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Discourses of violence in the transition from colonialism to independence in southern Sudan, 1955-60

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Abstract
The Torit Mutiny of August 1955 in southern Sudan did not trigger a civil war, but state violence and disorder escalated over the following years. We explore how the outlook and strategies of the government officials who inherited the state apparatus of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium contributed to this development. They perpetuated authoritarian and violent government practises based on a legalistic distinction between citizen and outlaw, while justifying their actions as part of a developmentalist and nationalistic discourse. The Mutiny created fear of another outbreak of violence which prompted recourse to collective punishment, an expanded intelligence network and bolstered the powers and mandate of the chiefs. However, the authoritarian tendencies were paired with developmentalism and the desire to educate and civilise the southerners. Through education and the justice and penal system they were to be 'made to learn' how to become 'modern'. This combination of perpetuating colonial government practises and fervent nationalism resonates with analyses of transitions to independence elsewhere in Africa, from which the case of southern Sudan has been largely excluded up to now.

Key words: Sudan, South Sudan, state violence, colonial inheritance, independence

In August 1955, less than six months before Sudan's declaration of independence, the newly 'Sudanised' administration faced a violent uprising in the southernmost province of Equatoria. Over a two week period, 261 northern Sudanese men, women and children were killed by southern soldiers, police and prison officers and others who joined in the violence and looting. Many southerners fled the towns, including 55 who drowned trying to cross a river near Torit. Northern troops arrived in force towards the end of August and arrested a large share of the mutineers and many civilians; some fled to Uganda and Congo and only some few mutineers stayed in 'the bush' in the eastern parts of Equatoria and the Sudan-Uganda borderlands. The Khartoum government response was restrained, but not lenient: perhaps as many as 1,000 were imprisoned and at least 121 death sentences were carried out.[1]

This violent episode – known at the time as the 'Southern disturbances', and more commonly now as the 'Torit Mutiny' – has come to be regarded as a crucial moment in Sudan's transition to independence in 1956. It is commemorated by many South Sudanese as the beginning of the 'struggle' against northern dominance. Scholars too have viewed the events of 1955 in hindsight as 'a fateful omen for the beginning of a half-century of bloody, unrelenting civil war'.[2] The Torit Mutiny is thus understood as a rupture, separating the relative stability of the *Pax Brittanica* from an increasingly violent and repressive post-colonial southern Sudan.

The Mutiny – as the perceived start of the civil war – has therefore been subsumed into broader analyses of the causes of conflict. In a polarised national historiography, northern Sudanese scholars attribute the first civil war to the harmful, divisive effects of the British colonial 'Southern Policy', while southern scholarship has criticised colonial neglect for leaving southerners vulnerable to the political and military domination of northerners.[3] But recent research has demonstrated that only from 1963 can conflict between the government and southern rebel forces be termed civil war, making not just the 1955 Mutiny but the period after it crucial to understanding the causes of war.[4] Historians have only cursorily recounted the post-independent repression by the new Sudanese administrators in the south, and attempts to impose national unity through campaigns of Arabicisation and Islamicisation, including the eventual expulsion of Christian missionaries in 1964.[5] But this narrative of a sudden shift in policy and administrative practices both underestimates the inherent violence of the colonial state, and wrongly assumes that its successors had altogether different agendas. Instead of revolution, the nationalists only sought control over the existing government institutions and instruments to rule the people of Sudan.[6]

This article thus argues for a much greater degree of continuity in the use of state violence from the colonial to the postcolonial period. Newly available archival material from the 1950s demonstrates considerable concern among these Sudanese administrators to justify coercive methods and policies in ways that are strikingly similar to colonial discourse.[7] This is particularly evident in their emphasis on legalism and developmentalism – the two main strands of government discourse to be explored here. The methods of administration followed by the new Sudanese officials were similar to those of their predecessors, relying on chiefs at the centre of colonial 'Native Administration' to be the agents of state development, justice and security. The Mutiny undoubtedly provoked insecurity and paranoia among northern

Sudanese officials in the south, but the violence of August 1955 – and the threat of its recurrence – also fed the elaborate discourse of legalism, state sovereignty and citizenship, through which the duties of state and subjects were being defined in the late colonial and early postcolonial period. We can therefore trace significant continuities in the government administrators' perception of South Sudan and its people, and in the methods and principles by which they were to be ruled. In the Sudanese administrative language of law and order, and public security, the southerners were to be 'developed', 'modernised' and 'civilised'.

We will thus explore the continuities of governance in southern Sudan in the period 1954-60, to argue for its integration into the wider literature on the transition to independence. First we examine the outlook of the new northern Sudanese administrators immediately after they took up their posts in South Sudan in the period from mid-1954 to early August 1955. This was a period marked by optimism on behalf of the state's capacity to positively transform societies in southern Sudan and to integrate the southerners into a larger national endeavour of modernisation, which we locate in the broader literature on African nationalist projects. Then we demonstrate how the violence of late August 1955 accentuated the more authoritarian aspects of this agenda: the southern Sudanese needed to be controlled and taught to behave as good citizens. Finally, we explore the ways in which northern Sudanese administrators justified state violence and coercion in the languages of legalism and developmentalism.

Colonial inheritances: legalism and developmentalism

The origin of authoritarian developmentalism and a legalistic approach to governance in Sudan was rooted in a general ambition among government officials to render 'legible' the societies they intended to dominate, by seeking to map, standardize and structure society so that it could be easily measured, monitored and regulated for the purpose of control and extraction of resources.[8] Such efforts were not restricted to the late colonial period, but had been integral to British imperialism since the late eighteenth century.[9] In the interwar period, the ideologies of indirect rule in Britain's African colonies further encouraged the mapping and ordering of colonial society according to tribes and chiefs, introducing uniform hierarchies of chiefs' courts with regularised powers and limitations.[10] Law and legal procedures were thus key tools in the quest for legibility. The Anglo-Egyptian Condominium

Government's primary interwar development project, the Gezira cotton-growing scheme in northern Sudan, also entailed control and ordering of its tenant farmer inhabitants.[11] Thus, state visions of development both required and furthered knowledge and control of Sudanese society.

By the 1940s, however, administrators' amateur ethnographic reporting and the conservative goals of the indirect rule era were being replaced by technocratic expertise, centralised planning and increasingly ambitious development goals. The decades after the Second World War were the heyday of government planning: belief in the transformatory potential of technical and scientific knowledge, together with the growing international pressure to confer the benefits of modernity upon the colonised, resulted in a model of development in the colonies that was 'profoundly state-centric'.[12] Arguably, this ideology had a particularly strong hold on the mind of government leaders and officials in Africa, both before and after independence. Even in southern Sudan, where British administrative policy remained largely conservative and cautious, the ambitions of late colonial development are evident in the creation of the Zande cotton-growing Scheme. Like the Gezira Scheme, though on a smaller scale, the Zande Scheme aimed at social engineering and resettlement as well as economic development.[13]

The educated elite of northern Sudanese who inherited the government of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium shared the modernising zeal and developmentalist agenda of the period. But this was combined with a distinctive sense of cultural superiority based on their own identification with Arabness and Islam. Heather Sharkey's study of the nationalist movement among the Sudanese 'modern' elite of secondary school graduates demonstrates how Arab nationalism and the British colonial mind-set converged within this social segment.[14] Education combined with Islam, Arabic language and lineage were seen as the explanation for their ascension to power, but at the same time also as the basis for a uniform national identity.

The Sudanese understanding of citizenship at this time was permeated by legal language and a fetishisation of the law which resonates with a more general trend in colonial Africa, where the language of the law was used to 'authorize predation and criminalize opposition'.[15] This tendency was inherited by the postcolonial state, and the citizen was, as Comaroff and Comaroff argue, primarily defined as '*legal* subject'.[16] Scholars have argued

that the rhetoric of nation-building and development justified the continuation of exclusionary and coercive government after the independence of African states.[17] Citing Mbembe, Young stresses that legalism was central to this programme:

> With a disposition to violence and a propensity to arbitrary discipline of the subject reminiscent of the indigénat, the state, committed to a vocation of 'modernizing the nation and civilizing the society', inflated notions of subversion and 'threats to state security' to facilitate punishment of the dissident 'with the judicial formalism characteristic of authoritarian regimes'.[18]

Legalism and developmentalism were intertwined in this authoritarian vision of modernization. In the French colonial *indigénat* in West Africa, colonial governments had long cited a lack of advancement among the populations they governed as justification for colonial coercion and collective punishment.[19] After decolonisation, postcolonial state violence was 'frequently (and paradoxically) designed to force participation in new political communities dubbed republics, which were grounded at least rhetorically in emerging principles of citizenship and equality'.[20] Thus, developmentalism was used to justify coercion: participation and compulsion were not antithetical in nationalist and government discourse.

Starting ahead of the first wave of independence, the decolonisation process of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium government foreshadowed developments elsewhere in Africa. Government officials in Sudan saw themselves as engaged in the education of southerners in the meaning and duties of citizenship. For the early nationalists there was no conflict between a modernising, civilising and nation-building effort in Sudan, and the desire to spread Islam and the Arabic language; rather, these were seen as complementary and mutually reinforcing goals. This should not however discount individual agency and idiosyncrasies. Like the British administrators before them, there was a considerable variation in zeal and capacity among the northern officials, and differences in their ability and interest in communicating across the cultural chasm that separated them from the southerners. During this period we also find some southerners in subordinate government positions at the district and province level. Although most of these southerners increasingly favoured federalism or autonomy for the south, in their daily execution of administrative responsibilities they adhered to the northerners' governance agenda and perceptions of southern Sudanese society.

Developing southern Sudan, 1954-55

The northern Sudanese who inherited the Sudanese government in the mid-1950s regarded the mission to modernise and assimilate southern Sudan into the national polity as imperative. The south was to the northern nationalists the prime example of colonial misrule and divisive politics. They claimed they would *reverse* the marginalisation of the south resulting from British administrative neglect, yet the new rulers adopted and perpetuated the development agenda of their predecessors, alongside a strong belief in the power of modern governance and its ultimate capacity to transform society. The official mind in the first year of Sudanisation is revealed in a collection of annual reports from the districts of Equatoria Province, mostly written in June 1955 – only weeks before the Torit Mutiny.[21] The developmentalist outlook is clearly visible in this report from Torit:

> [N]o serious attempt was ever made to develop this District economically, educationally, socially etc. ... In fact the forty years, which have now lapsed since the Sudan Government took over this District, have not changed the plain Lotuho in the least. They still lead the pastoral life [of] their forefathers and they are still undressed, uneducated and as backward as they were found by the British [in] 1914. The British hypothesis that these people are happy as they are is a fallacy which served as a ready answer to any visitor who asked why these people were still in such a primitive condition. It is high time for them to know or to be made to know that they, in their present state, belong to a stage of civilization which disappeared hundreds of years ago and that unless they adapt themselves to the prevailing stage the complexities of the modern world will inevitably shatter their tribal life and destroy their obsolete tradition against their will.[22]

Even before the violence of August 1955, then, Sudanese administrators asserted that southerners must be '*made* to know' that modernisation was inevitable. Such coercive rhetoric and policy would become even stronger after 1955. The perceived reason for southern Sudan's lack of development was that the British had held the people back and hindered northerners' access to the area from 1924 to 1946.[23] Nakedness and 'indecency' were seen to epitomise southern backwardness, to be stamped out for the 'good prestige of the Sudanese nation'.[24]

Yet despite their criticism of Condominium policies and practises, the new Sudanese administrators retained many of the methods and ideas of their colonial predecessors. The District Commissioner (DC) was still the man-on-the-spot who had full command of the government's meagre resources at the local level, and who was expected to get to know 'his

people' to overcome the illegibility of society. Above all, these administrators were to ensure the preservation of law and order in their districts, as the Governor of Equatoria, Abdel Aziz Omer el Amin, made clear to a meeting of the new northern DCs in Juba in February 1955:

> As officials we are responsible to see that the constitution is observed and Law and Order are maintained. In this connection all citizens must have equal rights and obligations irrespective of their nationality, tribe, religion or any other differences. A mixture of sympathy and firmness should be the basis of the Administration. The Governor then made a special emphasis on as much trekking as possible and on learning the local dialects as the best means for knowing the local people and gaining their confidence.[25]

Noting the 'delicate' political atmosphere in Equatoria, the meeting further expressed concern that northern Sudanese traders had not previously been subject to the jurisdiction of chiefs' courts, and that some of them might have contributed to the 'ill feeling' in the province: 'They have to be made to appreciate that all people are equal before the law and that they are expected to set a good example and play their role in the betterment of the present atmosphere'. The chiefs' courts were to be further supported through a building programme: 'For the prestige and respect of Native Courts, it is of great importance to build as decent court houses as possible'.[26]

As this suggests, the new administrators were committed to the system of chiefs, seeing them as the most reliable interlocutors between government and people. Like the colonial government, the Sudanese officials depicted the 'ordinary' people as innocent in their ignorance, needing protection from the corrupting influence of educated 'detribalised' politicians. At the end of 1955, the same Governor of Equatoria, El Amin, would reiterate the innocence of the 'Ordinary Citizen':

> By this is meant the man in the bush who has no special political ideas, and who is not interested – or may not even know, what is going on. He must therefore be protected well from any harmful influence. Every effort must be made to gain such man [sic].[27]

Reflecting the old contradictions of colonial policies, the new administration was thus both determined to bring development and modernity to the southern provinces, and to protect and conserve traditional authority and society: the DCs' meeting in early 1955 vehemently refuted a central government abolition of cattle fines on the grounds that it would 'disrupt

their social fabric', 'break down the back bone of the customary law and consequently have a very serious effect on the public security'.[28]

During these months before the Torit Mutiny, security problems were not perceived as challenging the state's authority, but rather were dismissed in a condescending and paternalistic manner, harking back to the British days. The Torit annual report thus explains the rise in crime within the district:

> The newly enfranchised generation naturally wish [sic] to prove that they are equal to the responsibility put over them and that they can do manly acts of homicide, arson and grievous hurt. Hence the increase in major court cases.[29]

The new administrators were much less indulgent, however, when it came to attempts by southern politicians and Egyptians to promote alternative political agendas for southern Sudan. Southern political opposition was largely limited to the towns, especially Juba, which was then the administrative headquarters of Equatoria.[30] A conference was held 18-21 October 1954 and southern parliamentarians organised a follow-up meeting 3-6 July 1955.[31] A number of chiefs attended the 1954 conference, but it appears that they all abstained in 1955. In Equatoria, following a hint from a central government source, 'politically minded' administrators arranged for telegrams expressing support for Sudanese unity to be sent from the chiefs of the different districts, the Zande case being particularly controversial and adding to the general tension in the south in the months before the Mutiny.[32] A similar incident took place in the Eastern District:

> In a big meeting held in June in the Toposa B/Court house at Kapoeta, attended by chiefs, sub-chiefs, merchants and leading tribesmen of Topsa, Didinga and Boya, the ideas of Unity with Egypt and separation of the South were unanimously rejected. All those present made it quite clear to their members in the house of Representatives that they will accept nothing short of a united fully independent Sudan.[33]

During the months of May-August, tension increased in southern Sudan. There was a demonstration when the British Governor-General, Sir Knox-Helm, visited in May 1955: 'various slogans which in essence, conveyed the creed of hostility to the northerners were displayed in various ways. Legal proceedings had been taken against those who attempted to create enmity between classes.'[34] This recourse to legal instruments to control political activity would be reinforced in the aftermath of the violence that erupted in August 1955.

The Torit Mutiny and the 'outlaws'

The Torit Mutiny would have a deep and lasting impact on relations between the southerners and their newly instated rulers. However, while these weeks of violence clearly heightened security concerns, we argue that the Mutiny served only to accentuate the existing discourse of legalism and the intertwining of development with security. For instance, reports on Rumbek District described the effects of the 1955 Mutiny in terms of a spate of criminal activity: 'robberies and brigandage'.[35] Vengeance against the mutineers was delivered through the justice system, with trials quickly set up once the Mutiny was suppressed.[36] There were several reasons why the Sudan government attempted to restrain the use of extra-judicial violence in their initial response to the Mutiny. Most important was the need to demonstrate vis-à-vis Britain and Egypt that the government had the situation under control and did not need any 'assistance' from co-domini forces.[37] It is also conceivable that the northern administration by using the courts to deal with the issue wished to demonstrate that they were 'civilised' and modern and thus refrained from 'barbaric' retaliation. Most importantly though, this resonates with the legalistic outlook of the new government where superiority and development was displayed through the control and mastery of legal instruments. This emphasis on legal codes when justifying emergency measures is also evident in a later statement by the Governor of Equatoria from 1956, Ali Baldo, when he wrote to DCs condemning the ill-treatment of prisoners and warning of the danger of alienating people and undermining confidence in government and justice.[38] Moreover, to combat rumours of abuses of southern prisoners in the north, the Province Council was informed that the prisoners were well taken care of and treated fairly.[39]

Some of the mutineers escaped capture and remained 'in the bush', but by late 1956 the security challenge posed by the mutineers in Equatoria was in reality minimal.[40] One group in Eastern District was supposed to consist of only three mutineers operating in concert with Toposa 'tribesmen'. Another group led by Lomiluk Lohide and Latada Hillir was a threat to government control in the area east of Torit. These two groups carried out a few ambushes. In one instance a group of cars carrying the DC and high ranking chiefs of the District were attacked on their way back from a meeting in Uganda. These attacks led to military operations where villages and crops were burned and cattle confiscated, but which

failed to effectuate the capture of the 'outlaws'. During 1956 and 1957 other 'outlaws' were pursued in Eastern District and also in one case further north in the Pibor/Boma area; severe penalties were meted out to those that were found to assist them in any capacity. Although the impact of their operations were negligible, these groups were considered a challenge to the government's control and prestige in southern Sudan; it was feared that if they were not dealt with swiftly and thoroughly they would be followed by others and the government control would crumble. In consequence, the 'outlaws' exercised a disproportionate influence on the official imagination in the years after the Mutiny, contributing to a preoccupation with security, law and order and loyalty to the state.

The use of coercive force to control political demonstrations was deemed necessary to prevent 'innocent' citizens getting dragged into criminal activity.[41] The above-mentioned acts of brutality perpetrated by southerners during the Torit Mutiny compelled administrators to believe that the southerners were potentially dangerous and it appears that northerners in southern Sudan felt more insecure subsequently, especially in Equatoria. In Torit the situation was normalising at a slow rate; as late as November 1956, Governor Ali Baldo reported that:

> The District Commissioner Torit has now moved from the house he used to occupy in the army cantonment to his proper house in the Town and so did his assistant. This has re-assured the local people and gave them confidence that the situation has returned to normal. On the other hand it has had its effect in raising the morale of the terror striken [sic] northern merchants in Torit.[42]

Civil administrators in the district lived in the barracks more than a year after the Mutiny, indicating the high level of perceived insecurity. Arrests and prosecutions were widespread even in the Bahr el-Ghazal province, which had seen little violence during the Mutiny.[43] Violence had escalated quickly during the first days of the Mutiny and to avoid this in the future it was assumed that swift and strict measures were necessary when new incidents occurred. The prioritisation of security lead to the creation and extension of an intelligence apparatus in the south: a meeting of provincial governors in 1956 'resolved that the District Commissioner should have a personal responsibility in operating and checking the Intelligence system in his district'.[44]

The northern officials argued – much like their colonial predecessors – that only a firm display of justice and law enforcement would ensure that government authority was

upheld. Even in 1957, an intelligence report from Eastern District warned of the continuing dangers of not having caught and convicted the 'outlaws' from the mutiny:

> As a result of several raids that took place in the Eastern District between Toposa-Boya in which some mutineers took part and which involved deaths on both parts and maiming and looting of cattle rumours started to spread amongst the simple tribesmen of failure of Government to trace and punish the offenders. This has been interpreted by the populace of the area as weakness on the part of the Government. Further rumours went as far as accusing the Government of releasing murderers at Juba and though they see the Government arrest murderers and try them yet they have not heard of any murderer being hanged and therefore they believe that such murderers who, after trial sent to Juba, are subsequently released.[45]

Whether these 'rumours' had any root in actual sentiments among people in Eastern District is unclear, but officials were evidently convinced of the need to demonstrate 'strong' government through arrests and punishments. In November 1957, the same official reported on some successes:

> A fairly good deal of improvement in public security in Eastern District had prevailed after the recent mass arrests of outlaws and murderers and their deterrent punishments by state of Chiefs Special Courts. The wild and savage Toposa of Riwato, and Nikor and the notorious Boya of Thugurn and Longarim Hills have come to realize that there is a strong Government that came to stay and rule and keep peace order and give justice.[46]

This assumed change of heart was wishful thinking, but the quote is evidence of the prevailing government view on peoples in the rural peripheries. The central role of chiefs in policing and security helped to maintain the government focus on justice – but equally fundamental was the belief that the demonstration of effective justice was vital to building confidence in government.

Security became an explicit signifier of a state-society contract and the duties of citizenship: it was the duty of the state to protect its citizens, 'and if mutineers are left at large they constitute a danger to citizens'; conversely it was also the duty of the citizens to contribute to security: 'we need cooperation of the whole citizens for their own safety and security'.[47] This contract had a long history: from the earliest days of colonial rule, British officers had promised state protection in return for loyalty and cooperation.[48] Chiefs had been and remained central to the contract:

> Good and loyal chiefs will be always rewarded while slack and bad ones will be severely punished... [S]ecurity ranks first and... chiefs are responsible to clear their areas from mutineers and their firearms so that government officials give them the best of their generosity and services.[49]

These northern Sudanese officers were not simply asserting the coercive force of the state – though they did not veil this threat in addressing the chiefs – but were also emphasising quite explicitly the dependence of the state on its citizens for security, and vice versa.

Despite the modernising rhetoric of Sudan's administrators, the threat of violence made them even more committed to the system of Native Administration than their colonial predecessors had been.[50] In the immediate aftermath of the Torit Mutiny, Equatoria Governor El Amin urged the need to win over the 'ordinary citizens' in the south and to establish 'friendly relations':

> The best suggested means being personal contact and application of justice. Of course he needs to be convinced that his District Commissioner is here to serve him and NOT to rule him. All this must be done without belittling the Chief who has specific importance... Social contacts must be encouraged to bridge the gab [sic] between Northerners and Southerners...
> [Southern] Members of Parliament... have to observe the law and must in NO case be allowed to interfere with the administration.[51]

One of the first acts of the government after the 1955 mutiny was to raise the pay of chiefs. Local Government Councils were at the same time pilloried for weakening 'Chiefs in particular and administration in general'.[52] Chiefly members of the province council who had fled to Uganda and Congo were replaced with 'loyalists'. These chiefs were told that they were the 'eye, ear and hand of government'.[53] In 1957, the Sudan Government's ministerial committee for the affairs of the south recommended the 'warranting of wider administrative and legal powers' to improve the status of chiefs and 'to add to their prestige and influence'.[54] The judicial role of chiefs was stressed, and DCs were issuing orders about the proper recording of court cases by chiefs and other matters of procedure. The Chief Justice asked the Governors of the Southern Provinces to report on whether there was indeed a need to increase the 'legal powers' of chiefs, cautioning that this should only be done if it was 'absolutely necessary for maintenance of public peace and order', but agreeing that it was 'a sound policy to increase the prestige of those Chiefs who administer local justice in their areas'.[55] Moreover, in the name of security, state violence was outsourced to chiefs and their retainers:

> It is evident... that there are still many mutineers on both sides of the river [Nile] and that their activity is on the increase every day. It is evident also that these mutineers are finding sympathy, help and shelter from the local people. Chiefs have failed to arrest them and we should not expect them to do so without arming their retainers as recommended in my Security Council Meeting in May.[56]

But effective law enforcement and intelligence gathering was seen to depend upon 'friendly relations' with the population as well as on the loyalty of chiefs. Law and justice were thus both the means of winning over citizens and of protecting them from the dangerous influence of politicians.

Forging the Sudanese nation: law and citizenship

The government discourse of law and order was linked to the definition of citizenship and nationalism in southern Sudan. Seen from the Sudanese nationalist perspective, a citizen must accept the sovereignty of the new rulers: adherence to the project of creating a united Sudan was required. There was no sympathy for alternative agendas – in particular attempts to gain federal status for southern Sudan. Southern politicians were viewed as destabilising elements in the newly independent Sudan, assumed to be under the influence of Christian missionaries. Nationalist and even international dimensions of the Torit Mutiny were engendered by the assumed involvement of foreign missionaries and that fact that the mutineers who escaped to the Uganda Protectorate were given sanctuary and Ugandan colonial authorities refused to repatriate them to the Sudan – Sudan government reports even alleged that some of the mutineers were hired by the Ugandan government.[57] This fuelled suspicions of British intentions towards the Sudan, and southern Sudan in particular. Eventually relations with Britain improved: by early 1957 the colonial government of Uganda was cooperating militarily with the Sudan in the search for mutineers in the border areas.[58]

But suspicion continued to hang over the missionaries. The Sudan government decision to nationalise mission-run schools in southern Sudan in 1957 has been interpreted as proof of its religious intolerance and desire to Arabise and Islamise the southerners by force. However, it was nationalist and legalistic arguments – not religious – that were used to take over the mission schools and get rid of the missionaries: they were portrayed as foreign agents undermining the government and instigating rebellion and disunity in the south.[59] Regardless of the quality and cost-effectiveness of the missionary-based education system its

very existence was an affront to the whole idea of an independent nation. Nonetheless politicians and government officials in Khartoum and in southern Sudan wanted to appear tolerant and responsible. It is testimony to the Sudan government's desire for foreign recognition and approval – and its belief in the superiority of legal instruments – that it used the formal government apparatus to marginalise and finally to evict the missionaries. Indeed, some evidence indicates an element of reluctance among some Northern administrators in the south towards implementing the central policy against the missionaries and it appears that most decisions regarding the missionaries were deferred to the central government.[60]

The independent government's education strategy towards the South was focused on teaching Islam and Arabic: this was not only a vehicle for spreading a religion and a language, but also intended to promote cultural homogeneity and national unity. In 1960, Equatoria Governor Ali Baldo issued a lengthy statement on the imposition of Friday as the rest day which he ordered DCs to translate and disseminate as widely as possible so that 'all people in the south particularly southerners should know the bare facts'. The statement was clearly intended as a public assertion of state sovereignty, couching the issue in terms not of religion but of allegiance to the state:

> [T]he decision has the legal as well as the moral force of the State. To put it in plain and simple language, opposition to the Government decision would mean an opposition to the State itself. To this extent this Republic is simply more than competent to enforce its will and to see that it is to be obeyed and respected...
> The authors and instigators of the so-called 'Sunday Protest' should be reminded that even Christ himself orders obedience to the State: Render to God what are God's and to Caeser what are Caeser's [sic].[61]

Government officials saw themselves as engaged in educating the southerners in citizenship, in how to become a legal subject. It was the duty of the government – 'to protect the interests of the citizens', to build up the 'moral force' of the state, and to prepare the way for both development and political participation.[62] As elsewhere, such 'participation' might be compelled or coerced, as part of the education of citizens in their own duties and rights. It was not only northern Sudanese administrators who professed to such discourse: the few southern administrators participated in it too, such as William Deng Nhial, writing in 1956: 'It takes time for a Country like the Sudan to make the Local people understand the machinery of Local Government and *make them active participants* in its economic, social and democratic developments' [emphasis added].[63] In 1960, he wrote again to Governor Ali

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Baldo, supporting the unity of the Sudan and asserting that 'we still have a long way to go in educating our people in citizenship'.[64] Other southern politicians and administrators similarly promoted modernisation and development, and urged the people to be 'good citizens'.[65]

Governor Ali Baldo occupied a dominant position in Equatoria and in southern Sudan more widely in these years, and has often been vilified in the southern Sudanese scholarship as emblematic of northern tyranny.[66] But government documents reveal the extent to which he sought to express, explain and justify the authoritarianism of government to other administrators, and his concern to assert government legitimacy and prestige to both southern and international audiences. He thus epitomises the legalistic and developmentalist discourse, as well as the authoritarianism of government in this period. For example following the discovery in early 1958 of a possible 'vicious conspiracy which aims at realizing the Federal Status through the incitement of the public and the use of violence', he lectured his DCs on the notion of the citizen as legal subject:

> It is our duty Northerners and Southerners to preserve peace and order and to apply the law of the State with precision and accuracy and we have to be prepared for every eventuality and make sacrifice in the realization of this object. We should therefore take all legal precautions to prevent a breach of the peace... but in the same time this should not divert us from pursuing our friendly relations with the people to gain their full confidence and to serve them and do for their good. ... We will continue to respect and serve the people so long as they behave themselves and obey law and order but as soon as they try to go out of that orbit by adopting another course we shall have nothing but to take the most drastic measures against them.

Ali Baldo's governorship of Equatoria bridged the period before and after the elections and military coup of 1958. The military government of General Abboud is generally seen to have accelerated harsh repression and policies of Islamisation in the southern provinces, but some scholars have also noted a more gradual hardening of government policies and method across the period between 1956 and the early 1960s.[67] The correspondence and reports by Baldo and other administrators reflect this overall continuity of discourse to justify increasingly repressive measures.

Ali Baldo is also significant for his explicit engagement with the wider statism and governmentality of the period. In 1960, he sent the DCs an extract from a speech on Congo by the UN Secretary General, which declared that

to lead and govern is not a privilege to be sought but a burden of responsibility to be assumed... We have had to act as responsible human brings facing a desperate emergency. You try to save a drowning man without prior authorization and even if he resists you; you do not let him go even when he tries to strangle you.

He clearly found this metaphor particularly apposite:

[T]his extract had struck me as a genuine and true representation of the new conception of the art of Governing which each of us should bear in mind if we are to succeed in serving our Country well. Our particular role here in the South demands from us a more strict adherence to such theories which we should not only conceive but must make the people feel that we are being guided by them.[68]

Again the continuities from the British colonial rhetoric of duty and responsibility are very much evident even in this endorsement of a 'new conception of the art of governing', together with the sense that wider theories and ideologies could add legitimacy to the Sudanese administrators' efforts to save the southerners from drowning in their colonially-entrenched backwardness. Although seldom as lofty as Ali Baldo, this mentality is reflected in much of the contemporary official correspondence of both northern and southern officials.

Linking development with law, order and the goal of national unity

The Torit Mutiny and its aftermath contributed to linking notions of development and modernisation with security and law in southern Sudan. The *lack* of development was presented as the explanation for violence: security broke down because 'the people are poor and ignorant and can be mislead [sic] by anybody'.[69] In 1956, at the first meeting of the Equatoria Province Council after the August 1955 violence, Ali Baldo stressed the interdependence of security and development, and the continuing need to increase productivity, move people into villages and register land:

We are all convinced that this backward part of the country requires much effort for its progress and development, but there could be no development without law, order, confidence and time under the guidance of skilled personnel. The urgent necessity for the creation of local capital by local effort must be the prime duty of everyone of us [original emphasis]. This is the only way or means for expansion within the economic frame work or advance in any social legislation. We must produce more than we consume. ... The success and failure of such schemes depends on the full cooperation and confidence between the administration and the producers.[70]

In the same meeting, the commander of the army in the south, Miralai Ahmed Bey Abu Bakr, reinforced the message:

> The country's development schemes, whether Educational, Agricultural, Industrial or Commercial, depend entirely upon public security. It would be beyond impossible for any individual or community to carry out their duties satisfactorily if the security is endangered.

When one of the chiefs who made up the council emphasised that development and increased productivity depended on access to capital, he was again reminded by the Governor that 'Capital whether local or foreign needs security first'.[71]

Development and modernisation was firmly predicated on notions of security and law and order. 'Backwardness' also served as a justification for coercive policing and state violence. The British and Condominium policies were blamed for the southerners' lack of development, yet the independent government's use of coercion and collective punishment were rooted in colonial practises and ideology, much as in other parts of Africa.[72] Moreover, as seen above, the Sudanese administration relied on the chiefs and structures of the colonial 'Native Administration' as the primary means of obtaining intelligence and enforcing law and order. Paradoxically then, development and modernisation – and the reversal of colonial neglect – were to be achieved by colonial governance ideology and by bolstering the authority of the agents of colonial rule to maintain security. The independent government's investments and initiatives in sectors related to social and economic development were believed to also contribute towards a national developmentalist and cultural integration agenda. Economic development in southern Sudan was almost exclusively promoted through the development of plantations and cash-crop cultivation, with initiatives including an agricultural research station in Yambio, forestry and saw mills in Torit, a rice scheme in Aweil and the growing of tobacco in Maridi.[73] Extension of the rail network to Aweil and Wau was first and foremost a measure to increase government control, but was also intended to have development impact.

Prison labour was presented as a vehicle for generation of government revenue and development of the economy. Extensive use of prison labour, as a part of a more general system of forced labour, was a colonial legacy. The Condominium had used prison labour as well as forced seasonal labour organised through the chiefs to maintain roads and other

government infrastructure projects. The independent government similarly demanded labour but paid the labourer at a (low) fixed rate. It also relied on prison labour. In 1958, Ali Baldo urged DCs to double the areas under cultivation in their districts and the prison authorities were seen as an element in this strategy. In the meeting, the Senior Controller of Prisons

> made a full account of what the Prison Camps are doing mentioning some of the their achievements, the most important of which is the Lafon Scheme, which will be started this year by an area of 500 feddans to be put under Dura cultivation. He said at the moment he has 100 prisoners working in this plantation and will as a matter of fact need 150 more to be supplied from Districts to cope with this seasons until the Scheme is mechanised next year.[74]

Moreover, prison labour was an opportunity to shape southerners into producers of cash crops. This was perceived as a way to expand the monetary economy, but also as a remedy against the perceived 'laziness' and 'idleness' of southerners.[75] This report from Bahr el-Ghazal illustrates this policy and perception of southerners:

> It is worth mentioning here that among the many schemes of the prison department in this province, durra [sorghum] is given top attention, not only because it increases prison revenue, but that its cultivation acquaints the prisoners with the job, which most of them might have not been able to do, during their free life or, which they regarded as tiresome and non productive [sic], Durra Plantations are also set up in villages to enable the natives of those villages to see their relative prisoners do the work, with the simple tools which they are unable to work with and to witness the prison products of the soil, which many of them regard, as being unsuitable for cultivation. It is hoped that with the prison example, people will increase their efforts to produce enough for their consumption and their needs.[76]

The penal system was thus tied not only to the establishment of the security that was seen to be so necessary for development, but also to the demonstration of what state-coerced development could achieve.

Conclusion

In southern Sudan, the Torit Mutiny and its aftermath contributed to an intensification of state authoritarianism, with Sudanese administrators prepared to use coercion to engender 'participation' and development. Such governance discourses and their accompanying ideologies mediate between structures and agency in the sense that they delimitated the boundaries of the possible and channelled the attention and initiative of the government officials. But, even more importantly, these discourses were deeply embedded in the

institutions of government and transcended not only the individual administrator, but also changes of regime. Thus, it is possible to see long-term continuities in these authoritarian visions of development, modernity and citizenship among later southern administrators as well as their northern Sudanese and British predecessors: this was epitomised in the 1970s by the President of the High Executive Council of Southern Sudan, Abel Alier's much-quoted declaration 'If we have to drive our people to paradise with sticks we will do so for their own good'.[77] But in the political context of the late 1950s, these agendas among the Sudanese state elite were interpreted by many southerners as a project to exclude or repress rather than to include and improve.

By using the language of the law and the coercive apparatus of state law enforcement (including the Native Administration structures) to delineate citizenship and to promote development, the Sudanese administrators only made starker the exclusionary and repressive aspects of their statism and nationalism. The government discourses analysed in this article were thus significant not merely as self-justificatory rhetoric or self-motivating ideology, but for their role in setting the terms of political debate. As southern resistance intensified during the 1960s, opposition groups appropriated government representatives' own legalistic discourse to criticise the latter's 'suppression' 'forced assimilation' and 'domination'.[78] And as such resistance was criminalised by government, those who found themselves outside the law – and hence denied rights of citizenship – were forced into political exile or armed rebellion.[79] The justification of state violence fed the rhetoric of violent opposition that would ultimately escalate into civil war from 1963.

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Endnotes

[1] Rolandsen, "False start"; Government of Sudan, *Report Commission of Enquiry*.

[2] Collins, *History of Modern Sudan*, 67; see also Poggo, *First Sudanese Civil War*, 47.

[3] Beshir, *Southern Sudan*; Abd al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism*; Wai, "Pax Brittanica"; Poggo, *First Sudanese Civil War*.

[4] Rolandsen, "False Start."

[5] Holt and Daly, *History of the Sudan*, 121–2; Collins, *History of Modern Sudan*, 65, 77–9; Johnson, *Root Causes*, 29–32.

[6] Holt and Daly, *History of the Sudan*, 115.

[7] This article is largely based on evidence from the South Sudan National Archive (SSNA) in Juba, with supplementary documentation from the National Records Office (NRO) in Khartoum.

[8] Scott, *Seeing Like a State*.

[9] Cohn, *Colonialism*; Harley, "Maps, Knowledge, and Power"; Basset, "Cartography and Empire Building"; Edney, *Mapping an Empire*.

[10] E.g. Berry, *No Condition Is Permanent*.

[11] Bernal, "Colonial Moral Economy," 447–479; Barnett, *Gezira Scheme.*

[12] Lewis, *Empire State-Building*, 19; Cooper, "Modernizing Bureaucrats."

[13] Reining, *The Zande Scheme*.

[14] Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism*.

[15] Comaroff and Comaroff, "Introduction," 11.

[16] Ibid., 18.

[17] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.

[18] Young, *African Colonial State*, 287.

[19] Mann, "What Was the Indigénat?," 340–43.

[20] Ibid., 352.

[21] SSNA, EP 57/E/3.1, "District Annual Reports Equatoria Province 1954/55."

[22] Ibid., 2-3.

[23] Government of Sudan, *Report Commission of Enquiry*, 16–17, 81.

[24] SSNA MD 1/B/1, El Tijani Saad, Acting Governor Bahr el Ghazal, to DCs, Wau, 12 January 1955; Burton and Jennings, "Introduction."

[25] SSNA MD 32/A/1, A. O. El Amin, "District Commissioners' Meeting Juba 1-5 February 1955," 14 February 1955.

[26] Ibid.

[27] SSNA MD 32/A/1, "Minutes of the District Commissioner's [sic] Meeting, Juba, on 6-9 December 1955"; Rolandsen, "False Start," 117.

[28] SSNA MD 32/A/1, A. O. El Amin, "District Commissioners' Meeting, Juba, 1-5 February 1955", 14 February 1955.

[29] SSNA, EP 57/E/3.1, "Torit District," in "District Annual Reports Equatoria Province 1954/55", 18.

[30] Howell, "Political leadership"; Passmore Sanderson and Sanderson, *Education, Religion and Politics*.

[31] Government of Sudan, *Report Commission of Enquiry*, 14, 21, 86; Johnson, *Root Causes*, 27.

[32] Government of Sudan, *Report Commission of Enquiry*, 87–91. Cf. SSNA ZD/57.B.1, "Zande District Monthly Report" June 1955; Wawa, *Southern Sudanese Pursuits of Self-Determination*, 80–141; Johnson, *British Documents on the End of Empire: Sudan*.

[33] SSNA EP 57/E/3.1, "Eastern District" in "District Annual Reports Equatoria Province 1954/55," 15. See also, *idem.,* "Torit District," 16.

[34] SSNA EP 57/E/3.1, "Juba District" in "District Annual Reports Equatoria Province 1954/55," 5.

[35] SSNA UNP BD 57/B/2, "Lakes District Monthly Diary" September 1955.

[36] SSNA MD 39/A/1, Osman el Tayeb, Province Judge, Southern Provinces Juba, "Directive under the Criminal Courts Emergency Procedure (Standard) Regulations 1955," 15 September 1955.

[37] Rolandsen, "False start," 110–11.

[38] SSNA MD 39/A/1, Ali Baldo, Governor Equatoria and Acting Province Judge, to all DCs, 28 November 1956.

[39] SSNA EP 1/C/1.3, "Minutes of the 8th Meeting of the Equatoria Province Council Held at Juba Town Council Chamber on 21st and 22nd July 1956."

[40] Rolandsen, "False Start," 111–16.

[41] SSNA MD 36/B/1, "Minutes of security meeting, Governor's house, 2 June1958 at 6pm."

[42] NRO UNP 1/20/168, "Equatoria Province Monthly Intelligence Report [EPMIR]," November 1956.

[43] NRO, UNP 1/20/168, I El Tahir for Governor, "Bahr el-Ghazal Province Intelligence Report," 1 Sep. 1955 – 30 Nov. 1955.

[44] SSNA MD 32/A/1 "Minutes of the Southern Provinces Governor's [sic] meeting, Juba, 28 October 1956." See also Rolandsen, "False start," 117.

[45] NRO UNP 1/20/168, Ahmed for A/Governor, "EPMIR," 1-31 July 1957.

[46] NRO UNP 1/20/168, SKM Ahmed, "Equatoria Province Half Monthly Intelligence Report [EPHMIR]," 16-30 Nov 1957.

[47] SSNA EP 1/C/1.3, "Minutes of the 8th Meeting of the Equatoria Province Council held at Juba Town Council Chamber on 21st and 22nd July 1956."

[48] Leonardi, *Dealing with Government*.

[49] SSNA EP 1/C/1.3, "Minutes of the 8th Meeting of the Equatoria Province Council held at Juba Town Council Chamber on 21st and 22nd July 1956."

[50] Leonardi, *Dealing with Government*, 138–42.

[51] SSNA MD 32/A/1, "Minutes of the District Commissioner's [sic] Meeting held in Juba, 6-9 December 1955".

[52] SSNA MD 32/A/1, "Minutes DC Meeting 6-9 December 1955"; *idem.*, "Minutes DC Meeting 28 October 1956".

[53] SSNA EP 1/C/1.3, "Minutes of the 8th Meeting of the Equatoria Province Council Held at Juba Town Council Chamber on 21st and 22nd July 1956".

[54] SSNA MD 1/B/1, M. A. Abu Rannat, Chief Justice, to Governors of Southern Provinces, 18 March 1957.

[55] Ibid.

[56] NRO UNP 1/20/168, A. R. Saied, A/Governor, "Equatoria Province Intelligence Report [EPIR]," July/August 1956.

[57] E.g. NRO UNP 1/20/168, A. R. Saied, A/Governor, " EPIR," April/May 1956, June/July 1956 and July/August 1956.

[58] NRO UNP 1/20/168, Gurein, "EPHMIR," 2nd half April 1957.

[59] Rolandsen, "False Start," 119–21.

[60] [Verona Fathers' Mission], *Sudan Government Secret Plans*.

[61] SSNA MD 1/B/1, Ali Baldo, Governor of Equatoria, to all DCs, "Facts from Equatoria Province", 13 March 1960.

[62] Ibid.

[63] SSNA EP 100/B/3.3, W. D. Nhial, A/Executive Officer, Yei Rural Council, "Yei Rural Council Annual Report for 1955/1956", 28 July 1956.

[64] SSNA MD 1/B/1, William Deng Nhial, Mamur of Tembura sub-district, to Governor Equatoria, 25 January 1960.

[65] Eg Benjamin Lwoki in Rumbek, 1956, SSNA UNP BD 57/B/2, "Lakes District Monthly Diary," November 1956.

[66] Even the northern Sudanese scholar Mohamed Omer Beshir cites Ali Baldo as an example of advocates of the forcible integration of southerners into the Sudanese nation: *Southern Sudan*, 80–81.

[67] Passmore Sanderson and Sanderson, *Education, Religion and Politics*, 356.

[68] SSNA MD 1/B/1, Ali Baldo, Governor Equatoria, to all DCs, 30 October 1960.

[69] SSNA MD 36/B/1, "Record of Meeting, Governor's house, 31 March 1957 at 6.30pm".

[70] SSNA EP 1/C/1.3, "Minutes of the 8th Meeting of the Equatoria Province Council Held at Juba Town Council Chamber on 21st and 22nd July 1956".

[71] Ibid.

[72] Mann, "What Was the Indigénat?", 340–43.

[73] SSNA EP 1/A/14, "Southern Development", *passim*.

[74] SSNA MD 32/A/1, "Minutes of District Commissioners' Meeting Held on 29th March 1958 at 10.30 a.m. at Governor's Residence", 5.

[75] E.g.: 'Local people were given priority for engagement on construction works in order to combat idleness', SSNA EP 1/A/14, DC Office Maridi to Governor Equatoria, "Issue of Future Magazine", 9 May 1959.

[76] Bulletin no. 141, *Bahr El Ghazal Daily*, published by the Ministry of Information Office Wau, 11 June 1959.

[77] Willis, "Ambitions of the State", 117.

[78] *Voice of Southern Sudan* 1, i (1963); "Statement by Mr. Joseph Oduho President Sudan African Closed Districts National Union, London," 17 December 1962, Sudan Open Archive (Accessed 24 March 2014).

[79] Rolandsen, "Anya-Nya insurgency."