THE RISE AND FALL OF SEPARATISM IN SOUTHERN SUDAN

R. K. BADAL

CHARACTERISTICALLY, Southern separatism vacillated between demands for local self-rule and the extreme of outright secession. In general, however, the call had been for some form of loosening of the political and legal bonds that united the South with the North. Needless to say, the response of the Centre (in this case the core-area of the North) had invariably been the hardening of attitudes towards regional demands. It is not my intention to go into the details of the history of the North-South conflict, but rather to attempt to highlight the process by which the South moved from a variety of positions to the claim for a separate identity or existence.

The line of enquiry suggested here is likely to yield valuable information with regard to the nature and character of the most articulate elements of Southern separatism. It is one thesis of this article that the perceptions and expectations of this layer or layers of the Southern community had largely been responsible for the shaping of Southern demands. An appreciation of this fact makes possible the attempt to explain how it was that General Numeiry managed to strike off Southern separatism from the political agenda. On this same premise, too, rests the purely conjectural issue of whether or not the existing political and constitutional arrangements designed specifically to contain separatist sentiments in the South will continue to hold in the foreseeable future.

There is, doubtless, a sense in which every case or instance of separatism is unique. But—and I can only put it tentatively—Southern Sudanese separatism does seem to be significantly different from all the cases seen so far.

I

When differences in religion between communities within one state or empire coincide with other visible differences (of wealth, class, or language) they may form the foundation of a separatist movement. To this catalogue of possible conflict-areas may be added the fact of past history. Southern Sudan separatism appears to have compounded, in varying degrees of emphasis, all the conceivable motives for a claim to separate identity or existence; only the most glaring of these merit attention.

The one striking fact about the Sudan (its vastness apart) is the extent of its ethnic or cultural composition. With a land area of just under a million square

R. K. Badal is a Southern Sudanese national and a graduate of the University of Khartoum. He is currently researching at the University of London, and this article is based upon a paper previously discussed at the Comparative Politics seminar the Institute of Commonwealth Studies.
miles, the country embraces a bewildering complexity of human elements. It is claimed that the Sudan contains within its boundaries not only sections of the three primary ethnic groups that live in Africa, namely Negroes, Hamites and Semites, but also representatives of almost all major African Languages.¹

It is on this ground that the Sudan has been described as a microcosm of Africa,² as well as being a link between the Arab north and Africa south of the Sahara. But if the Sudan represents Africa on a mini-scale, then it is plagued with the problems entailed by this. The best known of the Sudan's contrasts, which is also the concern of this article, is that between the North and South.³ While the six (now seven) northern provinces are inhabited principally by Arabic-speaking Muslims, most of whom would regard themselves as the natural members of the Arab world, the peoples of the southern Sudan are African and negroid, speaking a wide range of Sudanic, Nilotic and nilo-Hamitic languages; about a quarter of a million of them are Christians, a few are Muslims, but the majority are pagans.⁴ To one prominent social anthropologist the peoples of the Sudan are simply... variations between two ideal poles, the pure Caucasians and the pure Negro types. Moreover, the term Arab, when used to describe the majority of the Northern Sudanese, carries no racial connotation with it, but refers to those people who migrated from Arabia to Sudan and their descendants, and the indigenous folk who were absorbed into the Arab tribes and adopted their culture.⁵

The present inhabitants of the Northern Sudan (with the exception of, perhaps, the Kababish) are, therefore, not Arabs proper, but peoples of both Arab and African descent assimilated into Islamic and Arabic culture. Over the centuries, the Northern Sudan had been subject to waves of Arab immigration from Arabia and North Africa. The Red Sea and the Nile Valley provided the migration routes. After a long period of trade, of conquests, of settlement, of inter-marriage with an indigenous population, the Arab invaders conquered and in due course passed on Islamic and Arabic culture to the inhabitants, who also became their hosts.⁶ In consequence, the people of this part of the country constitute, in the modern Sudan, an intermediate race—between pure Negro and pure Arab—a race which, for want of a better term, may be described as Sudan Arab. The Pan-Africanist Dubois long ago observed:

Anyone who has travelled in the Sudan knows that most of the 'Arabs' he has met are dark-skinned, sometimes practically black, often have negroid

features, and hair that may be almost Negro in quality. It is then obvious (he concludes) that in Africa the term 'Arab' . . . is often misleading. The Arabs were too nearly akin to Negroes to draw an absolute line.\textsuperscript{7}

What Dubois said was true then, as it is true now. But this Pan-Africanist view of the Sudan Arab misses the point: it does not take seriously the role of the Muslim faith as the main unifier of the northern Sudan. According to Professor Y. F. Hasan, the great achievement of Islam and the Arabic culture in the northern Sudan has been the creation of a feeling of cohesion among the heterogenous inhabitants of the country.\textsuperscript{8} One colonial administrator was to make similar observations many years before when he commented:

A common basis of Arabic race and language and Islam, with their resulting unity of social and political ideas, have fused the northern Sudan into a single whole. The District Commissioner who is transferred from Berber to Bara, from Kassala to Kordofan, finds that he is dealing, in different local conditions, with the same mental outlook.\textsuperscript{9}

This picture contrasts sharply with the fragmented and pagan South. And, given the triple elements of race, language and religion, all part of the same cultural phenomenon in close contiguity to paganism, it can be assumed that there exists a condition more suitable for conflict than for a claim for a separate existence. This is by no means a far-fetched proposition. A commission of enquiry, appointed to investigate the Southern disturbances of August 1955, concluded that, on evidence, there was little in common between the Northern and the Southern Sudan.\textsuperscript{10} But this does not square up with the fact of fragmentation of the Southern society. If divided and therefore weak, how could Southerners make any valid or forceful claim to a separate identity? If the probable answer is a common hostility toward the North, how did this come about?

The Sudan Arabs and the Nilotes the country's dominant ethnic or cultural groups, reflect the division between the North and the South: the former are dominant in the Northern Sudan while the latter maintain an overwhelming preponderance in the South. Early contacts between the two were generally violent, especially in the context of the nineteenth-century slave trade. The Sudan Arabs were probably not the initiators of the trade,\textsuperscript{11} but, when the European ivory trade gave way to slave hunting, the Arabs swiftly became its perpetuators.\textsuperscript{12} Aggressive and commanding the strategic and commercial posts on the Upper Nile, the Arabized and Islamized Nubians of the Sudan seized the opportunity to raid the territories west and south of the Nile basin


\textsuperscript{8} Hasan, \textit{The Arabs and the Sudan}, p. 181.

\textsuperscript{9} L. F. Nalder, 'The Two Sudans: some aspects of the South' in Hamilton, \textit{Anglo-Egyptian Sudan}.

\textsuperscript{10} Commission of Enquiry, p. 81.

\textsuperscript{11} P. M. Holt, \textit{A Modern History of the Sudan} (London, 1963).

\textsuperscript{12} G. Schweinfurth, \textit{The Heart of Africa} (2 vols.) (London, 1873), Vol. I.
at will. As a result of this trade in human chattels, certain areas of the South, especially the Bahr-el-Ghazal, became so ravaged and depopulated that a European eye-witness with an acute power of observation wrote:

... A philosopher might fairly speculate ... whether this land would not have been happier if the Moslems had never set foot upon its soil. They brought a religion that was destitute of morality; they introduced contagion rather than knowledge; they even suppressed the true doctrines of Mohammed their prophet, which would have enfranchised the very people whom they oppressed, and have raised them to a condition of brotherhood and equality.¹³

The Muslim slave trade cannot be said to have been directly responsible for the rise of Southern separatism; but the practice had gone on for so long and was so widespread that Southerners came to take it for granted that their Northern compatriots were their traditional enemies.¹⁴ And, on many occasions, historical differences have been cited to back Southern claims to separate treatment or identity.

II

Perhaps of more direct relevance to a discussion of Southern separatism is the distinction often drawn between a dominant core-area and its periphery: a situation comparable to that covered by populist ideology, in which it is the city that robs the countryside. The Sudan has not attained a level of industrialization and urbanization sufficient to give life to a populist ideology. Nevertheless, populism on a mini-scale is in the making. In the north-eastern quarter of the country it is possible to detect a cultural, economic and political core which roughly corresponds to the areas of the Nile Bend, Khartoum Province and the Gezira. In this core-area, the riverain districts, the dual processes of Islamization and Arabization have almost reached completion. Although the Sudan is listed by the United Nations as among the twenty-five least developed countries of the world,¹⁵ this does not mean that the country is wholly underdeveloped. The riverain districts are certainly the country’s favoured areas: they are, relatively speaking, the most developed and most urbanized part of the country. Khartoum, the capital city, is located in this region, and so is the most important cotton-growing area of the Gezira—itself the largest single farm in the world.

Sociologically, it is not at all difficult to characterise the core-area of the Sudan. The Arab elements of this area are, for the most part, light-skinned, better educated, speak better Arabic and dress well—as an indication of wealth and for prestige. Being the early recipients of Western-type education, they were the first to experience the impact of social change. Consequently, the

riverain districts are, today, the homeland of the emerging elite and the focal point of political, commercial and industrial power. The upshot of all this has been that, with the transfer of power in the Sudan, the traditional as well as the emergent power-elite of this region have come to dominate the central government—taking more than their due share of top civil service jobs, determining the national culture and national goals, and forming the hard core of the officer corps in the military establishment. With the passage of time, therefore, the riverain districts appear to be growing more and more prosperous in relation to the rest of the country as a whole, and to the south in particular. Figures taken from a review of the national income of the Sudan illustrates this polarization. The table below shows differences in per capita product of the various regions of the country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions (Provinces)</th>
<th>Gross Domestic Product (£S.000)</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Per Capita Product (£S)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Khartoum</td>
<td>75,788</td>
<td>2,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kassala</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northern Province</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Blue Nile</td>
<td>86,038</td>
<td>2,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Kordofan</td>
<td>83,777</td>
<td>3,091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Bahr el Ghazal</td>
<td>38,610</td>
<td>2,783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equatoria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upper Nile</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As is to be expected, the Blue Nile Province (or the Gezira) has the highest per capita product, and Region D (the three Southern Provinces) the lowest. Region A has the second highest per capita product, despite its having quite a large nomadic population and despite the poverty of some of the people living on the northern reaches of the Nile (Old Halfa). But if the nomadic population (who live mainly in Kassala Province) are excluded, a clear picture of the core-area emerges, dominated by the large towns and the Gezira. Region C contains much of the ‘mainland’ cultivation, being a large producer of cereals, sesame, groundnuts, melonseed, gum arabic, etc. The produce of the three southern Provinces is mainly subsistence. Households, except those in the few Southern towns, are largely self-contained: they live on what they produce.

Because of their privileged position and almost total hold over the central government, the riverain Arabs may be presumed to have a vested interest in resisting any form of devolution, let alone secession. Southern agitation for local autonomy, federation or separation, can be safely interpreted as manifestations of discontent with the centralized system of government which tends to favour one region of the country over the others.

Southern separatist sentiments may also be said to mirror the rejection, by the South, of the Northern criteria for social ranking. For various reasons—cultural, racial, religious and historical—the people of the core-area have always...
had the practice of placing the Southerners, the Furs (or peoples of the West) and the Nubas lowest on the social scale.\textsuperscript{18} The non-Arab elements in the North, like the Southerners, have, at various times in the past, formed regional organizations opposed to the centralized authority of the riverain Arabs. These national groupings,\textsuperscript{19} e.g. the Beja Congress, the General Union of Nubas (GUN), made demands for some sort of autonomy, but to no avail. The South alone managed to carry its agitation to the extreme of organized revolt, which earned the South the present political and constitutional arrangements with the North.

III

The goals of Southern separatism vacillated between local autonomy and secession. In this context, separatism is defined broadly enough to cover anything from autonomy to secession:

By separatism is meant the desire of some articulate portion of the population in a section (usually a province) of a sovereign state to loosen or break the political and legal bonds which tie the part to the whole. If only loosening is the aim, it is called autonomy; if secession of a province or of members of a federation is in view, there may be the further goals of either independence or union with some other, usually adjacent, sovereign state.\textsuperscript{20} Separatist aims may change, depending upon a number of variables: (i) leadership of the separatist movement; (ii) the amount of mass support it can muster; (iii) accidental factors such as some dramatic event—war or revolution—which may offer opportunity for secession or make compromise with the central government possible.

The Southern Sudan separatist movement, like similar movements elsewhere, experienced bitter divisions within its leadership, along tribal or regional lines. When Southern leadership was united behind the Southern (Liberal) Party's demand for a federal relation with the north in the 1958 Parliament, the impact was greatly felt at the centre.\textsuperscript{21} It is possible that the Southern demand would have received a favourable response from the Government but for the military take-over of that year. On the other hand, at the Round Table Conference on the South, held in March 1965, Southern leadership was hopelessly divided and there was a diversity of goals. The SANU wing of William Deng, who led the split, greatly compromised the Southern position. Although a genuine attempt to break the deadlock it was untimely and widely regarded as motivated by selfish interests. The Southern Front Party pressed for self-determination, the adoption of which principle would have meant virtual secession of the


\textsuperscript{19} For a brief but lucid account of regional movements in the Northern Sudan, see Philip Abbas, 'Growth of Black Political Consciousness in Northern Sudan' in Africa Today, Vol. 20, No. 3. (Summer 1973), pp. 29-43.

\textsuperscript{20} Theodore P. Wright, Jr. 'South African Separatist Movements' (Private), Nov. 1974.

South. The Southern Front Party compared Southern Sudan to a colonial situation and argued for the inherent right of all the Southerners to be able to choose between four options: acceptance of the status quo (i.e. the centralized unitary system), local autonomy, federation or secession. Not surprisingly, this was rejected, together with Deng's proposal for an arrangement similar to that of the United Kingdom and Ireland. The Conference ended in total failure. Thus, while the North showed the will, the South did not have the capacity to negotiate.

Southern separatism cannot, by any standards, be said to have enjoyed the wholehearted support of the mass of the southern population, at least not in its early stages of development. Support for a separatist movement often depends upon levels of political consciousness and the extent of cultural, religious or linguistic homogeneity. These were factors patently lacking in Southern Sudan. Until the 1960s, political consciousness was confined to the mission-educated intelligentsia, who were little more than five per cent of the total Southern population. Even in contemporary Southern Sudan, political consciousness is very much a luxury of the few Southern towns or Merkas. Since the departure of the British, Southern tribesmen have recognized the role of the intelligentsia as spokesmen for the South. But to the Southern elite (if that is the word) tribal bonds and tribal allegiance are still the all-important things rather than the fact of being a Southerner. Identification with something bigger and higher than the tribe is only slowly beginning to show.

Nevertheless, common hostility towards the North and its predominantly Arab government was sufficient to forge a measure of unity amongst the otherwise heterogenous tribes of the Southern Sudan. When individuals or groups, like a collection of widely disparate objects, are the subject of indiscriminate maltreatment they tend, over a period of time, to feel and act together. This is the key to the understanding of Southern regional, as distinct from national, consciousness. Successive Khartoum governments, both foreign and indigenous, never developed a habit of according preferential treatment to any Southern ethnic group or a section of it. It is no wonder, therefore, that with increased political consciousness, inhabitants of the three Southern provinces of Bahr el Ghazal, Upper Nile and Equatoria came to regard themselves as people of a special region or a nation despite obvious ethnic differences, linguistic diversity and traditional enmity. The more enlightened elements amongst them naturally spearheaded the calls for political reforms that ranged from mere redress of grievances to downright secession.

The degree of participation in Southern secessionist movement varied widely depending upon the nature and levels of contact with the government’s agents in the South or the Northerners. Below the layers of the intelligentsia, sub-elite groups are clearly distinguishable. Participants in this category

included the partially educated whose life style occupied an intermediary position between those of the countryside and urban centres. To these, separatism presented a specially attractive proposition as a way of overcoming the frustration of unemployment. Separatism also attracted the skilled and semi-skilled Southern worker who, because of government policies, had little promotion prospects. Educated in mission schools and trained by missionaries, Southern artisans, mechanics and bricklayers had always prided themselves—with justification—on competence and efficiency in their respective trades. The fact that they always had to have a Northern foreman of no better qualifications or experience, other than fluency in Arabic, naturally aroused resentment and suspicion; the practice was viewed as part of the government's secret plan to dominate the South. The junior administrators and Southern officials were no less resentful or jealous of the higher positions and privileges enjoyed by their Arab superiors. Added to the list were the students at all levels of the education system who were extremely suspicious that their Arab and Muslim teachers were all out to Arabize and Islamize them—a proposition of high validity especially under the military regime of General Abboud. Furthermore, any Southerner involved in the cash economy was aware that the jellaba (Northern settler-traders, who possessed an almost exclusive commercial and trading facility in the South), exploited him by grossly inflating the prices of essential consumer goods.

At the top of the list were the Southern elite or the intelligentsia who were frustrated and greatly handicapped by a combination of factors. The numerical inferiority of the South guaranteed permanent minority status in the national legislature. Regions' differences, lack of mastery of the Arabic language and the general attitudes of Northerners towards the Southerners already alluded to, denied Southern politicians effective leadership at the central or national level. The general picture that emerged seemed to indicate that whenever and wherever Southerners came in contact with their northern compatriots on any serious terms, resentment, suspicion and fear, real or apparent, of northern exploitation or domination crept in. Situations of this sort, needless to say, constitute abundant fuel for conflict that may arouse secessionist sentiments.

Support for separatism in the Southern Sudan, even in the later days of organized revolt, varied with the region and in accordance with the extent of detribalization and political consciousness. Where detribalization was most advanced and political consciousness highest, as in Equatoria, the movement

24. This awareness may be said to increase proportionally with advance up the educational ladder although, in fact, the process of Islamization and Arabization had greater chances of success at the primary and intermediate stage than at higher levels.
25. The remoteness of the South, which discouraged profitable businesses, may have demanded relaxation of price restrictions as inducement but the fact that Southerners were, on the whole, discouraged from setting up businesses of their own aroused suspicion.
26. According to the 1956 census the population of the three Southern provinces was a third of the total for the whole country.
27. First Population Census of the Sudan (Khartoum, 1956).
could count on the almost total support of the rural population. On the other hand, the major Nilotic tribes who were largely isolated in the swamps were only marginally involved in the Southern rebellion. This statement does not apply to the majority of their respective intelligentsia, who were for the movement all along. Regional consciousness or separatist tendencies were stronger and more widespread among Southern elite than in the rest of the Southern population. The implication of this statement is clear enough: to contain secessionist sentiments, these Southern aspirants to power have to be accommodated. This is precisely the course of action President Numeiry chose to follow in an attempt to face up to the Southern challenge.

IV

It is not always easy or normal for a government to try to appease separatist sentiments. Quite apart from the risk of setting a dangerous precedent, the question of prestige is involved. To secede a region would have to secure assurance of military and economic might of a sympathetic foreign power, or fight it out with the centre to the bitter end and possibly sustain defeat eventually. Some secessionist movements follow neither course but go into eclipse, flaring up only intermittently. As Southern separatism had no really committed foreign power, it could not risk open confrontation with the Sudan Government, but continued to steer a middle course of protracted guerilla warfare. Successive Sudanese governments, civil and military, refused to make any substantial concessions to the South that might trigger off similar demands in the east, west, or in the Nuba mountains. They were also guided by considerations of prestige. The deadlock was broken only on Numeiry’s initiative.

On 31 March 1972, the Addis Ababa Accord was signed between representatives of the Sudan Government and those of the South. Southern representation was helped by the unified command over the rebel forces which had been accomplished by Lague during the previous year. In this way a repetition of the 1965 mistake was avoided. For the first time ever, the Southerners demonstrated that they had the capacity to negotiate; the North showed an abundance of goodwill. Secessionist claims were dropped, an in return Southerners were granted a large measure of local self-rule.

The details of the Agreement were enacted in the national constitution as the Southern Provinces Self-Government Act, 1972. Broadly speaking, the Agreement recognized the South as a Region on its own, with a House of Assembly, and executive known as the High Executive Council. The Council is headed by a President, who is also a Vice-President of the Republic. Southerners are represented in the national Parliament as well as in the central government; they now have a choice of positions in either the Regional or the National civil service. And, what is more, there is also a Regional Development Corporation to cater for the economic and social development of the
region. In this way, Southern separatist sentiment has been effectively placated, at least for the time being.

The question is: will this laudable arrangement hold for the foreseeable future? That making predictions in a fluid situation of this kind is a dangerous enterprise cannot be doubted. There is little doubt that the arrangement has taken some of the heat out of the North-South conflict, allowing the belligerent parties ample opportunity to re-examine their attitudes toward each other. The Southern separatist movement had been nurtured on years of resentment toward Northern administrators in the South. Southerners just did not wish to be ruled from the North.  

Fear of Northern domination had been expressed as early as 1947. And in the immediate post-independence era their fears were confirmed when they found themselves left out in the cold as they resentfully saw Northerners gradually taking over the top political and administrative posts vacated by the British. Lacking experience, seniority or qualifications, Southerners were little affected by Sudanization: only a handful of them were promoted to take responsible posts in government. Out of about 800 senior administrative posts Sudanized, the highest post Southerners attained was the office of assistant district commissioner. While this was in keeping with civil service rules, it was clearly a politically unwise decision. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the immediate post-independence period the Southern intelligentsia felt cheated, exploited and dominated by their Northern brothers.

Sheer physical distance, apart from inaccessibility to political power and commercial opportunities, compounded the frustration of the Southern elite. Juba, the present Regional capital, for instance, is more than a thousand miles from Khartoum and fourteen days upstream by motor boat. School-leavers seeking job opportunities in accountancy, book-keeping, clerical work, or teaching had to travel to Khartoum, obtain employment, and then apply to be posted to the South. At one point, licences for local trade, or for opening a bakery, a local shop, or construction works needed the approval of Khartoum. As most of the administrators in the South were Northerners, it was alleged they discriminated in favour of the jellaba (Northern merchants) by methods of obstruction even when, as often was the case, Khartoum was merely too slow in replying. In other instances, government trucks and Land Rovers for use in the South arrived with the Northern drivers engaged for the job. And when the rank and file of the police force and prison service began arriving in the 1960s, the picture of Northern domination of the South appeared complete. The people who felt the choking grip of a centralized system of administration most were, naturally, the Southern intelligentsia. Feeling cheated and let down by their Northern colleagues, they could not but agitate for Africanization of administration in the South.  

Frustrated by the uncompromising

29. Ibid., p. 81.
30. For note 30, see next page.
attitude of the North, they were driven to organize armed rebellion for the further goal of Southern secession.

The Numeiry experiment has helped to correct what was a truly appalling situation. The arrangement is undoubtedly loaded with conflict, though of limited dimension. Only cynics still entertain the possibility of eventual secession of the Southern provinces. Given the catalogue of hostilities between the North and South, it is argued, the South is bound to make a final attempt to secede. If granted, so the argument runs, then the Agreement, in temporarily placating the South, is in fact catalytic. By aiding the South to stand on its own feet economically, the North prepares it for secession at a time of its own choosing. The writer does not hold this view at all. For the time being at least, and only in the unlikely event of a precipitate action on the part of the Khartoum government, Southerners have little grounds for secession. Moreover, it would be unwise for the landlocked, physically inaccessible and backward South to attempt to go it alone. At any rate, secession would require a measure of unity, at least of Southern leadership across tribal lines, which is impossible under the prevailing conditions in Southern Sudan. Opposition against the Agreement is most likely to come from certain sections in the North who may feel that it goes far beyond what was originally envisaged for the South under previous regimes. These opposing elements, notably members of the defunct political parties organized under the banner of the National Front, are highly desirous of change at the centre. Apparently, they are insensitive to Southern opposition to a revolutionary change of leadership at the centre.

The one sticky problem still unresolved—and which was not expected to be resolved by the Agreement—is the question of cultural integration. Forced Islamization and Arabization attempted by the Abboud regime had the effect of further alienating the Southern elite. Indeed, the whole attempt was bound to be counter-productive, as what had hitherto been the product of trade and peaceful penetration, of good neighbourliness and intermarriage, was suddenly made an active instrument of design, of conscious policy and deliberate action. The Agreement has carefully observed this difficulty and a compromise has been reached on language. As for religion, a laissez-faire approach has been adopted, leaving room for the survival of the fittest.

30. The first call for Southernization of administration in the South was made at the Liberal Party’s conference held in Juba in 1954. This demand was repeated several times afterwards by various Southern political parties; it was given recognition by the North at the 1965 Round Table Conference and accomplished under the present regime of General Numeiry.
31. This view, though not publicly expressed under the present regime, was openly advocated in certain quarters in the North at the time of the 1965 Round Table Conference. See M. O. Beshir, *The Southern Sudan: background to conflict* (London, 1968), p. 98.
32. Saddiq el Mahdi’s recent statement following the attempted coup of 2 July, 1976, that he would rectify the Agreement if he came to power is a clear indication of his attitude.
34. For note 34, see next page.
The key to the success of the Agreement lies in the continued co-operation between Northerners and the small but growing class of educated Southerners. With the attainment of equal or near equal levels of understanding or enlightenment between these two, the slow but gradual disappearance of deep-rooted prejudices and the realization on the part of the Southerners that they have a stake in maintaining the system, it should be possible for both the South and the North to set sail under the same flag.

34. 'Arabic shall be the official language of the Sudan and English the principal language of the Southern region without prejudice to the use of any other language or languages which may serve a practical necessity for the efficient and expeditious discharge of executive and administrative functions of the Region'. The Southern Provinces Regional Self-Government Act 1972, Ch. 2, para. 5.