Towards the end of 1928, as E. E. Evans-Pritchard was completing his first year of study among the Azande, he wrote to various of his friends in the Sudan Government in Khartoum, including the Civil Secretary, Harold MacMichael, outlining his plans for the immediate future. He intended to return to England for a year to write up his material on the Azande and various other peoples he had visited. Then he hoped to return to the Azande about May 1930, so that he could complete his study there, having mastered the language in his first year and having clarified his thoughts during the intervening period in England.¹

At the time Evans-Pritchard wrote this proposal the Sudan Government had been embroiled for nearly a year in a punitive campaign against the Nuer of Upper Nile Province, the last of its type in the Sudan. The campaign had begun badly in December 1927 when an attempt to use airplanes to overawe the prophet Guek Ngundeng and his Lou followers failed. Government actions in the neighbouring Gaawar territory during the dry season of 1928 alienated the Gaawar prophet Dual Diu and brought him into open rebellion during the rains. In its attempt to capture the main leaders of these risings the government had to send troops throughout the Nuer country east of the Nile. It planned a full scale 'settlement' in 1929, aimed at concentrating the Lou and Gaawar in specified areas where they would be isolated from their Dinka neighbours and other groups of Nuer. The prophets were to be rooted out of their hiding places, and once military operations had been successfully completed, a vigorous new attempt to administer the Nuer would begin, with the building of roads, dispensaries, and administrative centres, and the organization of the Nuer into a new administrative system under government appointed chiefs.²

The government in Khartoum decided that for the ultimate success of this programme more had to be known about the Nuer themselves.³ Throughout the 1920s only two District Commissioners among the Nuer were conversant in the Nuer language, and one of them was invalided out of the Sudan in 1929. In

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¹ In addition to Evans-Pritchard's own writings about his fieldwork, the bulk of the biographical material in this article is taken from the Central Records Office [CRO], Khartoum, files Civsec 112/1/1-3, 'Visits of Professor Seligman and Mr. Evans-Pritchard'. A number of persons have also provided me with information on Evans-Pritchard's time in the Sudan and his reception by Sudan Government officials. Among those I owe special thanks to are Mrs K. Coriat, Mr John Winder, Mr E. A. Aglen, the late Professor A. N. Tucker and Dr R. G. Lienhardt.
³ Civil Secretary to Financial Secretary, 10.6.29, Civsec 112/1/1.
a reply to Evans-Pritchard's own letter about his future plans, Harold MacMichael suggested to him that for the immediate future the government saw the Nuer as its most important problem, and that it would consider a study of the Nuer as having first priority for any subsidy for research. In later years Evans-Pritchard claimed that he had been very reluctant to give up his study of the Azande for the Nuer, but in the end he agreed because he regarded MacMichael's request as a personal favour asked by a friend. Whatever his private thoughts about MacMichael's suggestion, his letters revealed slightly more enthusiasm. His main expressed concern was not so much whether he should study the Nuer at all, but when.

In a typewritten report to MacMichael about his work, Evans-Pritchard wrote:

I fully understand the Government's view that the Nuer have first call on any funds provided for ethnological research in the Sudan. Were the Sudan Government to do me the honour of asking me to make a study of the Nuer I should be delighted to have the opportunity of doing work amongst them partly because I feel sorry for the Nuer and would be glad to help them settle down peacefully by making myself intimate with their life ....

I realize that your letter contained only a tentative suggestion about the Nuer but I think that it is better that I should [sic] make my point of view quite clear, i.e. that I want to spend a year in England and that I would be prepared to come out to the Sudan in April of next year [1930] if called upon to do so.

This was the only point that Evans-Pritchard formally raised as an objection to beginning a study of the Nuer early in 1930. In an earlier letter to Hillelson of the Education Department, Evans-Pritchard outlined his reasons for wanting to return to the Azande. He had spent most of his first year there learning the language. 'Unless I return to the Azande again the real fruits of my labour will never be reaped', he urged, 'for the point which I have now reached is the point at which it is possible, speaking academically, for serious sociological enquiry to begin'. His willingness to help the government, which had supported his past research, was never in doubt. In a covering letter to the longer report he sent to MacMichael, he mentioned his admiration of the work the Sudan administration was doing and declared: 'If I can be of any assistance in furthering this work by making investigations amongst the Nuer I shall be glad to do so'.

During the spring and summer of 1929 Evans-Pritchard was engaged in discussions with various Sudan Government officials in Khartoum and England

5. Evans-Pritchard to MacMichael, 8.2.29, Cvsec 112/1/2.
7. Evans-Pritchard to MacMichael, 8.2.29, Cvsec 112/1/2.
about the terms of his return. In a meeting with Hillelson in Khartoum in April, he expressed his willingness and his eagerness to work among the Nuer but insisted that his work among the Azande should not be interrupted. He wanted a full year in England to write up his material; he wanted to return to the Azande to finish his work there first; and then he would go to the Nuer. The government for its part wanted to send him out to the field as quickly as possible, not only because of the political urgency of beginning a study of the Nuer soon, but also for climatic reasons. The dry season was the only possible time for travel in Nuer country, and that season would be over by April or May. In the face of the very great financial and personal pressure the government exerted on him, Evans-Pritchard tried to extract some concessions that would allow him to continue his other work. He offered to do an immediate survey on the Nuer for
six months from December 1929, and while the government was not happy about such a short initial stay, it acquiesced; and Evans-Pritchard was allowed to divide his fieldwork time in 1930 between the Nuer and the Azande. 8

This first field trip did not begin well. In November, before he left for the Sudan, Evans-Pritchard's father fell gravely ill. Evans-Pritchard could not delay his departure, but he feared that his father might die while he was away, thus prematurely halting the year's research. For this reason he decided to begin his work around the Catholic Mission station at Yoinyang on the Bahr al-Ghazal where he could rely on Father Crazzolara's help in learning Nuer, enabling him 'to gain definite results from this expedition' in case his father's death forced him to return to England. 9

These plans conflicted with the programme that the Governor of Upper Nile Province, C. A. Willis, had already decided on. It was Willis's intention that Evans-Pritchard should begin his work among the Lou during the dry season and then go either to the government station at Nasir on the Sobat, or to the Gaawar area of Rufshendol (Rup cieng Dol) on the Bahr al-Zaraf during the rains. Willis, whose prejudiced opinions and inaccurate reports about the Nuer had done much to precipitate the crisis which eventually brought Evans-Pritchard to his province, was unsympathetic to the methods of anthropological research. He and Evans-Pritchard immediately clashed. Towards the end of this first field trip, it was later reported by one of his acquaintances, Evans-Pritchard could speak of Willis only in words of four letters.

Evans-Pritchard's personal difficulties were not helped by the fact that his luggage and supplies got lost somewhere between Marseilles and Cairo and appeared in Port Sudan only after he had left Khartoum for Malakal. His Azande servants never arrived in Malakal as planned, and he went off to Yoinyang with very few clothes and supplies to sustain him. This forced him to be somewhat eccentric in his dress—a characteristic which reappeared in his old age—and the wife of Percy Coriat, the only District Commissioner then in the province who could speak Nuer, later recalled looking with fascination at the thick black woollen knee-socks Evans-Pritchard wore when he came to dine with them on their boat when passing by Yoinyang.

Evans-Pritchard's original intention of being tutored in Nuer by Crazzolara was immediately foiled when he learned upon arrival at Yoinyang that Crazzolara had been temporarily reposted to Tongo among the Shilluk. What was worse, there were practically no Nuer in or around the mission station itself. Evans-Pritchard was forced to camp on the banks of the Bahr al-Ghazal in order to make any contact with the Nuer at all. Finally, after consulting with Coriat, he decided to settle himself in the nearby cattle camp of Pakur. 10

8. 'Note of discussion with Civil Secretary and Mr. Hilleson,' 12.4.29, and 'Memo on a conversation with Mr. Evans-Pritchard,' 24.4.29, Civsec 112/1/2.
9. Evans-Pritchard to MacMichael, 13.11.29, Civsec 112/1/2.
Coriat and Evans-Pritchard agreed that he should spend all of his first field trip among the Western Nuer, where Coriat was District Commissioner, and then spend the next year among the Lou and other east bank Nuer. Since Coriat had been the District Commissioner of the Lou, Gaawar and Zaraf island Nuer before being transferred to the Western Nuer, his recommendation of this plan should have carried some weight, but it did not meet with Willis’s approval. It was not the first time that Willis overlooked Coriat’s greater knowledge and experience of the Nuer. When Evans-Pritchard requested permission to travel overland from Yoinyang to the Dok Nuer country, Willis refused permission on security grounds, though other non-government civilians had been in the habit of making the same trip without large armed escorts. He continued to insist upon Evans-Pritchard’s return to Malakal to be sent off to the Lou, a journey which Evans-Pritchard viewed as a waste of precious time, and a change of territory that would only cause further delays in learning the language and becoming familiar with local Nuer. ‘I am afraid that anthropologists are not thought much of in the Upper Nile Province’, he complained in a letter to MacMichael.11 His experience with officials in the Upper Nile during this first year was quite different from his previous experiences with officials elsewhere in the Sudan, especially in the Bahr al-Ghazal. Though he got on quite well with Coriat, he did not enjoy the same close personal relationship with any District Commissioner then in the province that he had had with Major Larken among the Azande. The contrast in his experiences with province officials is reflected in the dedications to his books he wrote after completing both his Azande and Nuer fieldwork. His first book on the Azande was dedicated to Major Larken, but his three books on the Nuer were dedicated to the staff of the American Mission at Nasir, to Radcliffe-Brown, and finally to the Nuer people.

MacMichael tried to smooth things over between Willis and Evans-Pritchard and telegraphed to Willis: ‘With my knowledge of his methods am inclined to agree that his proposal is sound’, but he left the ultimate decision to Willis.12 Willis, who if anything got on even worse with MacMichael than with Evans-Pritchard, replied:13

Pritchard already asked me permission to trip Western Nuer and I refused unless he had suitable escort which not available and anyhow inconsistent with nature of his work. I explained this in London and recently on his arrival. Fear his visit Youngyang [sic] has been failure but that was his idea not mine.

While this battle was being waged, Dr A. N. Tucker (‘the only other intelligent man in this province’, Evans-Pritchard is said to have noted at the time) visited him at his camp and gave him instruction in Nilotic phonetics. But

11. Evans-Pritchard to MacMichael, 27.1.30, Civsec 112/1/2.
12. Civil Secretary to Governor, Malakal, 11.2.30, Civsec 112/1/2.
13. Governor, Malakal to Civil Secretary, 11.2.30, Civsec 112/1/2.
Evans-Pritchard was soon forced to return to Malakal and was sent off to Muot Did among the Lou, the furthest point away from any river that he visited during his entire research among the Nuer.

Evans-Pritchard has left a vivid description of the tensions that existed in Lou country on his arrival there early in 1930 while troops still roamed the country looking for outlawed prophets. Guek Ngundeng had been killed the year before, and Dual Diu had been captured on the Sobat river near Lou country about a month before Evans-Pritchard’s arrival. After only a short time Evans-Pritchard was outlining his difficulties to MacMichael:  

> From our point of view the natives of this area are too unsettled & too resentful and frightened to make good informants & the breakdown of their customs & traditions too sudden & severe to enable an anthropologist to obtain quick results.  

It was quick results that the government wanted, but its own actions made them unobtainable. One morning government troops surrounded the Lou cattle camp where Evans-Pritchard was staying, moved in looking for the prophets Pok Kerjiok and Car Koryom who were still at large, and took hostages, insisting that the Lou of the camp find and turn over the prophets to the government. The Lou had already made their resentment of Evans-Pritchard known because of his association with the government who had bombed them, burned their villages, seized their cattle, took prisoners, herded them into dry ‘concentration areas’, killed their prophet Guek and had blown up and desecrated the Mound of his father Ngun-deng, their greatest prophet. After this latest incident Evans-Pritchard noted, ‘I felt that I was in an equivocal position, since such incidents might recur’, and he decided to leave.  

Even in this final plan Evans-Pritchard received little aid from Willis. Unable to stay among the Lou, he hoped to be transported south to Bor where he could catch a steamer to Adok and spend his remaining time among the Dok Nuer. But no such transportation was made available in time, and Evans-Pritchard left for the Bahr al-Ghazal after only three and a half months, rather than six among the Nuer. He paid a fleeting visit to Adok and Coriat noted after he left: ‘The Poet [Evans-Pritchard] came here while I was away and has left for Zande again. He writes that the Nuers are harder to know than ever. He can get nothing out of them’.  

The next four months among the Azande revived his spirits. Living in the coolness of the equatorial forest, surrounded by a people with whom he could converse and who were willing to speak with him, the frustrations and anxieties of the preceding few months began to fade from his memory. But he took the opportunity to insist on better treatment in the coming year. ‘You will not mind my suggesting’, he wrote to MacMichael from Yambio, ‘that the success of this

14. Evans-Pritchard to MacMichael, 27.3.30, Civsec 112/1/2.  
work depends to some degree on my being given a freer hand in the selection of an area of investigation and rather wider provincial facilities than I received on this trip'.

Once back in England Evans-Pritchard faced further difficulties. His father died and he felt himself obliged to make more money to take on the family’s responsibilities. One additional complicating factor was that his brother had become schizophrenic while at Oxford and had been placed in a mental hospital where he remained for the rest of his life. A good deal of the family money was tied up in his care. Evans-Pritchard had netted only £100 out of the fee the Sudan Government had granted him that year, a rather small sum considering the hardships he had endured and the new responsibilities he faced. He poured out his troubles to Seligman, who relayed them to the Sudan Government. His problems with the Upper Nile Province government were brought up again, and it was noted that:

> He particularly wanted to go to a place where there were some witchdoctors but apparently was sent to one where there were only two, both of whom had a price on their head and the tribe he was with were being continually called upon to produce hostages.

Seligman also suggested that Evans-Pritchard could now qualify as an expert and should expect a higher professional fee for his services.

In reviewing his first year’s work in preparation for the second year, Evans-Pritchard concluded:

> On the whole I got on best during my last trip with the Lau Nuer to the east of the Nile but I do not know to what extent they are still in a state of disturbance as a result of hostages being taken and their expulsion from the country lying between the Nuer and Dinka.

In view of the government’s activities among the Lou he still felt it was best to return to the relatively more settled conditions of the Western Nuer. In planning this return Evans-Pritchard hoped for a better set of informants than before, noting that Crazzolara had appeared reluctant to help him, and that the ‘only informant whom I managed to procure on my last trip was a half-witted youth from Yoinyang’. This youth was also one of the early products of the mission.

The central government tried to advance his plans for the coming year, but Willis in Upper Nile continued to be obstructive. He refused to give

17. Evans-Pritchard to MacMichael, 20.5.30, Civsec 112/1/2.
Evans-Pritchard permission to revisit the Leek as the government was then having some difficulties with its chiefs there. 'I think it is a sheer waste of time his going to Crazzolara at Yoynyang', he commented, 'and I should have thought his last year's experience would have taught him that'. He objected to suggestions that Evans-Pritchard visit the interior of Lou, and offered instead Kermayom, east of Abwong on the Sobat, and very close to Ngok Dinka country, as the only suitable alternative. He also raised difficulties when requested to provide transport and servants and was particularly sharp when Evans-Pritchard requested transportation for his one informant from Yoynyang (having decided, apparently, that half a wit was better than none). MacMichael was goaded by Willis's objections to send a one line telegram: 'Would request you adopt rather more helpful attitude in this matter'. Willis's reply could have been modelled on the telegraphic arguments that frequently arose between Bertie Wooster and his friends: 'Repudiate entirely absence of helpful attitude and regret failure appreciate our difficulties owing to lack of transport'.

Evans-Pritchard again became a victim of a feud within the Sudan Government. The fact that MacMichael was one of his strongest supporters seemed to stiffen Willis's resistance to him. Willis used MacMichael's demands for support to extract from Khartoum various spares and equipment for his province vehicles, but having used Evans-Pritchard's needs as the justification for these demands, continued to deny him the transport he required. During the months of March and April 1931, Evans-Pritchard's second stay among the Lou was made almost unbearable by Willis. 'Willis made matters worse between ourselves', Evans-Pritchard later wrote, 'by getting nasty over transport and writing the most offensive letters I have received for a long time'.

If his relations with the province government were still unpleasant, his reception by the American mission at Nasir was surprisingly and refreshingly cordial. Having arrived in Malakal in February Evans-Pritchard went direct to Nasir where he stayed for two weeks. 'They were quite unlike any missionaries I have ever come across', he wrote, perhaps with Fr. Crazzolara's aloofness in mind. 'They did everything they could to help me in every possible way and I collected a fair amount of reliable information from the Nuer at their station and through their interpreter'.

It was during this period of five and a half months field work that Evans-Pritchard felt that progress in his work really began. He attained, for the first time, some fluency in Nuer, an achievement that greatly impressed the administrators, but about which he was rather more modest. Of equal importance to his own progress was the change in administration early in 1931 when Willis retired as governor and was replaced by Guy Pawson.
Pritchard's relief at Pawson's appearance was immense. 'He was in every way as helpful as possible and besides assisting in practical matters he supplemented this by showing a keen interest in the sort of work I am doing. It makes a great difference having him at Malakal'.

With Willis out of the province a journey to the Leek following fieldwork among the Jikany and northern Lou was possible, but in June Evans-Pritchard was admitted to the Malakal hospital with severe malaria and was shortly thereafter sent home. His recent hardships had taken their toll, and Coriat commented after visiting him in the hospital: 'He looked fairly rotten but one couldn't expect anything else with the awful food and servants he puts up with when he is living with the Nuer'. Whatever style of life he had lived among the Azande, Evans-Pritchard's standard of living among the Nuer was far below what the average District Commissioner expected.

Considerably heartened by his progress, Evans-Pritchard was still not satisfied by the full state of his knowledge. While convalescing from malaria he wrote to both the Civil Secretary and the Secretary of Education, emphasizing the need for an additional fieldtrip which alone would make the work he had already done worthwhile. 'I shall not pretend to know all about the Nuer nor to feel entirely satisfied with the value of my notes', he warned them. This final trip was to be delayed some years because of lack of finances. An application for government funding was made in 1933 and received Pawson's enthusiastic support. 'He is much the best man we are ever likely to get for this work and is just the right age—young, keen and unspoilt by theory—his work up to date on the Nuer is absolutely first class and will, even as it is, be of the greatest value to all who administer the Nuer....' The government grant was not forthcoming. Evans-Pritchard next returned to the Sudan in 1935 on a Leverhulme Research Fellowship to study the Galla. He spent another seven weeks in the field among the Nuer at that time and completed his study with another seven weeks in 1936 when he was returning from Kenya where he had made a brief survey of the Luo.

It was during the lull between his initial and final trips among the Nuer that Evans-Pritchard took up a teaching post at Fuad I University in Cairo, a post he needed to have since the Sudan Government was unable to continue subsidising his research. While at Cairo he began publishing his material on the Nuer in *Sudan Notes and Records*. His first three articles appeared in 1933–5 under the title 'The Nuer: Tribe and Clan' and they were distillations of his fieldwork and reading. Much of his own information was supplemented by notes supplied by

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27. Evans-Pritchard to Hillelson, 18.7.31, Civsec 112/1/3.
29. Evans-Pritchard to MacMichael, 13.7.31, Civsec 112/1/3.
30. Winter to Civil Secretary, 21.11.31, Civsec 112/1/3.
administrators, such as Coriat who provided a critique of an earlier unpublished paper of Evans-Pritchard's. Other administrators with whom he discussed various aspects of Nuer society during this time were F. D. Corfield, DC at Nasir, and Captain A. H. A. Alban, DC of the Lou.

These first articles were to a certain extent rambling, but they were chiefly concerned with elucidating certain facts about Nuer society for the benefit of administrators with administrative questions in mind. Evans-Pritchard's main contribution to the administrative knowledge of the Nuer at this point was his description of Nuer leaders and Nuer political segments. The administrators began using his terminology in their own discussions of indigenous authority among the Nuer. Alban in particular acknowledged his debt to Evans-Pritchard, and wrote in one report on Lou leaders: 'I have borrowed a number of words and phrases of his as they express things I want to say more clearly than I could hope to express them myself'. Evans-Pritchard's terminology is still the basis of most administrative descriptions of Nuer politics.

The dialogue between Evans-Pritchard and the administrators continued after 1935, and he incorporated the experience of a number of them in his final monographs (they included: Capt. H. A. Romilly and B. J. Chatterton on the Western Nuer, C. L. Armstrong, J. F. Tierney and L. F. Hamer on the Jikany, and B. A. Lewis on the Gaawar). They were able to give him information on some groups of Nuer he never visited, and in fact all of his comments on the Gaawar are derived from data supplied by Jackson, Coriat and Lewis. Many years later Evans-Pritchard advocated this sort of personal cooperation between the anthropologists and administrators and other experts already in the field when he advised the newly trained anthropologist:

Let him therefore always remember that, at any rate at the beginning of his research, though he may know more general anthropology than they, they also know more about the local ethnographical facts than he. Also let him remind himself that if he cannot get on with his own people, he is unlikely to get on with anyone. And, furthermore, they are part of what he is supposed to be studying.

It was his experience with the Sudan administration during his study of the Nuer which most affected Evans-Pritchard's attitude towards the relationship between anthropology and colonial administration. The policies of the administration placed constraints upon his research among the Nuer which were entirely absent during his study of the Azande. The activities of troops and the

hostility and suspicion of the Nuer confronted him with some of the more unpleasant aspects of colonial administration which he had not previously witnessed in other parts of the Southern Sudan. The antagonism of Willis was his first and most serious conflict with a colonial administrator, and his dealings with other District Commissioners, while more friendly, again confronted him with the difficulties of applying the results of scholarly research to administrative policies which sought to impose an alien structure on subjugated peoples.

Evans-Pritchard began to advocate a more distant relationship between anthropology and administration in two lectures presented at the Oxford University Summer School on Colonial Administration in 1937 and 1938. He first drew attention to the different uses to which data were put by anthropologists and administrators:

... the data collected by anthropologists is [sic] often irrelevant to administrative problems, or cannot be used in administration or, where it is relevant and can be used, its use would be contrary to policy.... It must be realized that many administrative problems have no solution. The mere collection of facts does not necessarily provide a solution.

Anthropologists were first and foremost 'men of science interested in establishing uniformities and interdependencies. It is this first duty to seek for laws and not to aid administration'. Administrators, especially senior administrators involved in the formulation of policy, frequently did so without prior reference to ethnographic facts. (This accusation may have been an indirect reference to the way in which Willis presented information from his province to persuade the government in Khartoum to accept his policy of confrontation with the Nuer.) But administration, Evans-Pritchard went on to note, does not have effective control over its own policies, as these are subject to world conditions. (Certainly the poverty of the Upper Nile Province administration during the world depression of the 1930s was an example of that.) Administration must decide on what policies are feasible for the conditions that confront and constrain them. 'Consequently policy tends to be an intellectualization of a process of development and not the cause of the process'.

This distinction between the anthropological and administrative application of evidence is an important one, and one that was forcefully presented to Evans-Pritchard by the attitudes of various administrators. Administrative interest in Nuer society was restricted to practical matters, most particularly to matters of political structure. Few had any deep interest in other aspects of Nuer society, such as religion, and the limitation of their interests, and the
prejudices implicit in the policies they brought to the Nuer can be clearly seen in
the articles and reports that were written by administrators prior to
Evans-Pritchard’s publications on the Nuer. It is a distinction that few modern
anthropologists admit awareness of when using the works of administrators to
revise Evans-Pritchard’s own work.

The distance that separated administrators from anthropologists determined,
in Evans-Pritchard’s view, the extent to which anthropology could be used by
administration. In the first place, if anthropologists were truly interested in
understanding administration, that understanding could come about only through
a study of the administrators themselves. A study of British social organization
and ethical standards, of the values which are expressed in administration and the
sentiments that controlled it, was needed to understand the factors involved in
the formulation and implementation of administrative policy. Such an
appreciation was necessary for the understanding of administrative problems
within the Southern Sudan, where no clearly formulated policy existed. The
nature of administration there had to be fully understood in order to understand
the moral relations between the Southern Sudanese and the government. The
rule of force, the conflict between the government and Southern Sudanese
leaders, the clash between the interests of the government appointed chief and
the traditional chief, and the problems the Southern Sudanese faced in
integrating “into their social system a political organization that has no moral
value for them” were all aspects of Southern Sudanese administration that had
been clearly demonstrated among the Nuer in the 1930s.

Given these problems, there was still room for cooperation between
anthropologists and administrators, with anthropologists employed as advisors.
Evans-Pritchard advocated a more active seeking of advice on the part of
colonial governments; his cautioning anthropologists against volunteering advice
on their own was a tactical matter. Administrators were more receptive to
advice they sought, rather than advice forced on them. Administrators should
be encouraged and expected to be more open to such advice, but it was not up to
anthropologists to criticize administration or to implement policy. When asked,
‘he should restrict his opinion to stating whether the policy accords with the facts
as he knows them and whether the policy is likely to achieve the end in
view’. The anthropologist should strive for indirect influence to help ‘humanize
policy and administration and to make change less unpleasant to natives than it
would otherwise have been’.

Evans-Pritchard’s association with British administration in Africa did not end
with his work on the Nuer. In 1940 he was about to embark on a brief study of
administrative problems among the Dinka of Rumbek district when Italy’s

39. Ibid.
40. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, ‘Anthropology and Administration’, Oxford University Summer School
declaration of war forced a change in his plans.\textsuperscript{42} He was commissioned temporarily in the Sudan Defence Force with a command over a small group of Anuak irregulars, and he finished the war as Tribal Affairs Officer with the British Military Administration in Cyrenaica, a post that was as much military intelligence as administration. With this broader experience with administration of various kinds he was able to refine his arguments about the cooperation between anthropology and administration, favourably contrasting his later experiences with his earlier. The conditions of his Nuer research still served as an example of what should be avoided.

Immediately after the end of World War Two Evans-Pritchard advocated a more regular employment of anthropologists by colonial authorities, but this proposal was made more for the financial security of anthropologists than for the benefit of colonial administration. He criticized the informal and haphazard use of anthropologists by colonial governments which had characterized his association with the Sudan Government, and which had been the cause of a definite period of financial insecurity for him.\textsuperscript{43} He warned governments that they could not expect to call on anthropologists for limited periods without providing some security for their future. Governments also must reform their take-it-or-leave-it attitude towards anthropological research, giving more weight to the anthropological studies they commissioned than they had been inclined to do. Evans-Pritchard then pointed to his own experience in Cyrenaica, where he had been incorporated into the administrative structure, as a more happy and profitable arrangement for all concerned.\textsuperscript{44}

At the same time he did not want anthropologists to submerge themselves in administrative interests only. He advocated the continuing dedication of anthropologists to the investigation of scientific problems and the theoretical advance of the subject.\textsuperscript{45} Again his experience with administrators among the Nuer had shown where anthropological and administrative interests did not coincide. Administrators had on the whole been interested only in those aspects of his study that helped them understand the Nuer social structure and political order. He had found virtually no interest in Nuer religion among adminis-


\textsuperscript{43} It is not true that he held an official post of 'government anthropologist', as Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmad has stated ('Evans-Pritchard and the Sudan,' SNR 55 (1974), p. 168). Evans-Pritchard, and most subsequent anthropologists who received a subsidy from the Sudan Government, were supported in specific research projects for limited periods of time and had no official standing in the administrative structure. The Sudan Government did subsidize the publication of most of Evans-Pritchard's books on the Sudan, paying most of the publication cost of Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande, and receiving part of the royalty in return. The proportion of the publication costs of subsequent books borne by the Sudan Government progressively declined as Evans-Pritchard's reputation as a remunerative author rose (see: Oxford University Press files LBY 652 and 823104). By the time Nuer Religion was published no subsidy seems to have been required.


\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., pp. 93-4.
trators outside those aspects that related to the political order, and his most frequent and strongest disagreements with administrators was in their under valuing of religion in Nuer life. To have been totally guided by administrative priorities in his research on the Nuer would have meant overlooking this most fundamental aspect of Nuer life. We are told by one of his colleagues that 'the only authority he respected was intellectual and moral'; and we can see his reaction against the moral arrogance of some members of the Sudan Political Service in his advice to a student intending to enter the Colonial Service to read 'moral philosophy'.

It is clear from his earlier writings on colonial administration and from some of his personal comments on his work in the Sudan that Evans-Pritchard was deeply concerned about moral issues connected with colonial rule. It is neither true nor fair to say that he had no 'objections to the lines of work suggested to him', nor that his work was largely intended to aid the Sudan Government in its aims, however indirectly. Evans-Pritchard's ambivalent attitude towards colonial governments was fully reciprocated. Some members of the Sudan Government, such as MacMichael and Pawson, thought extremely highly of him, while others regarded him as arrogant, sceptical and even 'woolly'. The Sudan Government as a whole was never fully committed to the idea that anthropology was an efficacious tool for administration. Evans-Pritchard's student, Godfrey Lienhardt, received a very cautious welcome from the Deputy Governor of the Bahr el-Ghazal Area of Equatoria Province, who wrote in 1947 concerning Lienhardt's imminent arrival: 'Though I think there are severe limits to which administrative measures should be influenced by anthropological theories, these studies, apart from their scientific interest, make a very useful background to

46. Many of Evans-Pritchard's articles on Nuer politics, economics, social structure and kinship appeared in Sudan Notes and Records, the main vehicle for acquainting administrators with his work, but none of his articles on Nuer religion were published there, and none were officially circulated to Nuer District Commissioners. Administrators persisted in discussing Nuer religious figures in political terms. (cf. B. A. Lewis, 'Nuer Spokesmen. A Note on the Institution of The Ruic,' SNR 32, 1 (1951); P. P. Howell, A Manual of Nuer Law (Oxford University Press, 1954). Only two administrators published any articles concerning Nuer spiritual beliefs: P. P. Howell and B. A. Lewis, 'Nuer Ghouls: A Form of Witchcraft,' SNR 28 (1947), and P. P. Howell, 'Some Observations on "Earthly Spirits" among the Nuer,' Man, N.S. 53, 1 (1953).)


49. Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmad, 'Edward Evans-Pritchard and the Sudan,' p. 169.

50. Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmad, 'Some Remarks from the Third World on Anthropology and Colonialism: the Sudan,' in Talal Asad (ed.), Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter (Ithaca Press, 1973), p. 269. It should be pointed out here that the questionnaire issued to Evans-Pritchard in 1926, which Abdel Ghaffar refers to, was designed specifically to provide information for Seligman's compilation, Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan, which also contained contributions from missionaries and government officials. It was not used for his major works on the Azande, Nuer, or even the Anuak.

51. Other colonial government officials went even further in their denunciation of Evans-Pritchard. The South African censorship officers were so enraged at his outspoken criticisms in his letters to his wife during World War Two, that they branded him as a 'wild anthropologist,' and 'one of those de-nationalized [de-tribalized? scientists who take pride in advertising their freedom from the simpler loyalties'. (E. Fench to J. C. Penny, 9.8.40, and Penny to Armstrong, 22.9.40, CRO UNP 1/46/336).
give the newcomer perspective [sic] and sometimes affect one's judgement in practical matters.  

During that time when British anthropology was inextricably linked with the peoples and governments of the British Empire, Evans-Pritchard was concerned with the survival and independence of the subject. Some accommodation had to be made with existing political realities, but never at the expense of the integrity of the discipline. Unlike Malinowski, he did not publicly enunciate his opposition to specific aspects of colonialism. His attempts to 'humanize' policy were more personal; he tried to 'humanize' administrators. His own approach to African peoples was distinctly different from that of missionaries and administrators in colonial Africa, for while they tried to make their own ideas comprehensible to Africans, he was engaged in exactly the reverse, trying to make African concepts comprehensible to non-Africans. This approach, too, inevitably irritated many already in the field who did not appreciate an anthropologist explaining 'their' people to them. To officials it was frequently when Evans-Pritchard was at his most theoretical that he was at his most offensive, for his theories frequently struck at the fundamental prejudices of colonial thinking. His analysis of witchcraft was no mere anthropological infatuation with the exotic, for by crediting Zande witchcraft with an experimental logic he directly attacked the assumptions about primitive mentality that many administrators shared with the preceding generation of armchair anthropologists. His description of the Nuer political system, particularly his analysis of witchcraft was no mere anthropological infatuation with the exotic, for by crediting Zande witchcraft with an experimental logic he directly attacked the assumptions about primitive mentality that many administrators shared with the preceding generation of armchair anthropologists. His description of the Nuer political system, particularly his  

52. T. H. R. Owen, Deputy Governor, Bahr el-Ghazal Area to Governor, Equatoria, 10.3.47, SRRO EP 104.A. 3, my emphasis. Owen was subsequently highly impressed by Lienhardt's work, but he maintained a decided scepticism about the value of anthropology to administration.  


54. There is a recognizable difference in the quality of analysis in Evans-Pritchard's and missionary presentations of Nuer religion. The only missionary study that rivals Evans-Pritchard's for thoroughness is J. P. Crazzolara, Zur Gesellschaft und Religion der Nuerer (Studia Instituti Anthropos, 1953), but it is clear that Crazzolara relied more on indirect information than direct observation. His translation of some Nuer words and description of some Nuer concepts must be treated with caution. He had longer exposure to the Nuer language than Evans-Pritchard, and probably a greater fluency, but this does not mean he automatically had a profounder knowledge of shades of meaning and use of some words. Given Evans-Pritchard's own description of the remoteness of the mission at Yoinyang from the Nuer during Crazzolara's tenure there, it would be unwise to credit Crazzolara with the chance to gain an intimate knowledge of Nuer life. His linguistic ability lay mostly in phonetics, and the conclusions he drew about the relationship between certain words in various Luo languages (which he knew far better than Nuer) have been criticised by missionary colleagues and Luo speakers alike (cf. S. Santandrea, The Luo of the Bahr el Ghazal (Sudan): Historical Notes, (Museum Combonianum, 1968), pp. 185-6 and O. P'Bitek, Religion of the Central Luo (East African Literature Bureau, 1971, p. 2).  

Evans-Pritchard cautioned anthropologists against accepting translations of religious terms made for missionary purposes, for these inevitably carried Christian overtones which were absent in native usage. 'I have not in the past made this criticism of missionaries because I did not wish to give offence,' he wrote, 'and because I thought any intelligent person could make it for himself.' (Evans-Pritchard, 'Some Reminiscences and Reflections on Fieldwork,' p. 249). Educated Christian Nuer would agree. While of necessity they use English words such as 'sin', 'glory', 'devil', 'faith' (or 'belief'), which were introduced to them by their missionary teachers, they are not happy about their attribution as direct translations of certain Nuer words, and they are frequently highly critical of the missionary use of Nuer religious vocabulary, pointing out that the translations bear little resemblance to the non-Christian Nuer use of the same words.  

discussion of the assimilation of Dinka and the role of traditional leaders, was a specific refutation of the arguments supporting the implementation of the 'Nuer Settlement'. The indirectness of his assault should not deceive us into denying the strength of his attack on certain colonial prejudices.

Evans-Pritchard did not write out of an explicit political commitment, but out of personal sympathy. It was because he tried to understand both administrators and the Nuer on their own terms, for instance, that he saw so clearly the clash of moral values between the Nuer and the government. It was because of his sympathy for both that he drew attention to this clash and tried to mitigate its effects in his writings. His experience is relevant to the anthropological involvement with development programmes in the Third World today. The fact that many development anthropologists may be better paid than he was, and have more job security than he had, does not obscure the fundamental clash of interests inherent in such arrangements. Anthropologists will still have to decide whether their commitment to their subject imposes constraints on their loyalty to the aims of their employers. In a time when arguments for national (and even international) economic regeneration of undeveloped countries are put forward with such urgency, anthropologists may also find themselves facing the choice of supporting the efficient and sometimes ruthless implementation of development policies, or, as Evans-Pritchard and many anthropologists of the colonial period ultimately did, defending the weaker societies whose cultures and ways of life are in danger of being dismissed for the sake of some greater good.