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Sudan: Still Waiting for National Reconciliation

Events in Sudan during 1979 had a distinct aura of *déjà vu*: domestic policy followed a familiar pattern -- alternating between reconciliation and estrangement, great expectations and grave disappointments, popular participation and public apathy, potential stability and recurring crises, the promise of economic salvation and economic deterioration.¹ Even more striking was the replication of this domestic pattern in Sudan's external relations: the fluctuating fortunes in the attempts at national reconciliation between President Numeiry and former leaders of the National Front opposition were accompanied by ups and downs in Sudan's relations with its neighbours.

Domestic politics continued to centre on the process of national reconciliation, the major changes in the structure and leadership of both the Government and the ruling Sudan Socialist Union (SSU), and the Government's intensive efforts at decentralization. These developments were closely interrelated: changes in Government were explicitly meant to meet the exigencies of the decentralization policy, while the changes in leadership implied an awareness of the need to revive the reconciliation process.

President Gaafar Numeiry was promoted to the rank of Field Marshall on 24 May 1979, in recognition of his efforts in building national unity. ¹

POLITICAL AFFAIRS

National Reconciliation:

Despite the ambiguity and uncertainty surrounding it, the reconciliation process continued its uneasy course like a long-running TV soap-opera, full of new twists and surprises, not the least being that it was still a viable proposition in early 1980.

One of the major stumbling blocks was President Numeiry's pro-Egyptian stance on the Camp David accords. Sadiq al-Mahdi's protest resignation from his SSU posts over this issue in October 1978 underlined the intense hostility towards Egypt among the former Opposition leadership. However, the motives behind Sadiq's resignation clearly went beyond this immediate cause to some of the wider implications of the reconciliation process itself. Some observers saw his resignation, partly at least, as an attempt to placate and rally those among the Ansar rank and file who still had serious reservations about, or were totally opposed to, the idea of reconciliation with the SSU.²

There was some speculation in early 1979 that Sadiq might have rejoined Sharif Hussain al-Hindi, his former colleague in exile and leader of the National Union Party (NUP), presumably to resurrect the National Front. Some external reports claimed that Sadiq had visited Tripoli and Baghdad in order to forge a 'common strategy' among exiled opposition elements and that such activities marked 'the end of national reconciliation'.³

However, sources close to Sadiq insisted that the quarrel between the two leaders was unbridgeable, and that Sadiq had come to look upon Sharif as a financier, with widespread interests in many parts of the world, rather than a serious political figure. Whatever the truth in these conflicting reports, Sadiq al-Mabdi's associates in Khartoum were anxious to dispel any notion of a final break with the regime. In early January 1978, Dr Hassan al-Turabi (ex-secretary-general of the Muslim Brethren, a former leader of the National Front and Sadiq's brother-in-law) publicly reaffirmed the former opposition leadership's commitment to the policy of reconciliation. There was, he said, a consensus among them to renounce the use of violence and to work- from within the framework of the one-party organization. He called for an 'objective handling' of all issues concerning reconciliation in order to transcend the difficult period of psychological readjustment and gradual conversion".⁴ The same view was reiterated by Dr 'Abd a-Hamid Salih, a close associate of Sadiq, who emphasized that bloody confrontations would not be allowed to recur in Sudan, " we will fight alongside Numeiry to prevent any such attempt, whether it comes, from the Right or the Left".⁵ Yet another close Ansar associate, Dr Omar Nur al-Daim, explained that Sadiq al-Mahdi's continued absence abroad was in connection with new developments in the refugee problem', and that there was 'complete co-ordination on this issue' between him and -the Sudanese authorities'.⁶

These protestations of good faith reflected concern among former Opposition leaders over the fate of national reconciliation. Such fears seemed to be justified. During the sessions of the SSU Central Committee in March 1979, Sadiq al-Mahdi and other opposition leaders came under strong attack; some criticized his prolonged absence abroad, which was seen as a political tactic and called for disciplinary measures against him for making anti-SSU remarks to the foreign press; others took the ex-Muslim Brethren group in the SSU to task for maintaining their old allegiances and partisan practices. Nurneity, in his address to the committee also accused some of the representatives of the former political parties in the SSU of being 'wolves dressed as lambs', and of attempting to turn it into 'a vehicle for a power struggle between the revolutionary forces and the old political party elements'.⁷ It was obvious that the reconciliation process was at a low ebb. The Ministry of Information monthly, *Sudanow*, noted that some of the confusion over national reconciliation persisted because of "the lack of an institutionalized beginning to the process, and because of secrecy". However, the heated nature of the discussions in the Central Committee was attributed to the diversity of views brought about by reconciliation. 'The presentation of unorthodox views within the SSU', *Sudanow* observed, "was evidence of the growing maturity of the organization".⁸

An atmosphere of uncertainty was created in Khartoum by a security alert during Numeiry's absence abroad in April 1979. There were rumours of a coup attempt and a power struggle in the top leadership. At first the Khartoum media referred obliquely to a "conspiracy against the security and stability of the Sudan," and called for "a purge from our ranks of all those instigators of hatred and hostility who yearn to resurrect the dark past".⁹ Then, on 9 April, General Omar Muhammad al-Tayib, the chief of State Security, told the People's National Assembly that the security forces had discovered large quantities of smuggled weapons and uncovered the existence of a secret 'tribal' organization.¹⁰ As no details of the nature and activities of the 'tribal' organization were made public, uncertainty and speculation continued over who was behind the coup attempt -- if indeed there was such an attempt. According to one outside observer, "only non-commissioned officers and ranks have so far figured among the army officers arrested. The majority of them are from Western Sudan, a traditionally Right-wing area which has close ties with Libya".¹¹ In May, 45 people went on trial in Khartoum before a State Security Court on charges of subversion and arms traffic. The Sudan News Agency (SUNA) reported in October that 14 persons, both military and civilian, were sentenced to jail terms ranging from eight years to six months, while another 31 were acquitted.

After his return in mid-April from Britain -- where he had gone for medical treatment and rest -- the President expressed his "deep appreciation and confidence" in the various organs of government, particularly the armed forces and security organs which "have proved, under all circumstances, their efficiency and their ceaseless defence

of the gains made by the revolution".¹² By the end of May, domestic political tension began dissipating. Following a repatriation agreement between the Sudanese and Libyan governments, c. 350 Sudanese *Ansar* exiles returned to Khartoum on 28 May. The 'returnees' were described in the local press as "the hardcore soldiers" of Sadiq al-Mahdi's old National who had been trained and armed by Libya.¹³ The repatriation of the *Ansar* exiles reflected improved relations with Libya and cleared the way for the revival of the reconciliation drive. It also indicated Sadiq's irrevocable commitment to reconciliation, despite persistent differences, since the repatriation of the *Ansars* meant, in effect, that the "traditional opposition was no longer in a position to attempt a coup *d'état* from outside as it did last time in July 1976".¹⁴

In any case, the domestic situation by mid-1979 was characterized by different and often contradictory reports. On the one hand; the improved atmosphere in the reconciliation process tended to lend credence to speculation that Sadiq al-Mahdi might be tempted to resume his participation in the regime's institutions. *Reuter* reported in June that he was expected to be offered the job of Prime Minister. On the other hand, *Ansar* sources in Khartoum dismissed the idea because of Sadiq's reluctance to assume any official position that could prevent him from publicly voicing his differences with the regime. When Sadiq finally returned to Khartoum on 18 June, he attributed his prolonged absence abroad to his preoccupation with two book projects and lecture tours, and to his efforts to mobilize Arab and Islamic opinion against the Camp David accords. Sadiq insisted that Sudan's support of the agreements had created "a set of new realities, including the threat this support posed to the security of the *Ansar*". As to reconciliation, Sadiq allowed that "certain things have been achieved, including dialogue and, the freedom necessary to undertake such dialogue". But, he said, no specific programme had so far emerged which could be used as "the basis for the permanent achievement of reconciliation". He concluded that "the situation remains as it was before – nothing is new".¹⁵

The President and the Ruling Party:

Sudan was suddenly faced in early August with a new situation as a wave of popular discontent swept the country. Student riots broke out in Khartoum and a number of provincial capitals on 5 August following the announcement of hefty hikes in commodity prices; these included a 66% rise in the retail price of petrol, and with it, higher bus and taxi fares. On 10 August railway workers went on a five-day strike in support of demands for a cut in the cost of living and implementation of a second-phase pay increase.

The resulting political crisis forced President Numeiry to take swift action to avert what some outside observers described as "the most serious political threat to trouble him since he came to power 10 years ago".¹⁶ In a series of 'confrontation' meetings with the SSU leadership on 6 August, he made scathing attacks on the ruling party's organization and criticized the 'negative aspects' of the SSU reflected in its 'complete absence' in the

face of rampant consumer problems. He also condemned its 'neutrality' towards lethargy and corruption in Executive organs; its 'silence' over the problems facing some development projects; its 'tolerance' of anti-revolutionary moves inside and outside the country; and its 'lack of effort' in transforming national reconciliation into reality.¹⁷ Five days later, on 11 August, Numeiry took the very bold step of stripping his influential First Vice-President and SSU Secretary-General, Abu al-Qasim Muhammad Ibrahim, of all his political posts and appointed his Defence Minister, General Abd al-Majid Hamid Khalil, as First Vice-President. He personally took over the key political post of SSU secretary-general.

Although the imminence of Abu al-Qasim's fall from grace had been the centre of speculation in Khartoum since the policy of reconciliation began in July 1977, his actual dismissal was completely unexpected; it was at once seen as heralding major changes in the country's political framework. Although no official reasons were given for his dismissal, it could be directly attributed to two main factors. First, in handling the farmers and railway workers' strikes in April and August, he was forced to make financial concessions -- apparently against the President's express instructions -- that were likely to lead to more demands in other sectors and, consequently to increased trade union unrest and strikes. Second, and more significantly, his continued hard-line opposition to reconciliation with the former Opposition leadership was directly in conflict with the President's attempts to widen his popular base by reviving the reconciliation process. In his 'confrontation' meetings' with the SSU, Numeiry deplored the organization's failure to resolve 'the ongoing feud' within its ranks between "the old guard' and 'the returnees'".¹⁸

Thus, the changes at the top seemed to reflect, as *Sudanow* noted, an extension of the reconciliation policy, 'designed to tempt al-Mahdi's men—if not Sadiq al-Mahdi himself—into the Government'. Indeed, Numeiry's harsh criticism of the SSU seemed to echo some of the charges made by Sadiq when he resigned from the Politbureau in October 1978.

Government and SSU Changes:

When the expected changes finally materialized on 17 August, they took the form of a wholesale shakeup of the Cabinet and SSU organization. As the Economist put it, "President Numeiry shuffled his government like a pack of cards, and dropped a few of the least popular jokers".¹⁹

Six ministers and two Presidential advisers were dismissed, and four others were recycled to other Cabinet and Government posts. Two new important appointments were made: Dr Hassan al-Turabi, the former Muslim Brothers' leader, became Attorney-General, and Dr Ahmed al-Sayed Hamad (a former leader in the People Democratic Party which used to be the political arm of the *Khatmiya* sect) became Minister of Telecommunications. The SSU Politbureau was reduced from 27 to 17 members, and the

number of Secretariats was cut from IS to four; each of these was to be headed by Politbureau members who were also Ministers.²⁰

Elements of Opposition:

Before announcing the changes Numeiry accused 'communists and atheists' of inciting the student riots, singled out 'communist teacher' and called on trade unions to weed out communist elements from their ranks. It was, perhaps, natural and predictable for leftist opponents to make political bay out of the President's domestic difficulties--just as it was natural and predictable for the President to raise the communist bogey whenever such difficulties arose. But, whereas the Leftist opposition stood to gain from the frequent recurrence of these difficulties, Numeiry's increasing resort to what one foreign commentator called, the 'communist gimmick',²¹ was bound to cost him a certain measure of credibility. Most observers believed that the accusations of communist instigation were "insufficient to explain away the wave of popular discontent which seems to have gripped all levels at Sudanese society".²²

Moreover, the deteriorating economic situation--which actually triggered off the wave of popular discontent--could not be plausibly attributed to communist machinations. For that the President had no alternative but to blame his own political organization. Hence the 'confrontation' meetings with the SSU leadership and the sweeping changes in the Government and party organization. As one foreign observer somewhat caustically remarked: "President Numeiry had succeeded in achieving *un véritable tour de force*: he had managed to blame his own regime for all the ills afflicting the country, without implicating himself at the same time".²³

In a tacit recognition of one central fact of political life, *Sudanow* noted in a sombre editorial, "We cannot prevent our enemies from exploiting the seeds of frustration and discontent which have, after all, a firm basis in reality. But we can make some effort to remove these grievances upon which our enemies depend. Changing the faces will not be enough to overcome our problems. Rather, we need a change of policies".²⁴

Future Prospects for National Reconciliation:

Although the structural changes in the SSU failed to measure up to the Ansar's expectations--specifically, elections at all levels of the political organization, and an active role for the Politbureau in determining policy and approving the members of Government--insiders said they regarded the changes as a "positive breakthrough".²⁵ Indeed, some of the former Opposition leaders were given positions in the political system after the August changes. In particular, the appointment of Dr Hassan al-Turabi as Attorney-General was seen as a significant step in the move to adapt existing laws to the Islamic *Sharia*. Sadiq's close associate, Dr Abdel-Hamid Salih, was appointed Controller

of the people's National Assembly--a position which was, the closest thing to an institutionalized Opposition in the one-party state".²⁶

Still, Sadiq al-Mahdi's attitude towards the reconciliation process remained somewhat ambivalent. He apparently remained convinced of Numeiry's *bona fides* in wishing reconciliation, and accepted that a degree of political freedom and tolerance had been achieved; but his reservations were still considerable. In an interview in early 1980 Sadiq stated, "What is involved in the reconciliation is a programme of radical reforms in the constitutional, political and legal fields, which has so far not been fulfilled. Until the necessary reforms agreed upon have taken place, I don't see how there can be a unified approach to the political system in Sudan; but I shall do what I can".²⁷

Despite the reported efforts, made by some of the former Opposition leaders, to persuade other exiles to return to Sudan, the hostility of exiled opposition elements continued unabated. A 'Sudanese Patriotic Front' was formed in London, an almost unholy alliance comprising Sharif al-Hindi's group and a number of other opposition groups, including the Communist Party. The Front called for free elections and the return, not only of political parties, but also of liberal democracy. During the August riots in Khartoum, Sharif al-Hindi said in Kuwait that the Numeiry regime was dying and blamed the riots on "dictatorial rule, corruption, starvation and poor administration".²⁸

In Khartoum, advocates of reconciliation continued to reiterate their optimism over its chances of success. With the return of the exiled Ansar, it was argued, the process was no longer contingent upon the views of individuals and had, in fact, entered the post-reconciliation phase of participation in government—a phase which had, in turn, become possible because "the gap dividing Government and Opposition views on political organization and foreign policy had narrowed".²⁹

Decentralization of Government:

Numeiry announced a series of Presidential decrees on 1 February 1979 which were to reshape government power and structure through decentralization. Seven Government Central Ministries (Education, Interior, Religious Affairs, Youth and Sports, Co-operation, Social Affairs, and Commerce and Supply), were abolished and their functions transferred to local authorities. Four other Ministries (Finance, Agriculture, Health, and Construction) had their powers drastically reduced. Two new Ministries—Education and Guidance and Co-operation, Commerce and Supply--were created to fulfill the functions not transferred to the provinces. These changes in the structure of the Central Government were in line with the recommendations of the First People's Local Government Conference, held in January 1978, which envisaged changes based on "the centralization of planning and the devolution of implantation".³⁰

The decentralization drive was further accelerated when Numeiry, in his keynote address to the SSU Central Committee in March 1979, proposed the division of Sudan into three main regions broadly comprising the Western, Eastern, and Northern regions,

with the Southern region retaining its present autonomous status. The most important difference between the autonomy enjoyed by the South and that proposed for the new regions is that while the President of the High Executive Council (HEC) is responsible to—and can be removed by a two-thirds no-confidence vote of—the Southern Regional Assembly, the Governors of the proposed regions would be Presidential appointees.

Numeiry formed two committees in mid-1979—one national and the other technical—to make comprehensive studies and specific recommendations on the proposals for regional government. The Technical Committee was commissioned to tour the various parts of the country in order to sound local opinion on the devolution proposals and then to report to the National Committee on its findings.³¹ The recommendations of the Regional Committee on Regional Government were submitted to the SSU Third National Congress in January 1980. The Congress endorsed most of the recommendations, but made some important modifications. Instead of the creation of three new regions, the Congress recommended the establishment of five regions—Northern, Eastern, Central, Kordofan, and Darfur Regions—in addition to the Southern Region and Khartoum Province (which would have a special status as the seat of the national government).³² The proposed devolution plans entail drastic changes in the structure, power and functions of the governmental system in the Sudan. According to one public administration expert, they would make Sudan “one of the most decentralized countries in the developing world”.³³

At the central level, the Presidential system of government would be retained with the President as head of the executive but also enjoying some legislative powers. Matters pertaining to the sovereignty of the state (such as defence, foreign policy, currency, customs, foreign trade, and national development schemes) would be exercised by the Central Government which would also reserve the right to veto any regional legislation and to control the national purse. Regional Administrations would consist of a Governor, a People's Regional Assembly and a Regional Council of Ministers. The Governor would be appointed by the President from a list of three persons nominated by the Regional Assembly. The Council of Ministers would consist of seven appointed by the President on recommendation of the Regional Governor. The elected People's Assembly would have a membership of not less than 50 and not more than 70, depending on the density of the population in each region. At the provincial level, the Provincial commissioner—appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Regional Governor—would enjoy Ministerial status and become the representative of the Regional Government, the chairman of the People's Province Executive Council (PPEC), and the head of local government service. At the district level, members of the District Council who elect the PPEC members would themselves be elected by rural and urban councils. Functions and powers would be delegated to them by the PPEC to which they would be directly

responsible. The Base Councils, directly elected by the local people, would form the base of a pyramid of authorities, the apex of which would be the PPEC.³⁴

The idea of decentralization is not new. Since the People's Local Government Act of 1971, the Government had been moving towards the establishment of a more comprehensive local government system. In this context, Regional Government could be seen as constituting an intermediate tier in the devolution to local government. In the debate over Regional Government both the advantages and disadvantages of devolution became clear. For one thing, the sheer size of the country and its underdeveloped infrastructure tended to militate against responsive and efficient rule from the centre. Second, uneven social and economic development and the ethnic diversity of the country seemed to call for some measure of autonomy in order to satisfy local conditions and aspirations. Moreover, the participatory nature of local government could be seen as being conducive to the democratization of political institutions in the country as a whole. Yet, in the absence of some strong element of central control, these same factors could lead to the disintegration of the State. Indeed, in a country seething with latent separatist tendencies, and still seeking to achieve a workable formula for national unity, the very idea of devolution could be fraught with potential hazards. More practically, the financial cost of decentralization seemed to be prohibitive, particularly in view of the chronic economic difficulties and the drain on trained manpower. At the centre of the debate was the experiment in Southern Sudan which, paradoxically, was invoked by both advocates and opponents of devolution in support of their arguments. The former conceded the shortcomings of the Southern Regional Governments, but concluded that, on the whole, it had withstood the test of time. The latter argued that the performance of the South's Regional Government hardly warranted upholding it as a model of devolution for the rest of the country.³⁵

In the final analysis, the future of Regional Government in Sudan would most likely depend, not on the merits and demerits of devolution as such, but on the Government's ability to resolve some of the outstanding political and economic problems of the country. As *Sudanow* put it, "For the Central Government to go ahead with any kind of political confidence in the autonomy plans, the necessary degree of political unity had to be developed and, in particular, the dynamics of the process of national reconciliation had to be well-established".³⁶

SOUTHERN SUDAN AFFAIRS

Political developments in the South continued to reflect acute divisions which, at times, threatened to destabilize the region's whole political process. The immediate cause of these divisions could be traced to the 1978 elections when Gen Joseph Lagu (former leader of the Any Nya), Samuel Aru (former leader of SANU) and Clement Mboro

(former leader of the Southern Front) joined forces in a successful campaign to oust the Abel Alier administration.³⁷ Following their dramatic electoral victory, Lagu became President of the HEC, with Aru as his Vice-President, while Mboro became speaker of the People's Regional Assembly. However, the Lagu-Aru partnership soon began to show signs of strain and the stage was set, not for the expected confrontation between the new administration and the Alier opposition, but for an acute power struggle within the HEC itself. The reasons behind this development were not quite clear. It is possible that President Lagu's highhandedness, which alienated some of his own supporters, might have contributed to the rift. Equally, it could be attributed to the machinations of the politically ambitious Aru, who was known to covet Lagu's job. In any case, given the simmering undercurrents of sensitivity, dissatisfaction and personal clashes, the rift was perhaps inevitable.

President Lagu made his first move on 23 November 1979 by dismissing Aru and his supporters in a sweeping Cabinet reshuffle. Seven Ministers—including Lawrence Wol Wol, the former Regional Minister for Finance and Planning, and Benjamin Bok Akok, the former Regional Minister for Agriculture, Animal Resources and Irrigation—were relieved of all Ministerial posts. At the end of February, Aru was dismissed from the SSU politbureau, but still retained his seat in the Regional Assembly. Four new Regional Ministers were appointed, including Peter Gatkouth, who became the new Vice-President of the HEC as well as Regional Minister of Finance and Planning; and Natale ULwak Akolawin, who became the Regional Minister for Communications, Legal Affairs and Co-ordinations.

What was surprising in the shuffle was not so much the scope of the changes but the shift in political alliances which it seemed to indicate. Most of the newcomers were political associates of Abel Alier, particularly the new Vice-President of the HEC who was generally regarded as Alier's right-hand man. The official rationale for the changes was it they were necessary to overcome tribal groupings and regional allegiances in the administration. Lagu explained that the reshuffle was intended to infuse the government with new blood in order to end the sharp divisions in the South. It is more likely, however, that the reshuffle was a desperate attempt by Lagu to reassert his personal control over the HEC in the face of mounting challenges from the Aru group and also from some of his own supporters. The fact that Lagu had to seek the political support of Abel Alier's group was perhaps an indication of the erosion of his own position in the HEC and the mounting opposition to him in the Regional Assembly.

The strained relations between the HEC and the Assembly came close to open confrontation over the issue of alleged diversion of public funds for the private use of the President and some of his associates. While allegations of corruption were hardly new in Southern Sudanese politics, this time it seemed as if the opposition in the

Assembly was carefully orchestrating them in a sustained campaign to, bring down Lagu's government. The President was accused of having deposited \$1.5m in a Nairobi bank, and of having built his multi-storey house in Juba with government money. The campaign took an ominous turn in June when a number of MPs, led by Samuel Aru, introduced a motion in the Regional Assembly for the impeachment of President Lagu. The President, who was naturally incensed by these proceedings, responded in July in typical high-handed fashion by ordering the arrest of Samuel Aru, and then announcing another Government reshuffle. Aru was accused of plotting to overthrow the regime and of having written a letter to Sadiq al-Mahdi in which he allegedly planned to undermine the 1972 Addis Ababa agreement.

In the reshuffle, announced on 12 July, Lagu dismissed three Ministers (Ezeldel Kodi, Arthur Akwien: and Simon Mori), two Commissioners and a Presidential Adviser (Ezboni Mundiri). The President accused them of being 'disloyal'. On 17 July, Lagu carried a purge of his former allies to the Regional Assembly by having Clement Mboro voted out of the Speakership of the Assembly, and his deputies similarly removed. Mboro, who is popular in the South but has no strong political base, was accused of being behind the rumours of corruption and financial mismanagement. Lagu continued his previous practice of appointing more 'Alier men' replace his dismissed former supporters. Both of Lawrence Lwal Lwal, the new Minister of High Executive Council Affairs, and Dr. Gustin Yak, the new Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resource, were political associates of Abel Alier. As one observer succinctly put it: "Alier has won".³⁸

It was, indeed, a curious situation in which the President of the HEC seemed to have become the political *protégé* of the man he had kicked out of office. Lagu's, readiness to pay such a political price in order to stay in office raised serious doubts about the long-term prospects of his Administration. His increasingly difficult position can be judged from the reaction of his Government to a report in the London-based Lebanese weekly *Al-Hawadess* that alleged Lagu had misappropriated a \$2.5m donation from the United Arab Emirates. When a translation of the article appeared in Juba in September, the HEC issued an official denial of the allegation and blamed their circulation on "those who were dismissed in the last reshuffle", and who were now attempting to instigate in the South. An official spokesman said that the President of the HEC intended to sue the offending magazine. According to one Southern source, the Regional Minister of Commerce, Supply and Co-ordination, Martin Majer (who is closely related to Alier) resigned over this issue because he did not want to serve under a corrupt government. The resignation was accepted.³⁹ These developments tended to undermine the credibility and the performance of the Regional Government. Although the Regional Assembly eventually dismissed the impeachment motion, damaging rumours continued to circulate. In February 1980, President Numeiry announced the dissolution of both the Central and Regional Assemblies and ordered new elections. On 12 February, he relieved Joseph

Lagu from the Presidency of the HEC—ostensibly on Lagu’s own request because he did not want to lay himself open to charges if tampering with the coming elections.⁴⁰

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The Refugee Problem:

Sudan has a long standing and painful refugee problem. The influx of refugees in large numbers started in 1965 during the Congo crisis. Since 1967 successive waves crossed Sudan’s Eastern borders. In all, Sudan has accepted refugees from six of its eight bordering states: Ethiopia, Uganda, Libya, the Central African Republic, Chad and Zaire. Conservative estimates put the 1979 level of refugees at over 500,000.⁴¹ According to an official statement, “the refugees are spread over large areas, in six of the country’s 14 provinces. The diversity of their ethnic, social and cultural backgrounds has created many social and economic difficulties. The great majority of them live outside regular settlements, thereby causing a strain on services which are insufficient even for national”⁴².

The refugee problem was particularly aggravated during 1979 as a result of the fighting in Uganda. The defeat of Gen Idi Amin’s forces caused a huge influx of refugees into Southern Sudan, creating additional strains on the country’s already ailing economy as well as on its security problems. As the refugees started to flow in, the Regional Government formed security committees to register them at the main points of entry in Kaya, Kojokaji and Nimule. Their numbers were estimated at c. 130,000, but many would have managed to cross over without registration. The problem of the Ugandan refugees was further complicated by the legal controversy over the exact nationality of the refugees. At the Arusha conference on African refugees, organized by the UN and OAU in May, the Ugandan delegation denied the existence of any problem, claiming that “people who fled from Uganda are not refugees but Sudanese citizens returning home after massacring Ugandan”. The Sudan delegation maintained that these people had left Sudan 100 years previously and settled in Uganda, and could not therefore be regarded as Sudanese citizens.⁴³

Many of the troops loyal to Amin were from the Nubian and Kakwal tribes which originally came from Sudan. But few of the refugees seemed to bother about the legal niceties raised by relief organizations of whether they were ‘returnees’ or ‘refugees’. As one of them put it, “ridiculous colonial frontiers have at least afforded us somewhere to flee!”⁴⁴

Vice-President Abel Alier, chairman of the National Refugee Committee, said in London in mid-October that refugees are “putting a serious strain on already over-stretched services”. But the Vice-President insisted that Sudan “Sudan would not expel

any refugees and would not close its borders to them". He said Sudan planned to "build settlements for refugees in rural and urban areas and to start long-term health and education programmes to integrate them into the economy".⁴⁵

The Sudanese Government has consistently maintained an enlightened approach to the refugee problem by stubbornly refusing to return any political exiles and by strictly adhering to the OAU charter—in marked contrast, for instance, to Kenya, which was reported in 1979 to handing back c. 40,000 Ugandan refugees. This charitable attitude, however, has so far failed to draw contributions from other countries to lessen the burden on the Sudanese. As one foreign observer noted, "there were world protests at the far fewer refugees in South-East Asia. Yet refugees from Vietnam have never equaled those in north-east Africa where more than 300,000 in Somalia, 10,000 in Djibouti and thousands more in Kenya—though nowhere more than in the Sudan".⁴⁶

Sudan has plenty of land and a small population, so this aspect of the problem is relatively uncomplicated: but the social, health, housing and education problems, with their requirements in money, services, and staff, are the stumbling blocks. About half the refugees are from urban areas and have swarmed Khartoum and the main towns, and this is where the most serious difficulties arise.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

During 1979 and early 1980 and early 1980 Sudan continued to manoeuvre between its basic support for Egypt and its unwillingness to find itself ostracized by the Arab rejectionist front. The balancing act was almost acrobatic, with Sudan vacillating between the two opposing positions without making a decisive commitment to, or an irrevocable break with, one side or the other. But, given the painful realities of the Middle East situation, it was clear that Sudan could not go on hedging its bets indefinitely. The short-term objective of Sudan's foreign policy was therefore to minimize the damaging impact of its 'neutralist stance'—at least in so far as its relations with its neighbours were concerned.

Relations with Libya:

The Libyan reaction to Numeiry's announcement, in October 1978, of his qualified support for the Camp David accords took some time to materialize presumably because Gaddafi had hoped to wean Numeiry away from Sadat. But when it finally came in early 1979 it took the familiar form of an all-out diplomatic offensive designed to destabilize the Sudanese regime. The Libyan leader admitted that he was instrumental in scuttling the Freetown meeting in February 1979 (see below) between Numeiry and the Ethiopian leader Mengistu Haile Matiam, because of the former's refusal to abandon his alliance

with Sadat; this, he said, had left Libya no option but to join with Ethiopia in a common front against the Egyptian-Sudanese axis. In March, Khartoum made a formal protest to Tripoli against the “proliferation of lies about the Sudan” in the Libyan media. On 19 April, Ali Shumu, Minister of Information and Culture, issued an official statement denying allegations of an attempted coup and of the presence of 'tens of thousands' of Egyptian

troops in the Sudan.⁴⁸ In an editorial on 7 March 1979 that seemed to reflect concern over the renewed tension with Libya and Ethiopia, and over the fighting in Uganda, *al-Sahafa* noted that “the prevailing circumstances in the area surrounding us, underline the need to consolidate national unity and to strengthen our internal front”. In early May the pendulum of Sudanese-Libyan relations began to swing again towards normalization. The Vice-President and Foreign Affairs Minister al-Rashid al-Tahir Bakr, and the chief of security Gen Omar Mahammad al-Tayib visited Tripoli to negotiate arrangement for the repatriation of the Ansar exiles. The visit culminated in a joint communiqué on 7 May which affirmed “the commitment of parties to the Baghdad summit resolutions” and their “utmost rejection” of any agreement that legitimize the occupation of Palestine and the Arab territories”.

Although the Tripoli communiqué provided the basis for the new improvement in relations, it was nevertheless highly ambiguous. In the first place, it failed to specify, perhaps deliberately so, which Baghdad conference resolutions it was referring to: (Sudan had participated in the first Baghdad conference of November 1978, but did not attend the second Baghdad conference of April 1979, which imposed sanctions against Egypt.) Secondly, the communiqué was first broadcast in Tripoli and was then taken up by some European radio stations, but there was a complete blackout about it in the Sudanese media. These curious omissions seemed to reflect the deliberate ambiguity of Sudan's attitude towards the Egyptian-Israeli treaty. While Sudan still refrained from joining the majority of the Arab states in any sanctions against Egypt, the Sudanese Government began to underline the qualified nature of its support for Egypt, and to emphasize its nonaligned stance in Arab quarrels. Apparently, such a shift in Sudan's position was acceptable to the Libyans who, in response, again promised to support Sudan's policy national reconciliation.

Sudnow noted in June that Sudan's assertion of its independent position and the improvement of relations with Libya were expected to have considerable internal and external implications. “Libyan and Sudanese roles are essentially complementary, not competitive. Good relations with Libya will strengthen Sudan efforts to mediate in Chad, Eritrea and the Arab world, and the possibility of better relations with Ethiopia and the Soviet Union”.

Relations with Libya continued to improve as Sudanese-Egyptian relations began to show signs of strains, particularly towards the end of 1979, when Khartoum seemed to be at the point of making a final break with Egypt.

Relation with Ethiopia:

Towards the end of 1978 the tension in Sudanese-Ethiopian relations began to subside.⁴⁹ on 28 January 1979, the Sudan Foreign Minister confirmed that Numeiry had agreed to meet Colonel Mengistu in Freetown, Sierra Leone, in mid-February. In an interview with *Sudanow*, Col Mengistu took a conciliatory attitude. The “minor problems” between Sudan and Ethiopia, he said, were unnecessary and would be solved; steps must be taken to correct previous mistakes on both sides. He emphasized the need for an “honest dialogue” and expressed optimism about the prospects of the Freetown summit, which he saw as “an avenue for a new understanding”.

The optimistic expectations that the meeting would provide a real breakthrough seemed to dissolve into thin air as the two sides met in Freetown on 15 February. Predictably, the rock on which the negotiations foundered was the Eritrean question. The Sudanese argued that there were no substantial differences between the two countries other than the problems arising from, or related to, the Eritrean question; therefore, the efforts on both sides should concentrate on resolving this particular issue. The Ethiopian denied the existence of “an Eritrean problem”; there was only an Eritrean rebellion, which was purely an internal affair and which, in any case, had been dealt with militarily; therefore, the talks should concentrate on other differences between the two countries. It was like a dialogue of the deaf. As one observer commented, “while Sudan was speaking politically, Ethiopia was speaking legally. And both sides were right”.⁵⁸

Inevitably, the failure of the Freetown summit led to mutual recriminations. Addis Ababa blamed the breakdown on “Sudan’s fear of peace”. The Khartoum press blamed the deadlock on Ethiopian intransigence which, according to *al-Ayam*, was the result of Libyan pressures and Soviet machinations. Relations between the two countries began to show signs of slight improvement in May when the Ethiopian leader sent Numeiry an unprecedented message of congratulation for the tenth anniversary of the revolution—a gesture which the Sudanese President reciprocated in September for the fifth anniversary of the Ethiopian revolutions.

In late September, official circles in Khartoum expressed high hopes for the revival of the Sudanese-Ethiopian Joint Ministerial Committee which had last met in Addis Ababa in 1973. The idea of reconvening the committee was first raised in discussions between the two sides at the Monrovia OAU summit in July. There were in January 1980 that the *Dergue* had increased its diplomatic efforts to neutralize Sudan’s support for the EPLF—with some success as indicated by the removal of Eritrean refugees from Khartoum and other cities to Eastern Sudan.

An Ethiopian delegation participated in the SSU Third National Congress at the end of January 1980 and was received by Numeiry. Afterwards, the head of the Ethiopian delegation said that the meeting “had resulted in positive steps to bolster and enhance bilateral relations”. An invitation to the Sudanese Vice-President to visit Ethiopia was accepted.

Thus by January 1980, relations between Sudan and Ethiopia seemed to come full circle to where they had been in 1979.

Relations with Egypt:

President Sadat peace initiative with Israel injected a new and potentially explosive element, not only into Sudan’s relations with its neighbours, but also into the delicate process of national reconciliation. The delicate question of Sudan’s relations with Egypt was further compounded when the Egyptian-Israeli treaty was signed in March 1979. Sudan’s reaction to this development was characterized with a deliberate ambiguity that seemed to reflect the regime’s uneasy position. No official statement on the peace treaty was issued; nor did Numeiry make any public gesture in its support. According to the Lebanese *Al-Anwar*, Numeiry stated that his support of the Middle East peace effort did not mean support for solutions that ignore the rights of the Palestinians and that fail to secure Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories”.⁵¹

The essential dilemma of the Sudanese Government was how to avoid joining the general Arab boycott of the Egyptian regime without running the risk of being isolated itself. In the aftermath of the peace treaty there were, indeed, indications that Sudan was finding itself as virtually isolated as Egypt. During March and April, hostility towards Sudan was reflected in a campaign of criticism, and even abuse, in some of the Arab press. More seriously, there was the danger that Sudan's refusal to join the boycott could lead to the country suffering the same punitive measures that had inflicted on Egypt. Sudan was particularly vulnerable to this kind of pressure, especially if it were applied to development investment funds. An ominous sign of such pressure was the Iraqi decision to cut off oil supplies to the Sudan at the end of March. On 21 April, Numeiry retaliated by severing diplomatic relations with Iraq. He, explained that the motive behind Iraqi hostility was the Ba'thist resentment of the success of the policy of national unity in Southern Sudan—a success which emphasized, by contrast, the Ba'thist failure to come to terms with their own Kurdish minority. However, Iraqi pressures on the Sudanese regime could be more plausibly seen as part of a wider strategy aimed essentially at ensuring the complete isolation of Egypt.

Internal pressures seemed to be moving in the same direction. Indeed, the intense hostility of the former Opposition leaders towards Sadat's regime, and the uneasy feeling in the South over the integration plans with Egypt, went beyond the immediate issue of

the peace treaty. Sadiq al-Mahdi's view was that "Sudan's ties with Egypt had led it down a predictable path 'of support for the US and anti-Soviet initiatives in Africa...This committed foreign policy was too inflexible. It invited reprisal from Soviet allies on Sudan's very borders, specifically Libya and Ethiopia. And by over-identifying with one 'Super-power' it ignored the potential of Islam as a world force and restricted Sudan's freedom".⁵²

In the face of internal opposition and external pressures, the Sudanese regime began in mid-1979 to emphasize a more independent, non-aligned position—which meant looser ties with

Egypt. In an interview in June, Numeiry stated that Sudan's attitude towards the Middle East question was based upon "the principles which we believe would lead to the advancement of the Arab cause". Sudan, he said, would not be 'categorized' as belonging to one camp or the other "We are part of the Arab world and seek to achieve objectives under the auspices of the Arab League".⁵³

Sudan's shift of emphasis in its Arab policy had not meant any final resolution of the country's painful dilemma. As one Arab observer put it, "Sudan tended to object to the peace, treaty without condemning it, and to accept the Bagdad conference resolutions without implementirigthem".⁵⁴ According to some foreign observers, Sudan's neutral stance *vis-à-vis* the rift between Egypt and the Arab States, had been tacitly accepted by Saudi Arabia, and other potential moderates. The reasons for this are two-fold: First, these countries want Sudan to remain a bridge for eventual reconciliation with Egypt. Second, they did not want to destabilize the Sudanese regime with sanctions for fear of paving the way to risky alternatives such as a Leftist or militant Islamic regime. Hence, the continuation of economic aid to Sudan.⁵⁵

Still, the pressures on Numeiry to make a final breach with Egypt remained enormous. Sudan's uneasy position was not made any less difficult by the hard-hitting and defiant attitude of the Egyptian leader towards his Arab critics. Moreover, the Egyptian media took every opportunity of emphasizing; and often distorting, any statement emanating from Khartoum that could be construed as favourable to the Egyptian position. More embarrassing still was Sadat's charge in September that Saudi Arabia and Libya were colluding against Sudan as part of a wider conspiracy against Egypt".⁵⁶ These developments reflected Egyptian concern over the possibility of Sudan's possible defection at a time when relations between the two contries were coming under some strain. Sudan had expressed fears about the reported Egyptian offer of Nile waters for irrigating the Negev desert. More ominously, some of the Arab press reports of Egyptian moves to exercise pressure on Sudan, and of contacts between Cairo and Addis Ababa directed against Sudan. President Numeiry seemed to be underling the drift away

from Egypt when he decided to take personal charge of the Sudanese delegation to the Arab Heads of State conference held in Tunis in November. The President was reported to have had separate talks with the Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, and of PLO leader Yasir Arafat. Upon his return from Tunis in late November, Numeiry revealed his growing disenchantment with Sadat's policies when he referred, in a statement to *al-Ayam*, to "the failure of unilateral initiatives over a whole year to obtain results regarding the occupied territories, the liberation of Jerusalem and the restoration of the rights of the Palestinians". Sudan withdrew its ambassador to Cairo on 18 September, and appointed him Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. Since Sudan had declared that its diplomat in the Egyptian capital would be called home if the Israeli flag were hoisted in Cairo, the move was seen as paving the way for breaking diplomatic ties with Egypt (scheduled for 26 February 1980).⁵⁷ *Sudanow* stated in December that Sudan was not interested in any peace settlement that failed to deliver on the fundamental demands called for in Baghdad and Tunis. "Sudan would have to protect its own interests, should Egypt take any step that threatened to pull Sudan into the abyss with her", the official monthly said, "The exchange of ambassadors between Cairo and Tel Aviv might be such a move".

However, the forecasts of an imminent break in Sudanese-Egyptian relations proved to be premature. In mid-January 1980, Numeiry began back-peddling, "telling newsmen that despite disagreement, relations with Egypt are stronger than with a number of other Arab states". Then on 31 January, Numeiry dropped another bombshell by declaring that Sudan would not be breaking diplomatic relations with Egypt after all. Incredibly, the President disowned all the statements attributed to him during the Tunis conference, insisting that he had said 'nothing', and that his very presence in Tunis was 'problematic'. (He did not say how and why). He reiterated the importance of Sudan's special ties with Egypt, and claimed that according to international diplomatic practice, the recall of the Sudanese ambassador to Cairo was a "sufficient gesture of protest".⁵⁹

This new shift in direction seemed to emphasize rather than to resolve Sudan's painful dilemma. It was apparent that, despite all the internal and external pressures, Numeiry's regime would not, or could not extricate itself from the intractable ramifications of its special relationship with Egypt. The alternatives are hardly reassuring. The continuation of the pro-Egyptian line by the regime is likely, first, to encourage internal opposition to play on latent anti-Egyptianism and, second, to invite reprisal from anti-Egyptian states. Even a reassertion of the nonaligned attitude towards the polarization in Arab relations may prove to be insufficient in the long run. There is still little certainty that the sanctions against Egypt would not be applied to Sudan. Should the policy of nonalignment, whether actual or nominal, eventually end up antagonizing one or both sides, the implications for President Numeiry's regime could be very grave; perhaps even fatal. As one, rather unsympathetic, foreign observer put it, "In reality, the practice of double-talk, of which the Sudanese Head of State has become a

master, is no longer fooling anyone. Numeiry is dancing on a tight rope which, sooner or later is bound to snap”.⁶⁰

Relations with the West:

The Western tilt in Numeiry foreign policies, which began after the attempted in 1971 coup which be bad blamed at the time on the Soviet bloc, continued in 1979. His refusal to condemn the Camp David accords further strengthened American support for his leadership and increased their willingness to extend aid to Sudan. The US is now the most important supplier of arms to Sudan along with France and Britain. The Sudan-US Business Council met twice during 1979 and identified 20 projects which could be implemented as joint ventures. Sudan's traditional links with Britain remain strong, and were underlined by a visit to Khartoum in May 1979 of Richard Luce, a junior Minister in the Foreign Office in charge of African Affairs. Sudan is now the second largest recipient of Britain aid in Africa, after Kenya. Development aid in 1978 came to \$20m.

Relations with France also grew closer since Numeiry's state visit to Paris in 1976 and again in 1979. When President Giscard d'Estaing visited Khartoum in May, he launched his idea of a 'trilogue' among Europe, Africa and the Arab world (see essay on France in Africa). French aid has increased in the last three years (see Economic Affairs below)

Political and economic ties with Germany have also become much closer. Sudan benefited by \$220m from Bonn's decision to write-off the debts of a number of poorer states.

Relations with the Soviet Bloc and China:

Although Khartoum never severed its ties with Moscow, relations have remained troubled since 1971, and became even worse over the Soviet role in Ethiopia. Nevertheless, economic and aid programmes are maintained with the USSR and with a number of Soviet bloc countries, especially Romania. Numeiry strongly criticized the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan. There was some surprise when his ambassador to the UN abstained in the vote condemning Russia's action. It was later explained that the vote was cast in the neutral corner because Sudan had fallen behind in its dues to the UN and was advised that a positive vote would be irregular.

Sudanese relations with China remain extremely cordial. At a Chinese reception in Khartoum on 22 January 1980, Sudan's First Vice-President and Defence Minister stressed “the identity of the policies of China and Sudan” in strongly condemning the USSR for its “invasion of Afghanistan”.

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS (1.14 Sudanese pounds = £1 sterling; £S0.50 = \$1) .

The country seems to be in the grip of a never-ending and ever-widening cycle of runaway inflation, spiraling prices, acute shortages, rampant corruption, and a flourishing black market. With the economic situation steadily worsening, the under currents of public discontent and frustration approached the boiling point in 1979. Although the Government managed to contain the students riots in August, the situation still remained potentially explosive, and the overall gloomily economic picture was made worse by the prevailing feeling that there was no short-term cure in sight. Nor were long-term prospects any brighter. Sudan's cherished dream of becoming the 'breadbasket' of the Middle East was rapidly fading in the face of grim economic realities.

The economic crisis was mainly the result of the Government over-ambitious attempt to achieve economic growth by large-scale borrowing to invest in development projects without the short-term support needed to finance the import of non-capital goods, especially oil. *Sudanow* admitted that "part of the problem is the cumulative high spending on development which had created bottlenecks in the infrastructure and led to an expanding black market. And the cost of living shows a rise of 400% since 1970".⁶¹

Yet, despite the emphasis on development, the new projects were falling behind schedule, and even those completed were working below capacity. The inadequate infrastructure meant shortages of raw materials which resulted in construction delays and cost increases. This entailed more development spending which, in turn, caused a big increase in the country's current account deficit, and in its external debt. It was, and remains, a typical case of the vicious circle situation. As one Sudanese economist put it, "Policies in the recent past have been ill-defined and the projects were not well-prepared, with short-term loans being used to finance long-term development goals. The result was that we ended up having to pay a very high price for a very low return".⁶²

More seriously, the concentration on new projects has been at the expense of existing ones. Maintenance of capital stock and the provision of spare-parts have been neglected in the rush to begin new projects. Consequently, the output from existing agricultural and industrial schemes failed to keep pace with demand, thus contributing to the high rate of inflation and to the failure of government's efforts to right the economy by sound money management. Despite, the overall increase of nearly 4m acres in land under cultivation, agricultural production has fallen to below levels reached at the beginning of the decade. Yields have fallen as slack agricultural practices have contributed to the declining fertility of the soil".⁶³

Development Plan:

The current six-year plan (1977/78—1982/83) is Sudan's third. The aim is to achieve an annual growth rate of 7.5% and to raise GDP *per capita* \$314 to \$877. Total investment

during the period is estimated at £2,700m. This includes the first phase of the 25-year master plan (1976-80) of the Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development (AAAID), an agency of the Kuwaiti-based Arab for Economic and Social Development (AFESD). The aim of the plan is to turn Sudan into an 'Arab granary'. Agriculture is given priority in the plan, closely followed by social services. The investment is allocated as follows: Agriculture and irrigation 27%; Social services 26%; Industry, mining, power, tourism 20%; Transport and Communications 19%; Reserves 8%.

The broad aim of the plan is to raise *per capita* income and remove imbalances and bottlenecks to economic development (e.g. infrastructure, education and training, road and rail services). Private investment in both livestock sector and crop production will be encouraged as well as development of the traditional sector. The processing of agricultural raw materials will also be developed. '

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is the backbone of the country's economy, contributing nearly 40% GDP and earning 90% of its foreign exchange. Four-fifths of the population still depend on subsistence agriculture. Almost one-third of the land area of 625m feddans is suitable for crop or pastoral farming. Apart from the Gezira scheme consisting of 2.1m feddans of irrigated land devoted to cotton, rice and groundnuts, the other major current projects are:

The Arab Development Plan:

The Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development (AAAID), established under an agreement signed in 1976, is an independent Arab corporation to develop the agricultural and animal resources of the Arab world, with particular emphasis on the Sudan. It is committed to 19 development projects in the Sudan to be completed at a cost of \$1.062m. According to AAAID president, Dr Osman Bedran, Sudan was chosen as the headquarters for the Authority because it possesses the land, water, climate and human potential; but he could not say that Sudan would totally fulfill the food needs of the Arab world. "After conducting extensive studies, we came to the conclusion that with increasing population, and therefore, food demand, increasing annually throughout the Arab countries, our original targets had become more difficult to attain. Sudan must first achieve self-sufficiency in basic foodstuffs—and it is indeed the policy of the Authority to meet, in the first instance, Sudan's own internal food demands before exporting any surplus. We fully appreciate the difficulties—not to mention infrastructural drawbacks—but we are ready to contribute to solve all problems".

Four projects have priority under the authority's plan: a vegetable-producing scheme for local consumption and export; the production of starch and glucose; a poultry

complex; and a dairy development scheme aimed at producing 50,000 tons of milk. These are to be followed by projects for fodder production, plant oil production, rice milling and fresh meat production. The other schemes approved will be agro-industrial complexes on hundreds of thousands of feddans for intensified agricultural and animal production.

Rahad agricultural project:

This \$259m project on the Blue Nile is modeled on the 1925 Gezira scheme and will grow cotton, wheat, groundnuts, fruit and vegetables for export on a 300,000 acre highly mechanized farm. Utilizing a new type of irrigation it is planned to produce higher yields as well as higher living standards for the 14,000 families to be settled in the area. The project is financed by a variety of Arab funds and US aid. Dutch and British consultants have been used.

Kenana sugar project:

When fully operational this project will be the largest in the world producing 375,000 tons annually on 60,000 hectares of land irrigated by the White Nile. Sugar is being grown as an alternative crop to cotton and much of it will be exported to Arab countries. About 50% of the project is foreign financed—British (Lonrho) and Japanese (Missho Iwai) and Arab.

Conceived and managed by Lonrho, it was expected to produce its first sugar in early 1980. This target is two years later than the start-up date envisaged in 1975 when construction of the plant, the largest single unit in the world, began on the site 180m south of Khartoum. The cost estimate of \$600m, calculated in 1977, was being met. The Kenana Sugar Company is, however, trying to increase its capital from sources within the Arab world in order to meet operational costs and debt servicing. An earlier proposal that the Kuwait Government would increase its stake in the \$189.75m capital the company from 18.5% has not come to fruition.

The Jonglei Canal Area:

Despite earlier controversy⁶⁴ over the SL70m plan to divert the Nile flow to lessen evaporation and develop agriculture, progress has continued in implementing the project which is jointly financed by Sudan and Egypt.⁶⁵ "

NOTES

(Unless otherwise stated all publications referred to are published in Khartoum)

¹ For previous reviews of Sudanese affairs, see Africa Contemporary Record (ACR), 1968-69, 1969-70, 1970-71, 1971-72, 1972-73, 1973-74, 1974-75, 1975-76, 1976-77, 1977-78, 1978-79.

² *Al-Hawadeth*, London, 16 February 1979.

³ *Afrique-Asie*, Paris, 19 March 1979.

⁴ *Al-Ayam*, 2 January 1979.

⁵ *Al-Hawadeth*, London, 2 February 1979.

⁶ *Al-Ayam*, 19 January 1979.

⁷ *Al-Ayam*, 16 March 1979.

⁸ *Sudanow*, April 1979.

⁹ *Al-Sahafa*, 8 April 1979.

¹⁰ *Al-Ayam*, 10 April 1979.

¹¹ *The Guardian*, London, 11 April 1979.

¹² Radio Omdurman home service, 16 April 1979.

¹³ *Sudanow*, June 1979.

¹⁴ *Le Monde*, Paris, 1 June 1979.

¹⁵ *Sudanow*, August 1979.

¹⁶ *The Observer Foreign News Service*, London, 30 August 1979.

¹⁷ *Al-Ayam*, 7 August 1979.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* Despite the seeming finality of Abu al-Qasim's dismissal, few people in Khartoum were counting him out of the political game for good. Over the years, President Numeiry had followed, with amazing regularity, the practice of abruptly dismissing and then reinstating, his ministers and top associates. Thus, Abu al-Qasim's resurrection, in one form or another still remains a distinct possibility.

¹⁹ *The Economist*, London, 28 August 1979.

²⁰ The New SSU Secretariats were: for Organization, Economics, Foreign, Political Affairs, and Southern Affairs. *Sudanow*, September 1979.

²¹ *The Weekly Review*, Nairobi, 17 August 1979

²² *The Weekly Review*, 24 August 1979.

²³ *Jeune Afrique*, Paris, 12 September 1979.

²⁴ *Sudanow*, September 1979.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Sudanow*, January, 1980.

²⁷ *The Middle East*, London, February 1980.

²⁸ *The Daily Telegraph*, London, 15 August 1979.

²⁹ *Sudanow*, January 1980.

³⁰ *Sudanow*, March 1979.

³¹ *Minutes of the First Joint Meeting of the National and Technical Committees on Regional Government*, Doc. No. 11 SSU. Khartoum. June 1979.

- ³² *Minutes of the Third National Congress -of the Sudanese Socialist Union: The Final Report*, Khartoum, February 1980)
- ³³ M. Alassam, *Decentralization in the Sudan* (Ministry of Culture and information Khartoum, 1979) p. 3.
- ³⁵ *Minutes of the first Meeting, op.cit*
- ³⁶ *Sudanow*, January 1980
- ³⁷ See ACR 1978-79, pp.B114-115
- ³⁸ *Sudanow*, August 1979
- ³⁹ Dr. Raphael Badal, University of Khartoum
- ⁴⁰ *Al-Ayam*, 13 February 1979
- ⁴¹ *The observer Foreign News Service*, 5 September 1979
- ⁴² *Press Statement*, Sudan Embassy, London, 15 October 1979
- ⁴³ *Sudanow*, July 1979
- ⁴⁴ *New African*, London August 1979
- ⁴⁵ *Africa Research Bulletin* 15 October-14 November 1979
- ⁴⁶ *New African op.cit*
- ⁴⁷ *The Military Balance 1979-80*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London
- ⁴⁸ *SUNA* 19 April 1979
- ⁴⁹ See ACR 1978-79, pp. B122-3
- ⁵⁰ *Sudanow*, March 1979
- ⁵¹ *Al-Anwar*, Beirut, 10 April 1979
- ⁵² *The Guardian*, Manchester, 25 May 1979
- ⁵³ *Newsweek* (Atlantic Edition, London) 11 June 1979
- ⁵⁴ *Al-Mustaqbal*, Pars, 16 June 1979
- ⁵⁵ *New York Times*, 23 June 1979
- ⁵⁶ According to Sadiq al-Mahdi, the Egyptians “did what they could to discourage national reconciliation because they feel it is bound to be reflected in weaker Sudanese Egyptian Relations”. *Sudanow* December 1979
- ⁵⁷ *International Herald Tribune*, 20 December 1979
- ⁵⁸ *The Middle East*, February 1980
- ⁵⁹ *Al-Ayam*, 1 February 1979
- ⁶⁰ *Afrique-Asie*, Paris, August 1979
- ⁶¹ *Sudanow*, October 1979
- ⁶² *Ibid* January 1980
- ⁶³ *New African*, April 1979
- ⁶⁴ See ACR 1978-79 p.B831 and pp. C149-50
- ⁶⁵ See ACR 1976-77 p. B116; 1974-75 p. B110; 1975-76 p.126