

SOME SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF TURKO — EGYPTIAN RULE IN THE SUDAN

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Between 1821 and 1885 most of the area constituting the present Sudan came under Turko-Egyptian rule. The annexation of the Sudan to Egypt was undertaken in 1820-1 by Muhammad 'Ali, the Ottoman Wali of Egypt, and was completed under his grandson, the Khedive Isma'il, who extended this rule to the Great Lakes in the south and to Bahr al-Ghazal and Darfur in the west. In the history of the Sudan, this period became known as the (first) Turkiyya. The term Turkiyya is not really arbitrary since Egypt was itself an Ottoman province, ruled by an Ottoman (Albanian) dynasty. Moreover, most of the high officials and army officers serving in the Sudan were of Ottoman rather than Egyptian origin. Lastly, though Arabic made considerable headway during the second half of the century in daily administrative usage, the senior officers and officials continued to communicate in Turkish, since their superior—the Khedive — was a Turk and Turkish was the language of the ruling elite. Hence, when the Mahdist revolt erupted in June 1881, its main enemy were the Turks who had oppressed the Sudanese and had — according to the Mahdi — corrupted Islam.

a. European Historical and other Writings on Nineteenth-Century Sudan

Until the second half of the twentieth century western views both on Turkish rule in the Sudan as well as on the Mahdiyya, were largely based on the writings of European traders, explorers and soldiers of fortune. Many of these had an axe to grind, since their personal experiences in the Sudan were in most cases rather unfavourable. Moreover, they were generally ignorant about the country, its inhabitants and its history, and very few of them mastered its languages or comprehended Islam. Hence their presentation of the Sudan under Turkish or Mahdist rule was, on the whole, totally negative.

Criticism of so-called Egyptian misgovernment was of course not limited to one sphere only. However, the slave trade and the problem of slavery in general was one of major areas of dispute which had an important impact on European history writings on the Sudan. There was, in

the words of Richard Hill, a "...nation-wide wave of emotion, which united so many otherwise disparate elements of British public opinion against slavery and the slave trade in Africa..."¹. They consisted of the Anti-Slavery Society, Quakers, Evangelicals and various humanitarian groups. Indeed, the vehemence of their emotions, largely based on ignorance or false information "...lent to their campaign the fervour of a *jihad*." Gordon's mission to the Sudan in 1884, and the so-called "Gordon literature" devoted to him in England, were largely influenced by the anti-slavery groups mentioned above. The pressure they exerted on British policy makers and history writers was such that no serious attempt was made by British historians to reach a more objective assessment of the first Turkiyya until the 1950s. In summing up the influence of these pressure groups Richard Hill concludes:

...The ghost of Exeter Hall still survives in some British writings published since 1945. There is a lingering tendency among some former officers and officials of the Condominium to treat the sixty years of Egyptian occupation as a chapter in the history of crime...².

When Gordon was killed in January 1885, in the besieged Khartoum, he was idolized by many of his countrymen and became a symbol of a "Christian soldier, martyr and uncalendared saint". On a monument in St. Paul's an inscription in his memory states that "...He served an Empire by his warlike genius, he ruled vast provinces with Justice, wisdom and power..." In comparison, the Turko-Egyptian administrators of the Sudan were described in the Gordon literature as inefficient, unjust and mostly corrupt. In the introduction to Gordon's *Journals*, published immediately after his death, its editor Egmont Hake described the Sudan and its administrators as follows:

...Seven eighth of the population were slaves; the country swarmed with slave-hunters and slave-dealers; and district governors, greedy of pelf, aided and abetted them in their raids...³

¹ R. Hill, 'The period of Egyptian occupation 1820-1881', *Sudan Notes and Records*, Vol. 39 (1958): 101.

² *Ibid.*, p. 102, Exeter Hall in London was the meeting place of the Anti-Slavery Society as well as of the Quakers and various humanitarian groups.

³ *The Journals of Major-Gen. C.G. Gordon, C.B. at Khartoum*, Introduction and notes A. Egmont Hake (London: Kegan Paul, 1885), pp. XI-XII; see also R. Hill, *Gordon: Yet another Assessment* (Durham: Sudan Studies Society of the U.K. 1987).

One of the more serious accounts written about Turko-Egyptian rule in the Sudan was that of Lieutenant-Colonel D.H. Stewart. Stewart was sent on orders of the British government to report on the Sudan after the outbreak of the Mahdist revolt. In his report, submitted in February 1883, Stewart presented a rather gloomy view about the prospects of Turkish rule. He deals at length with over-taxation, corruption at all levels, and comes to the conclusion that "...the fact of their general incompetence to rule is so generally acknowledged that it is unnecessary to discuss this question"⁴.

General H.H. Kitchener, Sirdar of the Egyptian army, who was ordered to reconquer the Sudan in 1896, held views not dissimilar to those of Stewart and probably influenced by his report. In a secret memorandum to Lord Cromer he described the form of government he intended to introduce into the Sudan as based on the following considerations:

...That the Sudanese absolutely despise the Egyptians, the general term used to describe an Egyptian is one that will bear no translation... There are other minor points such as the dislike of the Egyptians to go to the Sudan so that only the worst employees can be obtained...⁵.

By the time that the Condominium agreement was signed in January 1899, Egyptian misgovernment of the Sudan was regarded as an undisputable fact in British governing circles. Lord Cromer, who engineered that agreement and supervised the administration of the Sudan from his post in Cairo, described Turkish rule in the Sudan as "...The worst form of misgovernment". Quoting from the writings of Samuel Baker and from Colonel Stewart's report, he concludes that Egypt was incapable of governing itself, let alone a vast country such as the Sudan⁶. Therefore, Cromer wrote:

...It was essential that British influence should in practice be paramount in the Sudan, in order that the Egyptians should not have conferred on them a bastard freedom to repeat the misgovernment of the past...⁷.

⁴ Report on the Sudan by Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart, Inclosure 2 in Mallet to Granville, 6 March 1883, C. 3670 (1883); Stewart returned to the Sudan with Gordon Pasha in February 1884 and was later killed when trying to reach Egypt.

⁵ Kitchener to Cromer, 4 April, 1897, Sudan Archive, Durham University, Box 266/1/1.

⁶ Lord Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, Vol. 1 (London: Macmillan, 1908) pp. 349-351.

⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 114.

European writings on the Mahdiyya were if anything even less objective or accurate. The Mahdi, Muhammed Ahmad b. 'Abdallah, was generally viewed as an ignorant fanatic who had been misled by his Khalifa, 'Abdallah al-Ta'aishi, into believing that he was the expected Mahdi (*Messiah*). Since the Mahdi's manifestation coincided with the Urabist revolt in Egypt, the general tendency in England was to view his movement as a political-national anti-Egyptian revolt rather than as a religiously inspired uprising. Gordon Pasha in an interview to the *Pall Mall Gazette* in January 1884 insisted that all that was needed in order to restore law and order in the Sudan was to promise the Sudanese that in the future no Turks or Circassians should be allowed to exploit them and ruin their country⁸. In fact, ignorance about the Mahdist revolt and its attitudes towards Egypt or England was such that Prime Minister Gladstone, who wanted to get Britain out of the Nile Valley, believed that the British government, which had no quarrel with the Mahdi, could act as a mediator between Egypt and the Sudan.

The next stage in British inspired historiography on the Sudan is associated with Sir Reginald Wingate, who as director of intelligence in the Egyptian army, inspired an ever growing volume of anti-Mahdist literature in order to convince public opinion in England of the inevitability of an anti-Mahdist military campaign. As Daniel rightly observed, Wingate "...became obsessed by the Mahdiyya, a crusader planning its destruction"⁹. The so-called "Wingate literature" was multi-faceted. On the one hand, as director of intelligence, Wingate supplied information to his superiors about the Mahdist destructive role, its ruin of the country, its barbaric attitude to the Sudanese people who hated the oppressive regime but were unable to rise against Mahdist atrocities without help from the outside. In addition there were special reports, based on eye-witness accounts of Europeans such as the Austrian missionary Joseph Ohrwalder and Rudolph von Slatin, ex-governor of Darfur, who had escaped from imprisonment in the Sudan. Last but not least were the books published in England in the 1890s, with Wingate's active help, which gave hair-raising accounts about the Khalifa 'Abdallah's atrocities comparing him to

⁸ Quoted by N. Daniel, *Islam Europe and Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966), p. 426.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 426; Francis Reginald Wingate (1861-1953) director of intelligence of the Egyptian army 1889-1899; governor-general of the Sudan and *Sirdar* of the Egyptian army 1899-1916, high-commissioner of Egypt 1916-1919.

Genghis Khan. Their aim was to popularize the prospects of a military campaign in order to destroy this autocracy, thus revenging the murder of Gordon and establishing civilized humanitarian government in the Sudan¹⁰. Wingate's literary efforts, though informative and readable, have to be read with utmost caution. Since this literary output of "historical" writings on the Sudan was practically the only source of knowledge about the Mahdia in English or other European languages, its impact on our understanding of the Mahdist state should not be underestimated. As with the Turkiyya, whose criminal record in the Sudan was accepted at face value, so the Mahdiyya was shouldered with the responsibility of devastating the Sudan and depopulating it. The considerable literary production of members of the Sudan Political Service did much to preserve this distorted vision of Sudanese history in the nineteenth century until after World War II¹¹. It was only in the 1950s that more critical and balanced historical research on the Sudan was undertaken by Western scholars such as Richard Hill and Peter Holt. Their respective contributions to the modern historiography of the Sudan is therefore of considerable importance.

b. *Land and Taxation.*

Land tenure in the Sudan under the Funj Sultanate of Sinnar was largely based on traditional small-scale cultivation. Rights to property and privileges, including lands, could not be automatically transferred, nor be extended beyond the immediate vicinity of a single community. The new Turkish rulers levied heavy taxes on the population and, unlike their predecessors, demanded payment in cash or slaves. Private landownership and cash crops, largely based on agricultural slavery, were a natural result of this policy. By the end of the nineteenth century, individual landownership extended over several provinces - with property rights transferrable to inheritors. Moreover, the Turks required export commodities such as ivory, gold, gum and primarily slaves. Since taxes were assessed in cash, it was up to the young Sudanese middle-class to satisfy the Turkish tax collectors. "Tax-delinquent land could be appropriated outright by anyone who stepped in to pay - not its market value - but merely the sum in ar-

¹⁰ On the Wingate Literature see *ibid.* p. 556 fn. 11; see also P.M. Holt, "The Source Materials of the Sudanese Mahdia", *St. Antony's Papers* 4 (London 1958).

¹¹ A good example of these is Sir H. MacMichael, *The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1934) where in chapters three and four the devastation brought on the Sudan by the Turkiyya and the Mahdiyya are restated without questioning.

rears"¹². Hence the Turkish system encouraged the transfer of property rights from the traditional system of tenure-based on kinship to the up-coming bourgeoisie. Furthermore, instead of the rights to a share in the crops, which had been customary under the Funj, the land itself became individual property. This applied both to the *saqiyya* lands and to the *jarf*, namely those lands on the slopes of the riverbank which were within easy reach of irrigation.

New ownership rights were supported by the newly-introduced Islamic law of inheritance. Property rights were thus sanctified by Islam, and became part of a new system of Islamic laws introduced by the Turks in order to legitimize their rule and to undermine the power of traditional sufi and tribal leadership. Tribal shaikhs were, in certain cases, coopted into the administrative system in order to enhance central government power at the expense of independent tribal aspirations. Certain tribes, such as the Sha'i'qiyya, became irregular soldiers who enforced tax-collection and were given lands expropriated from the previous elite.

The taxes imposed by the Turkish authorities depended to a large on the source of livelihood. Along the Nile, tax was imposed on *saqiyyas* and was assessed in accordance with the area they irrigated. Excess taxation brought about a rapid decrease in the number of the *saqiyyas* operated. Thus, a survey undertaken in Berber province in 1827 revealed that only 796 out of 2,437 *saqiyyas* were in operation. Similar discrepancies occurred in other riverain provinces. A land tax, called *jad'a* (an area of about 5 1/3 acres) was also imposed on other cultivated lands, regardless of harvest which differed from one year to another. This, yet again, brought about a decline in cultivation, as many farmers escaped in order to avoid taxation. But, since the village was responsible for payment, the remaining farmers had to pay the difference, which in turn resulted in a further decline in cultivation.

Tribal and religious leaders were in many cases exempt from taxation in return for their loyalty and willingness to collect taxes. The Sha'i'qiyya tribe, which supplied the government with irregular soldiers to force tax payment, were also exempt from taxation. Military raids led by the Sha'i'qiyya became a regular method of tax collection. Thus in 1830,

¹² Jay Spaulding, "Land Tenure and Social Class in the Northern Turkish Sudan", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 15/1 (1982): 7.

when the governor-general - Khurshid Pasha - could not pay his troops for lack of income, he set out to raid the lands in the vicinity of al-Qadārif, including those of the Takarir and al-^ʿAtish.

The more moderate methods implemented in later years, in order to attract farmers -who had escaped out of government reach- to return to their lands, had apparently some favourable effect. Many of the Ja^ʿaliyyin and the 'Arakiyyin, who had escaped from their lands following their rebellion in the early 1820s, returned and resumed cultivation in the late 1830s, once taxes were lowered to satisfy their demands. However, when in 1879 Ra'uf Pasha-then governor-general-suggested a reform of Sudanese taxes, the situation was apparently not much better. In the ten years 1869-79, taxes for the Sudan had been assessed at LE 3,840,175 while only LE 2,962,711 were collected. Many of the provinces were governed at a loss, which according to Carl Giegler, embraced in 1878 five out of eleven. The deficit in Darfur amounted to LE 113,000, Equatoria LE 39,000, Khartoum LE 18,385, Sinnar LE 22,209, Somali Coast LE 14,241. Ra'uf suggested to lower taxation which he regarded a major evil, since it led to the continuous abandonment of agricultural lands and hence, to the loss of revenue. His suggestion was rejected by Cairo on the grounds that he had produced insufficient evidence to support his case. The Egyptian authority cited inefficiency, rather than overtaxation, as the major reason for the discrepancy between the assessment and collection of taxes¹³.

In the case of sufi sheikhs, several methods were employed in order to undermine their leadership. As mentioned above, the introduction of shari^ʿa courts alongside government *Qur'an* schools (*khalwas*), was aimed at curtailing their hold over their adherents. In certain cases, sons of sufi leaders were sent to al-Azhar to study and were later appointed to government posts as teachers or qadis. However the failure of both the Turkiyya and the Mahdiyya to suppress sufi orders was the result of the popularity of the holy men among the rural masses. The *fuqara'* were not mere religious leaders, they played a dominant social role in the spheres of education and health within their society. Hence, even after the intro-

¹³ Richard Hill, *Egypt in the Sudan 1820-1881*, (London: O.U.P., 1959) pp. 40-154; see also *The Sudan Memoirs of Carl Christian Giegler Pasha 1873-83*, edited by Richard Hill, (London: published for The British Academy by O.U.P., 1984) Map 2. Giegler Pasha, of German origin, served in the Sudan telegraph service from 1873-1883, he was deputy governor-general of the Sudan under Gordon, Ra'uf and 'Abd al-Qadir Hilmi.

duction of shari'ā courts, government schools and modern clinics, the majority of the rural people continued, as before, to prefer their holy men, imbued as they were with *karama* and *baraka*. Since the people suffered from government oppression, taxation and forced labour, to whom could they turn in their plight? Surely not to the Azhar-educated qadi or 'alim who were part of the oppressive government. Instead they remained loyal to the *fuqara*' who had healed them and guided them through previous calamities¹⁴.

The Awlad Jabir were one of these so-called "holy families" who played an active role in the Islamization of the Sudan since the beginning of the Funj Sultanate. They established schools in the Nilotic Sudan as well as in Darfur and Wadai and though they never achieved the fame of other holy families such as the Majadhib of al-Damer, they accumulated considerable wealth as well as social standing, and the graduates of their schools became teachers in various parts of the Sudan¹⁵. The Awlad Jabir provide a good example as to the accumulation of wealth and economic power in the hands of some of these holy families. Like many of the Ja'aliyyin and the Danaqla, who were driven from the Nile Valley to seek their fortunes in the west, the Awlad Jabir too established branches of their family in Darfur and Wadai probably as part of this migration. But unlike the riverain tribesmen who sought occupation primarily in trading, the Awlad Jabir, apart from their teaching activities, enhanced their position as major landowners and administrators. By way of the *jah*, a privileged status giving the recipients tax exemptions but no direct rights over the land, the Awlad Jabir acquired large estates gradually. The *jah* pass from generation to generation, up to the conquest of Darfur by the Mahdist state, through the simple process of having it ratified by each new ruler.

The charitable estates in Darfur, as in the Funj Sultanate, grew in size and were granted to princes, merchants, notables or, as in our case - holy men. These estates differed in size and value and in some cases in-

¹⁴ Mohammad Said al-Gaddal, "Religion in a Changing Socio-Political Structure: a Case Study of Islam in Nineteenth-Century Sudan", in M.W.Daly (ed.) *Modernization in the Sudan* (New York: Lilian Barber Press, 1985) pp. 51-3.

¹⁵ For details on their history and their religious teachings, see P.M.Holt, "The Sons of Jabir and their Kin: A clan of Sudanese Religious Notables", in P.M.Holt, *Studies in the History of the Near East*, (London: Frank Cass, 1973) pp. 88-103.

cluded whole villages, as well as numerous slaves. The importance of these estates and their actual size is, in the case of Darfur, as yet unknown. But, judging by the flood of land charters issued shortly after the return of 'Ali Dinar to Darfur in 1898, one can assume that the Sultan must have been besieged by *fuqara* and others seeking reconfirmation of their estates, following the upheaval caused in landownership and *jah* rights under the Mahdi and the Khalifa 'Abdallahi¹⁶. The combination of religious leadership with the accumulation of wealth is neither unique to Islam, nor -within Islam- to sufi leaders in the Sudan. However, the ability of the holy families to adjust to the new economic realities of the Sudan both before and during the Turkiyya enabled them to withstand the changing patterns of government.

In the extreme east of Sudan, the Turkish authorities tried in vain to gain control of the fertile lands of Gash Delta. Muhammad Abu Adhan, governor-general of the Sudan (1838-1843), was a seasoned soldier who had taken part in all of Ibrahim Pasha's military campaigns. Yet, in the Gash Delta he was confronted by the Hadendowa - the most ferocious of the Beja tribes in the Red Sea Hills - and failed to overcome them. During the numerous military campaigns many of the Hadendowa leaders were killed in battle or in prisons but the tribe still resisted central government. Abu Adhan then decided to exploit Islam in order to overcome the enemy. A qadi was sent to Muhammad Din - leader of the Hadendowa - with a Morocco bound *Qur'an* and a letter explaining how sinful it was to fight the "Commander of the faithful". The qadi convinced Muhammad Din and his fellow sheikhs to come as guests to the Egyptian camp, where they were chained and sent as prisoners to Khartoum. It took another eight months of bitter fighting until the Hadendowa finally sent emissaries to negotiate for peace. But even then, large segments preferred exile in Ethiopia to Turkish rule¹⁷.

It was largely due to the appeal of the *fuqara* that Muhammad Ahmad al-Mahdi owed his initial success. Being himself a sufi sheikh of the Sammaniyya order, he knew exactly how to appeal to his fellow Sudanese Muslims. The Ism'iliyya order in Kordofan serves as good example of

¹⁶ R.S.O'Fahey and M.I.Abu Salim, *Land in Dar Fur, Charters and related documents from the Dar Fur Sultanate*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) pp. 18-19; see also "The Awlad Jabir and their Land 1720-1900", unpublished M.A.Thesis by Haim Klein, (Haifa University, 1984).

¹⁷ Hill, *Egypt*, pp. 71-2.

this wise policy, since it was from Jabal Qadir in Kordofan that the Mahdi intended to start his *jihad*. Led by Muhammad Isma'īl al-Makki, the Isma'īliyya which had been oppressed by Turkish administration, embraced the Mahdi as the expected saviour - even before he declared himself, in June 1881. This support, combined with that of the Baqqara tribes, provided the Mahdi with the popular base required for his campaigns in Kordofan. "Thus when it came to a trial of strength, it was the mystic Muhammad Ahmad al-Mahdi who drove the Egyptians headlong from the Sudan"¹⁸.

However, in the eastern Sudan too, it was largely due to sufi support that the Mahdi owed his initial success. The Majdhubiyya of al-Damer had suffered at the hands of the Turkish administration. They had lost their lands and property and, following some years in exile, had found their place among the Ja'aliyyin taken by the government patronized Khatmiyya order. Their new center was, therefore, among the Beja tribes in the Red Sea Hills and when in 1883 the message of Muhammad Ahmad al-Mahdi reached them, both the Majadhib and the Hadendowa joined him enthusiastically, under the command of the Mahdist *amir*, 'Uthman Diqna.

c. *Trade and traders.*

Trade had existed in the Sudan prior to the Turkiyya, though on a rather small scale. The rulers of Darfur and Sinnar employed agents to act on their behalf in trading with Egypt. Shendi, seat of the *makk* (king) of the Ja'aliyyin, was an important market town with a population of some 6000, prior to the Turkish conquest. Though it was destroyed following the Ja'alyyin uprising against the Turks in 1822-23, it resumed its former position as a trading center later in the nineteenth century, when it became the last station for the pilgrimage caravans heading for Suakin.

The Ja'aliyyin *jallaba* (traders) as well as merchants stemming from other - mainly riverain - tribes engaged in barter trading, especially during slack agricultural periods when their small farms could be left in the hands of their family and their few slaves. They originally welcomed Turkish rule since it brought greater security, both within the Sudan and on

¹⁸ Ibid, p.127, Ahmad Isma'īl al-Ahzari, Muhammad Isma'īl al-Makki's brother, was one of the sufi leaders sent to al-Ahzar to study, and later became a qadi in a shari'a court in Kordofan. Unlike his brother, he opposed the Mahdi, and died in battle.

the caravan routes to Egypt. It also signified greater prosperity through the establishment of military post and improved communications. However, heavy taxation soon drove many of the small farmers from the lands, since they were in no position to pay the taxes. Most of the trade was - under Muhammad 'Ali - government monopoly. The riverain *jallaba* were therefore forced to leave their lands and many migrated to Darfur and Bahr al Ghazal - that were still independent - and made their livelihood as small merchants hoping to return to their homes once they struck rich. But this happened to very few of them, primarily to those who engaged in large scale ivory and slave trade. Others became peddlars and middlemen and could barely make both ends meet¹⁹.

With the abolishment of the government monopolies and the lifting of trade restrictions in the late 1840s, some of the *jallaba* struck rich not only as a result of their association with foreign trading companies but also because they found profitable ways in which to associate with the Turkish administration and its army. Some of them even achieved important administrative positions since they were, by and large, the most educated segment of Sudanese society. Most notable among these was Ilyas Umm Birayr, a ja'ali merchant who was appointed governor of Kordofan - with the title of Pasha - in 1878. *Jallaba* also joined Turkish punitive and slave-raiding campaigns where they could purchase booty and slaves at low prices or in exchange for goods, which they provided enroute. Since the Turkish soldiers were often paid in slaves, the *jallaba* were in a position to dictate their price.

One of the barriers to the development of trade was lack of cash, mainly as a result of hoarding and the large variety of coins which, at unrealistic exchange-rates - dictated by the government - made trading rather cumbersome. Under the Sultanate of Sinnar, most of the trade was by barter. Some European coins - especially the Maria Theresa and the Spanish dollars - circulated in the eastern Sudan through Massawa and Suakin. The Turko-Egyptian rulers introduced various Egyptian and Ottoman coins - especially the *Khayriyya* gold piece - which the Sudanese were forced to accept since the 1830s. The exchange-rates of these coins were dictated by the authorities, more often than not at an inflated rate -

¹⁹ Spaulding, pp.17-19; see also Anders Bjorkelo, "Turco-Jallaba Relations 1821-1885", in L.O. Manger (ed.), *Trade and Traders in the Sudan*, (Bergen: University of Bergen Printer, 1984) pp. 81-89.

hence the reluctance of the Sudanese to accept them. The "silver purse" was the highest denomination, rated at about 500 Turkish piasters or about five pounds sterling²⁰. Hence hoarding cash, especially European coins, lending it at high interest - up to 15 percent a month - became a lucrative source of income for the *jallaba* as well as for government officials and tax-collectors. Since taxes were collected in cash, peasants who were not in a position to pay, became indebted to the *jallaba* or to tax-collectors. A similar process led to the dependence of nomad tribes, such as the Baqqara, on the *jallaba*. In the 1840s, when shipment of cattle to Egypt was brought to an end, the *jallaba* stepped in as intermediaries. The Baqqara, unable to provide cash, continued to pay their annual tribute in cattle. The cattle was sold to the *jallaba* for cash, who then resold it to the Baqqara in exchange for slaves. Towards the end of the Turkiyya, this chain of exchange was refined. The *jallaba* in Kordofan paid the Baqqara's annual tribute to the tax collectors and were rewarded by a regular supply of slaves from the Baqqara. Many of these slaves were then transported to the Nile Valley - where they were employed in agriculture by the riverain farmers. If we remember that most of the *jallaba* in the western Sudan were Ja'aliyyin or Danaqla, belonging to the same riverain tribes as the farmers, the economic advantage gained by these tribes becomes clear.

Hit by Gordon's stiff anti-slavery measures in the 1870s, the Mahdi's proclamation that slavery was once again a legitimate institution was greeted by these *jallaba* with relief and, not surprisingly, they joined him in great numbers. However, some of the *jallaba* made their fortunes in collaboration with Egyptian merchants and depended on the free trade between Dongola and Egypt. Hence the Mahdist revolt threatened their livelihood and some of them went into exile with their Turko-Egyptian masters, who were often trading partners. The importance of the *jallaba* association with the rulers during the Turkiyya, is thus manifold. However, it is quite clear that in this case too, the sword followed the trade. It was the greatest Ja'ali *jallab*, al-Zubayr Rahma Mansur, who erected his own slave kingdom in the south-western Sudan and later handed both Bahr al-Ghazal and Darfur to the Khedive Isma'îl²¹.

The growth of Khartoum as the seat of the new Turkish government was one of the most striking phenomena of the new regime. A small vil-

²⁰ Hill, *Egypt*, pp. 37-8.

²¹ Bjorkelo, 92-97.

lage, at the time of the Turkish conquest, Khartoum was chosen for its strategic importance, being situated at the confluence of the Blue and White Niles. 'Uthman Bey Jarkas al-Birjini, who was appointed to command the troops in the Sudan, came to the conclusion that Wad Madani was unsuitable as the seat of government and selected Khartoum instead. Thus in 1833 Khartoum became the capital of the Sudan and started to develop rapidly at the expense of the traditional urban centers such as Sinnar, Shendi, al-Matamma, or al-Damer. After the opening of the White Nile for merchants, coinciding with the abolishment of the monopolies in the 1840s, Khartoum attracted many foreign trading companies and was thus in a position to offer employment to wage-earners. These included many of the previous *saqiyya* farmers who - as mentioned above - had escaped from the lands due to high taxation and to the new system of land tenure. The growth of Khartoum and other new towns, both in the east and in the west, was also facilitated by the increase in military and administrative centers under the Turkiyya. El-Obeid - provincial capital of Kordofan - became an administrative as well as a commercial center for the west. Many of the Danaqla, the Ja'aliyyin and other riverain tribes made their way as *jallaba* to Kordofan in search of a living. El-Obeid became their center of activity and once the monopolies were abolished, trading links both with foreign firms and with their kinsmen developed rapidly. Foreign firms brought their merchandise to Khartoum and other market towns while the *jallaba* as their agents, sold these goods, throughout the Sudan. The old overland routes from the Nile, through Kordofan to southern Darfur, became important for this new trade²².

Suakin and Massawa monopolized most of the African trade with the Arabian peninsula. Their proximity to Jedda - and hence to Mecca - made them the center for African Muslims on their way to perform their pilgrimage to the holy places of Islam. Moreover, since the pilgrimage season attracted traders, both from the African continent as well as from the Arab provinces and the Indian sub-continent, these two Red-Sea ports prospered more than other regions of the Turkish Sudan. Following the Egyptian conquest of the Hijaz in 1811-1818, it seemed only natural that Muhammad 'Ali would seek to dominate the Red Sea and its African shores too. Thus his interest in Massawa and Suakin predated his decision to conquer the Sudan. However, apart from certain periods - when control over the Red Sea province was granted to Muhammad 'Ali - the

²² Ibid., pp. 90-91; Hill, *Egypt*, p. 19.

two ports remained under Turkish control from Jedda until the Khedive Isma'îl's venture into Africa in 1865. It was the first time that the two ports came under Egyptian control for what seemed, at least, a long period. Isma'îl supervised personally their development realizing that their strategic and economic importance exceeded that of his other African possessions. Isma'îl's "civilizing mission" in Africa was based on the belief that Egypt's superior civilization, as well as its adoption of modernized technology, legitimized its conquests and made the "southern province", namely the Sudan, an integral part of Upper Egypt. Both Suakin and Massawa had the characteristics of Red Sea, rather than African, towns. This was evident in their architecture, mixed populations, clothing and mode of living. It was only after they were ceded to the Khedive Isma'îl in 1865 that they were forced to rely on their African hinterland for their economic development. In the case of Suakin, the fertile lands of the Gash delta, comprising some 46,000 square miles and inhabited by the Beja tribes, were also affected since the opening of trade through a Sudanese port offered new incentives to the Beja farmers of Kassala. The route to Suakin through Kassala or Berber was also favoured by the Takruri pilgrims on their way from West Africa to Mecca. The tribal dichotomy between the non-African inhabitants of Suakin and the Beja of the Kassala plateau, enhanced Egypt's ability to control Suakin and exploit it to its own advantage.

In Suakin foreign elements predominated. The trading elite, the Hadharba, constituted the majority of its population and were of Araba in (probably Hadhramawti) descent. Many Hadharba families had established trading houses on both sides of the Red Sea, in Jedda and in Suakin, facilitated by their intimate ethnic connections with the Hijaz. Islam became predominant in Suakin at a much earlier stage than among the Beja of the hinterland. The rest of the population, referred to as "Suakinis", were a mixture of various Beja tribes intermarried either with the Hadharba or with the Turkish soldiers who had been stationed in Suakin in the sixteenth century. In the 1850s, the town's population received both Egyptian and Greek traders lured by the prospects of booming trade - after the monopolies were abolished. The final firman ceding Suakin and Massawa to the Khedive was issued in 1886, after proof was passed by the British foreign office about the flourishing slave-trade between the two ports and Jedda with the encouragement of the Ottoman Wali in

Jedda. Isma'îl received the new territory for his lifetime, at an annual tribute of 2,500 bourses of gold paid to the Jedda treasury²³.

The attempts to suppress the slave-trade, especially after the abolishment of the monopolies in the 1840s, hit Suakin economically and nearly impoverished it. However, it picked-up new trade in the 1860s and by 1867 it was exporting large quantities of gum - especially from Kordofan - as well as ivory, hides and wax. The connection with the Sudan thus became an advantage to Suakin. What enhanced further Suakin's position was the fact that in November 1865 the Aziziyya Misriyya Steamship Company - which sailed from Suez to Jedda and back - called at Suakin, thereby linking it administratively and commercially with Egypt. As of August 1866, a special 'Aziziyya boat departed from Suez every Tuesday - directly to Suakin - carrying with it the mail for Suakin and Massawa, as well as for Khartoum and the rest of the Sudan, enhancing thereby control and trade even further. Between 1867 and 1871 Suakin was under the jurisdiction of Ahmad Mumtaz Pasha - first as governor and later as *Hukumdar* of the Eastern Sudan - which included Kassala, Suakin, Massawa and the Somali coast. Under Mumtaz, attention was paid to cotton-growing projects in the Kassala region and Suakin's economic and political position benefited therefrom. Between 1871-1879, the Khedive Isma'îl vacillated constantly between centralizing his administration of the Sudan and decentralizing it. But regardless of the form of administration, Suakin and Massawa received utmost attention, since Isma'îl believed in the economic profits to be derived especially from Suakin and the Kassala plateau. Also, his great concern with Egypt's image in European eyes, added importance to the two ports, since those were more visible than the Sudanese hinterland. This led, at an early stage, to setting up clinics, in each of the ports, with Egyptian doctors and nurses, since it was clear that any outbreak of an epidemic, in either of them, or even a rumour to that effect, would become a great set-back to their economic development. Since the pilgrimage was of major concern, an Egyptian medical team was sent to Jedda too²⁴.

Isma'îl's concern with Massawa and Suakin was connected with the opening of the Suez Canal. He believed that once the canal began operat-

²³ Ghada H.Talhami, *Suakin and Massawa under Egyptian Rule 1865-1885* (Washington DC: University Press of America, 1979) pp. 20-33.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 80-85.

ing, an era of prosperity would prevail in the Red Sea, with the Aziziyya Company shipping the produce of the fertile Sudanese provinces through the Suez to Europe. Hence the emphasis on large-scale cultivation of cotton in the Sudan and on improving internal communications, so that it could be easily transported to Suakin. The reasons for the failure of these ambitious plans are tied-up with the general bankruptcy of Egypt, that reached its climax in 1875. Inadequate management of capital investments at exorbitant interest-rates, and the constant replacement of one governor by another, did not enable the development of projects to be fully accomplished. There are scores of blue-prints for the development of cotton-growing, salt mines, railways etc., between Suakin and its hinterland, none of which were ever implemented, despite their soundness. But even those projects that were realized, fell into disrepair once their initiators were removed from office. Thus, for example, under Ahmad Mumtaz Pasha the Shatta dam was constructed and large-scale cotton-growing was started in the Eastern Sudan. Even a spinning and ginning factory was established in Kassala at great cost. The tribal population of the region was constantly complaining against Mumtaz, accusing him of arbitrarily forcing them to work. The population was simply not ready for the fast development initiated by the German-educated Mumtaz and others of his ilk. Once the modernizing governor was removed in 1872, the tribes withdrew gladly from the scene of his profitable projects, and returned to their traditional economy. Resentment against the government was so deep that in 1874 Isma'îl issued an order forbidding forced-labour among the population. Another good example of wasted planning was the Sudan railway, which was inaugurated in February 1875 - after prolonged and costly planning - to be stopped three months later, due to lack of funds and the reluctance of the population to endure the hardships of building it.

Isma'îl seems to have been in two minds regarding the speedy development of Massawa and Suakin and their linkage with the Nile Valley. He knew the economic potential of the Sudan and the enormous advantage of speedy transportation to the European markets. However, he hesitated on two accounts. First, Suakin and Massawa were not ceded to the Khedive on a permanent basis. Their development could thus become an impediment to future negotiations with the Sublime Porte. Second, in opening the direct route from Massawa and Suakin through Suez, the eastern Sudan gained a considerable advantage over the Mediterranean ports of Egypt. Thus, the Egyptian government's ivory, which was trans-

ported north on the Nile route and then via Alexandria, reached London markets six months later than the ivory transported via Suakin, from the Sudan. Third, direct export from Suakin to Europe entailed a considerable loss to Egyptian customs, especially since Egypt did not share in the profits of transit through the Suez Canal²⁵.

While the "civilizing mission" of Isma'īl included the introduction of "orthodox" Islam into the newly-acquired regions, this was primarily motivated by political ambitions rather than by religious zeal. In order to acquire Massawa, Bogos and Asaab, he exploited the threat of Christian missionaries in order to convince the Sultan to cede these regions to Egyptian rule. Similarly, his setting-up of shari'a courts in Suakin and its hinterland, with-Azhar trained qadis, stemmed from his desire to subjugate the semi-pagan Bejas and introduce orderly government, rather than from the purely religious belief in the superiority of Islam. Isma'īl, and his Armenian prime-minister - Nubar Pasha - were educated in France and imbued with its secular ideology. They sought to create a Europeanized Egyptian Empire in Africa, in which Islam had to play a political role which would never be allowed to interfere with Isma'īl's modernizing ambitions. However, this so-called "civilizing mission" - by which Islam was granted a limited political role - came to an end as the result of a *ji-had* led the Mahdi against the corrupt Turkish Muslims and their European allies. Thus, following the Mahdist conquest of Khartoum, only Suakin and its immediate environs, remained under so-called Egyptian administration. In fact, it too owed its survival to British military and naval power, since it was isolated from the Red Sea mountains in which the Mahdists - under 'Uthman Diqna - reigned supreme. Most of the hostile Beja tribes, and not less hostile Majdhubiyya sufi order, also supported the Mahdists, and hence Suakin retained its special status without any economic benefits. Trade and pilgrimage came to a virtual standstill since Suakin was in fact besieged and cut-off from the Nile Valley, and after 1885 the pilgrimage to the Mahdi's tomb in Omdurman replaced the pilgrimage to Mecca, according to the Khalifa 'Abdallahi's orders.

d. Agricultural Slaves and West African Pilgrims.

Before the Turkish conquest the number of agricultural slaves in the northern riverain Sudan was small. Slaves served as garrisons, house ser-

²⁵ Ibid, pp. 108-120; see also A.B.Wylde, "The Red Sea Trade", *Journal of the Manchester Geographical Society* (1887): 186-7, quoted by Talhami, p. 120.

vants and concubines. Slave-ownership was limited to the ruling class since they were a rare and expensive commodity. Under Turkish rule, the northern Sudan was flooded with slaves, with Sudanese, Egyptian, Turkish and European merchants acting as concessionaries, supplying the required number of slaves to the colonial rulers. However, those of the slaves who were unfit to serve in Muhammad 'Ali's new army were sold in the markets of the Sudan, or to soldiers serving in the region. In consequence, the price of slaves fell drastically and even persons of moderate means, could own a slave or at least share one. By the end of the century, nearly a third of the population of the Sudan were slaves who performed all the agricultural work²⁶. Slaves were legally classified as livestock, or occasionally, as *al-hajawan al-natiq* (talking animal). They were not integrated into the family, as claimed by some historians, but rather retained their inferior status throughout the century. Even slaves born in Muslim families, were sold up to the third generation, or used for the payment of taxes.

The combination of land and slaves was a precondition for prospering in nineteenth-century Sudan and the emerging middle-class achieved this through collaboration with the Turkish elite. Since each *saqiyya* was taxed at a fixed rate, labour-intensive production was essential for obtaining high profits. Hence, slave-labour predominated quite early in the more fertile lands - adjacent to the Nile - while the more remote and less-fertile areas remained under free-peasant cultivation, for longer periods²⁷. It was only in 1863, following the return of Speke and Grant from their historic journey to discover the sources of the Nile, that British public and official opinion became concerned with the slave-trade in the Sudan. Six years later Samuel Baker was entrusted by Khedive Isma'il with, what he called, "the greatest expedition of our times". Between Baker's first expedition in 1862, and his second - 1869-1873 - slave-hunting and trading had greatly increased throughout the Sudan. Yet Baker claimed, that within the four years of his second expedition, he had succeeded against enormous odds to suppress the slave-trade completely. "Should the slave-trade recommence when I leave, it will be the fault of the Sudan Authorities"²⁸. In July 1873, Khedive Isma'il - while on a visit to Is-

²⁶ For details see G.Warburg, "Slavery and labour in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan", *Asian and African Studies*, XII (1978): 221.

²⁷ Spaulding, pp. 11-15.

²⁸ Abbas Ibrahim Muhammad Ali, *The British, the Slave-Trade and Slavery in the Sudan 1820-1881*, (Khartoum: Khartoum University Press, 1972) pp. 43-45; the quotation is from an interview with Baker published in *The Times*, 13.8.1873.

tanbul - submitted to Sir Henry Elliot, the British ambassador, the draft of a convention for the suppression of slave-trade. The timing was not a coincidence since on 8 June of that year Isma'îl had gained from the Ottoman Sultan, with British help, yet another concession. The new firman codifying all previous concessions since 1866, granted the Khedive and his successors the continued rule, not only in Egypt and the Sudan, but also in Suakin, Massawa and their environs.

What concerned Britain primarily, was the increased slave-trade in the Red Sea - originating in East Africa - which could only be curtailed if the British navy was allowed to search Egyptian boats in that region. Since all Egyptian boats sailed under the Ottoman flag, the Khedive could not grant this concession. When he renewed his proposal in September 1874, the British consul in Cairo proposed the appointment of British consular officers in Suakin and Massawa which - he stated - could virtually suppress the export of slaves from the Sudan. However, it was only in January 1876 that the foreign office finally instructed its consul in Cairo to take up the matter of an anti-slave-trade convention with the Khedive. Isma'îl tried now to exploit the negotiations in order to gain further concessions in the Red Sea as well as continued control of the Somali coast and the demarcation of the boarder with Zanzibar. The convention for the suppression of slave-trade was finally signed by the Egyptian and British governments on 4 August 1877. Under this convention, boats of either signatories, suspected of being involved in slave-trade, could be seized by the authorities of these signatories in order to be searched and, if found guilty, brought to trial²⁹. The convention was, however, quite ineffective since Khedive Isma'îl was forced to abdicate in 1879. With the Mahdist revolt in the Sudan and the 'Urabi coup in Egypt, the British authorities in the region had other priorities. It was only towards the end of the century, with most of the African continent and its coast under European control, that slave-trade became a more difficult and hence an expensive gamble. However, once across the Red Sea, slave-trading in the Hijaz was legal and continued to flourish unhampered by the interference of the European powers.

The pilgrim caravans became an important vehicle by which slaves could be smuggled across the African continent and hence to the slave markets of the Hijaz. Slaves were sold by pilgrims in order to pay for

²⁹ Ibid, pp. 89-95.

their pilgrimage, once they arrived in Mecca. West African pilgrims stood the risk of being captured en-route to the holy cities and then, though this was explicitly forbidden by Islam, they too were sold as slaves in Mecca. Since the mass-movement of West Africans fleeing from European rule coincided with the attempts to end slavery in the Sudan in the early twentieth century, it was only natural that these West-Africans were regarded by the Sudanese landowners as heavenly sent: "Allah took away our slaves, but sent us the Fallata"³⁰.

The number of West-Africans settled in the Sudan was well over one million in the second half of the twentieth century. They were employed as artisans in urban centers while in the rural Sudan they became an important source of cheap labour - following the decline of agricultural slavery. This mass movement was indeed religious in its aspirations. It was part of the pilgrimage to the holy cities of Islam in the Hijaz which, following the Turkish conquest, started to use the cheaper overland "Sudan Road", alongside the safer - but more expensive - routes along the Mediterranean coast.

The Kayra Sultanate of Darfur reigned in the most western region of present-day Sudan from the seventeenth century until 1874, when it was annexed to the Turkish Sudan by the Ja'ali slave-trader al-Zubayr Rahma Mansur. It lay at the center of three trade and pilgrimage routes: *darb al-arba'in*, "forty-days road" from Darfur to Egypt; the north-western route from Darfur through the Fezzan to Tripoli; and the route leading west to Wadai, Bornu and the western Bilad al-Sudan. The first description of *darb al-arba'in* dates from 1698, though it existed much earlier. Its prime-use was for the slave-trade and it owed its popularity to its remoteness and hence its relative safety. According to French estimates, between 5,000 to 6,000 slaves were transported annually from Darfur to Egypt along the *darb al-arba'in*³¹.

³⁰ Quoted from the Governor-General's Report on the Administration and Finances of the Sudan in 1909, by G. Warburg, *The Sudan Under Wingate*, (London: Frank Cass, 1971), p.181; West Africans are known in the Sudan as *fallata* or *takarir* (*takarna*). The origin of the latter is probably the ancient kingdom of Takrur (ca. 1000-1300); *fallata* means Fulani in the Kanuri language. The Sudanese Arabs employ the term *fallata* as a derogatory term to denote all West Africans and especially the Hausa, Fulani and Bornu groups; see 'Umar A. al-Naqar. "The historical background to the Sudan Road", in Y.F.Hasan (ed.) *Sudan in Africa* (Khartoum: Khartoum University Press 1971), pp. 98-108.

³¹ R.S.O'Fahey, "Religion and Trade in the Kayra Sultanate of Dar Fur", in Y.F.Hasan, pp. 92-3.

The pre-twentieth-century pilgrimage from West Africa was linked primarily to the trans-Saharan route to Cairo and from there, through the Red Sea or the Sinai, to the Hijaz. Since this was the established route through which Islam had been brought to Africa, it was only natural that West-African pilgrims and traders would opt for it, rather than for the more risky southern route across the African Continent. However, once Turkish rule was established in the Sudan, the alternate southerly route - through Chad to Darfur and from there through Kordofan to the Nile Valley - gradually became popular. Arriving in Sinnar, the pilgrims headed north on the Nile and from Berber took the overland route to Suakin. The reluctance to take the Savana route was not only the result of ignorance but was also due to the fact that it was only in the 1850s that the region from Lake Chad to the Red Sea came entirely under Muslim rule. The first to traverse the easterly route were pilgrims from Darfur and Wadai who, being poor, could not afford the trip along the "forty-days road". They were soon joined by pilgrims from Bornu and Hausaland. The first village established by West Africans in the Nile Valley - in the mid-eighteenth century - was Ras al-Fil. However, it was only in the nineteenth century that the new route gained somewhat in popularity. French rule in West and North Africa, drove many of the pilgrims to take the new route through the Turkish-Muslim dominated Sudan. Even then, the number of pilgrims was rather modest, probably not exceeding 500 per annum until the mid-nineteenth century. From then onwards the flow increased gradually³².

The belief that the Mahdi will appear in the thirteenth century after the *hijra*, was prevalent and is believed to have been one of the factors behind the Fulani *jihād* in Hausaland. Since, according to the tradition, the Mahdi would appear in the East (Hijaz), it was widely believed that it would be advantageous for Muslims to be in that region at the time of his appearance. In the Sokoto Caliphate and other Muslim states in West Africa, the authorities fought against these *hijra* tendencies, since they threatened to become mass-movements of believers, leaving their villages unattended, to pursue their pilgrimage to meet the expected Mahdi. The appearance of the Mahdi in 1881 in the Nilotic Sudan, rather than in the Hijaz, gave substance to these manifestations. Though not accepted by all believers as the true Mahdi, those who followed his call could, from now

³² J. Birks, *Across the Savannas to Mecca, the Overland Pilgrimage route from West Africa*, (London: C. Hurst, 1978), pp. 14-15.

on, make their pilgrimage to the Sudan and meet him there. This never evolved into a mass *hijra*, since many Muslim rulers - notably Rabih al-Zubayr - did not favour such a pilgrimage - which would have strengthened the Mahdi and later the Khalifa³³. Also, those Muslims who wanted to perform the pilgrimage, could not do so during the Mahdiyya first, because Suakin was under Anglo-Egyptian control and second, since it was not encouraged by the Khalifa ‘Abdullah.

Burckhardt described the alternative routes of the pilgrimage from Darfur to the Hijaz at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Apart from the traditional northerly route along the “forty-day road”, there prevailed two main routes to the east. The first headed to Sinnar and from there to Gondur and Massawa. The second, and more frequented one, led north on the Nile to Shendi or Berber and from there, eastwards to Suakin. Most of these pilgrims were, according to Burckhardt, destitute and made their way through the Sudan by begging or performing manual labour. However, some of these pilgrims - once familiar with the new route - realized its trading potential and joined the caravans on a regular basis, thus establishing a trade-route between Darfur, Kordofan and the Hijaz. Pilgrims engaged also in trading in books, other merchandize and in slaves - though only on a small scale. The writing of amulets however, was their most favoured source of livelihood, since according to Sudanese Muslims, these possessed greater virtue than amulets written by their own ignorant *fikis*³⁴. Some ‘ulama’ and notables from the west also used the Nile Valley route in the nineteenth century, but on the whole, the more affluent pilgrims continued to favour the costly route via Egypt, until the end of the century.

In conclusion, the pilgrimage through the Sudan, once the caravans were large and strong, provided security for traders who had previously used the route through the Fezzan, for protection. Conversely, pilgrims followed trade-caravans for their own protection. The choice of routes from Darfur continued to depend on the finances of the pilgrims. The

³³ ‘Umar al-Naqar, *The Pilgrimage Tradition in West Africa, an historical study with special reference to the nineteenth century*, (Khartoum: Khartoum University Press, 1972), pp. 83-86; Hayatu b. Sa’id, a great grandson of ‘Uthman Dan Fodio, responded to the Mahdi’s invitation in 1883 and was appointed his agent in Sokoto; Na‘um Shuqayr, *Jughrafiyyat wa-Ta’rikh al-Sudan*, (second ed., Beirut: dar al-thaqafa, 1967) pp. 1028-1029.

³⁴ al-Naqar, p. 113, quoting the 1819 edition of J.L. Burckhardt, *Travels in Nubia*, pp. 364-5.

"forty days road" from Darfur to Egypt, and from there by boat to Qusayr, required capital that was not necessary if travelling through Kordofan to Sinnar, and hence, via Berber to Suakin. The latter, though less safe, enabled the pilgrims to settle en-route and work in agricultural settlements - or even in towns - for prolonged periods. This was especially true after many West Africans settled in the Nilotic Sudan, thus providing shelter and a source of livelihood for other pilgrims. Consequently, the route through the Nile Valley "...probably drained most of the poor foot-traveller traffic from the desert routes during the course of the nineteenth century..."³⁵

By the end of the century, the total number of West-Africans settled permanently in the Sudan, probably did not exceed 25,000. Their numbers grew rapidly since the beginning of the twentieth century and was - as mentioned - well over a million by the time the Sudan achieved independence. Their importance, as an economic factor, cannot be overrated, since in the most fertile regions of the Blue Nile province, al-Qadarif district and the Gash delta cotton-fields, they became the most important labour-force. They were settled in the four most fertile and populated provinces and, in each of these, comprised over ten per-cent of the population. They actually became an indicator of economic development potential³⁶. However, the West-Africans have not been allowed to assimilate in the Sudan. Their status, as socially inferior, has been maintained and as of the 1960s, the number of West-Africans allowed passage through the Sudan has been restricted. Their numbers have not decreased, apparently, since in 1963 - though amounting to 15% of the population - they were assumed to comprise between 40-50% of the labour-force in the Sudan. Or, when in 1974, West-African tenancies in the Gezira scheme were restricted, and actually fell from 12.6% to less than 4.6%, the outcome was not a decrease in their numbers, but rather a fall in their status since previous West-African tenants remained in the Gezira as wage-labourers - often on the tenancy previously owned by them. Thus, while they remained economically indispensable, they were regarded as socially inferior and politically undesirable³⁷.

³⁵ al-Naqar, p.107.

³⁶ Birks, pp. 62-7.

³⁷ Ibid, pp. 134-138.

e. Some Reflections on Nineteenth - and Twentieth - Century Colonialism in the Sudan

Social transformation in the Sudan in the nineteenth century owes much to the Turkiyya, which was the first period of colonial rule. Central administration, based on a foreign elite and enforced by a relatively large army, required well-protected administrative centers and large sums of money.

The Sudan was supposed to pay its own way, and - later - to become a source of revenue. Though these aims were never realized, they nevertheless, had a great impact on Sudanese society and economics. Taxation in cash forced previous landowners to change their patterns of cultivation or leave their lands. Private landownership was introduced alongside cash crops, while small peasants were, in many cases, replaced by agricultural slaves. Security and the availability of cash encouraged trade - first through government monopolies and, later in the century by foreign companies which were gradually replaced by Egyptian and Sudanese traders.

Central administration and security also opened the Sudan to trade and pilgrims from West Africa. Though this process reached its climax only in the twentieth century, it nonetheless led to the foundation of a permanent West African population in the Sudan and to regular trans-African trade and pilgrims' caravans. It also enhanced the importance of the Red Sea ports Suakin and Massawa which, in 1867, were granted by the Ottomans to the Khedive Isma'il. Suakin, in particular, became a major trading center for merchandise from Egypt and Africa destined for Jeddah and hence to Mecca or south-east Asia.

The record of Turko-Egyptian rule in the Sudan was therefore not as totally negative as depicted in European writings on the Turkiyya. If one takes into account the conditions prevailing in the Sudan at the time of its conquest by Muhammad 'Ali as well as its size and the difficulty of communications, one will have to admit that the Turkiyya can credit itself with a number of achievements. The best proof of these achievements can be found both in the economic field and in the policies adopted by Sir Reginald Wingate and his fellow officers when they laid the foundations of the new administration in the early years of the twentieth century.

In a recent study on the Condominium, Martin Daly clearly demonstrates that the Sudan during the first Turkiyya occupied a place in world

markets and that by 1879 annual exports from Suakin had a declared value of LE 254,000, while Britain alone imported in 1881 some 3,620 tons of gum from the Sudan³⁸. If we take into account that Sudanese exports had important alternative outlets, such as Massawa, the Nile route, or *darb al-arba'in*, total exports in the last years of the Turkiyya exceeded those of the early years of the Condominium³⁹.

The second Turkiyya, as the new regime of the Sudan was called by the Sudanese, was influenced by its Turkish predecessors in a number of important issues. First and foremost was the attitude to popular Islam and tribal leadership. While both Egypt in the nineteenth century and England in the twentieth attempted to centralize government, they both came to the conclusion, for different reasons, that a certain amount of devolution was necessary. In the first Turkiyya the Sha'iqiyya tribe was coopted into the administration as irregular soldiers while other, mainly sedentary, tribes were administered thorough their shaykhs, with a *shaykh al-mashayikh* at their head. A not dissimilar form of tribal administration, known as indirect rule, was adopted by the British governors of the Sudan, in order to diminish the role of the untrusted Egyptian officials. In both cases, the system failed since the appointment of shaykhs as government agents did not enhance their traditional leadership. Furthermore, the very existence of central government authorities, to whom one could appeal, undermined the traditional role of tribal leaders. As regards popular Islam similarities between the two Turkiyyas are even more striking. The first Turkiyya attempted to undermine the supremacy of the sufi orders in the Sudan first by importing Egyptian 'ulama from al-Ahzar and later by training sons of Sudanese tribal and sufi shaykhs in al-Ahzar and appointing them as qadis or teachers in *Kuttab*s. Of all sufi orders only the Khatmiyya was regarded as "orthodox" enough and was subsidized by the government. The same policy prevailed under the second Turkiyya. The British administrators, guided by Slatin Pasha, regarded sufis as ignorant and hence prone to fanatic Mahdist propaganda. The Khatmiyya alone was regarded as loyal, since it had opposed the Mahdi. The sending of young Sudanese for training at al-Ahzar was gradually stopped, because of fear of Egyptian nationalist propaganda. However, the principle

³⁸ M.W. Daly, *Empire on the Nile, The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1898-1934*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) pp. 192-193.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.458-459; total exports from the Sudan in 1901-1907 were below LE 500,000., while export of gum reached 10,000 tons only in 1908.

of establishing shari'ah courts headed by so-called orthodox 'ulama was continued as before, while the new qadis were trained in the Sudan instead of al-Ahzar⁴⁰. However, once again the power of popular Islam was such that its major groups the Khatmiyya and the Ansar overshadowed the new class of established 'ulama until the end of the Condominium.

Taxation under Anglo-Egyptian rule was imposed, as in the first Turkiyya, mainly on agricultural lands. There was however a basic difference between the two regimes. Under Muhammad 'Ali and his successors the Sudan, to begin with, was expected to bring in profits to Egypt. Once it became clear that this would not happen the authorities attempted through taxation to make the Sudan pay for its own administration. As shown above, while even this objective was never achieved, high taxation remained one of the major grievances of the Sudanese. This fact, which was well known to Cromer and Wingate, provided the basis for the new policy of low taxation. Since the Egyptian treasury was shouldered with the Sudan's budgetary deficits until 1913 and continued thereafter to pay for its defence, taxes were kept artificially low without any financial loss to the British treasure⁴¹.

Even with regard to slavery there were similarities between the two colonial periods. The fact that in a slave-society, such as the Sudan, it was impossible to uproot domestic slavery by government order without causing social upheaval, was realized by Stewart, Gordon, Cromer and others, already in the 1880s, to the dismay of the anti-slavery societies in England. The Anglo-Egyptian authorities therefore made a clear distinction between slave trade, which was to be forbidden, and slavery which was tolerated. Until World War I domestic slaves were discouraged from leaving their masters for fear of economic disruption and social dislocation, leading to crime and prostitution. British authorities in the Sudan carefully eradicated "slaves" from their vocabulary and substituted "servants" instead, in order to comply with the moral codes or rather the semantic niceties of their home audience. However, they realized that without slaves there would be no labour force in the Sudan. It will of course not astonish the reader that slave trade could not be eradicated as long as

⁴⁰ On this see my article: "Popular Islam and Tribal Leadership the Socio-Political Structure of North Sudan", in M. Milson (ed.) *Society and Political Structure in the Arab World* (New York: Humanities Press, 1973) pp. 231-280.

⁴¹ Daly, pp. 197-201.

domestic slavery continued to flourish. The attempt to eradicate the one while tolerating the other was sheer hypocrisy⁴².

There were of course many basic differences between the two "Turkiyyas" and there is general agreement on the high level of competence of the Sudan Political Service and the devotion of its members to what they believed were the better interests of the Sudanese. Also, the level of independence achieved by the governors-general of the Sudan during the Condominium cannot be compared to the nearly complete dependence of their predecessors on Cairo. And yet the fact that both of them are regarded by Sudanese as "Turkiyya" is no coincidence. They were both colonial regimes seeking to control foreign people and territories with the pretext of a civilizing mission. To the Sudanese it made little difference whether they were ruled by Gordon or Ra'uf in the first Turkiyya or Wingate and Stack in the second. They resented foreign rule, whatever its origins or aims, and have come to regard the Mahdist state as their first attempt at national independence.

⁴² Ibid., pp. 238-239; Warburg, *Sudan under Wingate*, pp. 170-178.

