indian marxist Roy distinguished between the bourgeois democratic nationalist movement and the mass movement. Roy stated that

The popular masses of India are not fired with a national spirit. They are exclusively interested in problems of an economic and social nature . . . The elements exist in India for creating a
powerful Communist Party. But as far as the broad popular masses are concerned, the revolutionary movement has nothing in common with the national-liberation movement.

Roy was emphasising internal class struggle in the colonies while Lenin was stressing the importance of the rising national bourgeoisie in a broad based anti-imperialist struggle. Despite this difference the Congress adopted both positions unanimously and the discussion at the Fourth Congress in 1922 maintained the position arrived at in 1920. As Gordon puts it, the tension of a choice remained and the relatively undeveloped state of the socialist movement made the practical choice adopted one of alliance with the national bourgeoisie.

Around the time of the Fifth Congress in 1924 the term ‘national bourgeoisie’ began to be used in official, although generally only as an equivalent of ‘indigenous bourgeoisie’. The national bourgeoisie in China, for example, was seen by Stalin as having already split into a ‘compromising national bourgeoisie’ and a ‘revolutionary bourgeoisie’. In practice, however, and in the interests of promoting an international united front, any group opposing the international bourgeoisie was welcome as an ally. The ‘Manifesto to the Peoples of the East’ concluded accordingly by sending fraternal greetings to the Kuomintang which ‘was forging a great and bright future for the people’.

A fundamental shortcoming of the early contributions to the discussion on the national bourgeoisie was that the participants, except perhaps the Indians, lacked first-hand experience of colonial societies. Early theorising and prescription seemed, therefore, to have limited relevance to some concrete situations. A case in point is the inapplicability of formulations positing the centrality of a feudal structure given that many African societies lacked this feature altogether. Ultimately a great deal of confusion was to result from the differing emphasis of the communist spokesmen from Europe and those from the Third World. The concrete situations in the colonies seemed to be regarded as subordinate to those of Western Europe, particularly in the 1930s when the fascist menace was mounting and popular fronts characterised the activities of revolutionary movements in Europe.

This confusion was compounded after the Second World War when the national liberation movements intensified their struggle against imperialism. There emerged an exaggerated appraisal of the role of the local bourgeoisie and a search for a national bourgeoisie even where no such class existed. The manner in which some communist parties identified and labelled this class can perhaps be exemplified by the Indonesian experience. Although the country had no indigenous capitalist class, but only a burgeoning number of small proprietors, the Communist Party supported Sukarno as a representative of the progressive national bourgeoisie. The massacre of thousands of Indonesian Communists in 1965/66 can be seen as a result of unconditional collaborationist policies of the Communist Party, which exaggerated the role of the national bourgeoisie to the detriment of the independence of the revolutionary organisations. In the contemporary period this confusion reached such disturbing proportions that some Communist parties voluntarily decided either to liquidate the party in favour of petty bourgeois organisations such as in the case of Egypt in 1964
or to subordinate the working class party to such organisations, as was the case of Syria and Iraq.

Moreover, over-generalised as it was, the theory did not identify the basis of the national bourgeoisie. It was not clear whether this bourgeoisie should be identified by its economic activity, i.e. agricultural, industrial, etc., or on the basis of its degree of nationalism or the level of its alignment with foreign interests.

The Question of the National Bourgeoisie in Recent Literature
In the last decade or so the question of the national bourgeoisie has once again received attention from Third World and European marxists. Andre Gunder Frank, Samir Amin and others have discussed the question in the framework of the ‘periphery-centre’ relationship. Hamza Alavi has dealt with it in the context of an analysis of the nature of the post-colonial state.

In his book, Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America, Andre G. Frank concluded that national capitalism and the national bourgeoisie do not, and cannot, offer any way out of underdevelopment in Latin America.

According to Frank:

If there is to be a ‘bourgeois’ democratic revolution at all and if it is to lead to a socialist revolution and the elimination of capitalist underdevelopment, then it can no longer be the bourgeoisie in any of its guises which is capable of making this revolution. The historical mission and role of the bourgeoisie in Latin America — which was to accompany and to promote the development of its society and of itself — is finished. In Latin America, and elsewhere, the role of promoting historical progress has now fallen to the masses of the people alone; and those who would honestly and realistically serve the progress of the people must support them in achieving progress for and by themselves.

For Frank the national bourgeoisie, however dependent in the international economic sphere, invariably retains dominant influence in national institutional spheres. Yet, the growing presence of multinational corporations signifies a trend towards a decrease in its vis-à-vis the foreign bourgeoisie. The important point is that for Frank the fate of the two bourgeoisies are inter-dependent and cannot be separated.

Writers in Africa such as Colin Leys and John Saul have viewed the African bourgeoisie as dependent just like its counterpart in Latin America. They propose that the dominant class in the developing African countries is still the foreign bourgeoisie. Their analyses confirm Franz Fanon's remark:

... This native bourgeoisie . . . will realise, with its mouth watering, that it lacks something essential to the bourgeoisie: money. The bourgeoisie of an underdeveloped country is a bourgeoisie in spirit only.

The Frankian dependency approach is useful in that it brings out sharply the dependent nature of the Third World bourgeoisie and its inability to play the classic historical role of the European bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, Frank’s approach has been subjected to various criticisms, not just as regards its internal logic, but also with respect to the sorts of conclusions and strategies which may be inferred from that logic. Usta Patnaik has queried the suggestion of the Frankian model that, since all peripheral countries are capitalist, the only possible immediate programme of the revolutionary party within them must be a socialist revolution. Jairus
Banaji and Hamza Alavi have contended that Frank’s model leads to the questionable conclusion that we have now a global capitalist system that operates identically everywhere. Basing his analysis on this account of the dissimilarities between the two systems, Amin concludes that the periphery is faced with transcending the capitalist model, as it can never catch up with it. Therefore, the only option open to the countries of the periphery is a strategy based on self-reliance. On the political level he suggests that, while in the centre the masses are integrated into the system, in the periphery the system has forced the masses out (marginalised them), making possible its rejection by the latter. Unlike Frank, Fanon, Saul and Leys, Amin does not specify the role of the national bourgeoisie, leaving this for the concerned groups in the periphery to determine according to the prevailing objective and subjective conditions. His model thus fails to provide a specific position to be adopted by the peripheral revolutionary movement with regard to its own local bourgeoisie.

In a manner quite different from that of Amin, and on the bases of the Kenyan experience, Nicola Swainson has also criticised the dependency theorists. It is her contention that following Independence a substantial capital had accumulated in the hands of the Kenyan indigenous bourgeoisie, who moved with the aid of state power from the sphere of exchange to that of production. Swainson argues that far from being auxiliary to international capital (as initially suggested by Colin Leys for example) the Kenyan bourgeoisie has successfully used its connections with the Kenyan state to establish itself in direct competition with foreign firms.

According to Swainson, it is the movement from the sphere of exchange to that of production in competition with foreign capital which qualifies the indigenous bourgeoisie as ‘national’. This, however, is open to question because it disregards the means by which the indigenous bourgeoisie accumulated capital in making its move to production. As Swainson herself asserts, many of these capitalists used the state to effect the change. Can it be assumed then that the nature of the post-colonial Kenyan state is national? If the post-colonial state in Kenya was itself a bourgeois dependent state, then capital accumulated with its assistance cannot be said to lead to the growth of an independent national bourgeoisie. It is the way capital is accumulated and the conditions under which it operates, not the amount of that capital or where it is employed, that determines the independent nature or otherwise of the local bourgeoisie.

Writing about Ghana, Paul Kennedy has approached the question of the local bourgeoisie along lines apparently similar to those adopted by Swainson. Kennedy asserts that the local Ghanaian bourgeoisie is in competition with foreign capital in both import-substitution industries and government contracts. But, as with Swainson, no political role for the Ghanaian bourgeoisie is specified, even though Kennedy’s concluding remarks emphasise that a local capitalist class has emerged in Ghana and that it represents ‘... an economic and political force that cannot be ignored’. Though it may have some validity, the contradiction between local and foreign capital emphasised by both Swainson and Kennedy should not mislead us. In the final analysis, such as a contradiction should only be seen as subsidiary to that between capital and labour. Moreover, it is
important that characterisation of an indigenous bourgeoisie as national or otherwise cannot be done in isolation from an analysis of the class nature of the state.

The nature of the colonial and post-colonial states is adequately described by Hamza Alavi who argues that

the bourgeois revolution in the colonies was already accomplished by the imperialist bourgeoisie, which created in the colonies a bourgeois state and bourgeois property and a bourgeois legal and institutional apparatus precisely as an integral and necessary complement to its economic domination. Those who speak of the national democratic revolution in the colonies, misconceive the problem by overlooking this — in neither Russia nor China was such a bourgeois state established by the imperialist bourgeoisie.

The significance of Hamza Alavi's contribution lies in the fact that he pinpointed one of the major historical facts that have deeply affected most Third World countries, the neo-colonial nature of the post-colonial state. Most of those who have discussed the question of the national bourgeoisie emphasising its progressive role have overlooked this matter of the nature of the state.

The imperialist ties of the post-colonial state and the central role it plays in the process of capital accumulation in the Sudan, and probably elsewhere, poses another crucial question: which class, or classes, control the state and direct it to serve its interests, not only by using its apparatus and funds but also by its repressive institutions and confiscation of democratic liberties. Any viable strategy that attempts to draw up a blue-print for the break with capitalism must, of necessity, not only define the social forces that are capable of completing the transitional period and paving the way for socialism but also indicate the nature of the state and the level of the influence of the bourgeoisie (both local and foreign) over it.

Given that the working class, allied with the poor peasants, constitutes the cornerstone of these forces, the problematic question is the definition of the role that other forces might play during this transitional period. It is within this context that the roles of the national bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie are being discussed among the revolutionary forces in the Sudan.

**Conceptualising the Role of the National Bourgeoisie in Sudan**

The organised struggle against capitalism in Sudan started in the 1940s. For approximately three decades the literature of the Sudanese revolutionary movement with regard to its strategy and tactics seems to have been geared towards the abolition of the various disparities that characterise the political economy of the country and distinguish it from Western capitalism.

Our concern here is with tactics concerning the national bourgeoisie. Since the Communist Party of Sudan (CPS) is the most influential revolutionary organisation in the country and one of the leading CPs in Africa and the Middle East, the role it specifies for the national bourgeoisie in the process of breaking away from the capitalist systems is of considerable importance.

The programme of the CPS clearly emphasises the leadership of the working class in alliance with the peasants, especially the poor peasants. The programme of the party divides the transition to the socialist revolution into stages, the immediate one being the national-democratic revolution.
With regard to the role of the national bourgeoisie, however, the Communist Party literature seems to be inconsistent. Prior to 1977 the party distinguished between two sections of the national bourgeoisie: one connected with imperialism and one exclusively involved with national capital and the local market. In the book *Marxism and Problems of Sudanese Revolution* the Party clearly states that it is the agents of foreign capital and the industrial capitalists who have proved to be enemies of the national-democratic revolution and who can therefore play no role towards its fulfilment.

In 1977, however, there was an apparent retreat from this position when a Central Committee meeting approved a document entitled ‘External Questions and Tasks’ which stated:

... concerning the national bourgeoisie, we stand for drawing it into the national democratic alliance by a programme which does not jump over the present stage by posing socialism as the immediate goal or advocating prematurely the total liquidation of capitalist social relationships. The programme should oppose the domination of foreign monopolies, invite the participation of the national bourgeoisie in implementing the development plan and direct its investments to productive spheres which serve the interests of the national economy.

This position poses certain problems. The national bourgeoisie is assimilated into the vague category of the ‘allied strata’ in the same document, and appears as the class with which the party is proposing to ally for revolutionising of the bases of production. But questions need to be posed in relation to the alliance with the national bourgeoisie in the course of the national democratic revolution. When the national bourgeoisie, in its entirety and without distinction, is drawn into the national democratic alliance, will it accept a programme that opposes the domination of foreign capital? This question acquires a special significance in contemporary Sudan, where foreign capital operates through finance and partnerships with the indigenous bourgeoisie. Will not their participation in the democratic alliance affect the very nature of any plan that might be formulated to direct and co-ordinate economic development? How will the national bourgeoisie react if the programme clashes with its profit-making interests? What will happen to existing private or even state capitalist establishments which are already dominated by foreign capital and which are not oriented to fulfill the needs of the Sudanese people?

The changes in the relations of production which the Party proposes as first steps towards socialism, no matter how gradual they might be, will involve, as the Party accepts, workers’ control or, at the least, participation. Will the national bourgeoisie not react against such developments, given the role they played in destroying the 1971 regime, and given the progressively developing relation between local and multinational capital in the various fields of investment?

It seems that the earlier analysis by the CPS was the more adequate, since it gave specific details as to which, among the various sectors of the bourgeoisie, were aligned with neo-colonial capital. Yet even this early analysis was deficient. For while it was suggested that there were unaligned sections among the national bourgeoisie who could be included in the
national-democratic alliance, no specific basis for their identification was ever laid down.*

Evaluation of the more recent position of the CPS should take account of the expansion of capitalist activities in the contemporary period as compared with 1967. For, in view of the increase in the bourgeoisie's connections with foreign capital in recent years, the retreat from the 1967 classification is even more significant. Recent developments which have a direct bearing on the matter include: (1) the involvement of the present government with foreign aid and investment, and (2) the alliance of all the bourgeois parties with the government, in the intended creation of a new single party, combining Nimieri's Sudanese Socialist Union, with the bourgeois parties, thereby unifying state and private capitalists. These developments necessitate a sharper and more acute definition of the social forces that may be expected to stand up to the increasing ferocity of the combined local and foreign bourgeoisies. The 1977 position of the CPS is certainly not in line with these developments.

The relationship between the Sudanese bourgeoisie and imperialism is not a new phenomenon. Its roots go as far back as the early days of colonial rule. This alliance has always been manifested in the political affiliation and activities of the Sudanese bourgeoisie.

The Bourgeoisie and the Anti-Colonial Struggle

After the suppression of the various revolts against the colonial rule that took place during the years following the British invasion, organised opposition was led mainly by educated Sudanese. In the early 1920s the 'Sudanese Tribal Society' was founded. The 'White Flag League' was established in 1924 and played a central role in the anti-colonial demonstrations during that same year. An interesting fact is that both were initiated by army officers.

At this stage the Sudanese agricultural capitalists were clearly opposed to the anti-colonial movement and were in complete alliance with the colonial system. Among the members of a delegation that went to England in 1919 to congratulate King George V on the British victory in the First World War were Sayid Abdel Rahman Almahdi and Sayid Ali Almirghani, both landlords and religious leaders who were to become prominent agricultural capitalists. As a token of complete surrender to the colonial rulers and abandonment of his father's revolutionary heritage, Sayid Abdel Rahman presented what was reputed to be Almahdi's sword to the King of England. The delegation were rewarded with knighthoods by the British monarch, and Sayid Abdel Rahman soon afterwards regained Abba Island, where he planted cotton, and was given government contracts and other agricultural licences.

*In his 1970-71 prison notes, the former secretary of the CPS who was assassinated by the Junta in 1971 discussed the question of the democratic alliance briefly and clearly stated that the alliance does not include big capitalists but only the petty bourgeoisie (handicrafts) and small industrialists and retail traders. He clearly stated that the democratic revolution necessitates the eventual liquidation of capitalist relations. These notes were circulated in 1973 as a basis for the discussion within the party as a guiding document for the programme that is to be adopted by the forthcoming Fifth Party Congress.
During the nationalist revolts against colonial rule in 1924 the religious leaders, together with the main spokesman on religious affairs within the colonial regime, sent a memorandum to the Governor-General condemning the Egyptian and Sudanese national movements.

The editor of Alhadara magazine, which was owned by Sayid Abdel Rahman Almahdi, Sayid Ali Al-Mirghani and Sayid Shareif Al-hindi, wrote a long passage on the 1924 anti-colonial demonstrations in the Sudan: ‘The White Flag League should know that it is embarrassing the entire country. Those who demonstrated were the poorest and of the lowest strata of unrecognised members of the Sudanese Society.’ He went on to say that ‘... the storm created by the scum of society disturbed people of status, merchants, businessmen and the men of good origin’.

He concluded that there was nothing wrong with the British system and that the Gezira Scheme was the best solution for the economic problems of the Sudan.

The religious leaders were joined by the notable traders, leading native administrators and top civil servants in condemning the demonstrations and the White Flag League. They went further and made clear their choice of England as a guardian of the Sudan in order to develop the country until it acquired self rule.

The anti-colonial movement continued to expand, however, and in 1938 educated civil servants founded the ‘Graduates Congress’, membership of which was restricted to intermediate schools graduates. It attracted a membership of about 1,180 and gained support both locally and among Egyptian political circles. Until this point the capitalists had no organised parties and they now started competing for the support of the Graduates’ Congress.

It was only during the Second World War, when the anti-colonial movement was at its peak, that the bourgeois parties were founded. It was in the mid-1940s as well that the Sudanese working class began to express itself politically. In 1946 the Workers’ Affairs Association was organised, mainly from railway workers. The CPS was also founded in 1946, soon to be followed by Tenants and Farmers Associations. The Ashiqqa (literally blood brothers) Party was founded by Ismail Alazhari in 1943 in consequence of a split between the Mahdist and the Khatmiya Islamic sects over strategies for attaining independence. In response to the fact that separate negotiations with the British were being carried on by the pro-Ansar (Mahdist) graduates, the Khatmiya-affiliated graduates joined together to form the Ashiqqa Party and succeeded in 1944 in gaining control over the Graduates’ Congress. The following year saw formation of the Umma Party by the Mahdists. Hence the two major bourgeois parties which would continue upon Sudan’s political scene for several decades had already been formed by this time, each in association with one of the two major Islamic sects in the country, the Umma with the Mahdists and the Ashiqqa with the Khatmiya sect.

The Khatmiya, whose ties with Egypt dated back to Turko-Egyptian rule, lost favour with the British after the rise of the nationalist movement in Egypt, and the Mahdists came to be considered by the British as the ‘true’
spokesmen of the Sudanese people. the rise in Mahdist fortunes went hand in hand with the British policy of consolidating a Sudanese capitalist class to support the British interest.

The Umma Party was thus the direct representative of British interests, while the Ashigga Party, whose composition comprised a wider spectrum of educated civil servants and urban sections of the community, was more opposed to British colonial rule.

The split between the two parties with regard to complete independence and unity with Egypt reflected the different interests of the leadership of each of these parties and particularly the different fractions of capital in operation at the time. Those whose trade interests were linked with Egypt and who tended to be associated with the Ashigga, wanted unity with Egypt, while the Umma, whose agricultural export activities were linked with Britain, wanted independence in association with Britain.

In an attempt to drive a wedge between the Sudanese parties, the colonial rulers made a deliberate pre-emptive move in March 1946 by announcing the right of the Sudan to self-determination. They proposed a period of transition to last for some 20 years. Predictably, the Umma Party accepted the plan, while the Ashiqqa and other smaller unionist groups were not satisfied and boycotted all the institutions formed under the plan, such as the Advisory Council and the Legislative Assembly.

The Sudanese bourgeois parties did not question the structures of the liberal democratic systems, it was taken for granted that the Sudan should adopt a Western type of parliamentary system. At the first elections for a transitional government in 1953 the political atmosphere favoured the NUP (the core of what had formerly been the Ashiqqa Party), since it clearly opposed the British, as did the mass of the Sudanese population. By this time the trade union movement was active and a new left-wing movement, the Anti-Imperialist Front (AIF), had been organised, comprising the CPS and supported by trade unions, farmers' and tenants' unions, women's union, student unions, etc. This movement favoured a tactical alliance with petty capitalists and its members voted for NUP candidates throughout the country, except when the Front had a candidate of its own.

The elections gave a clear majority to the NUP. Fifty-one NUP representatives were returned as against 22 Umma Party members, while the AIF had one seat in the house of representatives. The remainder of the Parliament's 97 seats were taken by the representatives of the South and other minor parties. The NUP attained complete control over the parliament, and the government was formed exclusively from NUP members. As a result, however, of joint pressure from the two religious sects, the Ansar and the Katmiya, the NUP was persuaded to form a coalition government in January 1956, though in the event the coalition lasted only a few months. A split in the NUP in 1956 led to the formation of a new political group, the PDP. While NUP membership tended to be dominated by petty capitalists, educated civil servants and the urban masses, the PDP was dominated by the Khatmiya religious leadership and big capitalists, particularly agricultural ones. The PDP (Khatmiya) quickly joined in alliance with the Umma Party and succeeded in bringing down the
NUP government. Subsequently a government was formed in July 1956 with an Umma Prime Minister.

This new coalition government was itself soon put to the test when, after the failure of the Eisenhower Doctrine, the Americans offered aid to the Sudan in a new and more direct form. The Umma and their new allies, the PDP, were in favour of acceptance; the position not only reflected the common, cross-party interests of the agricultural capitalists, but also revealed the links of the leaderships of both parties with neo-colonialism. The NUP, together with CPS and the mass movement, organised a front demanding that the American aid be rejected. The Umma and the PDP, fearful of losing a vote of confidence in Parliament over the issue, handed over state power to the right-wing section of the army in November 1958. Predictably, the military government soon accepted the American aid.

The expansion of state capital during the period of military rule, 1958-1964, disturbed the leading capitalists within the two parties, particularly those in the Umma. The pattern of investment during this period suggests a competition between these capitalists and the top state bureaucrats, who were entering fields of business such as industry and contracts. This brought about competition between the bourgeois parties, who were no longer in direct control of state power, and the military government. The Umma, who first sent letters, as did the PDP, praising the new regime, eventually joined the Opposition Front organised by the CPS, the trade union movement and the NUP against the military Junta. In 1960 and 1961 this front sent memorandums to the military government demanding democratic freedoms.

The Opposition Front, however, did not last for long, in part because the bourgeois parties resisted proposals to organise a mass struggle against the military Junta in the form of a general strike. The bourgeois parties were frightened by the expansion of leftist elements, and, realising the extent of the economic problem the regime was facing at the time, tried to avert the possibility of a radical government first by joining the bandwagon of opposition with the left, but then by retreating to form their own right-wing alliance, which even included the non-mass-based Muslim Brothers organisation.

In 1964 a mass revolt followed by a general strike (proposed by the CPS since August 1961) brought the military regime to an end. A new government was formed comprising not only the bourgeois parties, Umma, NUP, PDP and the Islamic Charter, but also the CPS and representatives from the Tenants and Farmers' Unions and Workers' Unions. For the first time in the history of the country the CPS was legally recognised. The trade union federation (banned during the military regime) was re-established and, more important, workers' unions in the private sector succeeded in gaining official recognition. Labour unions were thus formed even in small private sector establishments.

The expanding organisation and success of the trade union movement and the establishment of private sector labour unions constituted a clear threat to capitalist interests and disturbed the bourgeoisie. The Umma Party incited the Ansar Sect to demonstrate violently against the transitional
government and threatened to use force. The bourgeois parties were thus able to push the Prime Minister to resign and hurriedly organised general elections along the old lines for a new parliamentary government. The new elections returned 11 Communists to the parliament. But the threat of slogans raised at the October mass revolt, such as nationalisation and circumscription of the state apparatus, enhanced the reaction of the bourgeois parties and provoked them to take action against the CPS members who continued advocating these revolutionary slogans within the parliament. In November 1966 the Umma, PDP, NUP and Islamic Charter formed a bloc to ban the CPS and dismiss its members from the parliament. Through a majority vote they succeeded in amending the constitution to this end.

It is important to understand why, for the first time since its formation, the NUP stood with the other bourgeois parties on this issue. What was the difference, for example between this issue and that of American aid? The answer is to be found, not in the substance of the issues but in changes that had taken place in the composition of its leadership. Between 1956 and 1966 the bourgeois and petty bourgeois elements within the NUP had grown in strength in the shadow of foreign investment. Leading capitalists within the NUP had controlled the Ministry of Trade in several governments during this period and NUP members had managed to obtain lucrative import licences; many of them had become agents of foreign companies. Several traders within the party had re-invested in industry, and many of their supporters among the civil servants had invested in contracts, and other services. It seems evident that the new capitalist interests of the NUP leadership led them to develop a political orientation similar to that of the rest of the bourgeois parties.

From 1963 onwards, as economic conditions worsened and living standards of the poor deteriorated, the leftist movement gained back some of the ground it had lost. Internal stability was increasingly shaken by the war in the South and by increasing repression, and the external situation was worsened by the impact of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. The drain on resources represented by the Civil War in the South, which consumed 20-30 per cent of the of the government budget, and the decline in foreign aid after the Arab-Israeli War led to considerable deficit financing. During 1964-1969 the foreign debt doubled, reaching $260 million. Inevitably economic pressure fell heaviest on the poor; indirect taxation on basic commodities brought in over $153 million in 1968/69, in contrast to only $22 million in taxation of income. All these factors weakened the government and set the stage for the military coup which occurred in May 1969.

The coup was organised by the Free Officers Organisation comprised of middle and lower ranking officers, which had been active within the armed forces in opposition to the first military regime (1958-64). The governing body of the new military regime was composed of a Revolutionary Council, whose 10 members included two Communists. A Council of Ministers composed of 21 Ministers, four of whom were well known members of the CPS, was also appointed. The Prime Minister himself was the prospective candidate of the Left for the presidential elections that were supposed to
take place in 1970. The constitution was annulled and all political parties, including the already banned CPS, were dissolved. The declared programme of the 1969 military government was in line with the demands of the left.

The announcement of socialism as a goal and the apparent nature of the governing body terrified the capitalists, and private investment declined drastically in 1969/70. Although the bourgeois parties were all opposed to the regime, the Umma Party constituted the most prominent opposition to the coup d'état in its first year.

Together with the small, extreme right-wing organisation of the Muslim Brothers (Islamic Charter), the Umma Party staged a counter-revolt against the regime in March 1970 at their base in Abba Island. The military junta, squashed the revolt and the leader of the Ansar Sect — grandson of Almahdi — was killed in the process together with hundreds (some say thousands) of his followers.

The Abba revolt was immediately followed by the confiscation of all the property of the Almahdi family. This was in turn followed, in May 1970, by sweeping nationalisations and confiscations, which included banks and trading, agricultural and industrial firms. The declared objective was to break the economic power of the leadership of the bourgeois political parties. Some of the nationalised firms, however, had already transferred their capital outside the Sudan. Moreover, the new boards of directors appointed by the state proved to behave little differently from the previous ones. The end result was that the majority of the enterprises taken over by the state incurred heavy losses through mismanagement and profiteering.

The nationalisation was an isolated, hurriedly enacted political decision designed to isolate the CPS, historically the main proponent of the nationalisation of the means of production, and to secure mass support for the regime. The CPS openly criticised the way the nationalisation was implemented, objecting in particular to the fact that nationalised firms became state capitalist concerns with no workers' control or participation in the running of the enterprises.

The regime was soon to bow to the right-wing pressure, however, and had to face the fundamental class contradictions of the society. It had to make the choice of either co-operating with the original base to which it appealed and pursuing a ‘socialist’ path or retreating to a capitalist policy. The choice made reflected the wavering class nature of the regime as well as the strength of the pressure of the capitalist class and its links with international capital.

This was manifested first in the decision of 16 November 1970 by the Revolutionary Council to oust three left-wing members from its own ranks. Secondly it was reflected in its withdrawal of the Unified Labour Law, which would have equated private sector workers with those of the state sector and restricted the capitalists' ability to dismiss workers at will. Finally, the right-wing course of the regime culminated in April 1971 with the capitalists and bourgeois parties organising a festival under the guise of 'national unity'. This came two months after CPS leadership and cadres
had been imprisoned as a result of an address by General Nimeiri on 11 February 1971 which promised to ‘crush’ the communists. At the same time, mass organisations such as Women’s and Youth Unions were dissolved and government organisations with appointed leaderships were created to replace them. All these measures were meant to lure Western and conservative Arab governments to resume foreign aid to the Sudan and contacts had already been made with Lonrho, the British multinational corporation, on possible ventures.

In July 1971 a group of pro-Communist army officers carried out a bloodless coup and declared their intention to reverse the right-wing shift in government policies, to fight neo-colonialism, etc. The events that followed revealed the true nature of the capitalists and the completeness of their alliance with international capital. The new regime lasted on three days and was crushed by direct foreign intervention in which Lonrho played an instrumental role.

As Cronje, Ling and Cronje (1976) relate, this was facilitated by the role played by Khaleel Osman, one of the three richest capitalists in the country. Khaleel accumulated his capital in Kuwait in partnership with Alsabah, the Amir of Kuwait, and the Gulf International Corporation. When he came back to the Sudan in the 1960s, he acquired about 10 industrial establishments under the local branch of Gulf International. Moreover, prior to the July coup, he was trying to introduce large-scale operations in collaboration with Lonrho. In June a Lonrho mission arrived in Khartoum for negotiations. In July a ministerial delegation went to London to negotiate the resumption of a £10 million British credit for the Sudan, which had been halted the previous year because of the nationalisation of British banks and other interests. Lonrho and Khaleel Osman helped the Sudanese to negotiate the credit. A week later, when the 19 July coup took place, Lonrho’s jet (a Mystère) was sent to Belgrade to fly the Defence Minister and his party secretly to Cairo and Tripoli, where the counter coup was organised.

The 19 July coup was crushed on 22 July. The counter coup took place in a blood-bath in which the army elements suspected of participating in the coup were shot and the leadership of the CPS were assassinated. During the reign of terror that followed, thousands of citizens were rounded up in jails and detention camps throughout the country. The civil service was purged, allegedly of communists but in fact many sympathisers were also affected.

The events that followed, with regard not only to British interests in general but to Lonrho and Khaleel Osman in particular, showed the newly reinstated regime’s recognition of the role they had played. The £10 million loan was approved and Lonrho was appointed as the purchasing agent for the Sudan government, with a commission rate fixed at 10 times the previous rate (0.2-2 per cent). Khaleel Osman negotiated schemes for the joint production of sugar with Lonrho and the government as well as a private textile factory for Gulf International.

The 1971 events in the Sudan revealed that the Sudanese capitalist class, which was nurtured by international capital, had in this instance transcended the national boundaries in its efforts to control the state and
change governments at will and was also willing and able to collaborate with international capital to safeguard the capitalist path of development in the Sudan.

The immediate results of the government's shift to the right in the years that followed were the encouragement of foreign investment and a substantial increase in foreign aid from capitalist countries. Another significant result was Western pressure on the Southerners to reach an accord with the regime on the basis of regional self-government. The agreement was reached under the auspices of the World Council of Churches and Emperor Haile Selassie in March 1972, although the declaration of regional self-government for the South had been in existence since 9 June 1969. The implementation of the original declaration had faced numerous difficulties which were eagerly smoothed out after the clear right-wing shift in 1971.

The increase in foreign aid started immediately after the 1971 coup. The United States started by opening a credit worth $18 million to Sudanese wheat importers. The IMF granted a credit of $40 million. Britain gave £25 million, most of which in fact never left London and was used to compensate nationalised British firms and to purchase British products. The Saudi regime supported the shift to the right and offered a $200 million loan to the Sudan. In return the regime signed an agreement covering joint exploitation of the Red Sea bed. They also started various other schemes in partnership with the state and the private capitalists.

Internally, the regime revived the slogan of national unity, originally initiated by the right, to permit the bourgeois parties to participate in the government's single party and its organisations. In 1972 and 1973 most of the nationalised private business establishments were returned to their previous owners and generous compensation and bank facilities were given to them.

The bourgeois parties (Umma, NUP and PDP) reached a reconciliation agreement with the regime in July 1977, brought about through the mediation of two capitalists. Their secondary contradictions resolved, the capitalist forces in the Sudan were to unite in the face of the rising consciousness of the masses. This left the CPS alone as the organised opposition to the present political system in the country.

A survey of 100 Sudanese businessmen conducted by the author in the late 1970s showed 38 per cent to be affiliated to the Umma Party, 30 per cent to the PDP and 16 per cent to the NUP. The breakdown indicates the continuing predominance of the Umma Party, which, as noted earlier, was the main representative of the rich capitalists throughout the colonial and early post-colonial period. If anything, it would be expected that the pattern would be even more pronounced in future since among the younger businessmen with secondary and post-secondary education surveyed, a vast majority (75 per cent) belonged to the Umma Party.

Prior to Independence it was possible to relate the Umma Party to the agricultural bourgeoisie and the NUP Party to trade. A subsequent pattern of overlapping re-investment has made such an identification impossible. The local bourgeoisie has scattered its investment over all sectors, whilst
retaining, on the whole, its political affiliations. The Umma, together with the PDP, have continued to be the main representatives of the rich businessmen. The NUP has moved gradually towards the right as leadership has come under the control of the capitalists affiliated to it.

In addition to their party affiliations, the businessmen studied also had varied relationships with the state apparatus; 78 per cent knew the present Ministers and Deputy Ministers personally; 32 per cent were found to be close friends of Ministers and prominent army officers in various periods since 1956; 8 per cent were members of ministers' families, 8 per cent had influence in banks, either through membership of the boards of directors or through members of their families working in banks and 8 per cent had partnerships with ex-ministers or employed them as senior executives in their establishments. Capitalist interests were thus not only safeguarded on the micro level through the control by the bourgeois parties of the state but also on the micro level through personal relationships developed since 1956.

Conclusion
The political history of the Sudan, analysed from a class perspective, reveals that the capitalist class had no major contradictions with the colonial system. Its organisations originated when the struggle for national liberation crystallised and conflicts between the bourgeois parties (during the colonial period) were an outcome of the subsidiary contradictions between the various fractions of capital. The handing over of the government by the bourgeois parties to the reactionary faction of the military in 1958 was a reflection of the strength of the mass protest against the infiltration of neo-colonialism and the failure of the parliamentary system to contain it.

The short-lived alliance of the bourgeois parties with the trade union movement and the CPS in opposition to the military government before the October 'revolution' may be explained as a consequence of their acute unease over increasing state capitalist investment. Feeling threatened by this development, the bourgeoisie entered into a tactical alliance with the revolutionary movement to regain state power. But they did so only because they were confident of their ability to contain or suppress the movement after the success of this immediate strategy. The alliance of all the bourgeois parties against the CPS and the Front soon after October 'revolution', and the banning of the CPS in 1966, reveals the primary common interests that all the bourgeois parties had with each other. The vital role played by the local capitalist class, in collaboration with international capital, in the events of July 1971 reveals the truly dependent nature of the Sudanese bourgeoisie and its opposition to any attempts to radicalise the political system. Their subsequent alliance with multi-national capital and the government in 1977 marked a new turning point in the dependent nature of the Sudanese bourgeoisie. Its opposition to radical change and to the mass movement has taken a fierce, violent and direct form.

Is it conceivable then that such a bourgeoisie could play any role in the breakaway from capitalism? Indeed, can it even be said that a national bourgeoisie existed in the Sudan during the colonial period? At that time,
and in contrast to the cases of India, China or Turkey, there was no industrial bourgeoisie in the Sudan. The only indigenous capitalist elements in the productive sector were in agriculture, and they have been allied with imperialism from its creation to the present. The commercial bourgeoisie in the Sudan on the other hand had minor contradictions with the agricultural bourgeoisie and was part of the anti-colonial struggle until after Independence in 1956 when it allied completely with the imperialist bourgeoisie.

It may be suggested that the term national is not in fact applicable to elements of indigenous capital during the colonial period. Both the established entrepreneurs and those newly recruited from the state bureaucracy were motivated by capitalist interests rather than national considerations. This was expressed politically through their party affiliations and the positions they took in the political struggle throughout the period under study.

After Independence an industrial bourgeoisie did develop in the Sudan under the sponsorship of the state which it controlled. This industrial bourgeoisie developed from the ranks of former commercial and agricultural capitalists in close connection with neo-colonialism and the post-colonial state. But even if we were to concede that this bourgeoisie succeeded in accumulating capital with the assistance of the state and in competition with foreign capital as suggested for Kenya and Ghana by Swainson and Kennedy, and that it does not lack money, contrary to what Fanon suggested, it would still be necessary to scrutinize the proposition that it is capable of playing a national role with contemporary developments in mind. Given that the interests of capitalists in the Sudan are so intertwined, economically and politically, with those of foreign capital and that the consciousness of the masses has increased, the capacity of indigenous capital to perform an independent and effective role is so limited as to be almost non-existent.

It is within this context that dependency theory offers a theoretical framework for the analysis of the peripheral bourgeoisie. Samir Amin’s contribution is too generalised to be of much help in analysing specific situations in the peripheries. By proposing that the proletariat of the metropolis exploited that of the periphery he contradicts his own proposition that capital has consolidated transnationally and on a world scale to become one unified force. It is thus not surprising that no specific strategy is given for the suggested breakaway from capitalism, other than the equally generalised proposition of self-reliance.

Andre Gunder Frank is more specific with regard to political strategy. His main premise is that the peripheral bourgeoisie is dependent and has a vested interest in the perpetuation of dependency. He clearly concludes that the bourgeoisie, in all its forms and guises, is incapable of playing any role in the democratic revolution if the latter were ever to take place. The origin and development of the capitalist class in the Sudan confirms their dependent nature in all sectors of their activity. Their political affiliations provide further evidence that they have had a vested interest in the continuity of the dependent capitalist path that has characterised the economy of the Sudan. Although further and more comprehensive studies
of the various layers of the capitalist class are needed to arrive at definitive conclusions, no evidence of a possible progressive role for the Sudanese bourgeoisie can be visualised this far.

In view of all this, it is difficult to understand the retreat of the CPS from its former (1967) analysis of the bourgeoisie. Given the considerable increase in local and foreign capitalist enterprise, together with attempts to unify capitalist forces in the country on the political level with the apparent blessing of international capital, it is hard to conceive of circumstances in which this bourgeoisie would relinquish its former position and stand for any change, however mild, in the relations of production.

Bibliographic Note


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The elapse of a quarter of a century after the political independence of the Sudan has produced no radical social improvement. In fact, the general living standard of the mass of people has actually deteriorated. The state
has failed to provide the basic services which are essential ingredients of any dignified human life: the provision of housing, clothing, food, education, drinking water and medical services to the working people. This, we would argue, is a consequence of an acceptance and active sponsorship of a capitalist structure. The choice of the 'capitalist' road breeds increasing inequality and procures very little 'development' for the mass of the population.

The dominance of the capitalist mode of production in Sudan manifests itself in the economic as well as the political domination of the capitalist class. The Sudanese capitalist class however does not constitute a homogeneous group of individuals. Different sections, with different economic interests, sometimes conflicting in their nature, are the striking feature of this class.

Historically, the capitalist class started its capital accumulation within the sphere of distribution. While most were in retail trade, a few directed their capital to foreign trade. Dealing in export-import, particularly of gum-Arabic and livestock, they developed strong links with foreign capital.

A much larger section of the commercial capitalist class is comprised of those who deal in retail trade, confine their activities to the domestic market and have no links whatsoever with foreign capital. During the late fifties and sixties many of this group shifted their investment away from the mercantile sphere and towards the productive sectors of the economy, mainly agriculture and light industry.

The section of the capitalist class, for whom the productive sectors of the economy constitute both the origin of their income as well as the final destination of their investment, we designate as the national bourgeoisie. Their economic interests are opposed to those of foreign monopoly capital as well as the local comprador bourgeoisie. The political power of this section of the capitalist class is reflected in the bourgeois political parties in the country which have dominated the state machinery up to May 1969, namely the Umma, the National Unionist and the People's Democratic Party.

Between 1969 and July 1971 political power rested in the hands of the military officers who allied themselves with the Sudanese mass movement as against that of the comprador capitalist class. But this alliance was short-lived. Subsequent to the 22 July 1971, the state machinery has been dominated by new social forces: the commercial comprador capitalist class and foreign monopoly capital. The last decade witnessed the flourishing of the former and the stagnation of the national bourgeoisie.

The political domination of the comprador capitalist class has been accompanied by a similar domination in the economic field. This section of the capitalist class has depended almost completely on the state apparatus for the generation of its income. That income has in turn been virtually wasted through conspicuous consumption, importation of luxurious items and residence outside Sudan for most of the year.

The absence of both political and economic democracy in underdeveloped capitalist countries is largely responsible for the parasitic capitalist class
which depends on the bureaucratic apparatus of the state for its very existence as well as for increasing its income and rate of capital accumulation. This class characteristically avoids investment in the productive base of the economy in favour of directing its investible surplus to the ‘quick’ profit-making projects like residential buildings. It tends, moreover, to transfer a substantial proportion of its economic surplus outside the country toward destinations considered politically and economically stable such as the advanced capitalist countries. Often it goes into partnerships with multinationals, depending on their technology and hard currency and emulating the lifestyle of those in the West. It is for this reason that we regard this section as constituting a comprador class.

This picture, however, must not blind us to the other face of the coin, namely the existence of another section of the Sudanese capitalist class. This section has a genuine interest in investing its economic surplus in the productive sectors of the Sudanese economy and has no intention whatsoever of either emulating the lifestyle of the capitalist class of the advanced countries or spending most of its money and time outside Sudan. This section we consider to be the national part of the Sudanese capitalist class. The interests of this section are, to a great extent, in direct contradiction with those of the parasitic comprador section of the capitalist class as well as those of foreign monopoly capital.

For this reason we think it would be a serious mistake to formulate a development strategy for the Sudan built on so misleading a conclusion as that of Dr Mohmoud* who has declared all of the Sudanese capitalist class to be a comprador class. By so doing, she has failed clearly to recognise the differences which do exist between the different fractions of the Sudanese capitalist class. Instead of correctly rejecting the capitalist path which has failed to generate rapid economic as well as social development, Dr Mahmoud has rejected the Sudanese capitalist class altogether and denied it any role in the socio-economic development of the country at the present stage.

This line of thinking follows closely that of the dependency school, best known by the works of A.G. Frank. This school argues that in order to overcome backwardness and liquidate underdevelopment, ‘periphery’ countries must terminate their relations with and eliminate their dependence on the advanced capitalist countries. It calls for weakening the alliance of the social forces which back the development of capitalism as a mode of production in underdeveloped countries. In pursuing this objective they argue, the masses should direct their struggle against capitalism and the bourgeois class and not against any other mode of production, since for them, no other exists.

We object to this school’s analysis and conclusions for two reasons. Firstly, it sees the basic problem of the underdeveloped countries in their link with the advanced capitalist countries. Hence it concentrates its discussion and analysis on the sphere of exchange. This is why it has failed to categorise or

even define satisfactorily what exactly it mean by capitalism. We see a
fundamental deficiency in this school's theoretical analysis of capitalism
because for us capitalism is to be understood essentially at the level of
production. Secondly, by characterising the entire capitalist class of
underdeveloped countries as having comprador characteristics and by the
call for an immediate socialist revolution, this school has removed any
possibility of an intermediate stage such as that of the national democratic
revolution resting on all anti-imperialist interests. The dependency position
has thus denied the slightest chance for any role being played by the
national section of the capitalist class or even the petty-bourgeoisie at the
present stage of development. Any alliance with the latter, it argues,
amounts to the betrayal of the mass of the population, if not political
suicide. We think this conclusion is politically damaging; the national as
well as the petty-bourgeois does have a positive role to play at this stage in
the light of the antagonism of their economic interests with those of foreign
monopoly capital.

The state has played a crucial role in the development and increasing
economic and political domination of the comprador section of the
Sudanese capitalist class and of foreign monopoly capital over the working
mass of the people and indeed over the national bourgeoisie. This is why we
cast grave doubts concerning the validity of Hamza Alavi's formulation of
the state exhibiting relative autonomy and mediating between several ruling
classes in post-colonial societies ('The State in Post-Colonial Societies:
Pakistan and Bangladesh', New Left Review 74, July-August, 1972). In the
Sudan the present post-colonial state has completely sided with and is
serving the interests of the comprador bourgeoisie against the national
bourgeoisie. In these circumstances, proximity to political power replaces
productive investment as the main source of income.

We believe that present trends as regards development and class formation
will not be reversed without the active involvement and participation of the
state but a state of a different nature. It must be a national, democratic and
progressive state in respect of its class basis. By national we mean it should
represent the economic interests of all social forces opposed to the interests
of foreign monopoly capital, i.e. it should have an anti-imperialist
character. These social forces are the workers, peasants, soldiers,
revolutionary intellectuals and the national section of the Sudanese
capitalist class. By democratic we mean that the state must represent the
political will of all these social forces but its leadership must rest in the
hands of the alliance of the workers and poor peasants, who constitute
more than 90 per cent of the Sudanese people. But this state will not be
democratic unless it guarantees the basic democratic rights of the working
people of the Sudan, including the right of free speech, free association,
free assembly, free trade unions, free press, formation of political parties
and the right to strike. All members of state legislative and executive bodies
must be freely elected. The choice of the electorates should be respected by
the different state bodies. This will be assured only if the electorate have the
right not just of electing their leaders but of removing them from office in
the event of corruption, inefficiency or betrayal of their cause. This
mechanism is the only one, in the context of Sudan, which will provide a
built-in system of checks and balances to safeguard the interests of the poor
working mass of people, release and develop the creative abilities of the Sudanese people and prevent the development of any bureaucratic tendencies within the state machinery. By progressive we mean also it must be secular. That is to say the Sudanese state should be based on a non-religious constitution and must respect all the religious and ideological beliefs of its citizens irrespective of their colour of skin, race or geographical location.

This state apparatus, in order to be effective in carrying out the national democratic programme, must be based on the leadership of the broad alliance of the workers and peasants of the Sudan. It is on their positive participation in all the economic decision-making and executing bodies which depends on the successful development of the country. This is because the real choice which is facing the Sudanese people is no longer between national democratic development or capitalist development but rather between national democratic development, which will form the basis for the transition to socialism, or capitalist underdevelopment.

Reviews


This book is an important contribution, at both a theoretical and an empirical level, to the field of social and economic change in rural communities in Africa. It is the result of a long term study of a settled farming population living in Maiurno, a settlement largely composed of migrants from Northern Nigeria in the North of the Sudan. Duffield’s study of Maiurno from colonial times through post-war rural development and transformation is not of a community in isolation. Rather Maiurno’s history is situated by the author within the larger context of the development and reproduction of capitalism in the Sudan. Duffield uses his empirical data well in the exploration of such key issues as the nature of peasant agriculture, labour migration, capital accumulation and class formation in rural areas.

On a theoretical level he analyses and challenges the dependency school of thought, taking issue with the theories of people as diverse as A.G. Frank and H. Bernstein in considerable detail and basing his critique firmly on his understanding of Marx. He suggests that, to date, people have underestimated the way in which capitalist expansion is taking place within rural societies. He focuses on the crucial importance of mechanisation of agriculture; by purchasing tractors and lowering labour times rich peasants are changing productive techniques and altering social relations of production. Mechanisation does not simply intensify existing relations and inequalities — it changes them. He argues that capital is *internal* to the peasant labour process and that capital accumulation, which in turn leads to the use of farm machinery and wage labour, is leading to a ‘qualitative
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transformation of the social relations of production and the break-up and dissolution of some of the classes and strata involved' (preface). The class struggle within the peasant society is crucial to its past, present and future development.

In this book Mark Duffield traces social and economic change from the period of initial transformation and reorganisation engendered by British colonisation through to the 1970s. He describes and analyses the dissolution of household production within an integrated peasant economy and documents the rise of peripheral capitalism. His work is characterised by a very detailed analysis of the forces of production in each period and the way in which they change in response to the penetration of capital, the development of the class struggle and the nature of the reproduction of capitalism within the peasant society.

The empirical data in the book is well researched and absorbed by the writer who describes carefully the intricacies of labour relations, planting strategies, capital accumulation in non-agricultural production and the relationship between agricultural and non-agricultural production, the significance of rising marriage expenses in rural peripheral capitalism and the rapid increase in tractorisation in this part of Sudan. He tackles such issues as the meaning of ‘gandu’, the working of indebted relations and the nature of classes in this society, bringing insight into very difficult areas. However, some interesting questions are not explored. The reader is left to wonder, for example, why in an area of commercial agriculture and mechanisation, there appears to be no buying and selling of land and little or no use of any kind of fertiliser.

This is an empirically detailed and theoretically informed work which contributes greatly to our knowledge about the nature of rural change. Whether one ultimately accepts or rejects Duffield’s analysis of peripheral capitalism one will undoubtedly have been challenged by his account and will come away with considerable knowledge concerning Sudan’s development.

Tina Wallace, University of Aston


It is sad to record that Immanuel Wallerstein’s work has now reached such a level of uncritical palatability that one now has to defend him against his epigones. One such is Rod Bush, one of the editors of Contemporary Marxism, who provides an introduction to this separately issued selection of articles from the journal. In this version of Wallersteinism, the British and French empires collapse because the US, as the hegemonic power, was no longer ‘tolerant’ of ‘lesser powers’ denying it market access (p.1). Similarly, we are told that “Rockefeller can let Reagan and the South Africans take the rap for being brutal but we should be clear that one section of the ruling class is not really more ‘enlightened’ and ‘humanistic’ than another” (p.9). Finally, in a statement that is profoundly misleading, Bush argues that: “The anti-colonial movements of the late 1950s and early 1960s . . . had not
been required to transcend their initial base in urban African trading and professional classes nor to mobilise, politically educate, and learn from the African proletarian and peasant populations" (p.6). These statements amply testify to the dangers of naive globalism. The history of anti-colonial movements is subordinated to a systemic crisis between free traders and imperialists; there is a chain of command set in motion by what is called ‘the world capitalist class’; while the struggles of workers and peasants are denuded of any power. These poor folks weren’t even significant enough to be used as tools of the emergent petty bourgeoisie. While Wallerstein has rightly been criticised by Worsley (in a recent Socialist Register, 1980) for subordinating salient political divisions to an undifferentiated economism, he has never simplified the world in quite such crude terms as Bush — who cites Wallerstein repeatedly in defence of his views. Neither in his earliest book (Africa: the Politics of Independence, 1961) nor in his latest collection with de Braganza (The African Liberation Reader, 1982) do Africans appear as totally passive victims to wider economic forces beyond their control or comprehension.

If I exaggerate the implications of Bush’s argument, I do so because I sense the profound danger (a new world system racism) and the profound errors of his position. It is one based on a deep ignorance of African labour history, of the forms of resistance and struggle developed by subordinate classes in the colonial period, of the nature of the class allegiances affected at the time and of the consequent balance of class forces. Maji-Mahi, Mau-Mau, the FLN, the coco hold-ups, the pass-burnings, the thousands of strikes, miraculously disappear into an abyss reserved for ‘non-events of the 20th century’.

Let me add immediately that to review this book solely as an extension of Bush’s views would be highly unfair to the other editors and authors, who clearly do not totally share his perspective. Magubane, for example, in the first major article of the book, extends the analysis provided in his Political Economy of Race and Class in South Africa (1979) to a more analytical discussion of ‘Imperialism and the Making of the South African Working Class’. Though there is often not enough detailed argument making crucial causal links, the title of Magubane’s chapter indicates the thrust of his piece. Internal class formation cannot be ‘read out’ from shifts at the world level; a social and class history from below has to be set in its regional (Southern African), colonial (the history of empire) and global (the rise of the transnationals and the US) contexts. The argument is suggestive rather than sustained, but it undoubtedly makes a useful contribution to those engaged in the South African debate about the efficacy of working class struggle and its relationship to the nationalist movements.

The chapter on Zaire by Nzongola-Ntalaja equally departs from the worst excesses of global determinism by arguing that the petty-bourgeoisie was able to capitalise on the revolutionary situation ‘created by the masses’ by playing in its role as an ‘intermediary in the international class struggle’ (p.57). Though this is clearly an advance on Bush’s argument and a point of view with which I would not dissent in general terms, like Bush, the author engages in a rather hype style of discourse. There are not numerous class struggles but one international class struggle. It’s ‘easy’ to understand the
petty bourgeoisie, why they ‘betrayed the people’s aspirations’, and how they sided with ‘international monopoly capital’. Again why disagree? But the account lacks contradiction, nuance, and subtlety. It therefore fails to convict this reader that the author has had an extended conversation with one of the Zairean ‘masses’ or sought to listen to any of their views, aspirations and expectations. There is peculiar displacement of human agency in Nzongola’s argument. It doesn’t evaporate altogether, rather the ‘Imperialist’ ‘Middle’ and ‘Petty’ Bourgeoisies appear to exercise unrestrained will to advance their class interests while the workers, peasants and lumpen proletriat become categories — talked about rather than talking.

The chapters on South Africa and Zaire by Magubane and Nzongola are by far the most substantial — occupying about half the book. The remaining country studies comprise a modest defence of the use of class analysis in Zambia (Mudenda); a rehash of the MPLA’s programme in Angola (Makidi-Ku-Ntima) and a brief bit of optimistic reportage on Ghana since 1981 by Airdoo (‘Never before in Ghana’s history has the working class been as mobilised as it currently is’, p.157). The book concludes with a five-page speech Wallerstein made to the Cabral conference in January 1983 (comprising some zippy and thought provoking remarks on the world class struggle) and a think piece by Peter Waterman on the concept of ‘the semi-proletarianised peasantry’. As Waterman correctly observes, the notion of a labour aristocracy has been dissected many times over, but the matching notion of the semi-proletarianised peasantry, also popularised by Arrighi and Saul for Africa, has not yet been placed on the operating table. Here the first scalpel is wielded.

In all, I found it a disappointing collection. The contributors (with the exceptions of Magubane and Waterman) seemed to know little about working class history and experiences. More often than not hyperbole and formula Wallersteinism became a substitute for a careful examination of the texture and context, the limits and possibilities, of working class struggles.

Robin Cohen

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