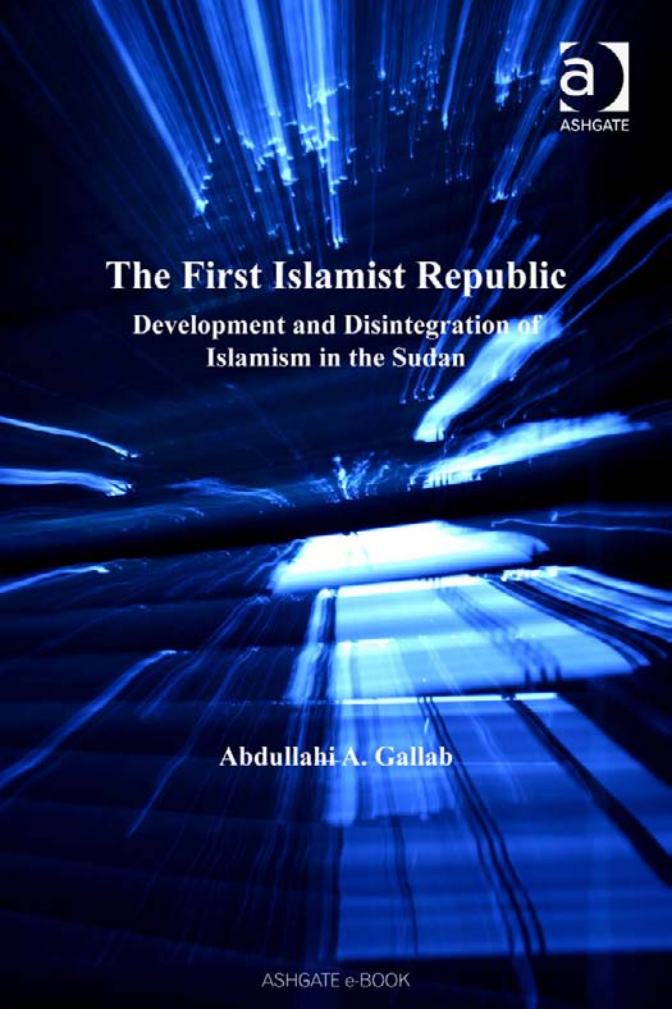
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The First Islamist Republic
Development and Disintegration of Islamism in the Sudan
Abdullahi A. Gallab
ASHGATE e-BOOK

THE FIRST ISLAMIST REPUBLIC

To the lives and memory of my parents Ahmed Abdullahi Gallab and Azza Ahmed Habib whose prudence, generosity of spirit, and sensitivity have greatly enlightened my path through life.

The First Islamist Republic

Development and Disintegration of Islamism in the Sudan

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Preface

This book, which has been more than a decade in writing, is the story of the social world of the Sudanese brand of Islamism. It provides an entry point into the Sudanese Islamist movement's local, regional, and global worlds as they interact and collide with each other. By placing considerable emphasis on the theoretical development and growth of this phenomenon within the context of the broader Islamist movement the book addresses the profound transformations in the practice of what is often described as political Islam. The goal of this book is to provide a comprehensive treatment of the Sudanese Islamists' experience and state model, which represent the first Islamist republic in the Sunni Muslim world. To substantiate this project's claims, primary material was collected from interviews, Sudanese, Arab, and international media reports, books, and a lifetime of personal experience in the Sudanese political and intellectual scenes. All of this research is applied in a sociological context. In developing this perspective, the book highlights different discourses and counter discourses among the ruling elite, the media, and the Sudanese public, as well as within Islamism itself.

Islamism is a new global phenomenon, which transforms the lives of both those who subscribe to its *weltanschauung*, and those who contest it. Equally, it affects those who agree and disagree with its political practices, and has an important influence upon the lives of those who either benefit or suffer from it. As a Muslim and a Sudanese citizen I am an insider to Islam and the Sudan. But as a scholar with no political affiliations, I am by choice an outsider to Islamism and all other isms, their ideologies, and their politics. In this historic period in which events have been unfolding, this dual perspective offers an exciting opportunity from the social scientist's standpoint to try to understand the logic, the strategies, the thought, and perhaps the underlying meaning of the violence, human meanness, greed, and wilding that were operating as an outcome of the experience of the Sudanese Islamists and acting separately and collectively to transform the life of the Sudan. In this regard, an understanding of the Sudanese experience leads us to the realization that Islamism, like all other isms, can be and should be contested.

Abdullahi Gallab

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Introduction

Earlier than most African countries, the Sudan gained its independence and came to terms with the reality of building a new state. Essential conditions for a promising state—economic, cultural, and political capital—were expected to one day induce reproductions of the experiences of state-building among the place and its people. Yet half a century after the country's independence from the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium rule in 1956, Sudanese attempts at developing a competent system of governance and a stable state—whether by design or by accident—have been a dismal failure. Over nearly the entire fifty-year period, the specialists of violence from both military and civilian ranks have competed with each other in the transfer of different forms of violence from one sphere to the other. This history may explain the genesis of the country's various power groups (particularly the Islamists), their competition for ascendancy, and each one's approach to state- and nation-building.

On 30 June 1989 a military coup led by an unknown brigadier named 'Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir succeeded in toppling the democratically elected government of al-Sadiq al-Mahdi in the Sudan.[1] This coup marked the beginning of the first Islamist republic, which would last until 1999. Although al-Bashir emerged as the leader of the coup, another man, Hasan al-Turabi, the secretary general of *al-Jabhah al-Islamiyah al-Qawmiyah* [the National Islamic Front (NIF)], was the primary architect of the first Islamist republic. As it happened, this division of labor was detrimental not only to the Sudan and its people, but to al-Turabi and the Islamist movement as well. This became evident with the collapse of the first Islamist republic in 1999, when al-Bashir and his collaborators removed al-Turabi from his positions of power and initiated the second Islamist republic. To understand the reign of the first Islamist republic and the significance of the transition to the second, and the impact that these developments have had on Sudanese life, we must begin with an examination of the coup that set things in motion.

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1 Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi (1935–) Leader of the Umma Party and Imam of the Ansar. The great grandson of Muhammad Ahmad al-Mahdi who led a successful religiously inspired revolution from 1881 to 1885 against Turko-Egyptian rule in the Sudan. Al-Sadiq came into the political limelight in 1964, when he played a significant role in the broad public discussions that led to and accompanied the October 1964 popular uprising. Two years after the restoration of democracy in 1964, he became the leader of the Umma Party. At the age of 31, he became Sudan's youngest elected prime minister (1965–67). Al-Sadiq was the prime minister of the democratically elected government (1986–89) that was toppled by the al-Bashir coup in 1989. In 1995, al-Sadiq's Umma Party joined the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). In 2000, he left the NDA and returned to the Sudan. Al-Sadiq refused to participate in the government or any form of elections and insisted on a constitutional conference for the restoration of democracy in the country.

The Birth of the First Islamist Republic

On the Friday morning of 30 June 1989, the Sudanese radio kept repeating for hours that a communiqué by Brigadier ‘Umar Hasan would be announced soon. As it turned out, this was the agreed upon code among the organizers of the coup that the coup had succeeded. Before that time, al-Bashir was virtually unknown not only among the Sudanese population, but among the Islamists too. There was nothing extraordinary or exciting about him or his life. He was born in 1944 in the small village of Hoshe Bannaga, in the northern region about sixty miles northeast of Khartoum. He completed middle school in the nearby city of Shendi, before his family moved to Khartoum and enrolled him in Khartoum Secondary High. He supplemented his education and family income by working in an auto repair shop. Upon his graduation from secondary school he was admitted to the military academy where he earned his wings in the Airborne Forces. He holds two masters degrees in Military Science from the Sudanese College of Commanders and the Military Institute in Malaysia. In 1988 al-Bashir was put in command of the 8th Brigade of the Sudanese Army in southern Sudan, fighting the SPLM[2] insurgency led by John Garang in the Amom area.

It is believed that in 1989 he met with Ali ‘Uthman Muhammad Taha,[3] who was then the deputy secretary general of the NIF and a schoolmate from his Khartoum Secondary High days, several times while he was in the south. The two spent the two

2 SPLM, the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement, was founded by Dr. John Garang de Mabior (1945–2005) in July 1983. In its founding manifesto, the SPLM emphasized that its primary goal is the creation of a new Sudan united “under a socialist system that affords democracy and human rights to all nationalities and guarantees freedom to all religions, beliefs and outlooks.” After the collapse of the socialist regime in Ethiopia, the SPLM moved its headquarters to Kenya and reduced its socialist rhetoric. The SPLM is structured along the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) military line. John Garang, the supreme leader and his guerrilla movement had been fighting the central government of the Sudan from 1983 to 2005. On 9 January 2005, a peace agreement between the Islamist regime of Khartoum and John Garang was signed in Nivasha, Kenya. John Garang assumed the position of the First Vice-President. In late July 2005, Garang died after the Ugandan presidential helicopter taking him back to the Sudan crashed.

3 Ali Osman Muhammad Taha (1948–) Current vice-president of the republic. It has been understood that Taha was the “architect-in-chief” of planning and carrying out the June 1989 military coup. Ali Osman Muhammad Taha’s ascent to power started in the last NIF general conference in 1987 when he was elected as the deputy secretary general of the party. Before the palace coup against al-Turabi in 1999 he was always associated with his relationship with Hassan al-Turabi and described as his *un homme de confiance*. He has always been perceived, by most Sudanese observers, as a political bureaucrat hand picked and trained by Hassan al-Turabi. Meanwhile, Ali’s own low-key style, his child-like features and his apparent quiet demeanor allow many people to overlook his manipulative, opportunistic, ruthless character. Ali’s ascent to power has resulted from a combination of many factors: (a) the expanding numbers of the younger second generation of the Islamists (b) the frustration of these groups arising from the control of the older generation over leadership positions since 1964 (c) the younger generations disrespect for the democratic process and the impatience of some of these groups to find a shortcut to power through a military coup

weeks before the coup planning to seize the government while pretending to prepare al-Bashir for his upcoming studies at Nasser Military Academy in Cairo.[4] Al-Bashir and the Islamists called their coup the National Salvation Revolution.

On the night of the coup, several hundred politicians, including leaders of political parties and ministers, as well as senior army officers, trade unionists, lawyers, journalists, and businessmen were detained, and all nonreligious organizations were dissolved. Newspapers were shut down, and only the state radio and TV stations and the weekly army newspaper al-Qwat al-Mussallaha were allowed to operate. Al-Turabi and two of his top party members—Ibrahim al-Sanoussi and Ahmad ʻAbd al-Rahman—were put in detention in Kober prison with other politicians.

The nature of the coup was not at first obvious for most Sudanese. Some thought it was a typical kind of coup, planned and led by nationalist army officers. Governments in some neighboring countries, especially Egypt, welcomed the coup. It took the politicians and trade unionists in Kober some time to make sure that the obscure coup was generated by the NIF even though three of its key leaders were detained with them. Later, it became clear that detaining the leadership of the Islamist movement was part of the plan, so as to camouflage the nature of the coup. It was reported that Muhammad Ibrahim Nugud, the secretary general of the Sudanese Communist Party (SCP), who was known for his sense of humor, told al-Turabi, "*baraka Allah fi mn zarah wa khafa*" ["God blesses the visitor who stays the shortest and is not a burden"], implying that al-Turabi should go home and join his coconspirators. Other detained politicians refused to let him lead the group prayer. Of course, al-Turabi not only stayed in prison, but also continued to say that his Islamist party would support this regime if it showed positive signs and would open a path for Islam, but that he would oppose it if it closed that path, regardless of its position on democracy.[5]

Within a few months of the coup, however, it became clear that the Islamists were involved in all stages of the coup, from planning and logistics, to the formation of a civilian and military task force, or a group of coup-makers, who worked together before and during the night of the takeover. At Kober prison, al-Turabi "was not mistreated unlike his brother-in-law Sadiq al-Mahdi who was subjected to a mock execution",[6] which was received with outrage and anger among the political detainees and was considered as one proof among many that the Islamists were behind the coup. Another proof, thought the politicians in Kober, was that al-Turabi "was allowed to meet freely with high-ranking NIF officials, including Ali Osman Taha and Ali al-Haj Muhammad. The courtesy shown Turabi produced rumors and aroused speculations among the urban Sudanese of Khartoum and Omdurman that

(d) his organizational skills and his tight control over the Islamists' secret organization (al-nizam al-sirri) since 1972.

4 J. Millard Burr and Robert O. Collins, *Revolutionary Sudan: Hasan al-Turabi and the Islamist State, 1989–2000* (Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2003), 3.

5 Fathi al-Daw, *Al-Sudan wa Siqot al-Agniaa: Sanwat al-Khiyba wa al-Amal [Sudan and the Drop of Masks: Years of Despair and Hope]* (Cairo: Sweeter Press, 2006), 87.

6 Burr and Collins, *Revolutionary Sudan*, 10.

Bashir must be Brother or sympathizer to NIF."[7] As the new regime's performance started to raise broader questions about its political orientation, some members of al-Turabi's party, especially those in the RCC tried to deny any relationship with the NIF. But certain aspects of the regime's behavior had yet to direct systematic attention on the coup and the regime's relationship to the Islamists. By November 1989 things became clearer as some of the younger Islamists began to appear at the forefront and as the regime started to take drastic measures against those who were suspected of preparing to move against the regime. Day by day the regime began to take preemptive measures against the rise of an organized opposition in a direct and oppressive fashion. One of the shocking actions taken by the regime in November 1989 was the execution of Majdi Mahjoub Muhammad Ahmad, Gregis al-Qus and Arkinglo Ajado who were accused of nothing more heinous than dealing in foreign currency. One month later, Dr. Mamoun Hussein, head of the Doctors Association and a prominent unionist, was sentenced to death for leading a physicians strike. These executions were to be understood as political acts of intimidation and an introduction to the new regime's reign of terror.

Before the end of 1989, the government renewed war efforts in the south and started to build a Popular Defense Force (PDF) according to the Popular Defense Act, which legitimized tribal militia forces and the forcible conscription of male citizens eighteen years of age and older. Simultaneously, the reign of terror escalated with the ongoing arrests of suspected political and trade union activists, who were subjected to torture at unofficial detention centers, known as ghost houses, either to intimidate or to obtain information from them. This reign of terror continued to shadow the first Islamist republic over its lifetime from 1989 until 1999.

On the other hand, the instantaneous convergence of the opposition to the new regime took shape when the detained politicians and trade unionists established the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) as an umbrella organization to coordinate the efforts of all the political entities that oppose the regime and seek a democratic alternative. The NDA is composed of thirteen parties, fifty-six unions and federations, armed factions, including the SPLA, and other groupings and national personalities. Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani, chairman of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and the spiritual guide of the Khatmiyyah *tariqa*, was one of the founding members of the NDA and has been its chairman ever since.

In light of these developments, it is striking that it took al-Turabi ten years to fully admit that he and his party had planned and engineered every single aspect of the coup. After he was stripped of power in 1999, he divulged that he had actually instructed 'Umar al-Bashir to go to the palace while he went to prison. The experience of the first Islamist republic has traumatized many inside and outside the Islamist movement, not least al-Turabi himself. But this trauma has been reflecting itself in the exhaustion that impaired the political ideas of the leadership of the movement and its cultural and political intelligentsia who continue to reflect and brood on themes of despair.

7 Ibid.

Revolution in the Sudan

In the closing years of both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, religiously inspired movements succeeded in assuming power in the Sudan. The first was a rebellion from 1881 until 1885 started by Muhammad Ahmad Ibn Abdullah, who proclaimed himself the *Mahdi* and declared *jihad* against Turko-Egyptian rule in the Sudan. He emerged victorious by defeating the British ruler of the Sudan, Major-General Charles Gordon (1833–85), in the battle of Khartoum. The Mahdiyya, or the Mahdist state, ruled the country until 1898 when the British invaded and retook control of the Sudan, establishing what they called the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium. A century later, another *Mahdi*, this time armed with a PhD from the Sorbonne, planned a military takeover with the aim of establishing an Islamist republic.

Hasan ʻAbd Allah al-Turabi was born in the eastern Sudanese city of Kassala in 1932. His family belonged to a famous religious sect and his father was a religious judge. Young al-Turabi had an ordinary Sudanese public education. Later, he studied at Western schools in the United Kingdom and France. Al-Turabi started his political career as one of the Sudanese elite with Islamist activist tendencies. His star began to rise when he actively participated in the October Revolution against the military government of Ibrahim ʼAbbud (1958–64). As Professor El-Tag Fadl Allah, president of the Sudanese International University has rightly noted, al-Turabi's status as a university professor and the dean of the faculty of law in addition to his family background endowed him with a cultural and social capital that facilitated his path to the fields of power within his Islamist group and Sudanese society at large.[8]

The academic community and most Sudanese would agree that the events of 1885 qualify as a revolution. However, there are very few in the Sudan today, even among the Islamists themselves, who would describe what happened in 1989 as a revolution. William Rose and Eliza Van Dusten published a thoughtful work titled "Sudan's Islamic Revolutions as a Cause of Foreign Intervention in its Wars: Insights from Balance of Threat Theory", in which they examined Samuel Huntington and Stephen Walt's different theories on revolution in relation to these two events in the Sudan. They argue that, the "two prominent theorists have discussed Sudan in its relations with other countries, but only briefly and without serious case study analysis."[9] In his book *The Clash of Civilizations*, Huntington implies that the Sudanese Islamist regime is a revolution that might instigate "serious interstate conflict when Sudan seeks to export an Islamic revolution to a non-Islamic or partially Islamic country (like Ethiopia) or, to a lesser extent, when it tries to export its particular version of Islam to other Islamic countries (like Egypt)."[10] In contrast, Stephen Walt, who disagrees totally with Huntington's clash of civilizations theory and describes it

8 El-Tag Fadl Allah, interview by author, audio recording, Khartoum, Sudan, 30 December 2005.

9 William Rose and Eliza Van Dusten, "Sudan's Islamic Revolutions as a Cause of Foreign Intervention in its Wars: Insights from Balance of Threat Theory," *Civil Wars Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (2002): 1–64.

10 Ibid.

as "an unreliable guide to the emerging world order and a potentially dangerous blueprint for policy",[11] argues in his book, *Revolution and War*, that "the Sudan is the only other regime [besides Iran] that openly espouses fundamental principles."[12]

Two important issues arise here. First, Rose and Van Dusten admit that, despite the disagreement of some experts, "More than a simple coup and a military dictatorship were involved in redefining Sudan's domestic and foreign policy." Based on their analysis, they assert that, "Sudan's politics in this period were at least 'revolution-like'."[13] Second, both Huntington and Walt describe Iran and the Sudan as Islamist regimes. This is not an accurate characterization, as will be shown, because the term Islamist usually describes a movement initiated by an educated urban elite connected to public and sometimes Western education. Such a background has led to contrasting approaches to some doctrinal and political orientations between the champions, theorists, and leaders of Islamist movements on the one hand, and the movement of Shi'ite political Islam that has been initiated by the *Mulahs* or the clergy on the other. While the clergy represent a small faction within all Sunni Islamist movements, we observe the reverse phenomenon among the Shi'ite movements, where an urban, public school educated elite represents only a small group on the fringes. Thus, while the former is based on the university, the latter is based on the *hawzeh*. Another crucial factor that explains the difference between the two is that while the Sunni Islamist movements' organizational structure rests on a shared political framework, they do not follow a centralized hierarchy as the Shi'ites do. Considered in this light, the Islamist State in the Sudan is the first of its kind in the Muslim world.

The period from 1989 until 1999, which Rose and Van Dusten describe as a revolutionary or revolution-like period, witnessed the emergence of a dictatorial polity and totalitarian project that used oppressive means to establish one Islamist model under all conditions. The first Islamist republic displayed patterns of governance so distinctive that its benefactors describe it as an ideology firmly related to al-Turabi's Islamist ideas and theories of the state. Of course, it is important to make clear the distinction between Islamism as an ideology and Islam as a religious faith. With this in mind, we must first answer the question "Who are the Islamists?"

About the Islamists

There is no single universally accepted label for all the current organized Muslim political groups. It is important to distinguish between what could be attributed to the broad Islamic belief and the current Islamist political movements. The term *al-Islamiyyun* [Islamist], which is widely used to denote a "determined choice of an

11 Stephen M. Walt, "Building Up New Bogeymen," *Foreign Policy*, No. 106 (1997): 177–89.

12 Stephen M. Walt, *Revolution and War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 246.

13 William Rose and Eliza Van Dusten, "Sudan's Islamic Revolutions as a Cause of Foreign Intervention in its Wars," 55.

Islamic doctrine, rather than the simple fact of being born Muslim,"[14] is applied to describe current groups and manifestations of Islamic movements, those described as fundamentalists and neofundamentalists. Nikki Keddie argues that the term Islamist "is probably the most accurate, distinguishing belief ('Islamic') from movements to increase Islam's role in society and politics, usually with the goal of an Islamic state."[15]

In the Arab and Muslim Worlds, as well as in the West, some scholars prefer the term 'political Islam' because, as Joel Beinin and Joe Stork argue, they "regard the core concern of these movements as temporal and political."[16] They further explain that these movements use—in a selective manner—the *Quran*, the *Hadith*, and other canonical religious texts to justify their stances and actions. Moreover, they maintain, "today's Islamic thinkers and activists are creatively deploying selected elements of the Islamic tradition, combined with ideas, techniques, institutions, and commodities of the present and recent past, to cope with specifically modern predicaments."[17] Another scholar, Bobby S. Sayyid, rightly rejects the term "fundamentalism" because it can only "operate as a general category if it situates itself within the discourse of the liberal-secularist enlightenment project and considers this project to be the natural state of affairs." Sayyid argues that connecting the term "fundamentalism" with any projects that "assert a Muslim subjectivity… [is] superficial or secondary and prevent[s] the pursuit of other more fruitful lines of enquiry."[18]

Meanwhile, Olivier Roy systematically classifies Islamist groups according to their instance to power. First, neo-fundamentalists (generally the reformists) are those who desire to see the establishment of an Islamic order in terms of its privatization—"Islamization from the bottom up". For these reformists, social and political action aims primarily at re-Islamizing society through political education and mobilization from the lowest level up, "bringing about, *ipso facto*, the advent of an Islamic state". The fundamentalists, on the other hand, seek the capture of the state. More revolutionary than reformist, fundamentalists expect the Islamization of society to occur through state power, and so the establishment of an Islamic order necessitates intervention in public affairs—"Islamization from the top down."[19] This revolutionary pole, however, is far from homogeneous; Fundamentalists are differentiated by the way their thought and actions are territory-bound (local *jihadists*) or global in scale (global *jihadists*). At the outset, however, important common characteristics in the landscape of the groups need to be identified.

First, scholars agree that the Islamists have been advocating a political ideology based on Islam, asserting the primacy of Islam, and calling for an Islamic order.

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14 Quoted in Fred Hillday, "Is Islam in Danger: Authority, Rushdie and the Struggle for the Migrant Soul," in Jochen Hippler and Andrea Lueg (eds), *The Next Threat: Western Perceptions of Islam* (London: Pluto Press with Transnational Institute, 1995), 71–81.

15 Ibid.

16 Joel Beinin and Joe Stork (eds), *Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report* (Berkeley: University of California Press, c.1997), 4.

17 Ibid.

18 Bobby S. Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism* (London and New York: Zed Books, 1997), 7–26.

19 See Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, for an elaboration of this idea.

Second, as mentioned above, new and old breeds of Islamists share a background of public and sometimes Western education, a characteristic that makes al-Turabi claim that the Islamists are the "only modernity."[20] When seen through the Islamists' spectacles, modernity is a self-image as well as a political current that appeals to a "superior" form of Islam. Accordingly, the Islamists resent the *ulam ,* or the learned scholars who have always been considered as "the official expounders of religious orthodoxy,"[21] while at the same time they ridicule Sufism and its leaders as the custodians of an "inner or esoteric dimension of Islam."[22] As Roy observes, "they live with the values of the city—consumerism and upward social mobility."[23] Third, as Bassam Tibi discerns, most Islamist ideologues, politicians, and writers "seem to overlook the distinction between two different traditions of knowledge in Islam: Islamic religious sciences and rational sciences (philosophy and natural sciences)."[24] Finally, as Mark Juergensmeyer observes, the Islamists "are concerned not so much about the political structure of the nation-state as they are about the political ideology undergirding it."[25]

Insights developed from the Sudanese Islamists' model of the state and the entire Islamist discourse all illustrate the validity of such an observation. Al-Turabi's writings and speeches about the state before and after 1989 clearly show a marked change of perspective. In 1983, al-Turabi wrote that "[t]he ideological foundation of an Islamic state lies in the doctrine of *tawhid*—the unity of God and human life—as a comprehensive and exclusive program of worship."[26] He maintained that the "Islamic state" is not secular, not nationalistic, and not an absolute or sovereign entity. He claimed that the "Islamic state" is not a *primordia* because the primary institution in Islam is the *umma*.[27] But, after this charade of what the Islamic state is not, al-Turabi failed to indicate what the Islamic state is. During the period of his collaboration with Ja'far Nimairi's dictatorship from 1977 until 1985, al-Turabi used to put "greater emphasis on converting society than on gaining political position."[28]

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20 Hasan al-Turabi, *Islam as a Pan-National Movement and Nation-States: An Islamic Doctrine of Human Association* (London, UK: The Sudan Foundation, 1992).

21 Larabi Sadiki, *The Search for Arab Democracy: Discourses and Counter-Discourses* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 74.

22 Seyyed Hossian Nasr, "The Interior Life in Islam", *Al-Serat: A Journal of Islamic Studies*, Vol. III, Nos. 2 and 3.

23 Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994), 23–6.

24 Bassam Tibi, "The Worldview of Sunni Arab Fundamentalists: Attitudes toward Modern Science and Technology," in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (eds), *Fundamentalisms and Society: Reclaiming the Sciences, the Family, and Education* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 73–102.

25 Juergensmeyer, Mark, *The New Cold War: Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford: University of California Press, 1993), 6.

26 Hasan al-Turabi, "The Islamic state," in John L. Esposito (ed.), *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 241.

27 Ibid.

28 John Esposito and John Voll, *Islam and Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 92.

In 1982, he told an interviewer that the "state is only an expression of an Islamic society" and that it "is based on consultation or *shura,* that means a democratic society where everybody should participate."[29]

Al-Turabi, however, uses the term "fundamentalist" to connote or denote the Arabic term *usuli* (one who follows the basic tenets of Islam as reflected in the *Quran* and the *Hadith*) so often, that the term "fundamentalism" has been thrown at him by his enemies, who use it to label him as a fanatical, anti-modern, right-wing reactionary. One would agree partly with François Burgat that such labels "are clearly not much different from the *a priori* reductionism of certain Orientalists."[30] By contrast, the uncompromising stand of Islamists against all varieties of non-Islamists—from secular to *ulam* to Sufi—makes no room for the Other, who is perceived by al-Turabi and the Islamists to constitute the biggest threat to a Muslim society. The primary goal of the Islamists is to keep secularists at a distance, expelled if possible, or to eliminate them altogether. These mutual hostilities have opened the way for a remorseless and never-ending war of attrition between the Islamists and their opponents in which each side perceives the other as ephemeral. In retrospect, for the past five decades we have seen both sides living in a "state of suspended extinction," as each has been turned by the other into an object to be eliminated through the coercion of the state apparatus or private violence. As a result, both state and private violence have grown stronger over time, especially during the Cold War, when the governing elite and their rivals continued to fortify their power by taking advantage of the rivalries and competition between the superpowers.

Since the emergence under Hasan al-Banna (1905–49) in 1928 of the *Jamiat al-ikhwan al-muslimin* [the Society of the Muslim Brothers], the Islamist movement has undergone remarkable changes. Among the most consequential has been the evolution of local ideological groups. The Sudanese Islamists are a perfect example, because their model and experience represent a paradigm shift, in so far as al-Turabi and his colleagues and disciples recreated the political space and the ideological conventions of their version of Islamism, molded it, made it their own, put it into practice, and lived its failure. Since the 1940s, the Sudanese Islamists under various names have demonstrated an ability to act within different systems of governance, including multiparty, militaristic, and dictatorial regimes, always seeking the shortest path to power. Hasan al-Turabi's intellectual and political leadership of the movement spanned a period of more than forty years. Beginning in 1964, he led the movement into a series of transformations, alliances, and collaborations over the years, beginning with the Muslim Brotherhood (1964) and continuing with the Islamic Charter Front (1964–69), the National Islamic Front (1985–89), the National Congress (1998–present), and the Popular Congress (2000–present). For simplicity's sake, this study will use the term Islamist movement to refer to all of these groups.

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29 Ibid.

30 François Burgat, *Face to Face with Political Islam* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 51.

The Islamist State in the Sudan

From the early days of the Islamist state in the Sudan in 1989, its champions and sympathizers saw themselves and their regime as marking a momentous break with the past in the Sudan, in the Muslim world, and in the world at large. The Sudanese Islamists' self-image, which is the essential element of their theoretical and ideological discourse, names them as an inestimable and special entity with a predestined covenant with the future of the Sudan and the entire human race. As Ghazi Salah al-Din al-'Atabani, a former disciple of al-Turabi, once claimed, "we have a constructive model and no one denies it, even our enemies don't deny that we are trying to build a model. Their quarrel with us is they don't like the model."[31]

This self-image and the main themes of the Islamists' ideology were captured in the National Charter for Political Action written in 1987 (see appendix). The Islamists' thesis, as stated in the Charter, was a prelude to and preparation for what would follow: the Islamist alternative. According to the Charter, the movement's "intellectual, spiritual and cultural values [spring] from our subservience to one God and our belief that He is the sole authority in this world and the world after." As the Charter elaborates, these values are "the only guarantee for a righteous society." With this in mind, the Charter outlines an Islamic code of moral behavior in Sudanese public life. Furthermore, *jihad* against internal and external enemies of the "the state, its religious and Islamic affiliation" is endorsed as a religious obligation to defend this "righteous society."

The significant feature of the Charter is not that it promotes a platform for a political party competing for votes, but that it introduces a blueprint for a comprehensive program entailing radical change, and hence it foresees not only an alternative regime, but an alternative society. The fundamental precondition for the existence of both the regime and the "righteous society" it imagines is internal and external (global) *jihad*. When seen through the lens of the events that occurred before and after the coup, the Islamists' ideological discourse—as stated in the Charter—represented the main source of the Islamists' norms and practices after the coup.

The Charter, al-Turabi's ideology, and the overall Islamist discourse reflect two essentially corresponding, though potentially contradictory, predispositions. The first predisposition forms the underlying argument of the entire ideology, the source of its inspiration, and its governing doctrine, which is deeply imbedded in Abu'l-A'la al-Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb's concept of *hakimiyah* [God's sovereignty] as the only legitimate polity. Furthermore, Al-Turabi's notion of *tawhid* and its ensuing articulations are deeply rooted in Qutb's argument that "all creation issuing as it does from one absolute, universal, and active Will forms an all-embracing unity in which each individual part is in harmonious order with the remainder … Thus, then, all creation is a unity comprising different parts; it has a common origin, a common providence and purpose, because it was deliberately produced by a single,

31 Anthony Shadid, *Legacy of the Prophet: Despots, Democrats and the New Politics of Islam* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2002), 154.

absolute, and comprehensive Will."[32] On a certain level, this view is what Qutb drew from Mawdudi's concepts of *hakimiyah*, *ubudiyah* [servitude], and *jahiliyah* [ignorance] in order to analyze the human condition of his day. However, nobody more than Qutb within the ranks of the Islamists—including Mawdudi himself—has applied these concepts to an all-encompassing vision about a humanity alienated by subjecting itself to *ubudiyah* as servitude to man and his mundane systems rather than *ubudiyah* as servitude to God. He argued persistently that through *hakimiyah* humans are driven into *jahiliyah* regardless of their material advancement. Qutb thought that *hakimiyah* needs to be established through *jihad*, which he defines as "a universal declaration of the freedom of man on the earth from every authority except that of God". In his view, the "declaration that sovereignty is God's alone and that He is the Lord of the universe, is not merely a theoretical, philosophical and passive proclamation."[33] Thus he concludes that, "establishing of the dominion of God on earth, the abolishing of the dominion of man … cannot be achieved only through preaching."[34] But conceptions and interpretations of Islamic doctrines and Qutb's views "as an envelope for a host of fundamental and endlessly proliferating meaning systems"[35] is not restricted to one single reference.

Al-Turabi and his disciples dressed both Qutb and Islam in their own ideological straitjacket. After the coup, the Islamists called their venture *al-Mashru' al-Hadari* [the Civilizational Project]. In this view, the Islamists' burden—like the White Man's burden—is to redeem "Your new-caught sullen peoples, / Half devil and half child." At the heart of this project lies what the Islamists called *al-da'wa al-shamila* [the comprehensive call]. Through the prism of this policy, the Islamist state perceived the Sudanese not as worthy citizens with civil and human rights, but as mirror images of individuals and groups owned by the state who must be brought into the civilizational project kicking and screaming in order to construct the "righteous society." Consequently, the Islamists forged an elaborate apparatus of coercion, religious indoctrination and conversion, political mobilization, and various forms of local *jihad* carried out by the paramilitary PDF in order to transform the Sudan into a model of an Islamist state. This was the essence of the first Islamist republic.

Ironically, the main constraint to the convergence of the official, the public, and the private spheres emerged from Islam itself, which the Islamists had meant to be an empowering force for the Sudanese regime and their political system. In this regard, Islam proved to be a constraining element for the Islamists and their state project. The Islamists' discourse, the method by which they shaped their scheme of action, and their regime's mode and sphere of operations have thrown the project into a seemingly endless progression of crisis. Here, the Sudanese experience provides an interesting example of the difference between the dynamics operating on the level of the political party and those operating on the level of the state's ideology and

32 Sayyid Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, trans. by John B. Hardie (New York: Octagon Books, 1970), 39.

33 Ibid., 49.

34 Ibid., 66.

35 Daniele Hervieu-Leger, *Religion as a Chain of Memory* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 34.

discourse. On the level of the political party, before the 1989 military coup and during the tenure of the multiparty system from 1985–89, NIF made itself known through a combination of religio-political discourse and mobilization techniques. The political process in the country was governed, for the most part, by accepted democratic rules that gave each political player similar access to the Sudanese political marketplace. The 1989 military coup suspended these rules and imposed its own set of rules in the name of creating an Islamist polity. The state's ideology and discourse fused Islamism and totalitarianism. The Islamists wasted no time in unleashing a reign of terror in which the state arrogated to itself ultimate power over all aspects of human life.

The second predisposition was to develop a uniform bureaucracy that could help control and monopolize the political, religious, economic, and social markets, thereby forcing the country's existing state bureaucracy to serve the Islamists' ideological and political agenda. Hence, the course and the order of the presentation and practice of the Islamists' polity ushered in after they assumed power in 1989 marked the transformation of the party into a device of domination. In an interview published in the Sudanese *Al-ra'y al-'Am* daily, a leading Islamist intellectual, Hasan Makki, explained how the process pursued by the Islamists after the 1989 coup "turned out to be an authoritarian project aiming to consolidate the power of the Leader or the Guide." He said that "the organizational structure of the [party] took a one-way direction for the control of information and a similar way for the direction of the decision making process to the extent that the party's image became similar to other totalitarian parties."[36] This step is significant because it explains al-Turabi's project for a total transformation of the party, the state, and the society to fit into the straitjacket of his totalitarian design.

Organization

The opening chapter provides an examination of the socio-historical background of the formation and development of the modern Sudanese power elite within the last century through the interplay and succession of different events, actions, and reactions that have transformed the Sudan's entire social, political, and cultural development. Chapter 2 explores the earliest emergence of the Islamist movement in the Sudan and its self-perception as a unique movement, separate and different from the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. An examination of the influence of the British Imperial system as a distinctive model is explored, and the importance of the Islamists as a civilian political party which backed the military coup of 1989 is discussed. Chapter 3 discusses how new political players emerged in the changing political landscape of the late 1960s and provides a short biographical sketch of three major players. Chapter 4 describes how the development of underground political and economic markets, as well as the introduction of Islamic banking, paved the way

36 Hasan Makki, *Al-ra'y al-'Am* daily, 5 May 2000. See also Dr. Hassan Mekki: "The Dilemma of the Islamists Movement in the cast aside of the Elite", an interview by Dr. Isam Mahgoub El-Mahi, *Al-ra'y al-'Am* daily, Khartoum, 17 May 2000.

for the Islamists to emerge as an invisible corporate entity. In Chapter 5 the historical background, political speeches and writings of al-Turabi and the transformation of the ideology into a total order are examined in relation to totalitarianism as a theory. Chapter 6 addresses *al-da'wa al-shamila* and its connection to local and global *jihad*. Chapter 7 looks at the difficulties al-Bashir faced upon removing al-Turabi from power. Finally, Chapter 8 investigates the transition from the end of the first Islamist republic into the second.

The primary focus of this book is on the Islamist movement in the Sudan within its ongoing engagements and encounters with its local, regional, and global fields of action and interaction. Like any other political movement, in the Sudan or elsewhere, it would be difficult to divorce the Islamist from its intricate pattern of cultural, political, and social relationships. In this regard, this book is intended to explain the Islamist movement as one aspect of a complex Sudanese existential socio-political experience.

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Chapter 1

Reflections on Islamism in the Sudan

The attention of local, regional, and international political, religious, and media circles has been focused seriously on the Sudanese Islamists and their regime since the 1989 military coup. That coup, which brought the Islamists to power, quickly expanded into an open-ended system of oppression with long-lasting effects on the country, its citizens, its neighbors, and other political players worldwide. There might not be one single pattern that interconnects all of these local, regional, and international groups and political players, however, the way the Islamists came to power and the brutal and coercive manner by which they tried to enforce their totalitarian project has propelled and compounded different sorts of internal and external tensions ever since the early days of the coup. And since Islam is still perceived negatively in many places, especially within some circles in the West, the different polity the Sudanese Islamists brought with them has created an additional uneasy atmosphere at home and abroad. It was not surprising that after the disintegration of the Soviet Union or "the Evil Empire" and the end of the communist threat as perceived by the West, the "Green Peril" or the Islamic threat, whether real or imagined, began to substitute for the communist threat more and more.[1] From this, it is quite obvious that a reproduction of negative Western political, academic, and media sentiments has supplemented and perpetuated an added value to this ideology of Islamic threat and fueled sentiments that connected the Sudanese regime and its supporters to the green peril and, hence, hesitated to address it on its own merits. This kind of interpretation has shaped the ongoing debate about the phenomenon and has to some extent, blurred all connections between the regime and its local fields, as well as the structural differences and similarities between the development of this particular political movement and other Islamist movements worldwide. It is true that most of the current Islamist movements share a similar motivating force, among other characteristics. Nevertheless, when we look behind the façade of these similarities, we can easily see that the objective structure, the internal and external challenges, and the distinguishing features of each movement or group vary greatly. And yet, the assumption of a massive undifferentiated and often rigid Islamist movement has been taken for granted largely because of the underlying continuity in the view of most of those observers, politicians, journalists, and scholars concerning Islam and

1 Aspects of the wide range of academic and journalistic literature on the Islamic challenge or threat to the West as the next global phenomenon have been addressed by many scholars. See for example, John Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Jochen Hippler and Andrea Lueg (eds), *The Next Threat: Western Perceptions of Islam* (London: Pluto Press with Transnational Institute, 1995); and Bobby Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism* (New York: Zed Books, 2002).

by extension the current Islamist movements. Such views do not address the nature of these Islamist political and social phenomena.

All of this is to say that the Sudanese Islamist movement's historical environment and political, religious, and temporal construction have both similar and dissimilar stances with other contemporary Islamist movements worldwide. Given the complexity of these developments, the means by which the Sudanese Islamists assumed power in 1989 reassured them and their fellow Islamists worldwide that the path to power had been paved and that the model for the Islamist state was set. As the supreme goal to which all Islamists aspire, regardless of their differences, has been to establish a new Islamic order and perhaps some sort of international state, the Sudanese movement and its activists as well as its sympathizers at home and abroad wasted no time in filling the airwaves with the boast that not only would they replace the incumbent authoritarian regimes within the Arab and Islamic worlds, but they would soon "call for the Azzan in the Vatican"[2] itself.

This misguided arrogance took different forms. First, Hasan al-Turabi, the former leader and chief ideologue of the regime, projected himself and his ideology as an alternative to local and international *ancien régime*, and assumed the role of a local and global reference on any matter related to Islam and the state. It was al-Turabi's thesis that the collapse of the Soviet Union and its East European satellites and the demise of Soviet style communism coincide with what he believed to be the promise of an emerging Islamist order that would liberate the entire human race "from the clutches of all kinds of material, political, occult, or psychological control."[3]

Al-Turabi himself advocated that the Sudanese Islamist state model would act as a launching point for "pan-Islamic *rapprochement* ... proceeding from below."[4] Hence, al-Turabi explains, "if the physical export of the model is subject to Islamic limitations in deference to international law, the reminiscence of the classical *Khil fah* and the deeply entrenched Islamic traditions of free migration (*hijra*) and fraternal solidarity would make such a state a focus of pan-Islamic attention and affection."[5] For al-Turabi, the "present growth of Islamic revivalism means a sharper sense of inclusive-exclusive identity, a deeper experience of the same culture, and a stronger urge for united action, nationally and internationally."[6] He further elaborates that "once a single fully-fledged Islamic state is established, the model would radiate throughout the Muslim world,"[7] a concept later articulated by global *jihadists* such as members of *al-Qaida* [the Base], whose philosophical inspiration came from the writings of Sayyid Qutb, and shared one way or another by most of the Islamist

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2 The anthem of the Sudanese Islamists' *Internationale* translates as follows: We will defeat the Americans and cowardly Hussni (of Egypt) and we will call for prayer at the Vatican: *sa nahzim al-amrican wa Hussni al jaban wa naqiem al-azzan fi alfatican*.

3 Mohamed E. Hamdi, *The Making of an Islamic Political Leader: Conversations with Hasan al-Turabi* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998), 31.

4 Hassan A. Turabi, "Islam as a Pan-National Movement and Nation States: And Islamic Doctrine of Human Association"; available from http://www.sufo.demon.co.uk/reli002.htm; accessed 21 January 2001.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

movements. For some, it is perceived as the staging ground for the revolutionary overthrow of all regimes which do not rule by Islamic law, or as a delinking of some sorts from the *Jahili* [ignorant] society.

In their new state, the Islamists transformed Khartoum into a hub of operations, where a network of radical individuals and groups from different parts of the Muslim world received sanctuary and training. As the regime granted citizenship to Islamists from all parts of the world, two strategies emerged, developed in coordination with global Islamist allies, including Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and other global *jihadists*. The first strategy focused on destabilizing Muslim and Arab regimes considered un-Islamic and replacing them, by force, with Islamist states. This could be accomplished either by following the Sudanese model of military coup, or through a grand plan engaging the military experience of the Afghan Arabs who were hardened in Afghanistan during the war against the Soviets and mobilizing the masses in the target countries. By the early 1990s, after the defeat of the Soviets and their allies, the pan-Islamic brigades who came to Afghanistan from different parts of the Muslim world had returned to their countries. These Afghan Arabs used their experience to forge an Islamist ideology based on armed struggle. They found in the Sudan a *qaeda*, or a base for spreading this ideology and for planning and carrying out certain strategies in an attempt to change other regimes in the Arab and Muslim world. As a second strategy, the Sudanese Islamists under the direction of al-Turabi, Secretary General of *al-My'tamar as-sha'bi al-Islami* [the Popular Arab-Islamic Conference (PAIC)], established an "Islamists Comintern" that claimed the leadership of the world Islamic movement. After April 1991, al-Turabi organized an annual Arab-Islamic popular conference in Khartoum attended by about 500 delegates representing various Islamist groups from throughout the world, hoping to promote the Sudanese capital as a major center in the Islamic world. As a consequence, al-Turabi and his organization became the popular challenger of the conservative Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). To emphasize their local revolutionary role, the Sudanese Islamists attempted, after the Gulf War, to use the PAIC as a platform to bridge the differences between Islamist and Marxist currents and Christians and Arabists within the Palestinian organizations.

Through such acts, the regime alarmed Sudan's Arab and African neighbors and other countries by expounding the notion that the Islamists represent a destabilizing force to the regional and world order. One of the factors that contributed to this apprehension was the emerging alliance between the regime and other radical Islamist organizations, groups, and states like Iran and Libya, which were suspected of working toward what some perceived as instigation of a "global *Intifada*". On the other hand, the open hostility of the regime toward its neighbors and to what the Islamists describe as *al-istikbar al-alami* [the international arrogance] in a direct reference to the West, caused Western foreign policy analysts like US Assistant of State for Intelligence and Research Toby T. Gati to lump countries like Sudan, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, and non-Muslim countries like Cuba and North Korea together as state sponsors of terrorism that facilitate the "proliferation of new, more internationally active terrorist groups … [which] benefit from experience in Afghanistan's terrorist training camps or from the largess [*sic*] of private patrons, such as Usama bin

Ladin."[8] Moreover, according to Gati's assessment, these states "threaten us by maintaining programs for weapons of mass destruction, sponsoring terrorism, often targeted specially at Americans, and by their hostility toward and active opposition to our social and political systems and those of our friends and allies."[9] Eventually, this recourse to what has been perceived as terrorism and violence by neighboring and world communities has engendered different types of stiff policies within some African and Arab countries, United Nations Security Council resolutions and sanctions, and U.S. counter-terrorism actions and operations.

Finally, the Islamists in the Sudan also provoked Muslim, Christian, and other Sudanese religious representations by imposing their own version of Islam as a state religion, through the violent suppression of other religious expressions. The Islamist state religion became the basis of strong animosity and constituted a challenge to the legitimacy of other religious groups and the essence of their authoritative proclamations. By dispensing such a religious particularism and systematic suppression of the larger religious groups, the Islamists promoted conflict and pushed other religious expressions to define themselves as evicted from their citizenship and religious identity. In this new arrangement, all other religious expressions, whether Muslim, Christian, or indigenous, concluded that they could only live safely and with self-respect in a Sudan free from the exclusive and oppressive designs of the Islamists and their regime.

Who are the Sudanese Islamists? This exploratory representation of the Islamists and their regime in the Sudan is generally not comprehensive. Nevertheless, it might be useful in two ways. First, it might lead us to investigate certain rudiments of who are those people, what is the basis of the circumstances of their entry in the Sudanese political, social, and economic life, and what are the distinctive characteristics of the regime they established and they have been standing behind for the last seventeen years? Second, most scholars, researchers, and journalists interested in current Islamic studies, as explained earlier, have assumed that there is no clear distinction between the Sudanese regime and other third world military dictatorships and they have been looking at the Sudanese Islamists as one of the "Muslim Fundamentalist" groups or part of the distribution of "political Islam," or at best as the old *aj-Jabhah al-Islamiyah al-Qawmiyah* [National Islamic Front (NIF)]. Hence, such a characterization may also help us to examine and nuance this particular case within its own fluid nature, dynamics, and stipulations.

Therefore, any attempt to analyze what defines the Islamist movement in the Sudan must address three propositions. First, it must be placed within the context of the historical development of the group, its political, religious, and worldly construction, and its surrounding local and international spheres of influence. Second, it must identify the specific capacities and distinguishing features of the Islamists and how these contributed to their ascent to power. Third, it must address the inner meaning of the mode of operation and the mode of production of all

8 In her testimony before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Toby T. Gati, "Hearing on Current and Projected National Security Threats;" available from www.fas.org/irp/congress/1997_hr/s970205g.htm; accessed on 31 March 2007.

9 Ibid.

those developments that followed their ascent to power and how those internal and external factors contributed to the demise and the disintegration of the first republic. Although the mediating factor for each one of these three fields affects the other, each one offers certain clues to a detailed theory of the character of the group and its relationship to power. These three schemes are the propositions that recur throughout this book and provide a framework for the study of the Islamist movement in the Sudan and the rise, the disintegration, and the eventual fall of the first republic since it was established in 1989.

The Islamists within the Sudan's Social World

While this is not a study of Sudan *per se*, exploring an analytic order that could set in an explanatory category of the Sudanese social world since the fifteenth century is in order. Such exploration is addressed in the light of the contributing factors, events, and social transformations that have been operating as essential within the origin and the reproduction of social classes, power groups, and as the contending players within the fields of power relations in the Sudan. Since very early times, governing developments have woven the progression of events into multilayered fabrics of lived experiences that were accepted and absorbed on the part of Sudanese society, while others were resisted and rejected by some or all of the population. Nevertheless, both have shaped all other dimensions of Sudanese society at large and its underlying structures, as well as giving its authority weight through time. These developments have had a double source and a double set of reproductions.

The first source was the long and slow processes of Islamization to the greater Northern part of the Sudan which includes the area north of latitude 10°N. This process has undergone a parallel pattern of negotiation over the accommodation of aspects of indigenous cultural and linguistic traditions. Hence, when Islam became victorious in the country, both Islamic traditions and Arabic language were appropriated in some parts of the country, and at the same time selectively absorbed or partially dropped in other parts. The unevenness of the distribution, assimilation, and influence of Islam and Arabic language are major factors behind both cultural and ethnic territorial boundaries, and associations in the country at large. Looking at this phenomenon as it developed in history, one perceives this distinctive mode of cultural and ethnic augmentation that has been a source and driving component of a system of conflict and integration that characterized and deeply affected the Sudanese life over the last five centuries. Two of the main Sudanese sultanates, Sinnar and Darfur, had ascertained that their newfound identity and its religious ideals prompt integrationist and expansionist policies to include part or all of the Sudanese territory in one. But what Sultan Tirab[10] (1752–85) of Darfur and Sultan

10 Sultan Muhammad Tirab was the seventh Fur Sultan. In 1787 he moved east conquering and extending his sultanate to the Nile and annexing the rich Kordofan region.

Badi[11] (1644–81) of Sinnar failed to achieve was accomplished by Muhammad Ali[12] of Egypt in 1820–21 through conquest and later by Muhammad Ahmed al-Mahdi[13] in 1881 through revolution.

The second source has been supported by the systemic distinction between Muslim communities and regimes of high status that grew and developed within the core Muslim states, and others of lower status within the periphery and the semi-periphery of the Muslim world that grow away from that core. Through long processes of war and peace, trade, immigration, resettlement, and intermarriages, the uneven and slow progression of Islamization and Arabization encouraged the "Sudanese" to function free in "the rooting of that faith"[14] and to establish their national states in Sinnar, Taqali, Musabbaat, and Darfur. These conditions have placed "Sudan" inside and outside the Muslim world from the very start. Whereas the move toward Islamization and Arabization was perceived by the Sudanese states as their own way of making inroads to the abode of the Muslim *ummah,* the surrounding Muslim communities never included them within their geographical and anthropological imagined communities. This unique situation, however, involved a process similar to what Roland Robertson describes as "invention of locality" or "the ideology of home."[15] There are many aspects of this invention of locality or ideology of home, chief among them those that relate to what Jay Spaulding describes as the creation of the pre-colonial independent states of the Sudan. He argues that, "What was different about the new state form of government that emerged during the early modern age was not allegiance to Islam *per se*, but the finality of society's ideological commitment to the faith and the new uses it would now be expected to serve."[16] While on the other hand, this reproduction of difference has continued to be a necessary structural element in the system that emerged within the region after the fifteenth century and which reflected itself in parallel forms of exchange within the surrounding Muslim system organizing around *mutatis mutandis* encounters,

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11 In his attempts to expand his Sultanate, Badi II Abu Duqn (1642–81) defeated the Fur, and took control of much of Kordofan.

12 Muhammad Ali Pasha (1769–1849) was appointed as the Ottoman Sultan's Viceroy or *wali* of Egypt in 1805. He ruled Egypt till 1848. He is often cited as the founder of modern Egypt. He extended his power over the Sudan in 1821.

13 Muhammad Ahmad al-Mahdi led a revolt against Turko-Egyptian rule in the Sudan. His rebellion was a movement for both religious and political reform. He captured Khartoum, where General Gordon, who was the last British governor, was killed in 1885. Al-Mahdi died in the same year, and al-Khalifa Abdullahi succeeded him and the country remained independent until 1898.

14 David Robinson, *Muslim Societies in African History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 27.

15 Roland Robertson, "Globalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity," in Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash and Ronald Robertson (eds), *Global Modernities* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 25–44.

16 Jay Spaulding, "Precolonial Islam in the Eastern Sudan," in Mehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels (eds), *The History of Islam in Africa* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2000), 120.

easy and uneasy forms of relations. What emerged out of this experience has very important distinguishing features and continuing effects.

The Sudanese self-representation which continues to find its frame of reference in the "invention of locality" has always resisted all forms of Muslim and non-Muslim outside intervention. "During the sixteenth century, Sinnar resisted Ottoman advances up the Nile and allied herself with Ethiopia to contain Turkish ambitions at their newly annexed Red Sea city-states island outposts of Sawakin and Musawwa. On the other hand, Sinnar was obligated to repel two major invasions (in 1618–19 and 1744), and during the later seventeenth century she invaded and annexed the surviving Christian Alodian successor state of Fazughli that controlled important sources of gold near the upper Blue Nile."[17] Clearly this enduring impulse of resistance to outside intervention flared in 1881 when Muhammad Ahmed al-Mahdi declared *jihad* against the Muslim Turkish rulers whom he described as oppressive and guilty of *bida* [innovation] and love of material things. This frame of reference has developed through time, invoking this spirit of independence as an idea of cultural and historical continuity in the Sudanese life.

Yet to all this, two sets of reproductions have added other important traits to the making of the place, its location within the system, and its attached stratification position within the region. The first trait in this sense reflects the identity formation or the internal reproduction of the self in relation to the close-yet-distant relationship with the surrounding Arabic-speaking Muslim world, its institutions of culture and learning, and different expressions of Islam. Since the early days of the Sinnar and Fur sultanates, thousands of Sudanese students and knowledge seekers headed towards Islamic learning centers in the region, especially Egypt and Mecca, only to appropriate and reproduce Islamic knowledge that contributed greatly to the broad local identity and made it as distinctive as their local Sudanese garbs. Many Sufi saints and their disciples came to the country and preached their *tariqas*, only to usher in a new style incorporating a multitude of local rituals, rites, and symbols constituted and deeply soaked in the "enormous residue" of the local. New social classes of *jellaba* [merchants] and slave laborers became indispensable to satisfy the commercial and other agricultural economies that brought about profound changes as the emerging sultanates became part of that regional system. In due time, the slave class was phased out and the *jellaba* adapted to new circumstances. On the other hand, even the new political parties and movements such as the communist and Muslim Brotherhood who came from Egypt, ended up establishing themselves and proliferating within a system of meaning associated with the place and its traditions and national discourse.

The second set of reproductions is related to the way the Arabic speaking neighborhood, and Egypt in particular, draw a sharp distinction between themselves and the Sudan and the Sudanese. It is certainly true that the Sudan turned into a landlocked area with the successful annexation of Egypt to the Muslim abode of Islam in 640. The new regional system that emerged as a result of this development, cut off Sudan from its Christian and commercial fields of interaction. Accordingly, insular Christian Sudan slowly started to dwindle in importance for its neighbors

17 Ibid.

and no one with the exception of Arab nomads and some adventurous slave traders, who were ready to go there, remained. Furthermore, many of Sudan's Arab Muslim neighbors, who perceived the Sudan and Sudanese as different for centuries, had never reconsidered the Sudanese relationship to Islam and Arabic culture after the fifteenth century as relevant. In typical fashion, the cultural and ethnic difference of the Sudan and the racialization of its people as different gave Muhammad Ali, the Ottoman viceroy, or the *wali* of Egypt, the pretext to invade the country in 1820–21, separating its people from their rights as human beings by turning the country into a hunting ground for slaves and transferring its gold, gum arabic, ostrich feathers, and other natural resources to his colonialist state. Under Muhammad Ali and his family, hunting for slaves became an organized function of the state. Accordingly, and within the new regional system, Sudan has continued to be perceived by those neighbors as a frontier and as a source of cheap labor and other valuable resources. During his invasion to the Sudan, Muhammad Ali sent messages to his son Ismail and his son in law Muhammad Bey the *Daftardar*, a financial administrator of a provincial directorate, instructing them "to bring slaves in large numbers."[18] For Muhammad Ali, the Sudanese, regardless of their relation to Islam, were fair game to be enslaved. The French traveler Pierre Trèmaux, who recorded his visit to the country between 1847 and 1854 in the book *Voyages to Eastern Sudan*, maintained that, "The only benefit he [Muhammad Ali] made from these far regions was the selling of entire populations reduced to slaves and the commerce in gum Arabic, ivory, livestock, etc."[19]

The historical result of difference and its symbolic and physical consequences and the forms of violence that originated and sustained out of such an impulse has reflected and planted its roots in a variety of types of peaceful and violent socialization processes through the ages that included conquest, domination, and hegemony. And as Eve M. Troutt Powell explains, "The outlook of the colonized colonizer began to take shape in the last decade of Muhammad Ali's reign and emerged full-blown by the 1870s. Nationalists developed these themes throughout the rest of the nineteenth century but especially from 1898 to 1899, the British re-conquest of the Sudan. By 1919 there was a well-established slogan that called for 'the unity of the Nile Valley'."[20] On the other hand, a local form of difference has created another form of prejudice toward other groups of non-Muslim Sudanese and non-Sudanese in their neighborhood. Some groups of Muslim Sudanese had created their own internal constitution of space or "extraneousness" as Meillassoux[21] describes it, to create an ideology of distance and difference separating them from those destined to be

18 Mekki Shibieka, The Expansionist Movement of Khedive Ismail to the Lakes, in Yusuf Fadl Hasan (ed.), *Sudan in Africa, Studies Presented to the First International Conference Sponsored by the Sudan Research Unit 7–12 February 1968* (Khartoum: Khartoum University Press, 1971), 142.

19 Pierre Trèmaux, *Voyages to Eastern Sudan and to Septentrionale Africa (1847–1854)* (Cairo: Al-Fatima Printing House, 2005), 179.

20 Powell, Eve M. Trout, *A Different Shade of Colonialism: Egypt, Great Britain and the Mastery of the Sudan* (Berkeley: University of California, 2003), 7.

21 Claude Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery: The Womb of Iron and Gold* (Chicago: University Press of Chicago, 1991), 67.

slaves. This ideology of distance and difference recreated two basic forms. First, it designated those groups categorized as different, as the "opposing other." By contrast, these groups were given "derogatory ethnic labels to refer to non-Muslim groups in the south. These generic names included Fertit below Dar Fur, Janakhara below Wadai, and Shankalla below Sinnar. Hence, the slave-raiding frontier was defined in ideological, ethnic, and geographical terms."[22] Second, the construction of inferiority was developed on multiple levels—"somatic traits (ugliness, heaviness) and character traits (stupidity, laziness, shiftiness)"[23]—into a general theory in order to maintain and reproduce the system of slavery one day, and a system of social zoning of the Other and an unofficial national history of ethnic stratification later.

Redrawing the Economic and Socio-Political Map

By the turn of the nineteenth century, new developments associated with the colonization of the country provided a new mechanism for redrawing its socio-political map. Through a variety of economic, political, and cultural routes, different Sudanese groups have entered social territories, creating new class structures, institutions, and power domains and relationships. The time period, the mode, and the point of entry of each group were critical in their placement in society. Here, three distinct periods in the history of the country are relevant. The first period of entry opens with the conquest of the Sudan by the British in 1898, the second period starts with the independence of the country in 1956, and the third period began in the early years of the Nimairi regime.

Within the first period, the British were unable to deliver a modern state as they promised. Instead, they were partially successful in forming an urban middle class and marginalizing other populations in rural and nomadic areas in the southern, western, and eastern parts of the country. This is similar to the pattern of "colonial accidents" identified by Ozay Mehmet, whose description of the colonial experience, in which the colonial "state assumed the vanguard role of developing and transforming society" in "an *ad hoc* fashion," is certainly relevant to the Sudanese experience with the British.[24] Nevertheless, the colonial state did represent an introduction to the international system. In contrast, the second and third periods that followed were not characterized by the same local and international opportunities or the same political order.

In the second period that starts with the independence of the country in 1956 and ends at the early 1970s, Ja'far Nimairi introduced a regime modeled on Nasser's Arab socialist regime in Egypt and directed the country toward a state-led brand of socialism. During this period, new social groups from the poor rural and the urban sectors secured safe passage into social life through the opportunities provided by the expansion of public education, transportation, and communication. The third

22 Ahmed Sikainga, *Slaves into Workers: Emancipation and Labor in Colonial Sudan* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 8.

23 Meillassoux, *The Anthropology of Slavery*, 75.

24 Ozay Mehmet, *Islamic identity and development: studies of the Islamic periphery* (London, New York: Routledge, c.1990), 179.

period coincided with Nimairi's crackdown on political parties, the nationalization of banks, financial institutions, and private companies, waves of purges of senior officials from the civil service, the army, and the police, the suppression of trade unions, and the opening of political and economic underground markets. This period continues to have deep effects on the state of affairs in the entire country. Two major characteristics of this period deserve special attention. First, at a specific period of time, the state embarked on a new venture of Islamization. Second, some groups with certain political, commercial, and entrepreneurial skills entered the political and economic underground markets and managed to place themselves within the power and political structures by dominating them. The Islamists were foremost among these groups.

Each one of these three periods coincided with the rise and evolution of the new Sudanese state within its different developments and the emergence of elite groups, class structures, and organizations within an ongoing competition, conflict, and self-interested pursuit of power. These three periods, in turn, have marked the entry of different social groups into different fields of the new Sudanese society as they found themselves engaged as individuals and groups in a competitive struggle over power and other valued resources. The Islamists as a political group have been part of the reproduction of this social order of these three periods.

Both the colonial and postcolonial periods in the Sudan were characterized by periods of moderately rapid expansion of public education, public sector employment and wage labor, small-scale manufacturing, international trade, and private and public sector farming. The nature and depth of each mode of transformation that unfolded out of each period, however, was not the wholesale and all-encompassing development needed to facilitate a radical break with previous periods and their interrelationships with the poverty and underdevelopment of the country. Nevertheless, the consequences of these developments, namely growth with a fragmented impact, led to a new sense of identity. While the first and second periods matured under relatively capitalist modes of operation of the state, the third phase reproduced dissimilar patterns of power relations and associations. Entry into the third period was ushered in under a centralized state controlled totalitarian regime that started as hostile to the theory and practice of capitalist patterns of development and continued all the way within a framework that gave the state the upper hand in the entire developmental process. A state of affairs that not only "created a situation where the state autonomy was increasingly eroded by the requirements of foreign investors and creditors," as Tim Niblock[25] has called it, but gave an increasing degree of power to the black marketeers and their underground activities to erode even further the autonomy of the state as well as old social and economic structures. The important feature here is the difference between formal and underground political and economic systems and the type of social power each one produces. Apart from the creation of a situation where the old middle class was reduced in economic and political power, the new social groups of black markets and the type of association that emerged out of this situation was rather different from the one before. Hence, taken as a whole and in a

25 Tim Niblock, *Class and Power in Sudan: The Dynamics of Sudanese Politics 1898–1985* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1987), 234.

more detailed manner, these three entries into the Sudanese society can be seen as the key to tracing the variations of thought and differentiation of power that underlie the political, social, and economic developments in the Sudanese political setting within the twentieth century. By exploring these patterns, the different complexities of the lifeworld of the Islamists might be better understood.

As stated earlier, one notable feature of the Sudan in comparison to most other African countries is that its long experience of statehood within roughly the same borders was rather unique. But even though the history of the centralized state in this part of the world can be traced back into antiquity, the successive administrations—the Turko-Egyptian (1821–85), and the Mahdists (1885–98)—that succeeded the Funj Sultanate (1504–1821) "had themselves inherited a number of structural characteristics and even some of the specialized personnel of their predecessors, just as the British were to do in their turn."[26] These characteristics could be epitomized in the following four processes of assemblages:

1. The rise of governmental institutions with relatively far-reaching administrative powers that exercised different types of regimes of power (coercive) and authority (hegemonic).
2. The evolution of new cultural, religious, and political organizations of cultural production and political expressions that illustrate a national identity.
3. The introduction of new ways of economic distribution, consumption, and agricultural production.
4. The expansion of the merchant class, the *jellaba,* who continued to be constrained, controlled, and sometimes sustained by the state.

But, above all, it was the peculiar nature of the Condominium composition and rule in the Sudan by Britain and Egypt where a European superpower and a semi-colonized African state were in an unprecedented partnership to colonize another country. Yet what had conspired to create competing and conflicting forms and modes of authority and cultural constitutions from the very early days of the Condominium rule has affected both the socio-cultural and political fields of political power and social augmentation in the Sudan. On the one hand, the deep cultural, political, and religious differences in addition to the irreconcilable conflict of interest between the two countries had helped in the establishment of a different "national political field,"[27] that opened the door and shaped an early and vigorous political activity in the country. In this respect, as the majority of the northern Sudanese have a shared religion, language, and to some extent culture with the Egyptians, the new advancements in communication, media, and transportation facilitated to a certain degree the easy and rapid transfer of anti-colonial ideas, as well as other economic, educational, religious, and political beliefs and practices that proliferated in Egypt then. On the other hand, the exercise of British political and administrative

26 Peter Woodward, *Sudan 1898–1989: the Unstable State* (Boulder, Colorado: Rienner, 1990), 13.

27 Sami Zubaida, *Islam, the People and the State: Essays on Political Ideas and Movements in the Middle East* (London: Routledge, 1989), 40.

power during the entire colonial period created a firm reassurance of power and status for those subscribing to the British economic and educational systems, the English language, and the British way of life. In contrast, the Egyptian system could not offer the same status and prestige, but Egyptian cultural and political influence shaped different aspects of Sudanese life nonetheless. In this respect, what happened in the Sudan during this period was not only unique in its nature and arrangements, but rather different in its intellectual, institutional, and practical remittance. Not only different political, religious, and economic elites and other power centers benefited from manipulating their positions as allies, clients, or enemies to one or the other of the Condominium states, but these new channels of communication that were imputed to the emerging Sudanese identity had exerted their effects far beyond the politics of the day. This opportunity in one way or another served to empower the emerging sectors of the Sudanese power groups, reproduced different forms of social and political practice, and paved the way for rising Sudanese nationalism and identity to articulate itself.

The expansion of the railways, different means of communication, free trade, mining, and increased production of gum arabic and cotton were early priorities for the colonial administration due to the "[p]ressure from the British textile interest, combined with a political need to put an end to the Sudan's dependence on Egypt."[28] Accordingly, major infrastructure projects were carried out as early as the first years of the Condominium rule. The demand for labor remained high throughout the colonial years as the "demand for cotton remained high and the prices it commanded continued to rise", especially after WWII, when "an unprecedented boom took place in the Sudan economy, with government revenue and expenditure soaring to equally unprecedented levels."[29] The development plans that followed this economic boom, opened the doors for different groups in the northern part of the country to move in large numbers to the major urban centers to provide the manpower needed for these new opportunities. All of this contributed to the creation of the rudiments of contemporary Sudanese fields of social, economic, and political power. Northern Sudan's earlier engagement in regional and local trade and commerce was improved by the new communication and transportation developments and by the reintegration of the country into the world economy. The new pattern of operation of the colonial state developed a system that benefited the old *jellaba* trade in products such as gum Arabic, livestock, and oil seeds into the international market. These new developments gave the northern *jellaba* and their countrywide networks dominance over the economic field and a new impetus to become the major controlling power within the export, import, distribution, and marketing processes. Moreover, as Peter Berger maintains, the market, like the city, has always been a pluralizing force, because all sorts of people buy and sell from each other, and "commensality" is an

28 Peter Cross, "British Attitudes to Sudanese Labour: the Foreign Office Records as Sources for Social History," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (1997): 217–60.

29 Ibid.

ever-present possibility.[30] All these fields of power operated collectively to produce a new power structure and to situate the players in this new power structure within recognized boundaries. The stratification of Sudanese society within the mode of operation of these fields reflected itself in a new religious orthodoxy, together with the emergence of propertied merchants and tenants, a salaried middle class, and a class of wage workers and later influential religious leadership.

The colonial period provided the Sudanese project with the means to construct and essentialize the social, economic, and cultural structures of a new nation-state. We may class the outcomes of the developments that occurred during that period and the characteristics of the state that emerged out of that into the following groups.

First, an evolution of a new Sudanese identity based on a nationality which was assumed to be secular and thought to develop within modernized processes, despite the fact that certain aspects of Arabism and Islam are so central to it and to the idea of the nation that evolves around it. The foundation for this identity emerged within an association with a Khartoum Arabic language accent, at its popular level, and classical Arabic, at its higher communicative levels, that despised other Arabic or Sudanese accents and languages. An underlying cultural pattern imbedded in this new identity was the orthodox and Sudanese popular Sufi Islam, and a mostly genuine belief in modernity. At the same time, this new reorganization of identity incorporated the history, pride, and esteem of the Arabic cultural heritage, and shared history, ancestry, and racial relationships of the emerging social groups as they perceived themselves to be true kin of the ancient and existing Sudanese Arab ethnic groups or a race. The terms Arabs and Arabism have come to be extensively articulated in everyday speech and national discourse by the press, poets and writers, and religious and political leaders with pride and strong polemical resonance. Not surprisingly, many among the educated elite embraced the resurgence of pan-Arabism, the Arabic renaissance as expressed by reformist thinkers of the late eighteenth century, such as Gamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abdu, as an inspirational support for the emerging Sudanese identity. Moreover, this thrust of identity was given further driving forces by five important factors.

1. The sacredness, density, and eminence of the Arabic language that has been acting for centuries as a medium for the sacred text, the Qur'an, the primary language for one of the great world civilizations, and a carrier of a wide corpus of human knowledge.
2. The development of Arabic print journalism as a new medium for revitalizing that heritage and corpus of knowledge, providing a space for an adversarial sensibility, and for the spreading and homogenizing of a new shared meaning and belonging.
3. The spread of the Egyptian Arabic book and print media played an important role as one of the intellectual and cultural support systems to this emerging identity in its Islamic and Arabic formations.

30 Peter Berger, *The Capitalist Revolution: Fifty Propositions About Prosperty, Equity, and Liberty* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1986), 21.

4. The colonial government's religious policy as circumscribed by Lord Cromer,[31] Sirdar Kitchener[32] and Governer General Wingate[33] and put in practice and supervised by the only Mahdist in the colonial camp, the Inspector General of the Condominium Government, Rodulf Slatin[34] presented orthodox Islam as the state religion. The goal behind that policy was to "encourage orthodox Islam while striving to lessen the impact of Sufism" which "cannot be allowed to be re-established, as they generally formed centres of unorthodox fanaticism."[35] This is not to say that kind of policy sympathized with orthodox Islam, but rather to establish "a Sudanese Muslim leadership which would find itself aligned to the interests of the established administration."[36] On the other hand, the essential dispositions of the orthodox discourse about Sufi Islam and vice versa in the Sudan as well as the Islamic world were not an invention of the colonial authorities. The Mahdia in the Sudan was one of the representations of such opposing discourses. But the colonial powers, especially in the formative years of the new Sudanese Condominium state, attempted to direct and exploit such attitudes to "quietly and firmly deal with" Sufism, which was Wingate's main worry. The promotion and later

31 Lord Cromer (1841–1917), a British administrator and statesman. He was the Consul-General in Egypt from 1881 until 1907 during which time he was the virtual ruler of Egypt. After the re-conquest of the Sudan in 1898, he was responsible for the Anglo-Egyptian system of government and labeled Condominium.

32 Field Marshal Horatio Herbert (1850–1916), First Earl Kitchener of Khartoum and the *sirdar* [commander] of the Egyptian army from 1890 led the British army in the Sudan, which defeated the Sudanese army at the Battle of Karari at the outskirts of Omdurman in 1898. He was the first governor-general of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and *sirdar* of the Egyptian army at the same time.

33 Sir Francis Reginald Wingate (1861–1953) succeeded Kitchener as governor-general of the Sudan and *sirdar* of the Egyptian army in 1899. His administration of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan continued until 1916.

34 Rudolf Karl von Slatin (1857–1932), better known as Stalin Pasha, was an Austrian soldier in the service of the Turko-Egyptian, Mahdists, and the Condominium in the Sudan. Slatin first came to the Sudan in 1874 and was made governor of Darfur province by Charles Gordon the British ruler of the Sudan in 1881, one year before the Mahdist revolution began. Besieged, Slatin fought with determination, even converting to Islam to improve the morale of his Sudanese troops, but he was forced to surrender at the end of 1883 and was held prisoner while the Mahdists controlled the country. His famous escape from Sudan in 1895 to Egypt was facilitated by Sir Reginald (then Major) Wingate of the Egyptian Intelligence Department. His book, *Fire and Sword in the Sudan*, was instrumental in the propaganda war in Britain and Europe against the Mahdist state. After serving with Lord Kitchener (1897–98) in the re-conquest of the Sudan, he was named inspector general of the Sudan in 1900 and served there until 1914. His mastery of Arabic and his profound knowledge of the land and its people proved invaluable in the work of reconstruction undertaken by the Anglo-Egyptian government in the Sudan. In 1907 he was made an honorary major-general in the British army.

35 Gabriel R. Warburg, *The Sudan Under Wingate, Administration in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan 1899–1916* (London: Frank Cass, 1971), 49.

36 Ibid.

the evolution of this policy, as reflected in the government's integration of Islamic studies into the curriculum at Gordon Memorial College, and the institutionalization of the orthodox "*ulam* " as the only interpreters of Islam, produced an uneasy ideological conflict between what was perceived as modern official Islam, which is orthodox, and that brand of Islam described as traditional and backward, and composed of "heretical sects", which is Sufi. As a consequence of that disposition, the Sufi majority has been relegated to minority status in terms of stratification of power and prestige and accordingly such an attitude has remained recurrent within the consequent developments in the Sudanese political arena since then and continues to play an important role in the political theory and practice of Sudan's elites, both civilian and military.

5. From the early days of the Condominium rule, there was active participation of Egyptian religious lawyers and disciples of Muhammad Abdu like *shaikh* Maraqi, in addition to generations of Egyptian nationalists in the army, civil service, and education. This gave space to shared sentiments, oppositional impulses, and criticism of British rule, which drew in Sudanese nationalist opposition groups. Although most, though not all, of these elites embraced certain aspects of Western tradition and style as the embodiment of modernity, including aspects of the British cultural and social way of life, Arabism remained the major force, underpinned by race, culture, and a shared history.

Accordingly, as Peter Woodward explains, "[i]deologically Sudanese nationalism was to be not simply a transference of a Western ideology to 'The Sudan' but the opportunity to examine complex questions about identity—in which issues of Arabism and Islam often posed uncertainties for the country, both internally to the south and externally to relations with the world to the immediate north and east."[37] This situation manifested itself clearly in the reproduction of religious essentialism and the nationalist discourse and its narrative that refracts and blends the colonial, the *Nahda* [renaissance], and the local traditions of articulations.

Second, the growing numbers of the educated elite who "had a chance of modern education and a better chance of training and preparation at government offices,"[38] perceived themselves as the heart and soul of the new, modern Sudan. These elites started their political movement as early as 1914 as the true representation of an "enlightened opinion" that should "become independent of disgraceful traditions and the delusions of superstition which has nothing to do with religion."[39] Ahmad Khair reasoned that the movement had aims similar to those of the European renaissance, which marked Europe's emergence from the Dark Ages into the light of "modern civilization".[40] Khier reasons that Egypt and the Arab East followed a similar route under al-Afghani and his disciple Muhammad Abdu, and in turn shaped the liberal

37 Peter Woodward, *Sudan 1898–1989: the Unstable State* (Boulder, Colorado: Rienner, 1990), 56.

38 Ahmed Khier, *Kifah Jil: Tarikh Harakat al-Khirijin wa Tatawuruha fi al-Sudan:* second edition (Khartoum, Sudan: al-Dar al-Sudania, 1970), 21.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

thinking of the Sudanese movement and its approach to modernity. As soon as they started establishing their political structures—like the League of Sudanese Union, the White Flag League, and the graduate congress—new and different expressions of resistance to colonial rule started to grow and power groups began to emerge. "Shorn of the violence that existed from early resistance of the 1924 revolt," as Woodward writes, "Sudan was becoming a highly political milieu in which the state was the common element endeavoring to shape collaborators while having to adapt to emerging realities to which it in fact was contributing."[41] It was on these dialectics between different groups along with the socio-political relations, that power, and prestige was centralized in the hands of the growing class of the educated elite. Enthusiastic as they were to lead most forms of social, cultural, and political expressions and conduct, the elite were equally ready to present themselves as a class for itself. Apart from the reproduction of a new urban cultural and authoritative domination, this power elite engendered their own political identity, lifestyle, and practice that placed them as the preeminent agent in society. Heather Sharkey argues that this development created a situation in which the elite became "colonialism's intimate enemies, making colonial rule a reality while hoping to see it undone."[42] Having managed to win the battle of independence from the colonial powers, the Sudanese power elite instated themselves as the flagship of change in the country's social, cultural, and political processes. Acting from a seat of superiority with regard to the vast amount of the poor and illiterate population, they saw themselves as agents of social change who were destined to occupy a special position of authority and privilege. This social and cultural order has been imbued and legitimized through "a process whereby power relations are perceived not for what they objectively are but in a form which renders them legitimate in the eyes of the beholder."[43]

Third, the development of events in the country during the colonial era, at one and the same time, produced alliances and an unwritten social contract between the different Sudanese power groups. As Woodward explains, "In their actions the intelligentsia were influenced not only by the sense of opposition to the British that the years after 1924 revealed, but also by the recognition of the importance of the emergence of Mahdism and the growing counterforce of the Khatmiyya."[44] He adds that "[s]ome of the intelligentsia had been born with connections to one or the other, but to many others, who felt rejected and repressed by the government for over a decade, there was an attraction in allying themselves with these rising movements whose political importance was becoming ever more apparent."[45] The new emerging groups, the elite, the two *sayyids*, and the commercial groups were interlocked in an alliance against colonial rule that organized the social, economic, and political framework of the country towards independence. This alliance placed

41 Woodward, *Sudan 1898–1989: the Unstable State*, 54.

42 Heather J. Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism: Nationalism and Culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 120.

43 Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 157.

44 Woodward, *Sudan 1898–1989: the Unstable State*, 57.

45 Ibid.

the educated elite at the highest echelon of authority as represented by the political parties reproduced as part of power relations in the country. Accordingly, a system of power and prestige developed out of the growth of the governmental, economic, military, and political institutions. On the other hand, this system of power and prestige derived its legitimacy from the assumed "enlightened opinion" status of the educated elite that ordained the duty to lead and develop the rest of the Sudanese population.

These distinct power relationships, and the domination and authority that they engendered over the rest of the population, constituted the defining culture of the power elite and the given class relations that have been approved, maintained, and protected by various state mechanisms. Chief among these mechanisms have been merit in public education and its British extensions of higher education as an initiation rite for entering the elite club and its lifestyle. Thus the disparity in access to higher education between urban and rural, rich and poor, and northern and the rest was a crucial determinant of entry into the new Sudanese society and the formation of the dominant culture. The mode and volume of the entry of each one of these groups into the new Sudanese society during the colonial era has had a significant impact on the dynamics of the structure of power relations in the country then and after. The northern administrative and urban Sudanese centers were in more fortunate positions. They became the major locations of public education, cultural activities, and social and economic development. Their long experience in the fields of trade and farming and their economic power over the country was rewarded by the increasing numbers of educated northerners in all levels of government, the army, media, trade unions, and other state and political institutions, which resulted in a form of hegemony. On the other hand, the 1922 policy of the colonial government in the south, which aimed to "build up a series of self-contained racial and tribal units based upon indigenous customs, traditional usage and beliefs",[46] not only failed to produce "any southern staff trained for executive work",[47] but also reduced the south and other parts of the country included in the Closed Districts Order [Darfur, Southern Kordofan, and the Blue Nile regions], *en bloc*, to a marginalized sum. Although low-wage labor in private and public agriculture schemes since the 1920s has given rise to a very high level of demand, the temporary nature of this employment means that this has had no significant impact on the lives of marginalized groups in Darfur and southern Kordofan from where those people were extracted. Except for a few non-northern rural groups, peripheral regions did not gain substantial entry in the new Sudanese social order before independence. Later, after independence, the entire country, especially the south, the west and the east became a semi-colony of the north.

But the colonial state was not only responsible for the reproduction of the Sudanese identity within its new narration, essential cultural boundaries, and imagined society, but also reproduced a systemic process of marginalization of the

46 Basher Mohamed Said, *The Sudan: Crossroads of Africa* (London: the Bodley Head, 1965), 33.

47 Oliver Albino, *The Sudan: A Southern Viewpoint* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 32.

Other, who were "allowed to work out their own salvation" as the British inspector of the Lado enclave once said.[48]

It follows from the above discussion that the form of identity reproduced during the colonial period and within its mode of exchange outlined the boundaries and essentialization of what is seen as Sudanese nationalism. The demography, discourse, and ideology of that model were combined in three forms.

The first of these forms, involved the construction of a new discourse that is built on two core reasonings. First, the superiority of Islam and Arabic language and culture, an assumption that reduces the chances of other religious and cultural expressions to coexist and participate as partners in nation building. This, in turn, causes the weak or marginalized groups to act out of frustration and feelings of inequality. Second, the new fashion and mode of ethnification that elevates the status of the riverain ethnic groups reproduces an increasing ethnic resentment, which made the resort to violent actions against those groups and the state they control a viable option. This situation made a stable, enduring, and mutually acceptable political order among the different Sudanese groups nearly unattainable. Nevertheless, this discourse has reconditioned itself to suit a national self-image of a nation which is, to a significant extent, dominated by a riverain northern, Arabic speaking, and Muslim Sudanese middle class.

In the second of these forms, ideology was assimilated in a form of practice through which the emerging middle class forged an unwritten alliance between the educated elite, the religious leadership, and the urban commercial groups. Within this alliance the educated elite were placed at the highest echelon of authority as represented by the political parties reproduced as part of power relations in the country. The hegemonic power of that alliance, which was built around parliamentarian democracy, was and mostly still is perceived to advance cohesion through that order.

Finally, since that alliance has its differential patterns, internal competitions, and a history of conflict, what began one day as a movement transformed into four major political camps reflecting the multi-polar power system in the country. Each of the two major political parties has a baseline degree of religious essentialization of presentations within Sufi Islam. The emerging Umma Party based its image, orientations, and support on a history of a militant Islam, which was unitarian in orientation and deeply antagonistic toward the ideas, concepts, and practices of Sudanese Sufi Islam. On the other hand, the Unionist groups forged an inherently competitive alliance with the Khatmiyya *tariqa* based on a peaceful pluralistic manner of political pursuit as central to their polity. Both the Umma and the Unionists accepted the idea that their political competition should not be allowed to turn into any kind of organized violence which might lead to anarchy or insecurity. Accordingly, each group tried to maximize its power through an open system of competition governed by a democratically elected ruling authority.

The third pole organized new seats of power that involved three impulses: feeding the spirit of superiority of orthodox Islam, promoting the Sudanese spirit of independence, and nurturing a compact with modernity. From these three impulses together emerged the first generations of the Islamist organizations and parties, and

48 C.H. Stigand, *Equatoria: The Lado Enclave* (London: Frank Cass, 1968), 201.

from the latter two emerged the secular orientations and political representations of the left. Resenting the practices and politics of the Sufi *turq* and the "*ulam* ", the new breed of Islamists opted for a change that would pass the Muslim leadership from the hands of the former traditional groups to university educated groups. As al-Turabi put it, "students and university graduates everywhere represent modernity."[49] In this view, it was the duty of these modern groups to use all types of power to express the true will of the Muslim community or *umma*. The political practices of both the Islamists and the leftists have never been pleasant as their pursuit of power betrays no confidence in or respect for democratic competition. This disbelief in the democratic process reflected itself in the numerous coups in which they participated.

Although the boundaries of these group's cultural, social, and historical places were (and are) well defined, and the reification of that Sudanese Arabo-Islamic culture with its ever expanding spheres was (and is) articulated and reinvented by generations of this elite, a certain type of upward mobility and a path of entry into the new Sudanese society and its institutions was (and has been) arbitrated within and achieved through a process of northernization. However, there are two conflicting schools of thought concerning this process.

The first perceives the process of northernization as a slow process of partial transformation that goes beyond the traditional boundaries of northern Sudan to integrate the areas marginalized by colonial rule. This school of thought emphasizes Arabism and Islam. Three significant aspects represent the hallmark of this approach and its polity: (1) "a single unified and national system of education … would be the best and surest basis for welding the various parts of the country together"[50]; (2) the ultimate goal of economic and human development is to assimilate (i.e. northernize) the disadvantaged groups in the country; (3) Islam is the official religion of the state and *shari'a* is one of the basic sources of legislation. Because this view was perceived—rightly or wrongly—to be the orientation of the majority, reassurances were provided to these groups in order to maintain a permanent advantage.

For the second group Islam comes first and it should include the Islamization of the entire population, including Sufi Muslims who are perceived as superstitious, backward, and ignorant, only to be followed by Arabization as an outcome of the process. According to this perspective, the Qur'an is the constitution and a fully Islamic state is the primary tool for such transformation. As the advocacy and theory of this group are based on an Islamist takeover of the state in order to initiate the Islamization of society, this group believed from an early time that they should work toward assuming power through a shortcut, such as a military or a civilian coup, and to obstruct what the other Sufi based political parties can do with power.

What is most striking about these two perspectives is the tacit supposition among the ranks of three of the four poles, excluding the Marxist left, that the process of northernization is the right way for the rest of the country to go.

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49 Hasan Turabi, A Roundtable, in Arthur L. Lowrie (ed.), *Islam, Democracy, the State and the West* (Tampa: The World and Islam Studies Enterprise, 1993).

50 The text of Ziada Arabab, the Minister of Education's speech at the Conference in Khartoum in February 1957, quoted in Basher Mohamed Said, *The Sudan: Crossroads of Africa*, 192.

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Chapter 2

Elementary Forms of the Islamist Movement

The emergence of the Islamist movement in the Sudan occurred during a period of political, social and intellectual vitality and attempts at seeking a way out of the colonial rule. Such vitality and attempts could be explained by their influences and the cross-fertilization of potentialities of complex internal traditions, adoption of strategies for social and political change, and an aptitude for modification and accommodation of some of the external elements. The most essential of these elements were the principles of modernity as understood and articulated by the Sudanese elite of the time. In his book, *Kifah Jil* [A Struggle of a Generation], which was perceived by most Sudanese intellectuals of the time as the manifesto of the nationalist movement, Ahmad Khair explains that the new Sudanese educated generation "started to look at life and Sudanese society through modern spectacles and evaluate them within modern standards, which were a mixture of authentic religious culture and the irresistible European culture."[1] In the previous chapter, I argued that the Sudan's governing developments have woven the progression of events into multiple layered fabrics of lived experiences that were accepted and absorbed on the part of Sudanese society, while others were resisted and rejected by all or most of the population. Understanding of the elements that influenced these developments suggest a thorough analysis of the Sudanese society as the prevailing view among scholars is that the new phase in the history of the Sudan—colonial and post-colonial—has been primarily made and expressed by the involvement of Sudanese elite in the colonial rule when the members of this elite became "colonialism's intimate enemies, making colonial rule a reality while hoping to see it undone." There were, however, other socio-economic factors that underlie the terms of reference of these processes that may have been instrumental in turning those "intimate enemies" into leaders of the nationalist movement, as well as other factors that influenced the processes that primed the colonial state to renovate "into the independent nation-state."[2]

Hence, and as far as the genesis of the Sudanese Islamist movement is concerned, there are more than the impressionistic historical accounts about this movement than its sympathetic historians and resolute detractors would say about it and about the advent and development of the phenomenon. The official accounts of the emergence of the Islamist movement according to the Islamist historians themselves describe it

1 Ahmed Khair, *Kifah Jil: Tarikh Harakat al-Khirijin wa Tatawuruha fil-Sudan*, second edition (Khartoum: al-Dar al-Sudaniyya, 1980), 18.

2 Heather J. Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism: Nationalism and Culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 120.

as a self-made, unique development that came from nowhere. Its detractors describe it as a disease outbreak that infected the Sudanese body politic as early as the 1940s. Indeed, since the birth of the movement, these two currents with their conflicting accounts have been persistent, underlying cold and hot wars between the Islamists and their secular opponents. Hence, a cautious inquiry of the movement and its emergence could therefore serve four important endeavors: (1) prevent simplistic appending of the movement to nowhere, (2) dispute such arguments and claims that the movement is a unique and novel phenomenon, (3) challenge the notion that it was an outbreak from history's quarantine house, and (4) confirm that the elementary form of the movement is like other things in Sudanese life with multiple sources and sets of reproduction that could be rooted in Sudanese existential experience.

The Elementary Form of the Movement

The views that the movement is self-made, novel and came from nowhere could be located in the writings and other oral articulations of the Islamists themselves. Most leaders of the movement insist on its novelty. In January 2006, I interviewed Yasin 'Umar al-Imam, the movement's commissar general *par excellence*, a member of its leadership bodies since the 1950s, a parliamentarian, and editor of its newspaper *al-Mithaq al-Islami* in 1965–68, among other leading positions. Al-Imam reiterated in clear terms the uniqueness of the movement.[3] He noted that "in 1949 a group of young students including Babikr Karrar, Muhammad Yusuf, Yusuf Hasan Sa'id, and Muhammad Ahmad Muhammad 'Ali came to Khartoum from the rural part of the country. They formed *Harakat al-Tahrir al-Islami* [Islamic Liberation Movement] at Khartoum University College."[4] Al-Imam adds that the *Harakat* "advocated high moral standing and was anti-Marxist."[5] He distinguishes between two important aspects of the nascent movement. While "it had no relationship to *Harakat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin* [the Muslim Brotherhood movement]…, it was the Communists who continued to call its members *Ikhwan*."[6] Abdelwahab el-Affendi argues that because the communists then "did not know its name, they branded it the 'terrorist Muslim brotherhood group'."[7] El-Affendi insinuated that that terminological quibble or label which stayed with the Islamists ever since was borrowed from elsewhere and was applied by an outsider. He argues "Ample ammunition for this campaign was found in the propaganda work produced by the Wafd party in Egypt entitled *Harakat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimeen fil-Mizan* [The Muslim Brotherhood Evaluated], which dwelled on alleged atrocities and acts of terrorism committed by Ikhwan."[8] Muhammad al-Khair 'Abd al-Qadir, a founding member of *Harakat al-Tahrir al-Islami*, explains in his book, *Nash'at al-Haraka al-Islamiyya fi al-Sudan 1946–1956*,

3 Author's interview with Yasin Umar al-Imam, 3 January 2006, Omdurman.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Abdelwhab el-Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in Sudan* (London: Grey Seal Books, 1991), 48.

8 Ibid.

that the seven members[9] of the group met secretly one night at the western sports field at Khartoum University College, discussed the idea of an Islamist organization that might "confront the communist onslaught and resist British colonialism with the intention of establishing a righteous society based on Islamic ideals."[10] He added that this was the way those who were present understood their mission, "though they had no clear vision of how that idea could work, or from where it should start or what to do. They just relied on God, the sincerity of their orientation, and the resolve of the youth."[11] 'Abd al-Qadir explains that the group had no direct relationship to the Muslim Brotherhood organization in Egypt. He adds that some of them had not even heard of that organization.

Hasan Makki, professor of political science at the African University in Khartoum, was the first Islamist scholar to write the history of the movement in his book *Harakat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin fil-Sudan: 1946–1969* which was published in Arabic by Dar al-Fikr in 1980. Makki presented the movement's early history mixed with imagined myths of origin as narrated through the formal chain of memory concerning details of its early emergence. His interviews with the founding fathers and some members of the first generation of the movement afforded an illustration of the formal construction of the history of the movement. The process of such political construction of history went hand in hand with the movement's participation in Ja'far Nimairi's regime after the 1977 "national reconciliation"[12] with the political opposition to the regime including the Islamists. Although the Islamists were included in the Sudanese Socialist Union and appointed into high positions in the state and other political structures, they were denied the right to operate as a formal political party. Hasan al-Turabi describes the movement's strategic aim then as "to adopt an Islamic approach for total control of power in the country."[13] Al-Turabi further explains that "that strategic aim needed specific measures to be taken, including the popularization of the movement so that it could reach all sections of society in all

9 According to Abdel Gadir those members include, Babikir Karar, Muhammad Yousuf Muhammad, Yousif Hasan Said, Muhammad al-Khair Abdel Gadir, Adam Fadal Allah, Muhammad Ahmed Muhammad Ali (Mawlana), al-Tayyib Muhammad Salih, and Ahmed Muhammad Babikir.

10 Muhammad al-Khier Abdel Gadir, *Nashaat al-Harkah al-Islamia fi l-Sudan 1946–1956* (Khartoum: al-dar l-Sudania lil kutub, 1999), 66.

11 Ibid.

12 In early 1977, businessman Fath al-Rahman al-Bashir brokered a reconciliation between Nimairi's regime and the National Front: an umbrella group formed in 1974 that included Northern political parties that included the Democratic Unionist Party, the Umma Party and the Islamic Charter Front. Al-Bashir met with the opposition in London, and arranged for a meeting between Nimairi and al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, chair of the National Front, in Port Sudan in September 1977. In what became known as the "national reconciliation," the regime and its opposition signed an eight-point agreement according to which leaders of the opposition were pardoned, a general amnesty was pronounced for all political prisoners, and former supporters of the National Front were admitted to the Sudanese Socialist Union and the government.

13 Mohamed E. Hamdi, *The Making of an Islamic Political Leader: Conversations with Hasan al-Turabi* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), 19.

parts of the country."[14] Here, the linkage between Makki's book and that important time in the life of the movement is at play. Accordingly, Makki emphasizes that the nucleus of the Muslim Brotherhood movement in the Sudan was initiated by *Harakat al-Tahrir al-Islami* in 1949. The sources Makki interviewed such as Yusuf Hasan Sa'id, one of the founders of the movement, states that the movement emerged as a spontaneous Islamic trend in response to the communist students' activities at the university college. Sa'id adds that he, Babikr Karrar and Muhammad Yusuf formed the nucleus of that trend, and although they did not nominate one of them as a leader, Babikr Karrar dominated that trend because of his activity and intellectual capacity.[15]

In 1991, when the Islamists were at the zenith of their power in the Sudan, another Islamist produced a book. Abdelwahab el-Affendi, a senior research fellow at the Centre for the Study of Democracy at Westminster University in London, produced a book titled *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in Sudan*. The title of the book is an example of what social scientists would describe as the links between modes of knowledge and being in the centers of power. El-Affendi's sources, similar to Makki's, were primarily from the founders and older generations of the Islamist movement who were entrenched in the highest echelons of power when the author interviewed some of them. His sources retold the movement's formative history the same way the first generation of Islamists did before. El-Affendi himself emphasized the unique nature of the movement by saying, "modern educational institutions ... were generally the purgatory through which the young washed the past from themselves. This was precisely the reason which made the setting up of a new type of movement necessary."[16] Some of his sources tried to reinvent that myth of uniqueness and sometimes tried to refashion the early history of the movement and congeal it within a contemporary context. This kind of refashioning of history manifests itself in such testimonies. "Muhammad Yousuf wrote the communiqué to launch the movement, stating that the world was divided into two big warring blocs and the third force which should have stood up to these giants and apart from them was ineffective with its energies dissipated and wasted. Thus it was imperative to set up a new order based on Islam, because Islam was the only force capable of standing up to world powers. To achieve this, one had to start by setting up an Islamic society and an Islamic state based on Islamic socialism, and for this purpose it was imperative to liberate Sudan from colonialism so as to clear the way for the Islamic state."[17] What is at issue here is the mode in which the third way is framed to fit a modern definition that was not part of the contemporary discourse.

In his second book, *Harakat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin fil-Sudan, 1944–1969*, which was published in 1999, a time of crisis for the movement, Makki openly attests in his introduction that "the study made an effort to move away from the defensive

14 Ibid.

15 Hasan Mekki, *Harakat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin fil-Sudan, 1944–1969* (Khartoum: Dar al-Fikr, No Date), 16.

16 Abdelwhab El-Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in Sudan* (London: Grey Seal Books, 1991), 50.

17 Ibid., 48.

approach, as this study was neither written to praise the Islamic movement nor give it what it did not have, the study intended to follow the developments of the movement in its different circumstances and its good times and bad times."[18]

Time and again, al-Turabi, the most prominent political and ideological leader of the movement from 1964 to 1999, lauds the novelty as one of the main characteristics of the Islamist movement in the Sudan. He argues that the movement "is very much aware of its own history. It might in early days have assumed the form of Egyptian experience, which in turn emulated an earlier model of Islamic life, mainly characterized by education and reform. Within a short time, however, and after the initial stage of its existence, the movement developed a marked sense of self-awareness, positioning itself accurately within its own specific time and place parameters."[19]

What transpires from all that is that the different generations of Islamists scholars and politicians have been consistent in reconstructing the history of the movement as a unique self-made organization that came from nowhere. This historical construction in itself sets the movement apart from other Sudanese and other Islamist movements in the region. Such an attitude has involved a sense of superiority that reflected itself in the polity and practices of the movement and which led to tension and sometimes open conflict with internal and external Islamist and non-Islamist entities. While this wholesale character of the movement has always been overlooked by those who have been studying the Islamists in the Sudan and their political behavior, this attitude that denies historical relationship to the place, has its meaning. By such a denial the Islamists try to convince themselves, their sympathizers and their detractors that the Sudanese Islamists' legitimization does not come from the past similar to other religious representations in the country, especially the Sufi orders that they despise, or the "*ulam* ", whom they deride and ridicule. On the other hand, although adopting Islam could be perceived as a positive thing within a Muslim society, that by itself does not qualify such Islamist groups to perform the functions of the *ulam* who gained and solidified their legitimacy from institutionalized religious knowledge and their functions as judges, *imams* and teachers who issue *fatwa* in matters relating to Islamic knowledge and Muslim life. Accordingly, as they "will not be the ones to open up the ulam s' corpus", the Islamists "reproach the ulam "[20] claiming to be thinkers rather than *ulam* and stand out as self-proclaimed spokespersons of Islam as *din wa dawla*, or religion and state. At the same time, they go further to tell their secular competitors that their compact with modernity could be pronounced in a more authentic fashion. Al-Turabi attempted to raise the modern aspect of his movement when he told his American audience of Islamic and Sudanese Studies in 1997 in Florida that "Islam is the only modernity, because if the modern sector in our society represents modernity, then the modern sector is dominated by Islamic

18 Mekki, *Harakat al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin fil-Sudan, 1944–1969: Tarikhua wa Khitabuha al-Siyasi*, 11.

19 Hamdi, *The Making of an Islamic Political Leader: Conversations with Hasan al-Turabi*, 14.

20 Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 37.

currents. Students and university graduates everywhere represent modernity and they are the only current which exercises any measure of *ijtihad*."[21] This discourse, which differentiates their ascribed authenticity, is entangled with competing understandings of both Islam and modernity, as well as essentialist definitions of Sufiism on the one hand and "*ulam* " orthodoxy on the other.

Clearly, this brings in an invention of the self-imaging of the group that has underlain its actions all through its life. At the same time, such self-imaging and narration of the movement's history has an enduring impact on the mood and politics of the movement. In a broader perspective, this invention of self-imaging reproduced three important developments in the life of the movement. First, by promoting such a self image and the rhetoric associated with it, the movement defends "the essence or experience itself rather than promote the full knowledge of it and its entanglements and dependencies on other knowledges."[22] In this sense, they "will demote the different experience of others to a lesser status."[23] Second, as Mohammed Ayoob explains, such "decontextualizing of Islam allows Islamists in theory to ignore the social, economic, and political milieus within which Muslim communities exist. It provides Islamists a powerful ideology that they can use to "purge" Muslim societies of the "impurities" and "accretions" that are the inevitable accompaniments of the historical process, but which they see as the reason for the Muslim decline."[24] Finally, the most important aspect of this discourse and its historical narration is that it makes the Sudanese Islamists a self-sufficient political association rather than a religious movement.

But in fact, the real explanation for the emergence of the Islamist groups in the Sudan in general within their different notions from the late 1940s to the present day are deeply rooted in the complexities and the augmentations of the Sudanese experience. It is important to outline the sites of Islamist movements that emerged by that period. Over the course of the 1940s, at least three different important Islamist trends were recognized. The first one went by the name of the Muslim Brothers Organization. It emerged in 1946 and for a brief period of time was led by *shaikh* 'Awad 'Umar al-Imam who was then replaced by 'Ali Talb Allah. No information is available on why *shaikh* 'Awad was removed and replaced by 'Ali Talb Allah. Talb Allah was an active member of the Graduates' Congress, Sudan's first political organization, which came into existence in 1938. He was the managing editor of the Congress newspaper in 1944 and he maintained a relationship with Isma'il al-Azhari,[25] the first president of

21 Hasan al-Turabi, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the Sunna and Shia Worlds* (London: The Sudan Foundation, 1997), 3–11.

22 Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, a Division of Random House, Inc, 1993), 32.

23 Ibid., 32.

24 Mohammed Ayoob, "Political Islam: Image and Reality," *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 3, (2004), 1.

25 Ismail Al-Azhari (1902–1969) First Prime Minister of the Sudan. Born into a prominent family, al-Azhari became president of the Sudan's first political organization, the Graduates General Congress in 1940, and then President of the National Unionist Party (NUP) in 1952. His opposition to British rule brought him national attention. As Prime Minister (1954–56), he led the Sudan to complete independence in January 1956.

the Congress. Talb Allah was appointed to the position of secretary general of the Muslim Brothers organization and a member of the general constituent assembly of the Brotherhood in Cairo by the founder of the mother organization, Hasan al-Banna himself. His appointment reflected the influence the Egyptian Muslim Brothers in Cairo had on the young Sudanese organization. Al-Banna and his organization had long taken interest in the Sudan. Muhammad al-Kahir ʻAbd al-Qadir maintains that al-Banna stated in an address celebrating *sayyid* Muhammad ʻUthman al-Mirghani's visit to Cairo in 1948 that the Brotherhood's relationship with the Khatmiyya started as early as 1937 in Ismailiya. In 1948, *sayyid* ʻAbd al-Rahman al-Mahdi, in a response to a letter from al-Banna, firmly though "politely and diplomatically turned down a personal and passionate plea from their [the Muslim Brotherhood] *murshid Shaikh* Hasan al-Banna to support the Brotherhood."[26] In the meantime, al-Banna and the Brotherhood organization in Egypt were very active recruiting Sudanese students in Cairo and dispatching delegates and activists to the Sudan. In 1948 al-Banna mentioned with pride that the Brotherhood chapters reached two thousand in Egypt and fifty in the Sudan and the Arab and Islamic world.[27] All these activities materialized in the emergence of an organization in the Sudan bringing together within its ranks Egyptian-educated Sudanese together with Egyptian employees and military officers serving in the Sudan.

Perhaps one of the most important factors was the resistance of the students inside the country to join the ranks of this organization. That trend, accelerated by the relative expansion of public education in the country, was behind the growth of an Islamist group different than the Brotherhood. The British colonial authorities in the Sudan harped on the idea that public education in the Sudan was superior to Egyptian education. Since the early days of the colonial state in the Sudan, the British Governor General, Francis Reginald Wingate, a military intelligence officer and one of the longest reigning military rulers in the history of the Sudan (1899–1916), introduced and diligently followed a policy that extended, strengthened, and maintained an imperial order that sustains the British cultural and political power as superior and separates and debases what is non-British as inferior. Accordingly, "Wingate employed all means at his disposal to stem the infiltration of Egyptian nationalist and pan-Islamic ideas into the Sudan. A special system of intelligence was devised in order to deal with this subtle penetration. The intelligence department, whose headquarters were in Cairo, kept a close watch on developments

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Following the October Revolution that overthrew the military rule of Ibrahim ʻAbbud (1958–64), he was appointed Chair of the Head of State Council (president) in 1965, but was overthrown in a military coup in May 1969, by Jaʻfar Nimairi. He died in 1969 while in custody.

26 Al-Banna's letter to *sayyid* Abd al-Rahman was handed by Jamal al-Din al-Sanhuri a Sudanese who went to Egypt in the 1930s as a student. He joined the Brotherhood in the 1940s and formed a nucleus among the Sudanese students in Cairo. According to el-Affendi, al-Sanhuri "occupied a key position in the parent movement itself, taking charge of the African Section in the Muslim World Liaison Office." p. 46. For the full texts of al-Banna's letter and Sayyid Abdal-Rahman's response see Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim Appendix A, 243–4.

27 Mohmed al-Khier Abdel Gadir, *Nashaat al-Harkah al-Islamia fi l-Sudan 1946–1956* (Khartoum: al-dar l-Sudania lil kutub, 1999), 61.

in the Egyptian capital and warned its branch in Khartoum to take any necessary action."[28] This imperial order developed into a total "disciplinary institution" to borrow Foucault's phrase. In 1948 the British authorities in Khartoum denied the Brotherhood organization permission to open their head office in Khartoum until they declared their independence from the parent organization in Egypt. The same year 'Ali Talb Allah was accused of plotting to assassinate the British Governor in the Sudan, Robert Howe. He was quickly charged and sentenced to ten months. The Brotherhood organization disintegrated by the 1950s and most of its members joined *Harakat al-Tahrir al-Islami* at a later stage.

The second group in this category is the Republican Brothers, an Islamist group who owe their doctrinal, political and intellectual allegiance to the party's founder Mahmud Muhammad Taha. Mohamed Mahmoud, a Sudanese scholar who wrote extensively about Taha and the Republican Brothers, described the group as neo-Islamists.[29] Taha was born in either 1909 or 1911 in the central Gezira region of the Sudan, which meant that he came of age as the nationalist movement was emerging. He graduated from Gordon Memorial College in 1936, after studying engineering, and took a job with Sudan Railways. However, his growing political activities led him to leave the civil service and in 1945, Taha and a few of his colleagues formed the Republican Party, which later changed names to the Republican Brothers. The group was explicitly opposed to colonialism and the *ta'ifiyya* (sectarianism) of the dominant Khatmiyya and Ansar sects. As a result of this activism, Taha was twice arrested in 1946 and served two years in prison. After his release, he withdrew into a *khalwa* (retreat) for three years and upon emerging in 1951, he articulated "a comprehensive vision of what he later termed the second message of Islam", which he claimed was revealed to him by God. At this time, he was approached by the Islamists to lead their movement. El-Affendi says that "Mohamed Yousuf traveled to Rufa'a to meet Mahmoud Muhammad Taha who was in retreat there, after a lengthy discussion he decided that Taha's views were too unorthodox for him to lead the movement."[30] However, in an interview with Yasin Umar al-Imam, he denied that this exchange ever happened.[31]

As Taha preached the Second Message of Islam, the party was transformed into "an organization for the propagation of that new conception of Islam."[32] Taha was given the title al-Ustadh or the revered scholar, and the Republican Brothers began to resemble a religious community, like a Sufi *tariqa*. The group contended that Islam represented the only system capable of reconciling the individual need for

28 Gabriel Warburg, *The Sudan Under Wingate: Administration in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (1899–1916)* (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd, 1971), 20.

29 Mohamed Mahmoud, "Mahmud Muhammad Taha and the Rise and Demise of Jumhuri Movement", *New Political Science: A Journal of Politics & Culture*, Vol. 23, No. 1, (March 2001), 65–88.

30 Abdelwhab el-Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in Sudan* (London: Grey Seal Books, 1991), 65.

31 Author's interview with Yasin Umar al-Imam, 3 January 2006, Omdurman.

32 The Republican Brothers, "The Republican Thought"; available from http://www.alfikra.org/index_e.php; accessed on 31 March 2007.

freedom and society's need for social justice through a democratic socialist system.[33] As advocates of an unorthodox Islam—a philosophical-religious worldview that espouses the implementation of a reformed *shari'a* law—the Republican Brothers drew the ire of the "*ulam* " and the Muslim Brothers, who reacted by convicting Taha of apostasy in 1968. The Republican Brothers complied with the ban on political activity that accompanied the seizure of power by Nimairi's Free Officers in May 1969, but the group continued to conduct its religious and educational activities. Initially, Taha declared his support for the regime and his activities were tolerated, but in 1983 he opposed Nimairi's plans to implement *shari'a* law. As a result, the Islamists, with the support of Nimairi, revived the 1968 apostasy sentence and on 18 January, 1985, Taha was executed. Relations between the Islamists and the Republican Brothers have always been marked by acrimony and spite, to the extent that the Islamists have been accused for his tragic death.

The third trend was *Harakat al-Tahrir al-Islami* which was established by Babikir Karrar in 1949 and went through different transformations and changes through the 1950s to bring to its ranks those who were members of Talb Allah's Brotherhood organization and to adopt officially in 1954 the name *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*. As el-Affendi explains, the new development was "a clear concession to the Karrar group, it was resolved that the movement was to be 'a Sudan-based' movement (i.e. not directly connected with the Egyptian group) and it should maintain independence from all other political parties."[34] Although this trend continued to transform into the main trend that built the contemporary Islamist movement, the divisions among the ranks of this trend have been a significant factor over the course of the last fifty years. In all of these instances, tensions and conflicts arose among the ranks of the Islamists not simply over *ijtihad* or Islam-related issues and constructions. Rather, the Islamists' uneasy disagreements, confrontations and splits have been over issues that relate to undercurrent frustrations, which has prompted the growth of power groups within the movement that have succeeded in chasing out the leadership and its supporters. Considered in this light, perhaps, one can find a pattern has been repeating itself in different forms four times since 'Ali Talb Allah managed to regroup his Egypt-oriented Ikhwan group to force Muhammad Khair 'Abd al-Qadir to resign as the secretary general of the movement. 'Abd al-Qadir had been elected to this position only one year earlier in a 1954 conference that sidelined Talb Allah from his leadership position which was supported by the mother organization in Egypt. The removal of 'Abd al-Qadir was to be followed by a serious conflict which ended up in a major split that forced the celebrated founder of *Harakat al-Tahrir al-Islami*, Babikir Karrar and his supporters, to secede and establish a rival organization under the name *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya* [the Islamic Group]. That dispute, according to some of the Islamist movement historians, was due to Karrar's fascination and enthusiasm for "revolutionary aspects of Mahdism."[35] El-Affendi argues that, "Babikir Karrar was fascinated by Mahdism, a factor which could have contributed to his alienation from the rest of Ikhwan who came mostly from a unionist background."[36] But such

33 Muhammad Mahmoud, Taha and the Rise and Demise of the Jumhuri Movement, 74.

34 Abdelwhab el-Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in Sudan*, 53.

35 Ibid., 153.

36 Ibid., 153.

disrespect for certain past aspects of the Sudanese life experience has always been the trend that defined the Islamists' claim that their legitimation does not come from the past similar to other religious representations in the country. This trend has been clearly reflected in the articulations of the Islamists in general and al-Turabi in particular. But the other and most serious competing tendencies that led to the conflict were twofold. On the one hand, Karrar was an advocate of a revivalist ideology that incorporates an Islamic socialism as "the basis of which is spiritual brotherhood, and community and moral economic life." Karrar was in many respects the thinker and the leader for the Islamist movement since its inception. It nearly goes without saying that those who embraced his ideas that blend a Sudanese-based impulse with Islamic socialism were intellectually oriented and progressive, while those who opposed them were conservative and more responsive to the influence of the Egyptian Ikhwan. On the other hand, the conservative trend has also rejected Karrar's emphasis on the primacy of *tarbiya* or spiritual upbringing and political awakening of the people as a prerequisite to political activism.

The removal of Karrar was followed by the emergence of a younger generation led by al-Rashid al-Tahir. But al-Tahir's leadership was severely damaged by his implication in a failed coup attempt in 1959 and his subsequent imprisonment. The emergence of Hasan al-Turabi and his Western educated group in 1964 was the result of a series of bitter internal disputes, "hinging on the idea of the coup itself, the participation of communist elements in it, and the fact that al-Tahir's colleagues were not kept adequately informed."[37] Al-Turabi managed to stay at the helm of Islamists' leadership from 1964 till 1999 only to be removed by his disciples in a humiliating way.

None of these trends were novel, and none came from nowhere. Several social forces helped create and shape the development of these trends within the nationalist and Islamo-nationalist movements.[38]

The Anatomy of the Islamist Movement

The rise of all the three Islamist trends in the Sudan took place at a conjunction of three major developments that prompted political, social and economic reproductions that shaped the country and the life experience of its citizens. First, the re-colonization of the Sudan by Britain and Egypt and the creation of the Condominium, with its peculiar nature as already explained, gave rise to a differentiation within this mini-British Imperial system. It is true that the new imperial system put most of the Nile valley under the control of Britain; nevertheless, this new system came with profound problems. Specifically, the British Imperial system in the Sudan suggests a distinctive model. Britain stands as the core state, while Egypt the co-domini has always been seen and treated as part of the semi-periphery of that system. For Egypt "the Condominium was little more than having her face rubbed in the dirt by her

37 Ibid., 62.

38 On Islamo-nationalism see Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 26.

British oppressors."[39] Egypt's manpower was used as the lower strata employees—*ma'murs* (subordinates) and *na'ib ma'murs* (subordinate deputies)—as a cheaper if not wholly efficient way to staff the colonial administration. Within that differentiated system, the Sudan was gradually incorporated as the periphery within the colonial division of labor. By 1925, the northern part of the Sudan was integrated within the imperial division of labor through two major projects: the Gezira Scheme, the largest centrally-managed farm in the world, was operational, and the Sudan Railways, a government managed enterprise, was finally completed to transport Sudan's main products—cotton, gum arabic, sesame and ground nuts—to Britain, the core state within that system. The establishment of the Gezira Scheme and the cotton that it produced ultimately benefited the British textiles industry, "which up to the end 19th century had occupied a paramount position in the world textile industry, was at that time facing increasingly fierce competition from Germany and the United States."[40] Sudan Railways and the roads "built between 1899 and 1913 reflected military more than economic priority."[41] Later this railway system was upgraded to connect the production areas in Gezira, through the Gezira Light Railway, Kordofan and Kassala to Port Sudan on the Red Sea. Hence, both projects were firmly situated within the colonial division of labor, and they both reflect "an expression and extension of British power."[42]

If that aspect of power was true by definition, then for that division of labor to be maintained and reproduced it required viable strategies for change that would incorporate cooperation and interdependence within the system itself. Thus, in addition to the Egyptian personnel at the lower rung of the state employees, local reliable Sudanese intermediaries between the local colonial administration and the rest of the population were needed to maintain and run the system. Within that colonial scheme, a system of tribal rule was reinvented and restructured to overcome "the lack of personnel that every colonial power faced and the extreme difficulty in communicating over long distances."[43]

Second, an important feature of the Condominium was that it continued to be a source of bitter divisions and conflict between all parties involved from the beginning. There was a deep difference between Lord Cromer, the British Consul General in Egypt, and Wingate, the Governor of the Sudan. As Peter Woodward explains, "Cromer saw Sudan as an adjunct of Egypt, once admonishing Wingate for 'a tendency to consider the Sudan as a separate and independent Government, more or less unconnected with Egypt.' Yet that was the drift of Wingate's feeling for

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39 Peter Woodward, *Sudan 1898–1989: the Unstable State* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publisher, 1990), 16.

40 Tim Niblock, *Class and Power in Sudan: The Dynamics of Sudanese Politics* (New York: State University Press of New York, 1987), 11.

41 Carole Collins, "Colonialism and Class Struggle in Sudan," *MERIP Reports*, No. 46 (April, 1976): 6.

42 Victoria Bernal, "Moral Colonial Economy and the Discipline of Development: The Gezira Scheme and 'Modern' Sudan," *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Nov., 1997): 452.

43 Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 73.

his own aggrandisement and his desire to limit the influence that Egyptians might be able to exercise in their former territory."[44] This difference stayed alive, generating conflict until Egypt won its independence in 1922, only to take deeper forms of conflict between the two former partners of the Condominium.

On the other hand, although officially a Condominium, the British had systematically pursued a policy of de-Egyptianization by excluding their co-domini from all zones of governance and power-sharing by keeping them out of senior positions in all parts of the government. Hence, continued Egyptian demands for restoration to genuine "co-demominus" status reflected itself in what was to become known as the "question of the Sudan", "which was to have different forms at different times and was to involve essentially the respective position of Egypt and Britain in the Sudan, and consequently wider relations between them, and the problem of the position of the Sudanese with regard to the future of the territory they inhabited."[45] Within that conflict riddled environment between these partners and within the dialectical forms of its actions and reactions, there have arisen four main currents and discourses of shared culture and representations of Sudanese nationalism. By the 1930s and through the 1940s and 1950s the intellectual formulations of these trends gave each one its coherence and force. The high end of these four trends or poles explained earlier was manifest in the Umma Party and Ansar camp, the Ashiqqa party and Khatmiyya camp, the southern parties at a later stage, and the small ideological parties which included the Communist Party, the Republican Brothers and the Islamist movement.

Third, the process of the formation of these outlined trends was accompanied by other economic developments. The high production of cotton from the Gezira scheme, as well as rain-fed and private pump farms, and rising world market prices of such exports, in addition to other exports such as gum arabic and sesame encouraged a modest shift in the country's economy and connected its northern part in particular to the world market within the British Imperial system. The products and the consequences of the interaction of these market forces and regime policies facilitated that modest shift which was largely associated with more efficient communication and transportation systems, the growth of cities, social forces and the expansion of the economy. Alongside the steady growth of the economic fortunes and "clientelistic relations ... with the major Islamic movements"[46] the *jellaba* and other merchants expanded their networks and activities to export, import and retail local goods together with empire products. Such activities that increased the scale of overseas trade, together with the expansion of governmental and private farming schemes, promoted the proliferation of commercial and financial institutions, such as banks, and transportation, shipping and railways. As a consequence, state manufactured sectors, structures and groups emerged or revitalized themselves in the following ways: (1) individuals active in the private sector who "accumulated capital in the earlier period were able to re-invest it and strengthen their economic position in

44 Peter Woodward, *Sudan 1898–1989: the Unstable State*, 16.

45 Ibid., 44.

46 Ibid., 53.

the later—with significant economic, social and political effects."[47] (2) The gradual integration of religious institutions and the law within the state apparatus. One of the Condominium government's priorities was to establish as early as 1901 the Board of "*ulam* " that operated under the authority of Slatin, the Inspector-General, who "asked their advice whenever a religious problem occurred and they became his sole interpreters of orthodox Islam."[48] Later, the *shari'a* courts and Islamic religious education were designed and supervised by government bureaucracies. (3) The increase in government revenues helped in recruiting the needed educated local people for the bureaucracy and created or supported educational institutions to expand and produce more graduates to fill the state's growing needs for employees. This newly created class of educated Sudanese began forming a new identity that could, and did, provide the foundation for nationalism. The primary model of the political and intellectual movement expressed a modernist desire for a political stance in accordance with certain Islamic sets of connection influenced by some current Egyptian and Indian nationalist political and intellectual experiences. The nationalist movement structured its political processes and discourses within what was identified as a patriotic impulse or *haraka wataniyya*. Such an orientation is revolved around the *watan* or the territorial aspect together with the actions that the members of that nation take in their quest for independence. Much of that movement was driven by elites consisting of different generations of high school and college graduates in collaboration with leaders of the main Sufi *tariqas*, the Khatmiyya and Ansar, as well as the merchant class. Within the variations of the nationalist movement, the Islamists with their different organizations and discourses came at a later stage, in the 1940s, and proceeded at slower pace as different collective emotions that emerged within the proximate conditions of Islamo-nationalism. Their inspiration by modernity was parallel and antagonistic to Marxist and other forms of secular nationalisms.

Determinants and the Course of the Islamist Movement

The rise of the new independent Sudanese state under democratically elected parliamentary and dictatorial military systems in the period between 1956 and 1969 had marked two important developments. The first was the rise of a power context within which "political influence and authority rested with those social groupings which had benefited from the distribution of resources under the Condominium."[49] For most of those years, the resultant state of affairs during the post-colonial period was shaped by those promoted to senior and middle ranks of the civil service during the colonial period and those who "were not inclined to undertake a radical reformation of the country's socio-economic structure."[50] Hence, and as

47 Tim Niblock, *Class and Power in Sudan: The Dynamics of Sudanese Politics*, 23.

48 Gabriel Warburg, *The Sudan Under Wingate: Administration in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (1899–1916)*, 50.

49 Tim Niblock, *The Dynamics of Sudanese Politics 1898–1985: Class and Power in Sudan* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1987), 204.

50 Ibid., 204.

explained earlier, the nature and depth of the mode of transformation that unfolded out of that period was neither a wholesale nor an all-encompassing development to facilitate a radical break with previous periods and their interrelationships with poverty and underdevelopment in the country. The second development was that the relative expansion of developmental, public education, public transportation and communication systems hardly surpassed the area "resembling an inverted 'T' imposed on Sudan: composed of the valley of the Nile to north of Khartoum, central Kordofan, and the southern part of Kassala province."[51] Within that area, the Gezira scheme, the backbone of the economy, was expanded to include the Managil extension in 1963 in order to raise the area commanded by pump and gravity irrigated schemes to over 2 million acres out of 250 million acres of arable land in the country. A ten year plan was launched to speed up development in some sectors such as the air, railways, roads, radio and telecommunication systems which were upgraded, while the banking system, government administration, the machinery of the state and export and marketing systems were improved. This modest expansion of infrastructure, education, services and communication provided new opportunities for groups within the above mentioned areas of the country and other groups from other regions neighboring them to enter into the new society.

Of considerable significance were the continued migration to urban centers, the increase of students at the high school and college level, and the rise in labor force. Most of these groups entered the new Sudanese society with a baggage of cultural and social background enhanced or constrained by the new experience to strengthen social bonds, growing political and trade union associations, and the human and social capital of individuals and groups. The concentration of institutions of higher education, government offices, media establishments, public services, and big business and industry in the greater Khartoum area, consolidated the centralized power of the Capital of the country as the gateway of upward mobility and the country's flagship of modernity. Other cities such as Atbara, Juba, Wad-Madani, el-Obeid, Wau, Kassala, and al-Fashir were differentiated according to each one's relationship to the Capital and economic and cultural welfare. This differential distribution of power drove the already marginalized areas of the country's periphery in the east, south and west into a higher degree of poverty and marginalization. On the other hand, this new gateway to social mobility and modernity contributed to a Sudanese ideology, which holds that everyone regardless of ascribed personality and background could go as far as his/her ability would take them through public education. This ideology of commitment to education has another side. It shaped the student movements and formulated the discourse which has been dominated by two main trends of political activism each assuming an opposite relationship to modernity and a disconnect from what have been described as traditional and sectarian entities that clustered around the two main parties: Unionists and the Umma. Within the political debate of both the Islamists and the left, the terms *taqlidi* (traditional) and *ta'ifi* (sectarian) have been used to denote and describe these two mainstream political parties and the social sectors that coalesced to form and support them include the followers of patterns of association such as Sufi *tariqas*, tribal leadership, and *jellaba* commercial networks as relics of

51 Ibid., 49.

the past. At the same time, for the mainstream political parties, Sufi *tariqas* and other traditional associations, these new *tanzimat 'aqa'idiyya* (ideological organizations), as they labeled them, were born out of the rejection of the mainstream associations.

These modes of reductionism in which all these parties were interlocked, have opened the way for a remorseless and a never-ending war of attrition between the Islamists, the leftists, the main political parties and other religious and social associations as the presence of each side is perceived as ephemeral. In retrospect, we have seen within the last five decades both sides living in a "state of suspended extinction" as each side has been turned by the other into an object that should be eliminated through the state apparatus of coercion or private violence. Both state and private violence grew stronger over time, especially during military rule, when the ruling elite and their rivals continued to resort to different sorts of armed violence. Moreover, these modes of reductionism and the mutual hostilities have generated one of the most enduring and consequential political culture wars with an aim towards mortifying the other. Within such an environment, public debate becomes not at all conducive to reason and civility. All too often, it has been silenced by a military coup which progresses into dictatorial rule. It is not surprising, therefore, that this state of affairs continued to enlist the military to resolve political conflict. This process of coercing opponents through military rule forced most, if not all, political organizations to take turns in acting as clandestine organizations receiving harsh treatments from different regimes. And through the mode of the coup or violence, each group transforms its "othering" impulses and past negative feelings or hostilities into an organized form of subjugation of the Other. Behind every military coup in the Sudan—successful or abortive—has been a civilian political party or a group of conspirators, while within every military regime were groups of civilian as well as military collaborators. Hence, the self-fulfilling prophecy of the Islamists as *jihaz fashisti*, "a fascist apparatus," as their communist enemies used to describe them, has become the living example and the enduring legacy of their rule during their republic, especially the period from 1989 to 1999.

The second subsidiary that relates to the new organized movements that emerged during the 1940s and which has been perceived by its leaders and the political elite as modern was the growing urban labor force which has been organized within a "self-conscious class."[52] This self-conscious class has been described by Peter Cross as an "*urban* proletariat" consisting of "skilled and unskilled wage-workers in industry, construction, commerce, communications, public services."[53] Within the evolution of this, two processes in particular merit attention. First, this urban proletariat has organized itself as "movements and organizations based on employment, occupation or role in life, not with groupings based specifically on political or religious belief, or regional identity."[54] Hence, as this urban proletariat emerged as a genuine force in the field of economic development, with absolute and relative relation to the new

52 Saad Edin Fawzi, *The Labour Movement in the Sudan, 1946–55* (Oxford University Press, 1957), 34.

53 Peter Cross, "British Attitudes to Sudanese Labour: the Foreign Office Records as Sources for Social History," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (1997): 219.

54 Tim Niblock, *The Dynamics of Sudanese Politics 1898–1985*, 107.

Sudanese way of life, its organized unions are social change agents by necessity and history as long as they are class conscious. In this respect, unions as organizing bodies for a "class for itself", have something to offer to their members and to the country as an entity concerned about the distribution of power, wealth, and inequalities. In this sense, and as citizens of the country, it would be very difficult for the working class to be reticent in presenting its interests as part of a generalized political action rather than limiting them into narrow sectional disputes. The organized Sudanese labor force has made itself visible as "a 'workers' society', apparently operating in conjunction with the White Flag League, recruited a wide range of artisans and labourers ... and seems to have played a significant part in organizing strikes and demonstrations which occurred in different parts of the Sudan between June and November 1924."[55] Steady expansion of the labor force continued throughout the colonial period only to give the organized unions an opportunity to situate themselves as a power center within the Sudanese political landscape. Second, this urban proletariat and its unions are the product of the modern aspect and development of Sudanese experience and its new and changing ways of life. Thus, together with all the ideological challenges the entire political landscape in the country was undergoing, the emergence of this urban proletariat "hastened the breakdown of traditional consciousness and, perhaps, to have contributed to the emergence of a new form of class consciousness."[56] As the working class cannot develop an ideology of its own but has to work within the system of existing ideologies, the communists, the unionists, and the Islamists worked hard to exploit that attitude which blends dissension and opposing attitudes with a consciousness of the collective power this newly emerging labor movement has over the economy to promote their political pressure capabilities. On its own terms, the expansion of organized labor in urbanized cities of the Sudan, and their collaboration with the communists in particular was an invitation for another type of competition and conflict between the Islamists and other political parties. At the same time, fault lines started to appear as Islamists started to build parallel workers, youth and women organizations and as these organizations started to grow and take a determined position in relation to social and political change.

A third subsidiary of these new organized institutions that relates to the modern structure of the state and has grown with a different but distinct group self-consciousness is the army. Like the labor union, the army's sense of identity symbolizes a national eminence transcending ethnic, regional or sectarian loyalty. On the other hand, if the labor force is self-conscious of its role with regards to the means and modes of production, the military are conscious of their role within the means and modes of destruction. This monopoly of the means and mode of destruction manifests itself as a legitimate use of force shaped by "a functional imperative stemming from the threat to society's security and a societal imperative arising from the social forces, ideologies, and institutions dominant within society."[57]

55 Ibid., 108.

56 Peter Cross, "British Attitudes to Sudanese Labour: the Foreign Office Records as Sources for Social History," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (1997).

57 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil–Military Relations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), 2.

It follows from this characterization that the military institutions "which reflect only social values may be incapable of performing affectively their military function. On the other hand, it may be impossible to contain within society military institutions shaped purely by functional imperatives. The interaction of these two forces is the nub of the problem of civil–military relations."[58] There are other general issues that could be raised regarding the nature of the military institution that merit attention. The military, by training, "[are] ill disposed toward mass participation insofar as it constitutes a more extensive and intensive type of political activity."[59] Moreover, the military establishment by its very nature is firmly rooted in two closely related features: "hierarchy and cohesiveness."[60] These traits could create deep and unresolved dilemma. Any organized group of officers could be an instrument of a political ideology or agenda by planning and staging a coup. Since an early time, whether by negotiated deals, compromise or by design, different groups of Sudanese military assembled together, riding on a public sentiment, utilizing the potential of the army to act politically. Once the military is in power, these two features of the military establishment combine to enforce a system and a polity that leaves no space for mass participation, forces "hierarchy and cohesiveness" and systematically drives people to seek ways of defending themselves through different types of patronage, family, or other forms of underground networks.

Historians of the Sudanese army agree that the first secret organized group of officers in the army was organized by two officers in 1952. Those two officers had sympathies for and connections to the Egyptian Free Officers who assumed power in Egypt in 1952. Major Ya'qub Kibaida from the Sudan Defense Force and Major 'Abd al-Mun'im 'Abd al-Hayy from the Egyptians corps in the Sudan, were the organizers of a secret group named the Free Officers. The Free Officers began to organize again after Kibaida and some of his group were discovered and fired from the army or put into inactive duty in 1957.[61] A "more substantial movement developed in the 1960s, with a variety of radical themes reflecting ideologically derived criticisms of the conservative 'Abbud regime and civilians who replaced it."[62] The Islamists were very eager to develop their own organization in the army and to attempt a *coup d'etat* as a short-cut to power. This started with al-Rashid al-Tahir's involvement in an attempted coup in 1959, as indicated earlier, and was to culminate in the success of the 1989 coup.

Clearly then, belief in the novelty of the movement shaped the thinking of the emerging Islamist organizations as well as their sense of being modern but not westernized, and provided a sense of oppositional identity which grew to influence the experience of the Islamist movement all through its lifetime. Since the early days

58 Ibid.

59 Eric A. Nordlinger, *Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, c.1977).

60 Ibid.

61 Mahmoud 'Abd al-Rahman al-Faki, *Al-Quwwat al-Musallaha fi Tarikh al-Sudan al-Hadith* [Armed Forces in the History of Modern Sudan 1935–197] (Khartoum: Military Press), 52.

62 Peter Woodward, *Sudan 1898–1989: the Unstable State*, 137.

of *Harakat al-Tahrir al-Islami,* college and high school campuses turned into battle grounds between the Islamists and their leftist rivals. Each one tended to override the other's modernist discourse. The Sudanese Communist Party was more successful in firmly establishing itself and assuming direct or indirect leadership within the emerging fields affected by modernity, particularly the students and workers movements. It also found inroads to the Gezira Scheme Tenants Association. The national character of the party and the intellectual zeal of some of its leadership—'Awad 'Abd al-Raziq and 'Abd al-Khaliq Mahjub—gave it a degree of respect inside and outside the country. On the other hand, these two small activist groups, the Islamists and their leftist rivals, have continued to have asymmetric interests though united in their viewpoints against the two main majority or dominant groups which they label as sectarian or traditional parties. It is this overriding historical mindset and idiosyncratic traits that each of these ideological groups developed that produced two different modes of self-proclaimed righteous vanguard stimuli. Yet here the distinctive character of each stimulus merits greater attention. While the vanguard impulse that influenced the communist and other left-oriented parties was articulated by Lenin, the Islamists modified and devised their self-image to suit the vanguard arrangements through two important influences. These influences include the writings of Hasan al-Banna (*Risalat al-Da'wa*) and Sayyid Qutb (*Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* [In the Shade of the Qur'an] and *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq* [signposts]) as well as Mahmoud Mohamed Taha, for the Republican Brothers, in his book *The Second Message of Islam*. The second influence, paradoxically, which points to the other direction was that the Islamists learned more about the organizational strategies and tactics of the vanguard party—an iron discipline, subordinating the individual to the collective, and the combination of secret and open work—from the communists. At the same time, none of the Islamist organizations will admit their debt to the communists except for associating their "imported ideology," historical antecedents, and all their conventions with atheism and moral degradation connecting that to the vestiges of the corruption of the origin of that ideology; always keeping the communists in a continuous state of self-defense. As an outcome of all that, each party became conscious of the other as a serious competitor, feared the other, and sought different strategies including violence to destroy the other. One of the most important strategies in this game has been the restless competition between the two for controlling what is called the *al-quwa al-haditha* or the modern sectors of society which includes trade unions, students, women and professional organizations. In an interview with Yasin 'Umar al-Imam, who was a member of the communist party before joining the Islamist movement, he explained how he used the experience he gained when he was a member of the communist party to work in his respective sector and to challenge the communist influence over the workers' organization in Atbara, the headquarters town of Sudan Railways and the birthplace of the organized labor movement. According to his account, once these attempts started to show some success, the Islamists were encouraged to open a workers' bureau in Khartoum and continue to fight the control of the communists and other political parties of other trade unions such as the tenants' and teachers' unions. As a result of these attempts, the Islamists utilized their experiences and their successes and failures in this field to build parallel women's, youth, teachers' and other organizations. All this

led the Islamists to discover that the party itself was the main organizational entity. Here again we see that Lenin's scheme was modified to suit an Islamist ideology in which an Islamic political consciousness—not class consciousness as Lenin would say—can be brought to the population "*only from without*, that is, only from outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers. The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships of *all* classes and strata to the state and the government, the sphere of the interrelations between *all* classes."[63]

The success of the organizational strategy has become instrumental in the planning and performance of the Islamist movement for three complementary reasons. First, in a very short time the movement succeeded in finding its way to the students' body and by 1951–52 the Islamists were able to win the elections of the Khartoum University College for the first time. Since that time, the Islamist movement geared their political program and organizational skills to attract students in general and those in the University of Khartoum in particular, whose prestige as the flagship of the Sudan's educational system they continue to exploit. Throughout its lifetime, the University of Khartoum had always been "more than just a college, it was the Government in person."[64] At the same time the University of Khartoum continued to be the entry point of the students of high education in the Sudan into the Islamist movement. Second, by 1955 the movement was successful in using the "*from without*" strategy to form the Islamic Front for the Constitution. This front was composed of different political and religious groups and individuals who were brought together in a loose alliance by the call for an Islamic constitution for the Sudan that acted as a pressure group with the Islamists as the organizer and vanguard. The model of the Islamic constitution the Islamists promulgated was "clearly modeled on Western constitutions and based on the acceptance of the Sudanese state within its recognized territorial boundaries, without insisting on a distinctive 'Islamic' concept of state."[65] In 1959, the Islamists, under the leadership of al-Rashid al-Tahir, "had been conspiring with some officers in the army of different persuasions to topple the regime by force."[66] Although the coup failed and both al-Tahir and the movement paid a heavy price for that failure, the Islamists have never been deterred from trying other coup attempts as a short-cut to power. This model of the party acting *from without* as a vanguard has continued to be one of the movement's prime strategies ever since. According to al-Turabi, "at every important turning-point, the movement would review its position and introduce whatever substantive structural and organizational changes were necessary to respond to the new needs of the times."[67]

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63 Vladimir I. Lenin, *What is to be Done?* (London: Penguin, 1988), 143–4.

64 Quoted in Heather J. Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism: Nationalism and Culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 43.

65 Mohamed Mahmoud, *The Discourse of the Ikhwan of Sudan and Secularism,* WLUML Dossier, 19 February 1998.

66 Abdelwhab el-Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in Sudan* (London: Grey Seal Books, 1991), 61.

67 Mohamed E. Hamdi, *The Making of an Islamic Political Leader: Conversations with Hasan al-Turabi* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998), 14.

The significance of the success of this strategy for the Islamist movement was twofold. In one aspect, the movement's emphasis and success in the organizational enterprise has stifled other ideological thought, political discourse and democratic needs, as well as opening the door for totalitarianism to emerge even before assuming power in 1989. This has, in turn, helped the creation of a strict centralization of all decision-making in the hands of an unchallenged leader. The second significant aspect is that this emphasis on the organizational enterprise made the movement an organizer generating institution. The organizers who survived and dominated the movement were not original political thinkers, but merely political actors with skills for intrigue, secrecy, and rhetoric. These have become the artisans of the movement. In an interview with Hasan Makki, he argues that the movement lacked a genuine Islamic inspiration and coherent political thought derived from such inspiration from the beginning. He added, "We have been calling for an Islamic constitution which represents a very small fraction of Islam. And even this Islamic constitution was presented as a legal issue, reflecting the culture of the lawyers who were leading the movement at that time. Later the Islamic constitution itself was dropped for *shari'a* and even the *shari'a* was dropped for *al-Ingadh al-watani* the national salvation regime and then the comprehensive call (*da'wa shamila*)."[68]

68 Hasan Makki in an interview at his home in Khartoum, January 2006.

Chapter 3

Competing Visions in the Aftermath of the October Revolution

The determinants and the course of the Islamist movement during its formative years as a minority organization, as has been described in the previous chapter, implanted operative traits that do much to explain the developments leading to the rise of Hasan al-Turabi, the attempts and shortcuts to power that resulted in the coup of 1989, and the oppressive totalitarian rule that progressed out of that coup. These operative traits, as well as other intervening factors, have properly laid the foundation for developing certain tools for the technology of political performance that built an organization advocating a totalitarian ideology publicly and arrogantly. This ideology incubated and nursed an organization conditioned to look at the Other from a prism of essentialism that entails in its deepest level an open culture of conflict and indiscriminate enmity to all of those who share the political and religious spheres in the Sudan. It is out of the complexity of major developments in the country and the shifting balance that came at the heels of the 1960s, or what I described as the third period, that key new actors, grand projects, and new conventions emerged. There are several dimensions to these developments and the legacy of these new players who shaped that period. The temper of that period was set by new players pursuing the road to power through all means possible, including the military coup. Among these new players, ‘Abd al-Khaiq Mahjub, the secretary general of the Communist Party, with his vision of a broad national democratic front, Ja‘far Nimairi, leader of the May 1969 coup and president until 1985, who built up a personality cult around the idea of *al-Ra’is al-Qa’id* [the president leader], and Hasan al-Turabi, the leader of the Islamist movement, with his vision of an Islamic front, deserve special attention. From within the changing contours of the political fields and the competing visions of the ideological contenders of the minority parties and their grand projects new political and social trends emerged. This chapter examines how these determinants and operative traits imported these new impulses; so doing will make it possible to see the new fault lines and the road to the coup and the Islamist republic through the emerging fields of power and their actors within the Sudanese social and political landscape.

The Emerging Fields of Power

Yet such an examination needs more elaboration, as the social and political consequences of the third period of development in the Sudanese life helped fashion the institutional differentiation of the Islamist movement as one of the emerging

voices within the country's political landscape. Closely related to these developments were the political and culture wars in the Arab world and their direct and indirect effects on the Islamist movement at large, and in the Sudan in particular. A full consideration of these political developments, actors and other variants across this period might help explain how political practice and differentiation progressed. This, as I explained earlier, has been another significant social and political entry for other groups into the expanding new Sudanese society as the means and modes of production, education, transportation, communication, and trade continued to expand during the 1950s and 1960s. Cotton production and marketing continued to reach its highest; roads, railways, air, and water transportation—river and sea—were improved; and new schools at all levels, hospitals and communication services facilities were built in different parts of the country. Some of those newcomers, however, were neither shy nor silent about the location and status of their regions within the ongoing state of affairs in the country. From this perspective, whatever else was happening in the Southern part of the country, where the rebellion was growing and taking violent shape, in the Western and Eastern parts of the country, as well as the Nuba Mountains, emerging voices of dissent were demanding recognition and the fair distribution of wealth and power. The political character of these demands and of the social groups that made them continued to grow through time. On the intellectual level, a new generation of poets, writers and thinkers started interrogating the past and the deeper soul of the place in search of an identity as signs started to show from a distance that the future of the country itself appeared to pose the greatest challenge. It is significant that the issue of identity has shifted through time from the fields of intellectual discourse to the fields of violent confrontations. The state enterprise of Major-General Ibrahim 'Abbud (November 1958–October 1964) and its military organizational and ideological hue failed to meet all these challenges. Hence, the need and aspiration for both societal and political change that would help create a new socio-political order has manifested itself in the October Revolution in 1964.

There are three important developments that merit further attention here. It is out of the social and the political chances the revolutionary moment has provided that the actors and their associations, including the Islamists, were deeply influenced. The larger context of this revolutionary moment and its reproductions has provided a complex reality that pushed the entire country towards new frontiers. First, through civil disobedience, the October Revolution launched a general strike by unarmed civilians that spread throughout the country and consciously pursued for the first time in Africa and the Middle East a discourse and a strategy of organized fields of power relations to a successful end by forcing a dictatorial regime out. The 'Abbud regime that used force to outlaw the Workers' Trade Union in 1958, dissolved the University of Khartoum Students' Union, dissolved the Gezira Tenants Union, banned the Communist Party, and intensified its war against the guerrilla forces in the Southern part of the country, was chased out of power by the same organizations and groups the regime impinged upon to dominate and control the affairs of the country. The civil disobedience leaders who identified themselves as the National Front for Professionals (NFP) formed a United National Front (UNF) with some leaders of the political parties and made contact with the Free Officers in the army to

achieve their goal to peacefully topple a military regime. This collective social and political practice and the successful execution of this revolutionary process, added to the value and the legitimacy of those participants in the revolutionary process and their political capital. For the communists and other Sudanese left groups and organizations who continued to make clear advances in the political and intellectual fields, the emergence of a structured system of political positioning such as the NFP or the ideas of deployment of the modern forces was perceived as the twilight of a new era that would phase out the *old forces*. That is why the battle cry immediately after the success of the October Revolution was *la za'ama li-l-qudama*, which is to say that "there is no leadership from now on for the antiquated".

Second, the construction of such a political discourse and a movement representing the modern forces (*al-quwa al-haditha*) that included the professional associations of doctors, lawyers, university professors and other knowledge workers in a united front with the workers' and tenants' organizations to develop a counter-power to dispute and nullify an institutional power, represents and defines one of the most profound developments in the Sudanese political experience in itself. The emergence of these modern forces introduced to the Sudanese political and social life a new structure of networks, different but not necessarily parallel to the political parties that bring together urban and rural groups together within a loose coalition. As explained earlier, trade unions and professional associations, as well, have something to offer in the socio-political world of practice as organizing bodies for a "class for itself", to their members and to the country as entities concerned about the distribution of power and wealth and other inequalities. In this sense, and as citizens of the country, it would be very difficult for the working class as well as the professionals—within their objective relationships to other fields of power—to be reticent in presenting their interest as part of a generalized political action rather than limiting them into narrow sectional disputes. Hence, to define and promote its political power and moral authority, these associations and trade unions have to position themselves between the other fields of power and the discourse that relates to the foundational political necessity in the country. Such a trait fits very well with the Islamists and communists and their perception of their role as vanguard organizations endowed with the task of leading the masses through a route of struggle and change. For that reason, the trade unions and the professional associations, as well as the student unions and the army, and their fields of power became the primary focus and battleground for the Islamists and their sworn enemies, the communists and other political parties and regimes. The lessons that have been arising from that experience are many and profound. For one thing, those lessons seem to confirm the general Sudanese belief that the military can take power by force, but there is no way for them to remain in power indefinitely. Similarly, this belief has been confirmed by the successful execution of the April 1985 *intifada* against the Ja'far Nimairi dictatorship (May 1969–April 1985). This belief is nowhere more apparent than in the understanding that has grown into a form of dual political imagination that has been persistent in the Sudanese collective mind and political culture. Out of this dual political imagination, what could be described as a Sudanese civil religion has emerged. This civil religion has its rituals that commemorate the October 1964 Revolution and April 1985 Uprising and renew the nation's commitment to their ideals. Moreover, this Sudanese civil

religion has its shrines, such as the University of Khartoum, the birthplace of the October revolution. It has its poets, entertainers and artists who contributed to the national discourse and the articulation of the values of that existential experience; examples of such artists, entertainers and poets include Muhammad al-Makki Ibrahim, Fadl Allah Muhammad, Hashim Sidiq, Mahjub Sharif, Muhammad Wardi, ‘Abd al-Karim al-Kabli, and Muhammad al-Amin to name a few. The dual nature of the Sudanese political imagination reflects itself in the considerable nationwide appeal and motivating power of collective action and in the enormous fear military regimes on the other side would feel as an outcome of their breach of social, political and constitutional contracts. This unique Sudanese political experience, however, has given many groups within the political and intellectual sectors in the country a deterministic presumption that an expected uprising or *intifada* to overthrow the Islamists’ regime is inevitable as long as these modern forces could be organized and mobilized the same way as times before. In an interview with al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, the leader of the Umma Party and the Imam of the Ansar sect, he explained that he and his party are promoting what he calls *al-jihad al-midani* or a civil *jihad* to unseat the Islamist regime through civil disobedience.[1] Similar attitudes have been reflected in most of the Sudanese political literature published or delivered by groups opposing the Islamist regime, in political and media forums, for the last seventeen years. On the other hand, and for a considerable period of time, all the lessons learned from fighting this Islamist regime seem to indicate that the ruling regime is not only aware of that but has been taking measures to avoid a new uprising against its hold on power.

Third, through the October Revolution the country witnessed the rise of a new generation of politicians and a new and younger leadership in most of the political parties and associations. This new leadership was eventually to take over from the old generation, whether by default or by design. Chief among this new generation of leadership was Dr. Hasan al-Turabi of the Islamist movement, ‘Abd al-Khaliq Mahjub of the Sudanese Communist Party, al-Sadiq al-Mahdi and Imam al-Hadi al-Mahdi of the Umma Party, Muhammad ‘Uthman al-Mirghani and al-Sharif Hussein al-Hindi of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), William Deng of the Sudan African National Union (SANU), Abel Alier of the Southern Front, Philip Abbas Ghaboush of the Sudanese Liberal Party, Ahmad Ibrahim Diraij of Darfur Front, al-Shafi‘ Ahmed al-Shaikh of Sudan Workers Trade Union Federation (SWTUF), Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim of Women’s Union, Ja‘far Nimairi the army officer, and Babikir ‘Awad Allah of the judiciary. This new generation of politicians and leaders entered the Sudanese political scene with competing interests and a tendency toward resolving political conflicts through different forms of violence exercised on each other. Yet, above this was the continued war of attrition between the Islamists and their sworn enemy, the Communist Party. The October Revolution brought this war into the open, as each party claimed a leading role in the revolution. At a more profound level, however, the new major fault lines over which the battle continued to be fought widened to include the entire Sudanese political landscape. This started

1 Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi in an interview at his home in Omdurman, January 2006.

when the Islamists felt a threat that the "communists had for the first time the chance to be the virtual rulers of Sudan"[2] through the NFP.

Although, the October government that succeeded the 'Abbud regime was not explicitly threatening because it was of a transitional nature, the Islamists were not alone; other political parties and actors felt threatened too. The 15-member government was headed by Sirr al-Khatim al-Khalifa, a professional, educator, and the head of the Khartoum Polytechnic, seven members from the National Professional Front, including Shafie Ahmed al-Sheikh of the Sudan Workers Trade Union Federation (SWTUF), and Sheikh al-Amin Mohmed al-Amin of the Gezira Tenants Association, five members from the political parties (one each from the Umma Party, the National Unionist Party, the People's Democratic Party, the Islamic Charter Front and the Communist Party), and two from the south. It was clear that the cabinet "represented a number of ideological strands, mainly of the left but by no means all communist."[3] However, the idea that the NFP might present an attractive alternative to the basic structure of the political parties represented a significant latent threat. This threat, which arose less from any declared policy of the NFP than its end effect on the order of political practice, induced terror in the hearts of the parties. This collective feeling of threat served to bring these political groups together in opposition to the NFP and those who stood behind it.

This threat became manifest after the NFP took power and its demands began to reflect a sort of a transformative role that would accommodate the left's ambitions. One of these demands, which was perceived by the political parties not only as a threat, but as a direct challenge to their authority, was that a 50 percent representation should be allocated for modern forces in the new parliament. The Front "proposed special constituencies for workers, tenants, intellectuals, and finally tried to resurrect the old Graduates' Constituencies."[4] In addition, what was alarming for the political parties and their main allies and supporters was the radical policies that the new government of Sirr al-Khatim set out to enact. These included a collective purge of senior government officials, preparatory plans for dissolving the native administration, and active policies supporting the Arab, Soviet, and international leftist regimes, their organizations, and their movements. Consistent with that agenda, "branches of the front were being established in different parts of the country, and it seemed possible that the front would engage as one unit in forthcoming elections."[5] Considered in this light, the overall agenda of the professional front, and the Communist Party behind it, was perceived by the Islamists and other political parties as a serious threat. Here, comparable political strategies, namely the vanguard model, could be observed in the ongoing battle between the Islamists and the communists as the main source of the

2 Abdelwhab El-Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in Sudan* (London: Grey Seal Books, 1991), 73.

3 Peter Woodward, *Sudan 1898–1989: The Unstable State* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publisher, 1990), 16.

4 Peter K. Bechtold, *Politics in the Sudan: Parliamentary and Military Rule in an Emerging African Nation* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1976), 217.

5 Tim Niblock, *Class and Power in Sudan: The Dynamics of Sudanese Politics* (New York: State University Press of New York, 1987), 23.

Islamists' sense of fear. As the perceived communist threat has been the inherent fear of the Islamists since the early days of the movement, this fear materialized with the success of the communist vanguard model. It is an established fact the "communist party of the Sudan has played over the years as a major campaigner for various social and economic reforms."[6] As a vanguard, the party was successful in positioning itself as "a proponent of the interests of workers and tenants, whereas the other Sudanese parties generally ignored those interest groups."[7] Of all ideological threats to the Islamists, it was the generalized political action of the communists that successfully turned into the leading program for the Front. Here, "the more radical the actions and pronouncements of the front became, the more vociferous were the demands of the old politicians to change the composition of the cabinet. There was talk of and even genuine concern over 'saving the country from Communism.'"[8] This, then, opened a window of opportunity for the Islamists to regroup these concerned parties for a "*from without*" strategy to help form "the National Front of Parties (NFP) as a counter-weight to the leftist-dominated NFP and then started a battle over the NFP, aiming to control it or, failing that, to destroy it."[9] As a result of the pressure applied by the NFP and the demonstrations of the Umma Party's followers from the *Ansar* brought en masse from western and central Sudan on the NFP government, al-Khalifa conceded to the pressure by submitting the resignation of his government. "Six days later he formed a new government, composed of ministers from the Umma Party, the NUP, the Islamic Charter Front and the southern front. The radical experiment was over."[10] It was through their collaboration with the traditional, and not the modern forces, that the Islamists were able to frustrate the program of their rival. Nevertheless, the predispositions and orientations of the modern forces and their role in the Sudanese political life stayed alive, alluring the imagination of the left.

On the other hand, the success of the strategy and the move the traditional parties have taken together with their new Islamist ally to constrain the NFP and its political program helped the Islamists to rethink their political presence and their program of action. According to their own historians, the Islamists "did not seem to have made any substantial breakthrough anywhere in the modern sector by May 1969. In trade unions, among educated women and in the professional organizations the hold of the left seemed secure."[11] Nevertheless, the Islamists tried to redeploy a "*from without*" strategy to bring together some political parties and groups to meet a specific political goal. It was through such processes that the Islamists' political actions, reactions and strategies were framed. In the aftermath of the October Revolution, the 2,000 core members of the Islamist movement developed three important strategies. First, they adopted the Islamic Movement or the Islamic Current to replace the name *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun* that came with an Egyptian package. According to al-Turabi this change had a functional necessity. He argues that "after the initial stage of its

6 Bechtold, *Politics in the Sudan*, 216.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 El-Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution*, 73.
10 Niblock, *Class and Power in Sudan*, 228.
11 El-Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution*, 99.

existence, the movement developed a marked sense of self-awareness, positioning itself accurately within its specific time and place parameters."[12] Nevertheless, as in previous internal conflicts in the Islamist movement, such moves proved to indicate intricate competitions and may be a rise of a particular group and the demise of another one. The alternative option, which was provided by that move and the political space that it generated, was a significant change in the leadership and the orientation of the movement.

In 1964, al-Turabi was elected secretary general to the Islamist movement. In a way, al-Turabi's rise to prominence positioned the movement within a Sudanese context, much as Babikir Karrar had always advocated, but without Karrar at the helm of the movement. This step automatically sidelined al-Rashid al-Tahir and those who followed the Ikhwan of Egypt school—Ja'far Shaikh Idris, Malik Badri, Sadiq Abdallah 'Abd al-Majid, Muhammad al-Shiekh Omer and others—and who emphasized the *tarbiya* [education] approach rather than politics. In large measure, the formation of the contemporary Sudanese Islamist movement took place within that development. Second, the Islamists formed the Islamic Charter Front which was described by al-Turabi as "an umbrella for the movement's public activities."[13] The Islamic Charter Front was an improvement and modification to the formula the Islamists tried before in 1955 under the name of the Islamic Front for the Constitution. It is the Islamists' way of deploying their party as a vanguard to bring in supporters and sympathizers and to continue to rally them around a certain message or a loose organization. Al-Turabi utilized this strategy effectively to lead the Islamists from the Muslim Brotherhood (1964) to the Islamic Charter Front (1964–69), to the National Islamic Front (1985–89), through to the National Congress (1998–99). He argues that "the expansion in the size of the movement itself necessitated reorganization, and forced it to implement large-scale changes."[14] Third, since that time and under the leadership of al-Turabi and his team, the movement built on its organizational potentials and embarked on what they thought of as an Islamist project that many within and outside the Islamist movement describe as "al-Turabi's project". Hasan Makki argues that the entire Islamists' project in the Sudan is more or less al-Turabi's project rather than the Islamists'.[15] Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim argues an inclination among the ranks of the "biographers of Hasan al-Turabi ... to see his 'fundamentalism' as an expression of the religious traditions of al-Turabis, a lineage of Sufis, Mahdists, jurists, and clerics that came into existence in the seventeenth century."[16] Such a view, Ibrahim argues, "obscures the politics of a shrewd thinker with a great ability to respond to and effect change."[17] Whether it obscured the politics

12 Mohamed E. Hamdi, *The Making of an Islamic Political Leader: Conversations with Hasan al-Turabi* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998), 14.

13 Ibid., 15.

14 Ibid.

15 Hasan Makki, interview by author, audio recording, Khartoum, Sudan, 28 December 2006.

16 Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim, "A Theology of Modernity: Hasan al-Turabi and Islamic Renewal in Sudan," *Africa Today*, Vols. 3–4 (Summer/Autumn) 1999: 164–222.

17 Ibid.

of a shrewd thinker or not, al-Turabi's chief innovation was to propel force to the Islamist movement. His longevity as a central and influential figure in the Islamist movement in the Sudan was due to his organizational skills, the mobilization of the movement's political artisans, and his ability to study the strategies of his opponents and to effectively invent and deploy a counter strategy, which could be similar to his opponents' strategies. In this way, he was able with varying degrees of success to outmaneuver his main rivals' political moves both inside and outside the Islamist movement. Chief among those rivals has always been the Communist Party. It is evident that al-Turabi paid close attention to the communists' political strategies and tactics and tried to counter or reinvent similar ones. He developed his notion of Islamism to supplant the communist movement as a first step in his overall program, or his grand project, the Islamic front. He built a tightly regimented organization and supplemented all that by the rhetorical stance of those lawyers who dominated the leadership of the movement as a close-knit group that stayed around him for the last forty years or more. Hence, al-Turabi's life, his vision, and his political as well as intellectual influences warrant investigation.

Who is Hasan al-Turabi?

As stated earlier, Hasan Abdalla al-Turabi was born in the eastern Sudanese city of Kassala in 1932. He was born into a famous religious family who had settled in the village of Wad al-Turabi—where his great grandfather was buried—located fifty-two miles south east of Khartoum. The legacy of his great grandfather Hamad al-Nahlan Ibn Muhammad al-Bidairi known as Wad al-Turabi is chronicled in Muhammad al-Nur b. Dayf Allah who lived in Funj Sultanate: *Kitab al-tabaqat fi khusus al-awliya' wa 'l-salihin wa 'l-'ulam 'wa 'l-shu'ara'fi 'l-Sudan*. According to Wad Dayf Allah, al-Nahlan was known as the first person in the Sudan to declare himself as al-Mahdi al-Muntazar (the expected Mahdi).[18] In his article about al-Turabi's theology, Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim brings in three important facts about al-Turabi's background. First, Ibrahim maintains that "al-Turabi does not view his village or lineage as 'traditional' in the sense that others use it in claiming the influence of cultural traditions in his life."[19] Second, al-Turabi, according to Ibrahim, "described his people as adept at forging tradition rather than submitting to its alleged imperative. He described them as 'free' and open to change."[20] Wad al-Turabi villagers, according to Ibrahim, started as Qadiriyya followers one day and they later switched to Khatmiyya. Third, during the Mahdia period some of the villagers fought with the Mahdists, although some "found it convenient to switch back to Khatmiyya, since colonialism showered them with political favors for opposing Mahdism."[21] It might be significantly important to ponder Ibrahim's reflection on the legacy of Abdalla al-Turabi, Hasan's father

18 Muhammad al-Nur b. Dayf Allah, *Kitab al-tabaqat fi khusus al-awliya' wa 'l-salihin wa 'l-'ulam 'wa 'l-shu'ara'fi 'l-Sudan* by Yusuf Fadl Hasan, Muhammad al-Nur b. Dayf Allah (Khartoum: Khartoum University Press, 1985), 160.

19 Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim, "A Theology of Modernity", 164–222.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

and his "experience as a cleric in a colonial Judiciary that relegated *shar'ia* law to a humiliatingly inferior position in relation to modern, civil law."[22] This experience, according to Ibrahim, deeply influenced al-Turabi's assessment of the broader patterns of change in two significant ways. First, "it makes his point that colonial clericalism, as family jurisdiction divorced from the business of the state, was only one example of the long-standing tradition in Islamic clericalism of separating *sharia* from state politics in order to safeguard personal piety."[23] Of course, the view that clericalism was incapable of reconciling Islam with modernity was not unique to al-Turabi, but was shared by the Islamists at large. Second, "he uses his father's experiences to question the ability of the secular *effendis* to implement a modernity in which Muslims would feel at home."[24]

The implications of this matter for al-Turabi the Islamist might be clear, especially when he states that the *ulam* , "whose education is based on books written hundreds of years ago and who believe nothing better could be produced."[25] According to al-Turabi, these *ulam* need to undergo an Islamist "Four Cleanups Movement" to become "more enlightened and look at religion in its wider meaning as a force against falsehood and injustice in all areas of life."[26] But his father's experience as an effendi helped young Hasan to have an ordinary Sudanese public education. He studied and graduated from the law department of the Gordon Memorial College in Khartoum in 1955. He received his LLM (Master of Laws) at the University of London in 1957. He spent two years as a lecturer in the law department of the University of Khartoum. In 1959, he left the Sudan for Paris to study for a PhD at the Sorbonne. He finally came to the Sudan in 1964 to resume his teaching career at the University of Khartoum. Al-Turabi joined Babikir Karrar's ILM in 1951. Though it might be difficult to assert, many would argue that Karrar's intellectual influence on al-Turabi is more than meets the eye. In many respects, the Karrar's ideas of the Sudanization of the Islamic movements and other unorthodox views regarding women and social justice reflect a deeper influence on al-Turabi's thought.

An important stage in the history of both al-Turabi and the Islamist movement started in 1964, when he returned from France with a PhD in Constitutional Law. Al-Turabi's star started to rise as an articulate spokesperson of the Islamists at the University of Khartoum as he argued that a peaceful resolution to the problem in Southern Sudan lay in extending democracy to the whole country. After the downfall of 'Abbud's military regime, al-Turabi continued his rise up the ranks of the Islamist movement. His family background and his relationship by marriage to the Mahadi family, together with his "status as a Western-educated Professor of Law and as Dean of the Faculty gave him the prestige that the Muslim Brothers had hitherto lacked."[27]

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22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Hamdi, *The Making of an Islamic Political Leader*, 38.

26 Ibid.

27 Gabriel Warburg, *Islam, Sectarianism and Politics in Sudan Since the Mahdiyya* (London: Hurst and Company, 2003), 180.

Under the leadership of al-Turabi, the Islamists gradually became a mainstay of political activism and agitation, sometimes instigating violent campaigns against the Communist Party both on and off the campuses of universities and other institutes of higher education. It was al-Turabi's aim to significantly change the balance in favor of the Islamists, especially after the gains the Communist Party had achieved in the aftermath of the October Revolution. The fact that the Communist Party "virtually ruled the Sudan in the early post-October months and scored a decisive win over Ikhwan [the Islamists] in the graduate constituencies made Ikhwan even more wary."[28] This happened at a time when the forces of the left appeared to be making progress throughout the Arab and Muslim worlds and in Nasser's Egypt in particular. What the Islamists needed to do "was to fight communism"[29] so as to alter that balance. To achieve that goal, the Islamists needed an organized cadre of party artisans to rally the Muslim sentiment in the country behind an Islamic constitution and to work diligently on "the unmasking of the treacherous elements represented by the Sudanese Communist Party."[30] Within such a strategy of reductionism, the Islamists initiated or participated in major violent acts against all shades of what they perceived as part of the communist Other. Hence, violence by the Islamists and their rivals claimed the lives of many students and thousands of other ordinary Sudanese citizens and has continued to blemish the image of the Islamists as well as other groups that collaborated with them ever since.

What could be described as the reverse of the other developments that the October Revolution generated is the tremendous rivalry and antagonism that turned several times into different forms of violence. Most of the leadership that emerged through the October Revolution paid a very high price because of that violence. Al-Hadi al-Mahdi, 'Abd al-Khaliq Mahjub, al-Shafie Ahmed al-Shiekh, William Deng, Joseph Garang, and Mahmoud Muhammad Taha, in addition to tens of military officers, lost their lives. Al-Sharif Hussein al-Hindi died in exile. Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani, Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, Hasan al-Turabi, Ja'far Nimairi, Philip Abbas Ghaboush, Babikir 'Awad Allah and Ahmad Ibrahim Diraij all spent long years in exile while some spent longer periods in prison too. And above all, thousands of innocent men, women, and children were killed for reasons related directly or indirectly to these forms of violence. All these calamities and sufferings were reproductions of a series of serious conflicts over problems inadequately managed, aspirations not satisfied, and what was perceived as the struggle to alleviate the sufferings of all or some of the Sudanese people. It is a paradox that those groups and political leaders, who worked as a united front to topple a military rule one day, used or accepted the military coup to achieve political gain or to thwart a rival's gain the next. Hence, as these fields of power turned into a "military arena" the expectations and practices of violence

28 El-Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution*, 81.

29 Ibid.

30 Quoted from the Islamists official newspaper *al-Mithaq al-Islami* in Abdelwhab El-Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in Sudan* (London: Grey Seal Books, 1991), 81.

have been even higher.[31] It is not surprising, therefore, that the intellectual fatigue of the state-manufactured elites and dissenters has made a social contract based on the Sudanese propensity and spontaneity to create bonds of togetherness, an unthought-of endeavor. Instead those power elites—as groups and individuals—have continued to enlist the military to resolve their political conflict, through the mode of the coup or violence. Behind every military coup in the Sudan—successful or abortive—has been a civilian political party or a group of conspirators, while within every military regime were groups of civilian as well as military collaborators as stated before. This pattern of continued resolution to the military solution as a mode or a justification for political action reflects a complex situation as well as serious problems of a political and social nature. In all of these instances, however, the state itself—controlled by military regimes—became the most important institution that all parties competed to control and turn into an apparatus of coercive force, a system of extensive repression against one another, and an instrument to impose a regulated ideological discourse from above. This change proved to have a detrimental impact on the livelihood and vitality of all other political and civil institutions, though its greatest effect was on the communists and the Islamists.

The Coup as Mode of Change

Of all the developments that followed the October Revolution, none was more aberrant than the emergence of violence, which was antithetical to the spirit and temperament of the revolution. The main trends of violence that characterized that period include different forms of confrontations, coups and counter coups as a means to constrain political development, especially when the balance of power tilts sharply toward the opponent's side. Outstanding among these trends of violence were the events that transpired as developments of what was called the High Teachers' Training Institute incident. Shawqi Muhammad Ali, a student of the High Teachers' Training Institute, was accused by the Islamists of defaming Islam and the Prophet Muhammad's wife 'A'isha at a public panel held at the Institute on 8 November 1965. The Islamists accused Ali of blasphemy and of communism at the same time. The Communist Party issued several statements disapproving what came in that speech, denying any relationship to the student, and accusing the Islamists of leading a conspiracy against the democratic system. Nevertheless, the Islamists insisted on their claim and organized and coordinated campaigns that led to the dissolution of the Communist Party and the expulsion of its eight elected members from the parliament. The Islamists called these campaigns against the Communist Party *thawrat Rajab* (or the Rajab revolution, after the Muslim month of Rajab). Mass marches intensified and turned into violent acts and attacks on the Communist Party's offices and members, as thousands of the Umma Party's followers, the *Ansar,* were purposely brought from rural areas to join the campaign against the communists. Demonstrators attacked the

31 Harold D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, *Power and Society: A Framework of Political Inquiry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 252.

Communist Party's offices in *Bait al-Mal*, one of the residential areas in Omdurman city. The Islamists worked diligently to set up what they called the Islamic Conference for the Defense of Religious Beliefs. The conference called for demonstrations, rallies to mobilize youth for jihad against the communists, and the drafting of an Islamic constitution to be submitted to the constituent assembly (the parliament) as soon as possible. The communists and their allies organized counter campaigns in defense of democracy, the constitution and public freedom. The resolution to ban the Communist Party was challenged in court by the Party and overruled, only to be reaffirmed by the Supreme Council of State. The Islamists wasted no time starting a new campaign promoting an Islamic constitution that "should represent the will of the people ... since the majority are Muslims their will should prevail,"[32] as al-Turabi's memorandum to the National Committee to the constitution stated. In addition, al-Turabi claimed that unlike other religions, Islam is a religion and a state, and it instructs the believers to govern in accordance with Allah's Revelation. He further explained that the adoption of non-Islamic political systems in the Sudan had not been in response to popular demand, but rather a work of despotic rulers with Western culture and orientations. He accused the ostensibly Islamic states that ruled Muslims of being bad models whose knowledge of Islam was very poor. Hence, an Islamic constitution would be a rule of the sacred law and not a rule of men because in Islam there is no place for theocracy or clergy men.[33]

In defining a new premise for an Islamist orientation and vision, al-Turabi borrowed Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb's idea of *hakimiyyat Allah.* He based his argument for an Islamic constitution, which in turn would lead to the establishment of an Islamic state, on his rejection of Eastern communism and Western capitalism and their economic systems, ways of life and types of democracy. He argued that in "the people's democracies people enjoyed economic equality but suffered from political suppression, while in liberal democracies free expression existed but only as a result of the market economy, which led to a monopoly on political power by the rich, while the mass of the people were helpless. Only *hakimiyyat Allah* (the sovereignty of God) would ... guarantee both the people's rights and their freedom."[34]

The coup led by al-Turabi's high-school mate Colonel Ja'far Muhammad Nimairi in May 1969 was a blow to the Islamists' strategy, including plans for an Islamic constitution and the establishment of a presidential system under the imam of the Ansar, al-Hadi al-Mahdi, in place of the parliamentary system. Some of the champions of the modern forces together with some of their vanguard party allies—whether by default or by design—were behind that coup as an attempt to thwart the Islamists and their allies' plan for an Islamic state. Nimairi, who identified himself and his regime as socialist, renamed the country as the Democratic Republic of the Sudan, deposed a democratically elected government, outlawed all political parties,

32 For a detailed account of the controversy over an Islamic constitution in the Sudan see Chapter 4 in Abdel Salam Sidahmed, *Politics and Islam in Contemporary Sudan* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 95–112.

33 Ibid.

34 Warburg, *Islam, Sectarianism and Politics in Sudan Since the Mahdiyya*, 182.

arrested virtually all political leaders, and dismissed, arrested or sent home about three hundred officers.[35] The only political groups that received favored treatment by the regime at its early days were the Communist Party, the left and Arab Nationalist organizations. Later, the regime nationalized banks, financial institutions and private companies, purged senior officials in civil service, the army and the police, suppressed trade unions, and opened the door to political and economic underground markets. That period has continued to have deep effects on the state of affairs in the entire country ever since.

Three major characteristics of this period deserve our attention. First, the military coup of 1969 and the state that emerged out of it were substantially different from what had been experienced in the Sudan before. It "was not another military take over. Nor is it merely a transfer of power from the civilians to the young officers who belonged to the Free Officers' organization. It inevitably meant a decisive shift in political and economic power in the Sudan and as such represented a real break with the past and a beginning of a new area in the political history and development in the Sudan."[36] It was the intention of those who planned for a political change through that coup not only to eliminate the possibility of the ascendance of the Islamists through an Islamic constitution and a presidential system, but also to reinstate a political order that could give *al-quwa al-Haditha*, the modern forces, the lead in the Sudanese life. The first two radio announcements recorded by the leaders of the coup that were broadcast that morning were significant in their content and style. Colonel Ja'far Nimairi, who was introduced as the coup leader and the chairman of the revolutionary command (RCC), was well known as an officer for his involvement in several failed or aborted coups. His name was among those Free Officers who had some role in tilting the balance towards a victorious outcome of the October Revolution. In addition, the second announcement by Babikir 'Awad Allah had brought alive to the Sudanese memory a well known public face. 'Awad Allah, the only civilian in the RCC, who later became deputy chair of the RCC, as well as both prime and foreign minister for the first government of the regime, was connected to the events that preceded the coup. As chief justice he opposed the expulsion of the members of the Communist Party from the parliament, declaring it unconstitutional. After resigning his position as chief justice in protest against the Supreme Council of State's decision reaffirming the parliament's resolution banning the party, 'Awad Allah became the presidential candidate of the left. 'Awad Allah was one of the public personalities that played a role in the public life since the early days of the first Sudanese parliament through the October Revolution and after. A few people knew by that time, however, that 'Awad Allah was a zealous Nasserite. Nevertheless, the first impression of some of the Sudanese people and other observers was that the new regime was a reincarnation of the October Revolution. Within a very short time, it was clear that the regime's military and civilian leaders had divergent views and even irreconcilable differences regarding the modern forces and how to incorporate them into the system ruling program. Hence, the regime faced serious internal and

35 Bechtold, *Politics in the Sudan*, 260–61.

36 Mohamed Omer Beshir, *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan* (London: Rex Collings, 1974), 228.

external challenges since its very first day. Effects and after effects of each one of these challenges impacted the future of not only the Islamists, but the state of affairs and the political lives of all players in the country.

The internal challenges were due to the relationship between the regime, the Communist Party and other parties in its direct relationship with the system. Along with this came the ideology, political orientation, and the model of the state that inspired each one of these groups. For ʻAbd al-Khaliq Mahjub, the Secretary General of the Communist Party, and those who supported his line, "the future of the Sudanese progressive movement should not be entrusted blindly to the safe-keeping of a group of petit-bourgeois army officers, however radical their declared intentions."[37] In a public statement widely distributed through leaflets on the first day after the coup, the Communist Party made it clear, in what was meant to be a conditional support to the new regime, that, "if the new regime was to maintain its progressive policies and outlook … it was essential for the Communist Party to retain its independent existence and an ability to criticize the regime where it felt necessary."[38] A central issue of contention, serious disagreement and conflict between the Communist Party and the regime was about the nature of the movement and where political authority should rest. The Communist Party argued that what took place on 25 May was *inqilab* (a military coup). To qualify and transform into a *thawra* (a revolution), the party insisted on a united revolutionary democratic front bringing together the revolutionary political parties, trade unions and associations which "would cooperate together and act together on agreed policies, but would retain the freedom to express distinctive views and opinions."[39] On the other hand, the Arab Nationalists and the Nasserite groups that included ʻAwad Allah, some RCC officers, some cabinet ministers and their political organizations were adamant in their rejection of the idea of a front, and were behind a model similar to the Egyptian socialist union as a reference point. According to that model, it was *wuhadat al-quwa al-wataniyya* [the unity of the national forces] and not that of the revolutionary forces that would govern the ideological orientation of the new regime. While the Communist Party was raising the slogan that calls for "the revolution is for the revolutionaries," the Arab nationalists advocated that "the revolution is for everybody" including any elements and individuals from the defunct political parties who would accept the revolution's principles. The disagreement between these two parties ignited a conflict by the second month of the coup when the RCC issued a resolution dissolving the Free Officers Organization and establishing an alternative organization known as the May Free Officers organization. That was the first step toward building an organization established according to the regime's own ideological orientation and not the Communist Party's. The conflict continued to escalate through consecutive events that included a re-shuffle of the cabinet in October in which four communist ministers left the government. In January 1970, the Sudanese Socialist Union (SSU) was established. In April, ʻAbd al-Khaliq Mahjub together with al-Sadiq al-Mahdi were banished to Egypt. On 16 November 1970, the RCC dismissed three of its

37 Niblock, *Class and Power in Sudan*, 250.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

members, Babikir al-Nur, Hashim al-'Ata and Faruq Hamad Allah; the first two were members of the Communist Party, while the third was a Ba'athist whose voting record in RCC meetings and critiques of the regime coincided with the first two. This act was followed by a systematic purge of "hostile elements", or those communists and their allies who adhered to 'Abd al-Khaliq's line, from the army and civil service. On 19 July 1971, Hashim al-'Ata and officers associated with 'Abd al-Khaliq's line managed to lead what was described as a highly organized surprise coup and seize power for three days. A bloody counter coup on the 22nd succeeded—intentionally or unintentionally—in restoring Nimairi to power, giving a crushing blow to the Communist Party. Leaders of the Communist Party such as 'Abd al-Khaliq, al-Shafie Ahmed al-Shiekh and Joseph Garang, and coup leaders Babikir al-Nur, Hashim al-'Ata and Faruq Hamad Allah were among the first to be executed. Thousands of party members and sympathizers were either sent to prison, purged from the army or civil service or fled the country.

What preceded the onslaught of the Communist Party in 1971 was the important second characteristic of the conflict among the communists themselves. It was out of the disagreement between a senior group within the party and 'Abd al-Khaliq's line and the hostility developed between these two groups later facilitated for the champions of the Sudanese Socialist Union (SSU) group and Nimairi to emerge, especially when the battle against al-'Ata's coup was commenced. Confrontation between the Communist Party and the regime was heightened by many factors; chief among them was the ever-increasing role of a group of senior party members who disagreed with 'Abd al-Khaliq, his opposition to the idea of the military coup before, and his conditional collaboration with the regime after the coup became a fact. Ahmed Suleiman, Mu'awiya Ibrahim, and 'Umar Mustafa al-Makki, three of the eight members of the Political Bureau, and Muhammad Ahmed Suleiman, a member of the central committee responsible for the party underground machine, disagreed openly with 'Abd al-Khaliq's line. But the differences between these two groups were deep and existed before the May coup. According to al-Qaddal, a communist scholar, the difference between these two groups reflects a fight "between two ideologies inside the Communist Party. In another sense, there were two parties within one organization unable to resolve their differences."[40] For 'Abd al-Khaliq and his majority group, who argue that "the coup tactic as an alternative to the work among the masses among the forces of the democratic front represent at the end the interest of the bourgeois and the petit bourgeois."[41] This fight became more vicious after the coup, and Ahmed Suleiman himself admitted that he was coordinating with the coup organizers. Suleiman was to say in another occasion that "Abdel Khaliq Mahjub who had always accused me of being a coup-monger, so it was natural for the 'Free Officers' whom he similarly accused, to take my side rather than his."[42] But even before the coup took place, Suleiman divulged his disagreement with the secretary

40 Mohamed Saied al-Gadal, *al-Hizib al-Shuii wa Inqlab 25 Mayo (the Communist Party and the May 25th Coup)* (Khartoum: dar al-Zahraa, 1986), 32.

41 Quoted in ibid., 32.

42 Ibid., 33.

general in one of the leading Sudanese dalies, *al-Ayyam*, avoiding the Party's semi-official newspaper *Akhbar al-Usbu'*. He wrote a series of three articles under the title *Ahmed Suleiman Comes out of His Silence* on 5th, 6th and 8th December 1968, arguing that "I see no way for stability without the protection of the armed forces which we have to recognize as an influential power and an instrumental factor in the life of the country."[43] Suleiman explained in his articles that a strategic alliance between the army and revolutionary forces was behind the success of the October Revolution and the downfall of the military regime. At the same time, Suleiman argues that the absence of such an alliance in the period that followed the downfall of the former regime was behind the success of the "reactionary forces" to turn the course and "steal the revolution" from the revolutionaries and regain their power. Hence, according to Suleiman an alliance between the revolutionary forces and the army is detrimental to the continuation and maintenance of a progressive regime as it pursues its objectives. Accordingly, Suleiman and his group offered unconditional support for the regime.

Central to the third characteristic of that period was the emergence of the Sudanese Socialist Union as the sole political organization. The demise of the Communist Party in 1971 was not, however, just a matter of an internal challenge or concern. The extensive deportment by which that ordeal was executed signified something more than a conflict within the political groups that clustered around the regime. It was by far the final and most serious blow to the grand project of a broad democratic front that 'Abd al-Khaliq and the Communist Party nursed for years and skillfully utilized through the 1960s and early 1970s. At the same time, it slowly set in motion an irreversible course of events that shaped the period that followed the 1971 coup. Rather than prompting the establishment of the SSU and emboldening its champions, this course of events slowly opened a backdoor to the competing grand project of al-Turabi, which had been sidelined since the coup took place in 1969. The rise of the SSU and its control of political activity in the country created a new context of political practice that paved the way for the cult of *al-Ra'is al-Qa'id* [the president leader] built around Nimairi. Within this new development, the state was recreated by a few ambitious personalities to transform the president into a conduit for their ideas that would not allow any room for public deliberation which did not praise the president. Although Tim Niblock describes these personalities as "technocratic bipartisans",[44] an examination of their historic background suggests otherwise. For example, the group led by Mansour Khalid, Ja'far Bakhiet, and 'Umar Haj Musa was ideologically conservative with roots in the Umma Party, and the group led by Badir al-Din Suleiman, Ahmed 'Abd al-Halim, and Nafisa Muhammed el-Amin had historic ties with the Communist Party. All these "technocratic bipartisans" knew very well that Nimairi "had no ideological nor intellectual pretensions."[45] Nevertheless, Nimairi and the individuals and groups of that community of interest played off one another. This process has been alive and developed its model because

43 Quoted in ibid., 32.

44 Niblock, *Class and Power in Sudan*, 265.

45 Mansour Khalid, *Nimeiri and the Revolution of Dis-May* (London: KPI Limited, 1985), 60.

a state of mutual dependency has been achieved by both parties. The inclusion of the technocratic bipartisans would strengthen the establishment of and continue to promote the personality cult of *al-Ra'is al-Qa'id*. At the time, promotion of such newcomers to high places, whatever their social or political weight might be, could only happen in such a system and through *al-Ra'is al-Qa'id*. So, they feel happy and praise the qualities of *al-Ra'is al-Qa'id* as long as they were employed and they lament the system the moment one of them was fired. Within such an "associated-dependent development" of that sort, both Nimairi and the technocratic bipartisans continued on feeding the monster of the ever hungry personality cult.

Nimairi disapproved of Nimairism as a philosophy of action and when Ahmed Babikir 'Isa, the secretary general of the government, boldly advocated Nimairism in a conference organized by some of the technocratic bipartisans, he was rebuffed. However, when an obscure prison officer with an Egyptian education and accent named Muhammed Mahjub Suleiman coined the term *al-Ra'is al-Qa'id*, the personality cult came walking in on its tiptoes. Although he was far from the public eye, Suleiman rose above the ranks to become an editor at *al-Quwwat al-Musallaha*, the Armed Forces newspaper, as well as Nimairi's speechwriter, the ghost-author of his books, and one of his closest advisors.

Chief among those technocratic bipartisans were Dr. Ja'far Muhammad Ali Bakhiet a professor of government, Dr. Mansour Khalid who studied economic theory at the prestigious Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and had his PhD from France, Omer Haj Musa an officer with an interest in local culture and decorative language, and the quiet southerner Abel Alier, a judge and human rights lawyer. Bakhiet, Khalid, Musa and Alier worked together to chase out the remaining communists and Arabists from the corridors of power and replaced them with a class of educated elites who contributed to a cult of *al-Ra'is al-Qa'id*, which turned PhD holders and university professors into the workers and developers of an autocratic regime with an "infallible" president leader. During that period three university vice-chancellors, five college deans and twenty-five university professors served under Nimairi.[46]

Soon this new move toward *al-Ra'is al-Qa'id* personality cult created its mode of reproducing and maintaining the system by hiring and firing personalities of high-level social and educational background. Unwritten qualification codes, identity management, and expression of loyalty to the leader worked themselves through trial and error and within a short time the system became operational. Within this system, firing is as important as hiring, because it defines the power center that dominates over all other individuals and groups and turns them into subordinates. At the same time, for that center of power to maintain its superior status and resources, it must continue to offer rewards for service well done and to deprive those who would not comply with the stipulations of the cult. A similar system was later used by al-Turabi to build and consolidate this personality cult during the period 1989–99.

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46 Mahmoud Muhammad Galandar, *Sanawat al-Nimairi: Tawthiq wa Tahlil li-Ahdath wa Waqa'i' Sanawat Hukm 25 Mayu fil-Sudan* (Omdurman: Markaz 'Abd al-Karim Mirghani, 2005), 263.

After a while this system became Nimairi's preferred game and style of rule, so those with ambitions to acquire high position within the system had to submit to Nimairi's rules. Under this system, cabinet reshuffles, appointments to senior positions in government and SSU, and the inclusion and exclusion of personalities and groups were all in the hands of the leader.

The success of the technocratic bipartisans in addressing one of the major external challenges to the regime, namely the southern problem, initiated a new era in the history of the regime. Abel Alier, Ja'far Bakhiet, Mansour Khalid and Abdel-Rahman Abdalla were successful in negotiating a peace agreement with the rebels of the South in Addis Ababa. The Addis Ababa agreement, signed on 2 March 1972, gave a big boost to *al-Ra'is al-Qa'id* personality cult as all the credit and admiration were given to Nimairi. Moreover, it opened the door for Nimairi to use his technocratic bipartisans as a model to promulgate a permanent constitution in 1973 and to use the same model to address other external challenges. Instead of confronting the northern "reactionary forces", as they have been described by the regime, and using the revolutionary violence to subdue them as has been the case since March 1970 with the Ansar and the Islamists on Aba Island, and July 1971 with the Islamists, and 1976 with the national front, the same model of negotiation was used with relative success. After long secret meetings, a national reconciliation was announced in 1977, which allowed for the main opposition parties of the Umma, the Democratic Unionist Party and the Islamists that formed the National Front in exile and who represented a serious challenge to the regime to return to the Sudan.

The May 1969 coup caught the Islamists off guard and completely demolished al-Turabi's grand project of the Islamic front. Al-Turabi himself and the Islamists paid a high price. By 1976 al-Turabi had spent about six years in prison. Hence, for al-Turabi and the Islamists who were "virtually decimated by the repeated crackdowns of 1973, 1975 and 1976,"[47] the national reconciliation was an opportunity to rebuild their organization and reinstate their presence in the Sudanese political landscape. But the reentry of the Islamists into the political field this time was different and more challenging. They were given a safe passage into the regime not as an organization, but as individuals. At the same time, and most importantly, they were allowed to operate within the *al-Ra'is al-Qa'id* project, which had been transformed into a state ideology and personality cult whose technocratic bipartisans were not all the way confident of al-Turabi and his Islamist espousal of this state ideology. It was Nimairi who hand picked each one of them and assigned each a position, including al-Turabi himself, and later fired them one after the other to keep the system working.

On the other hand, the Islamists who studied carefully the Communist Party's experience with the regime and Ja'far Nimairi's character were able to craft a program of action. Nimairi and the Islamists needed each other as long as there was a functional necessity and "associated-dependent" development of sorts for both parties. Eager to maintain stability, Nimairi saw a functional necessity in keeping the Islamists in as long as they could keep campuses across the country quiet. As for the Islamists, their relationship with Nimairi was functionally significant as long as he would allow for time and the opportunity to build their organization and gain experience and

47 El-Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution*, 113.

knowledge of the operation of the state apparatus. Although the Islamists have never ceased reaping all sorts of incentives from their relationship with Nimairi's regime, they stayed aware of the risk that the underpinnings of the system have always been insecurity and unpredictability. Yasin 'Umar al-Imam once argued that when they decided to join the national reconciliation, they were determined not to be taken off guard or go to jail again. Hence, the period that followed the reconciliation was a time of gradual growth of two parallel projects—each one trying to circumspectly outmaneuver the other—that eventually collided in 1985.

To preempt the Islamists' project, Nimairi and his technocratic bipartisans came up with an Islamization project centered upon Nimairi himself. Watching very closely the rising trend of political Islam in the region after the Iranian revolution and how the Islamists in the Sudan celebrated it, Nimairi's technocratic bipartisans were alarmed. By 1980 the first signs of that preemption policy started to show. In a press conference during the closing session of the National Congress of the SSU, Nimairi alarmed his Islamist allies by saying that he does not "want any Khomeinism in the Sudan."[48] Moreover, he fired al-Turabi from his positions as attorney general and chairman of the special committee for the return of the laws to compatibility with *shar'ia*, and revoked all steps of Islamization taken by the Islamists. Later, he appointed al-Turabi in a ceremonial job as an advisor in the palace. In formulating *al-Ra'is al-Qa'id* Islamization, Nimairi published his first book *al-Nahj al-Islami: Limadha?* [The Islamic Way: Why?] in 1980 through the ghost authorship of his press adviser Muhammad Mahjub Suleiman. According to Mansour Khalid, the book was "sought laboriously to trace Nimairi's latter-day evangelism to 1969 or before."[49] The book used very lucid and skillfully flowing language to reconstruct Nimairi's life since his early childhood so that it would fit into *al-Ra'is al-Qa'id* personality cult. By that time, Suleiman was the highest priest in its temple. The book describes how Nimairi's Islamic path started and continued to grow through time together with his leadership qualities. The opening statements of the introduction of the book refer to the time in which it was written, the closing of the fourteenth and the opening and the fifteenth *hijri* centuries. According to some observers, Nimairi had a "close association with *sufi* leaders such as the Abu Qurun *sufi* family, a branch of the Qadiriyya, which regarded the fifteenth century of the *hijra* as a turning-point in the history of Islam."[50] The Abu Qurun sect "believed in the 'second coming' of a great *mahdi*, who would be one of their adherents."[51] By September 1983, Nimairi launched his "Islamic path" as a preemptive action aimed at "taking the wind out of the sails of all the Sudanese Islamic movements (the Muslim Brothers, Mirghani and Sadiq el-Mahdi)." [52] In addition, Nimairi wanted to ride the wave, because he sensed that "Islam was gaining momentum inside and outside the Sudan."[53] Whether to fulfill the Abu Qurun prophecy or not, Nimairi

48 Khalid, *Nimeiri and the Revolution of Dis-May*, 255.

49 Ibid., 10.

50 Warburg, *Islam, Sectarianism and Politics in Sudan Since the Mahdiyya*, 153.

51 Ibid.

52 Khalid, *Nimeiri and the Revolution of Dis-May*, 257.

53 Ibid.

appointed a team of three lawyers. One of them was al-Nayyal ‘Abd al-Qadir Abu Qurun, the son of the leader of the *Sufi* sect previously mentioned. The other two were ‘Awad al-Jid Mohamed Ahmed and Badriyya Suliaman. Both al-Nayyal and ‘Awad al-Jid graduated from the University of Khartoum School of Law in 1970 and were one time students of al-Turabi. Mansour Khalid claims that “El Jeed told Nimairi when they first met that the Prophet appeared to him in a dream and told him that Nimairi was destined to save the Islamic nation.”[54] Khalid adds that “on entering Nimairi’s offices they are reported to make a point of turning their faces left and right greeting the invisible souls of the angels.”[55] Day after day, al-Turabi and his Islamists were kicking and screaming, grudgingly giving *Imam* Nimairi their *bai‘a* (allegiance). However, Nimairi’s move towards Islamization opened the door for a new form of conflict. While the Islamists pretended to publicly endorse Nimairi’s Islamization, their “aim was to inherit the earth after him, or properly, in spite of him, by staging a palace coup, putting an end to Nimairi’s excesses in the application of Shari’a and thus emerging as the saviours of Sudan and Islam.”[56] On the other hand, the remaining technocratic bipartisans in coordination with the security chief and first vice-president, Omer Mohamed al-Tayib, and old enemies of al-Turabi including al-Rashid al-Tahir, organized a campaign against the Islamists in order to sway Nimairi away from the Islamists’ side. By the time Nimairi realized that the implementation of the *sharia* was counterproductive, the war was already triggered in the South by his redivision of the region, and was aggravated by his insistence on the implementation of *sharia* in all parts of the country. Nimairi’s unpopularity inside the country was compounded by the state of siege from anti-Camp David agreement Arab countries and different types of pressures and harm to his regime continued to receive from neighboring Yemen Pact Soviet allies of Libya, Ethiopia and North Yemen. Hence, “he decisively embarked on his first move of distancing himself from the *shar‘ia*, paving the way toward its abolition: he accused the Islamists of conspiring to topple his regime and locked them up before his fateful trip to Washington in March 1985.”

In April 1985 a popular *intifada* ended the Nimairi regime the same way the October Revolution ended the ‘Abbud regime in 1964. It turned a page on sixteen years of violence that scarred every single group in the country. It was opened up by the death of Isma‘il al-Azhari, who was considered by most Sudanese to be the father of independence, and closed by the execution of the Republican Brothers’ leader Mahmoud Muhammad Taha. Both men were in or approaching their seventies when they met their fates. The Islamists were equally scarred in the beginning and the closing days of the regime. They were both inside and outside the regime because of the mutual mistrust that characterized their conflict riddled relationship with Nimairi’s team. The Islamists joined the Nimairi regime at a time of serious economic hardship and an oppressive political dictatorship. They did not help to create a better economic or political environment. Nevertheless, they were successful at hatching the double yolk of Nimairi’s political and economic black markets. In fact, the most

54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.

important development after the national reconciliation and the inclusion of the Islamists within the regime has been the transformation of the Islamist movement into an invisible corporation with a national and international scope. The most important development after the April *intifada* was the Islamists planning for and carrying out a coup. Hasan Makki explains that after April 1985 "the movement discussed the way to assume power within a declared nationalist program that agrees with the nature of the existing regional powers." The plan which was on the idea that "the war is trickery," and accordingly, "the coup should advocate a national agenda and declare that its objective is to get rid of the Islamists' movement and to reach an agreement with John Garang, and to include the security personnel known by their relations to the Americans and Egyptians."[57]

That is precisely what they did on 30 June 1989.

57 Hasan Makki, interview by author, audio recording, Khartoum, Sudan, 28 December 2006.

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Chapter 4

From the Corporation to the Coup

The coup engineered by the Islamists on 30 June 1989 was, by any reasonable standard, a blow to the democratic process in the country. A few of the Islamists, however, implicitly or explicitly disagreed with the idea of the coup in the first place.[1] Others expressed their disagreement through dissent or by parting company with the regime at a later stage. In retrospect, to some of the Islamists in the Sudan, the coup was a blow to the Islamist movement and its grand project too. Today, many of the Islamists would agree with Ghazi Salah al-Din al-'Atabani "that the first causality to the coup was the Islamist movement."[2] None of the Islamists inside or outside the Sudan would agree with him that "the Islamists did not rule"[3] the country through *al-Inqadh al-Watani* [National Salvation regime]. If the first statement reflects a reality, the second might suggest an irony. Several Sudanese and other observers have seen and would agree with al-'Atabani that the Islamists movement in power has shrunk in membership and would add that its credibility and moral standing have been severely damaged since the early days of the coup. Nevertheless, the coup, which mobilized and involved the military, paramilitary groups, the Islamists and their sympathizers into what they all called *al-Harakat al-Qawmiyyah li Tashih al-Awdaa* [The National Movement for the Rectification of the State of Affairs] and which was apparently led by fifteen junior officers that included three non-Muslim southerners, was not an ordinary coup. Military experts, scholars, and journalists[4] agree with the Islamist scholar and writer al-Tayyib Zain al-'Abdin that the Islamist movement planned for the coup even within its minutest details. Zain al-'Abdin discloses that "the officers who took over the leadership of the coup after its success were one part of the tools of the execution and they were neither the brain nor the

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1 Both Hasan Makki and al-Tayyib Zain al-'Abdin told the author in interviews that al-Tayyib Zain al-'Abdin was the only member of the Shura council who objected to the coup. In his book *al-Turabi wa al-Inqadh the struggle of Desire and Identity*, Dr. 'Abd al-Rahim 'Umar Muhy al-Din, an Islamist historian, argues that the decision to assume power through a military coup was taken by the Especial Branch which is made of six members headed by Hasan al-Turabi.

2 Most of the Islamists who subscribe to the idea that al-Turabi manipulated the Islamist movement for his own gain would argue that the Islamist movement was the victim of the coup. A statement that has been repeated again and again in all the interviews I conducted with Hasan Makki, al-Tayyib Zain al-'Abdin, and Ghazi Salah al-Din al-'Atabani.

3 Ghazi Salah al-Din al-'Atabani, interviewed by the author at his office, recording, Khartoum, Sudan, 4 January 2006.

4 See Isam al-Din Mergahni, *al-Jiash al-Sudani wa al-Sayysa* (Sudanese Army and Politics), Haydar Ibrahim, *Siqout al-Mashru al-Hadari* (The Collapse of the Civilizatioanl Project), and Abdel Rahman al-Amin, *Saat al-Sifr* (Zero Hour).

body that controlled the planning or the execution processes."[5] He further explains that the Islamist movement represented by Hasan al-Turabi and a few other leading members around him "carried out most—if not all—of the major decisions issued in the name of the Revolutionary Command Council, and in the name of the president of the republic later, sometimes with consultations with the military and sometimes without that."[6] As a consequence, the distinguishing feature of what transpired out of that coup—whether called *Thawrat al-Inqadh al-Watani* [the Revolution of National Salvation] or *al-Mashru' al-Hadari* [the Civilizational Project]—was not a typical military regime. Hasan Makki, al-'Atabani and other former disciples of al-Turabi describe the coup as an introductory phase of al-Turabi's own project to rule the country. According to al-'Atabani, al-Turabi used the Islamist movement as a ladder to climb to the peak of power and then threw that ladder away when he thought that he reached the peak. However, when he realized that he needed it the most as he had not yet reached the peak, he could not find that ladder.[7] But what has happened in the Sudan since the coup of 30 June 1989 goes beyond what could be described as al-Turabi's project and/or an ordinary military regime.

Contrary to the expectations of those who subscribed to the idea that the time of military coups was over and that a transition to multiparty politics had overtaken Africa linking it to the "third wave of democracy" that started in the 1970s, a non-democratic rule was established and maintained in the Sudan. On the other hand, Muslim intellectuals who aspired to build an Islamic state became less enthusiastic in the decade after the Iranian revolution, as the problematic nature of such as state became clear. Nevertheless, the Sudanese Islamists installed their new Islamist model of state as the first of its kind in the Sunni Muslim world. At the most basic Islamic level, the level of principles that command the respect of the entire population, both Muslim and non-Muslim, the Islamists failed from the very first day to set a moral standard. By this one could refer to the entire range of deceits through which the Islamists tried to disguise the true nature of the coup. These deceits started by sending al-Turabi and some Islamist leaders to "prison and al-Bashir to the palace" as al-Turabi himself later disclosed. These deceits compounded other behaviors that became the norm after the coup, which did not adhere to the ideals of Islam as understood by the ordinary Muslim. This disconnect between the Islamists in power and the rest of the population provided conflicting contexts to the Islamists on one side and the rest of the population on the other. Finally, the end result of the Islamist project ridiculed the dreams of those who believed one day that the military leadership of the coup would melt away and the civilian Islamists under the leadership of the *shaikh* Hasan would take over.

Consideration of the factors, broad consequences and ideological features of this development, however, might help distinguish and situate the first Islamist republic

5 Al-Tayyib Zien al-Abdin, *Maqqalat an al-Hrakah al-Islamiyya fi al-Sudan (Articles About the Islamist Movement in the Sudan)* (Khartoum: al-Dar al-Sudnia lil Kutub, 2003), 72.

6 Ibid.

7 Ghazi Salah al-Din al-'Atabani, interview by author, recording, Khartoum, Sudan, 4 January 2006.

in the Sunni world in its local, regional, and global contexts. At the same time, such consideration can also serve as a case study for the overwhelming majority of the Islamists at home and abroad who received it with unconditional support and great enthusiasm while a few Islamists at home and abroad continued to look at it with degrees of conflicted enthusiasm or total disagreement. On the other hand, increasing numbers, if not the majority of the Sudanese population, continued to express their opposition to the Islamist state and disagreement with its project in sometimes violent ways. Part of this could be reflected in what al-'Atabani described as "retrenchment in the popularity of the Islamists' project since they assumed power."[8] All of these situations, different as they are, represent part of the Sudanese condition in its complexity and an example of the Islamist experience within its different forms of representation, logic of practice and patterns of engagements within its various fields. The dialectic force of these engagements within their forms of rejection, ambivalence and acceptance to the phenomenon and its transformative potentials are what this study intends to address in this and the coming chapters.

Property, Power and Violence: The Islamists' Pattern of Stratification

As explained in the previous chapter, one of the most important developments after the national reconciliation and the inclusion of the Islamists within the Nimairi's regime was the transformation of the Islamist movement into an invisible corporation with a national and international scope hiding behind the Islamic economy, its banking system, and their Islamist managers and workers. Different Islamist groups and individuals including managers and workers have been transferred and promoted back and forth from the party to the private institutions, from government to the public sectors and from private and public sector to government. In this way these groups developed and shared knowledge, accumulated wealth, and developed new tastes as markers that set them apart from the rest of the population and fellow Islamists as a new and a distinctive class. Within their different phases of ascendancy to wealth, status and power, these groups and individuals worked together within the expanding Islamic economy and its banking system, with new groups of what was called *tujar al-jabhah* [the Islamic Front merchants] and their Islamist state. The structure of relations and mutual interests they developed as they worked together and exchanged benefits developed an ideological and political hegemony, giving them the ability to control the social and political experience of the Islamist party and later the state. Some of the Islamist scholars discovered very late that "the market mentality and the capitalist groups that started to become active and expanded until they were about to 'swallow' what was remaining from our Islamic organization which we did not join in the first place except for running away from wild capitalism."[9] Other Islamist scholars saw only one side of this development, namely the power that a group within the political organization has gained from its relationship with this

8 Ibid.

9 Al-Tijani Abdel Gadir, "al-Rasimaluon al-Islamoon, mada yafaloon fi al-harka al-Islamia" [The Islamists Capitalists: What do they do with the Islamic Movement?] (Khartoum: *Al-Sahafa* daily, 12 December, 2006).

complex development. That way Abdelwahab el-Affendi described what happened to the organization as the empowerment of a "super party" that emerged out of this development. He argues that a secret apparatus not accountable to anybody within the broader Islamist organization, except for al-Turabi, was established. He adds that this closed and secretive body has developed "from an early time its 'special language' that has become a reference for itself. If this body says today that the Islamic belief requires a war against the United States and the world, then it would be like that, and if it came back to brag about providing services to the CIA then that would be the *jihad* incumbent upon every Muslim."[10] In fact, it was not the party that took over the financial systems, as 'Abd al-Qadir claims, but rather it was the financial institutions that took over the party, transforming it into a corporation in order to oversee all political activity and to control the livelihoods of those affiliated with the party. On the other hand, this development produced not only a secret group or a "super *tanzim*" [super apparatus] as el-Affendi explains, but also an objective quality of the Islamist organization itself that has changed the reconstruction of group solidarity among an emerging social class and opened the way for serious transformative processes that led to the development of what I call a corporation. The more the institutions of this corporation—banks and other financial institutions—and their affiliates—*Monazamt al-Dawa* and other organizations—expanded their influence into the economic and the social fields and coalesced into the party, the more they shaped the party, undertaking its political and social roles and turning it into a corporation to oversee that expanding structure. Sharing a mutually compatible top-down model, the nature of the universe that emerged out of this phenomenon was essentially inherent in the nature of the corporation and in the expressive culture of the Islamist movement as expressed by al-Turabi.

Within these developments serious internal changes emerged and expressed themselves in a political and economic regime and a state that identified itself as Islamic that particular al-Turabi ideology. One can clearly see examples of the manner of what could be described as different aspects of identity management and its pedigrees, and the ways and means of admission into the new Islamist corporate field and class. In a recent article published in the Sudanese daily al-Sahafa, al-Tijani 'Abd al-Qadir disclosed that the young Islamist journalist 'Abd al-Mahmud al-Kurunki wrote an article in the early 1980s critical of the behavior of some of Faisal Islamic Bank's employees and submitted it to Yasin 'Umar al-Imam, who was the Chairman of al-Ayam Newspaper Editorial Board. The article ended up in the hands of al-Turabi, who did not like it, and accordingly summoned the author, advising him not to publish it, but rather to meet with those bank managers and to convey the content of the article to them in the form of advice instead. Young al-Kurunki refused and explained his situation by saying to his *shaikh* al-Turabi, "suppose that I gave them my advice and later al-Tayib al-Nus [the wealthiest of *tujar al-jabhah*] gave them a different advice, which one would they take?" Such an example cannot be the utility of one person's values or assumptions as other experiences add to that

10 Abdelwhab El-Affendi, "Mudilat al-Suber Tanziem fi Siraat al-Islamien (Sabiqan) fi al-Sudan" [The dilemma of the Super Organization in the struggle among the (former) Islamists in the Sudan] (Khartoum: *Al-Shahafa* daily, 29 November 2006).

phenomenon as indicators to determinants of utilities of identity management. T. Abdou Maliqalim Simone gave different examples including that of Abu Gassim Goor Hamid whom he described as ethnically "a Baqqara—his father was a Baqqara *shaykh* and his mother part Azande, Dinka, and Baqqara. Gassim is dark-skinned, African featured. A shepherd as a child, he worked his way up through the provincial schools to earn a degree in theater at the University of Khartoum."[11] Simone explains that although Gassim co-founded *al-Wan*, which was to become one of the most popular Islamist tabloid papers, "he was not the man with the money", that comes from the Islamic financial institutions. The publisher, "paid Gassim's meager salary over years and gave him space for his idiosyncratic and provocative texts, but maintained him in a perpetual state of marginality in the organizational structure."[12] Other aspects of identity management include social status, aptitudes, and perhaps even certain ethnic relations and attitudes that qualify or disqualify individuals for access to the different strata of the corporation. These emerging groups within their distinctive regional and ethnic backgrounds came to be housed in collective strata within the changing Islamists structure as a class for itself whose practice mediated factors and conditions and the state of the system.

To understand how these developments emerged and acted together to recreate the Islamist movement in its new corporate shape, we need to return to the 1969 coup, when Ja'far Nimairi interrupted the Islamist project, and gained control of a new regime that meandered between the political extremes in the country for sixteen years. How the Islamist movement's actions and reactions were informed by these developments and simultaneously transformed and situated within conditions and contradictions of possibility, or the set of relations within which other factors gain their sense as Foucault reasons, is key to what would follow.

The Trail of Violence

For many, Ja'far Nimairi's coup on 25 May 1969, both in purpose and reality, was a blow to the Islamists' political designs and to their allies' plans for a presidential republic. All the Islamists were convinced that that the coup was staged by a communist enemy to destroy their political plans and to eliminate the possibility of an Islamic constitution and presidential republic that they worked hard to put in the national agenda. The Nimairi coup and the May regime that emerged out of it marked the beginning of new developments that shaped the life experience of the Islamists, their project, and their political growth. Three major developments relating to wealth, violence, and power in the life of Islamists are connected to the socio-political transformation that emerged as the Nimairi regime stepped up its violence towards the Islamists and other political parties opposing his regime. The first of these developments relates to the high numbers of Sudanese migrating outside the country due to state violence directed towards different political groups.

11 T. Abdou Maliqalim Simone, *In Whose Image? Political Islam and Urban Practices in Sudan* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 192.

12 Ibid.

Among these were different groups of Islamists who found refuge in Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Libya, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada. The second development concerns the ideological battles of the Cold War and the different but sustained strategies followed by conservative and revolutionary regimes in the region. To understand the impact of this development one need only look to regional players such as King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, Anwar al-Sadat of Egypt, Gamal Abdul Nasser of revolutionary Egypt, Moammar Gadafi in Libya, Saddam Hussein in Iraq, and Mengistu Haile Mariam in Ethiopia, who gave refuge, military supplies, and training, as well as political and financial support to different warring parties in the Sudan. Finally, as Mahmood Mamdani maintains, "state terror has been [a] parent to non-state terror and, having given rise to non-state terror, it has then proceeded to mimic it."[13] In this way, the period that preceded the national reconciliation in 1977, witnessed different patterns of *hijra* [migration] outside the country and the ascendancy of violence and armed confrontations between the regime and those who opposed it. These included elements both in and out of the National Front, a coalition of opposition groups headed by al-Sadiq al-Mahdi and his Umma Party, al-Sharif Husain al-Hindi, a former finance minister and leader of the DUP, as well as the Islamists who escaped prison in the Sudan, Father Philip Abbas Ghabboush of the Sudanese Liberal Party, and the Ba'ath Party. These forms of opposition to the regime took different shapes that included unrest among workers and students, military coups, and open hostilities. Both migration and violence acted as transformative processes with deep effects in reconstructing the Islamist movement, outlining the aspects that governed to a certain respect its future development.

Dramatic events started as early as November 1969 and escalated into street clashes between the regime and the Ansar paramilitary organization in Wad Nubawi—a neighborhood of Omdurman with an Ansar majority—in March 1970. On 27 March 1970, government forces bombed Aba Island—a location of historical significance for the Ansar in the White Nile about two hundred miles south of Khartoum—where al-Hadi al-Mahdi, the Imam of the Ansar, took refuge surrounded by some of the Islamist leadership who fled the regime's crackdown. Al-Imam al-Hadi and Muhammad Salih Omer, a leading Islamist, were among those who were killed during that struggle.

As explained in the previous chapter, in July 1971, Hashim al-'Ata, a communist and a former member of Nimairi's Revolutionary Council, led a successful coup against the regime. The coup was short lived only to be followed by the bloodiest and "perhaps the most extensive Communist hunt-down in Middle Eastern experience."[14] Nimairi accompanied his turn to the right after the events of 1971 by stepping up his campaigns against members of the Communist Party, the Ba'ath Party, the left, and their sympathizers. But as the opposition to the regime was "unwilling ... to share

13 Mahmood Mamdani, Q & A Asia Source Interview, http://www.asiasource.org/news/special_reports/mamdani.cfm.

14 Peter K. Bechtold, *Politics in the Sudan: Parliamentary and Military Rule in an Emerging African Nation* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1976), 269.

and thus endorse Nimairi's power",[15] the regime turned its attention to the south. As Bona Malwal explains, by reconciling with the south, Nimairi achieved two important objectives: to end the war in the south and in "so doing ... he might even ingratiate himself so as to receive a second strong ally."[16] The 1972 Addis Ababa agreement and the alliance with the south was not a safeguard for Nimairi from violence and challenge to his regime as the National Front continued to prepare itself for new rounds of confrontation with the regime. August 1973 marked a nationwide demonstration—named the Shaban Revolution after the Muslim month—spearheaded by the University of Khartoum Students Union. Demonstrations continued for days, attracting trade unions and professional organizations, and forcing the regime to declare a state of emergency. Some students were killed during the confrontation between the demonstrators and the anti-riot police, other leaders of the Front, trade unions and professionals were detained, while universities and institutions of higher education were closed. The failure of the Shaban demonstrations to turn into a civil disobedience, similar to the October 1964 Revolution, led the Islamists and the Front to think of other options for unseating the regime. By September 1975 Colonel Hasan Hussain lead a coup attempt which was aborted the same day. Although the Islamists admitted that some of their cadres—namely judge 'Abd al-Rahaman Idris—participated in the coup, Mansour Khalid claims that among those who took part "were elements that played a role in re-instating Nimairi in July 1971."[17] Khalid adds that "the majority of those who participated in the coup attempt came from western Sudan."[18] Khalid reasoned that "Western Sudanese looked with envy on the South's autonomous status and the fact that it was the recipient of government and international aid, while the West remained as underdeveloped as ever, especially the Nuba Mountains."[19]

The continuation of these violent confrontations shattered each of the conflicting parties hopes for an order based on their own political program, and locked these groups into an uphill fight for survival. While Nimairi perceived the Islamists and other political parties as a threat to his regime and the stability of the country, he harnessed repression as one of his regime's fortifications. On the other hand, the counter violence the opposition directed towards the regime was aimed at seizing the state and its coercive power in order to turn it against their own rivals. The Islamists and their imprisoned leader al-Turabi condemned Nimairi—from the prism of his prison cell—and described his secular state as an infidel (*k fira*) that should "atone to religion."[20] As long as such atonement was not forthcoming, the Islamists wielded all forms of power that they could, and designated that state as a fair game for local

15 Bona Malwal, *The Sudan: A Second Challenge to Nationhood* (New York: Thornton Books, 1985), 15.

16 Ibid.

17 Mansour Khalid, *Nimairi and the Revolution of Dis-May* (London: KPI Limited, 1985), 143.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim, "A Theology of Modernity: Hasan al-Turabi and Islamic Renewal in Sudan," *Africa Today*, Vols. 3–4 (Summer/Autumn, 1999): 164–222.

jih d because of its sinful conduct. While the Islamists and other political opponents were reconstituting themselves through that period of time for gaining ground on different fields of opposition and fighting for survival within the Sudanese political landscape, three different forms of migration *hijra* took place with deep consequences influencing the Sudanese politics and shaping the Islamists movement more than any other political group.

The *Hijra* to the Camp

The violence Nimairi's regime directed towards those who opposed his 1969 coup had not diminished the appeal of an open democratic society to the people or their political leadership. On the contrary, it increased that appeal. However, the violence directed political activities to the underground. Nimairi banned all political parties and opposition groups. He nationalized the press and imposed tight state control on all forms of media. By this time, the regime had developed the state's technical capacity and power of effective surveillance and tools of repression as one of the main defenses of the regime from internal opposition. The opposition started to challenge the regime as early as the first day of the coup. Violence, in the form of detention of real and potential opponents of the regime, started the first day too and continued to escalate as the opposition sustained its violent and non-violent resistance to the regime.

The Ansar under the leadership of al-Imam al-Hadi al-Mahdi, the Umma Party under the leadership of al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, the DUP under the leadership of al-Sharif al-Hindi, and the Islamists denounced the military coup, and particularly the involvement and support of the communists, demanding a return to democratic rule. Al-Hindi and some of the Islamist leaders who remained out of jail or fled imprisonment in Khartoum found refuge and shelter in Aba Island by joining al-Imam al-Hadi there. As mentioned above, clashes erupted between the regime and the Ansar paramilitary organization in Wad Nubawi on the outskirts of Omdurman in March 1970, just a few months after the coup. On 27 March government forces sealed the island and bombed the defiant al-Imam al-Hadi, his Ansar, and the Islamist supporters who surrounded them. About 3,000 people died during that battle. Although al-Imam al-Hadi managed to escape, he was killed while attempting to cross the border into Ethiopia. Some of the Islamists leaders, including Muhammad Salih al-Karuri, were captured and detained, while others like Osman Khalid had already left the country for Saudi Arabia and Europe. The second response to the coup was that groups of the Ansar and the Islamists migrated to Royal Ethiopia to start their first military training camps there. According to al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, "twenty thousand of the Ansar"[21] arrived in Ethiopia to join these camps. The Islamists were accused by Nimairi of instigating an insurgency against the regime. Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi too

21 Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, *al-Wifaq wa al-firaq bien (al-Umma) wa (al-Jabhaa) fi al-Sudan: 1958–1995. [Agreement and Disagreement between (al-Umma) and the [Islamic] (Front) in the Sudan: 1958–1995]* (Cairo: Umma Party External Information Publications, 1995), 14.

accused the Islamists of agitation and pushing his uncle and the Ansar into a very costly confrontation with the regime that ended in a massacre of the Ansar.[22]

The left-oriented Nimairi coup introduced developments that contributed to the Arab and regional cold war. Deeply opposed to the new regime's declared socialist "revolution", the conservative, anti-communist Ethiopian monarchy gave support to the Sudanese opposition and opened camps for migrant Ansar and Islamists. Among Sudan's neighbors, Ethiopia, which suffered the most from the help that revolutionary regimes in the region provided to the Eritrean revolutionary liberation movements, was most threatened by having an additional revolutionary regime at its back door. But Ethiopian support of the Sudanese opposition proved to be contingent on the Nimairi regime's leftist orientation. As soon as Nimairi broke with the communists in 1971, Ethiopia changed its attitude towards the regime and gave a helping hand to Nimairi and his regime to be incorporated within the conservatives club. Emperor Haile Selassie hosted and brokered the Addis Ababa agreement of 1972 between the Sudanese regime and the rebels in the south, opening a new avenue for Nimairi to forge new regional and international alliances. Consequently, Ethiopia withdrew its support for the Northern opposition while international sympathy for the regime and those who opposed it shifted as the United States started to look upon Nimairi favorably and its Cold War rival, the Soviet Union, perceived him negatively.

It did not take that long for the opposition to find support from Libya through the mediation of the father of Sudanese Islamism, Babikir Karrar, who left the country in 1972 to join and work closely with the Libyan leader Muammar al-Gaddafi. Under Libyan auspices, the Ansar and the Islamists were moved from Ethiopia to the oasis of Kufra where new training camps were opened. On 2 June 1976, one of the bloodiest confrontations between the regime and National Front took place as "one thousand fighters from the Ansar and fifty from the Islamists"[23] who had military training in Libya were sneaked into the country from their training camps in the oasis of Kufra. The three prong plan started by staging surprise military raids and capturing main military installations, strategic government media and communications buildings, and providing additional military support from Libya to accompany the Front leadership from Libya, while simultaneously mobilizing internal opposition and local support for the takeover. The operation which was led by a retired army colonel—Muhammad Nur Sa'ad—failed. Some of the participants including Sa'ad were captured and killed, others tortured and imprisoned. A few found their way back to Libya while al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, al-Sharif al-Hindi and other ringleaders of the failed attack were sentenced to death in absentia.

For the Islamists, the defeat in that armed confrontation with the regime was due to the failings of their allies in the DUP and the Umma Party. Similar negative sentiments toward the Islamists were expressed by the Umma and DUP leaderships. All of this contributed to deep-seated and negative feelings that the Islamists have been harboring towards what they call the sectarian political parties. This bitter experience heightened the Islamists' need to build their own military wing. The Islamists reacted to this new situation in several ways. The young Islamists,

22 Ibid., 10.

23 Ibid.

especially university students, continued to join the training camps in Libya,[24] but this time with the intention of receiving training and the experience needed to build their own military force. In the coming years, this military arm was to become an important wing of the movement that participated in the 1989 coup. Amin Hasan 'Umer discloses that the Islamist movement deployed more than one thousand of the best young men who participated in the military planning and execution of the coup. Later the military faction transformed into the Popular Defense Force (PDF) which General Omer Ahmed al-Bashir described one day as the "school for national and spiritual education" through which "the Sudanese citizen's mind can be remodeled and his religious consciousness enhanced … to restructure and purify society."[25]

The *Hijra* to the Campus

The prevalence of the state and the public culture of violence in the Sudan during the Nimairi era introduced a militant ideology within the Islamist student movement. A new generation of student Islamists participated in the major demonstrations against the regime in 1973 and in the armed confrontation of July 1976. In addition to the strict party organization, many of the senior members of this new generation of Islamists received military training in the camps in Libya together with other opposition groups of the National Front.

The culmination of repression and the incarceration of political activists including the Islamist leadership coincided with a rare opportunity for the younger generation to present themselves in university campuses as a growing opposition group to the regime. The October Revolution provided campuses in general and the University of Khartoum in particular with a relative degree of political freedom, especially freedom of association, which the rest of the country lacked. Although they were well acquainted with the pain of the humiliation and oppression of the older generation and the leadership of the Islamists in the Sudan, as well as under Nasser's regime in Egypt (Nimairi's ally and role model), the young Sudanese Islamists developed as their counterpart in Egypt "a hatred of reality, a need to revenge what nationalism, Arabism, socialism, and all that Nasser and the Ba'th party stood for."[26]

On the other hand, among the most important developments during the Nimairi period were rising patterns of rural to urban migration, the continuing expansion of education in general, the introduction of free higher education, and the open door for higher education opportunities in Egypt and the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries. Such developments provided new avenues for many students coming from the periphery and the lower and middle classes to higher education and opened the

24 Abdel Rahim Omer Mohi al-Din, *al-Islmiuoon fi al-Sudan: Dirasat al-Tatour al-Fikri wa al-Syasi 1969–1985 (The Islamists in the Sudan: a Study of the Ideological and Political Development 1969–1985)* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr lil Tibaa wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzie, 2004), 102.

25 Ann Mosely Lesch, *The Sudan: Contested National Identities* (Indiana University Press, 1998), 134.

26 Hasan Hanafi, "The Relevance of the Islamic Alternative in Egypt," *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 4, Nos. 1–2 (1982): 60–62.

entire Sudanese landscape for new social groups from different parts of the country for an upward mobility. By that time, "a large number of the Brothers' supporters had become teachers in western provinces, and consequently there has been major support for the movement there."[27] The relatively open environment that the October Revolution secured for the University of Khartoum, as the main shrine and the citadel of freedom, helped the student unions to enjoy a degree of freedom and gave the Islamists an opportunity not only to recruit members from among dissenting students, but also to accommodate newcomers already recruited at the high schools. Some of the students coming from far away regions—especially Kordofan and Darfur—found in the Islamists' social pattern of behavior a conduct that commits to and appears to conform with the values of their home cultures. And in the Islamists' organization, they found a surrogate mother and an enclave that could maintain their religious and (to a certain extent) their cultural identity. This new experience and its orientation socially organized those newcomers to the big city and provided them with refuge and a home that protected and sheltered them from the culture shock that some of them endured when they arrived in secular, metropolitan Khartoum.

On the other hand, the October Revolution and its legacy gave generations of students a sense of their own power and continued to endow them and the university with the esteem and prestige of an institutional space regarded as the country's seat and flagship of opposition to dictatorship and a mainstay of activism for civil and political rights. Whereas the student unions operated openly, state terror had erupted from time to time subjecting the leaders of these unions and student activists to harassment and imprisonment. As a result, that phase of the Nimairi period provided the Islamist movement with a new generation of party members and activists whose life experience was shaped and deeply influenced by two conflicting dynamics: the special status of the university and state terror perpetrated by a regime that viewed itself as threatened. Another important dynamic to consider was the mutual violence that both the regime and its opponents exercised against each other and the mistreatment of political opponents, combined with the hardships that characterized the Nimairi period, which opened the door for a culture of violence. This culture of violence was demonstrated in the students' life by al-Tayyib Ibrahim Muhammad Khair, nicknamed the iron rod or *Sikha*, who was notorious for the use of such a rod against political opponents. *Sikha*'s violent conduct assaulting students at campuses stands as the example and the symbol of the conformation between the Islamists students at institutions of higher education and their opponents, especially the communists and the Republican Brothers. From the late 1960s through the 1990s, these Islamist students resorted to violence in order to intimidate their opponents and advance their causes. Many students lost their lives in these campus wars. Later, *Sikha* played a key role in the execution of the coup and afterwards has been an important member of the regime.

This brand of hard violence was complemented by a softer, but perhaps more pervasive form of violence. With the tremendous rivalry and antagonism among the

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27 Khalid Medani, "Funding Fundamentalism: the Political Economy of an Islamist State" in Joel Beinin and Joe Stork, *Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 168.

Islamists and other political groups, a group of university students among the ranks of the Islamist activists promoted written violence. These students provided campus wallpapers with a language and expressive hostility that complemented *Sikha's* violent pursuits. This violent style evolved over time to become one of the Islamists' ways of attacking, intimidating and sometimes assassinating the character of their opponents. As the movement progressed, these unruly students matured with it, and they began to import their tactics from campus wallpapers to newspapers like *Alwan*. Among these students turned journalists were Hussein Khojali and the late Mohamed Taha Mohamed Ahmed, who was kidnapped from his home by unknown kidnappers on 6 September 2006 and his body found decapitated in a remote area of Khartoum. Taha's aggressive style of journalism that the Islamist movement incubated, nurtured, and utilized against its enemies turned against al-Turabi, his son, and the National Congress Party before Taha's tragic death.

The Migration to the Land of Plenty

A major development, with deep effects on social, economic and political life in the Sudan during the 1970s and after, was the high and different patterns of migration [*hijra*] of Sudanese groups and individuals in general and the Islamists in particular outside the country to Saudi Arabia, the Arab Gulf States, and other countries. As explained earlier, the Nimairi regime began its rule with unprecedented oppressive actions against all forms of opposition from the first day he assumed power. Accordingly, many of the political personalities, including the Islamists, faced imprisonment, purges and difficulties obtaining government employment. Given that Nimairi's regime identified itself from the first day as a radical socialist, pan-Arab and progressive force opposing regional and international reactionary states, its announced policies sent waves all over the region. The new Sudanese regime's rhetorical stance evoked memories of the Arab cold war in the minds of the Saudis and other conservative Arab rulers, and it alarmed them of a new wave of Nasserism in the region. This situation, combined with the activism of the Sudanese opposition, heightened the Saudi concern of an imminent communist or Nasserist threat. Beginning by that time and accelerating through the 1970s, high numbers of Islamists of all ages and qualifications migrated to Saudi Arabia and some of the Gulf States in order to find a temporary refuge from what they perceived and described as an oppressive communist regime. The Sudanese Islamists who fled the country at that time confirmed to King Faisal, the Saudi authorities, and other Arab rulers that not only Nasserism, but a communist threat, was sneaking in through the back door. Similar to previous generations of Islamists who migrated to these Arab countries, the anti-communist stance of the Sudanese groups afforded them easy access to positions of rank and responsibility in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. Thousands of Islamists together with other Sudanese expatriates crossed the Red Sea by air to Saudi Arabia and other oil-producing countries. Studies estimate that Sudanese "migrants constituted 10% of the male population between the age of 20 and 34. In 1985, it was estimated that two-thirds of Sudan's professional and skilled

workers were employed outside the country."[28] In their newfound refuge, Sudanese Islamists created new networks, discovered new forms of inter- and intra-group solidarity, and achieved political and financial empowerment. The greatest element of empowerment emerged with the growth of what is called Islamic economics and its financial institutions. There are two basic influences underlying that growth. The first of these influences was related to the growing numbers of Islamists scholars like Khurshid Ahmed, N. Naqvi, and N Siddqui who dominated the International Center for Islamic Economics at the King Abd-al-Aziz University, Jeddah.[29] Secondly, by the mid 1970s, young Islamist economists and groups of businessmen in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf started the first Islamic Banks in Dubai, Sudan, and Egypt. Moreover, other Islamic economic institutions began to grow to cover areas of investment, business, and finance, in addition to relief and *da'wa*. By that time it was clear that Nimairi's dreams of an economic transformation based on a breadbasket strategy was a failure. These failed government policies, as Robert Tignor explains, could be partly the result of the little or no attention that economic planners had given to "the country's historical economic experience." As Tignor elaborates, "Instead, they sought to create an entirely new political economy, based on the importation of western technology and Arab and western capital. They pushed to the side the one group with knowledge of the economic and financial conditions: the local businessmen."[30] Other factors, primarily the arbitrary and massive nationalization and confiscation of private businesses in 1970, the falling price of cotton, which accounted for 61 percent of total export earnings, and the rise of oil prices, crippled the economy and compounded the difficulties and hardships of everyday life.

For the most part, the *hijra* of highly experienced, educated and skilled labor to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States became the dream and the pursuit of Sudanese individuals and families. Those who stayed to look for jobs in government and other fields in the increasingly inhospitable local labor market found themselves as part of a growing invisible poor due to rising inflation and higher costs of living. Most profoundly affected by these factors was the political and social status of the country's middle class who worked hard as individuals and families but remained poor just the same. In addition, the system of oppression ensured that the whole society could not express their resentment or their disagreement with the regime's policies. The direct result of this situation, together with the progression of dictatorial rule, was the rise and proliferation of both the economic and the political underground markets in the country.

The rise of these underground markets was part of the reason why Nimairi's regime was forced to seek quick fixes for the deteriorating economic situation in the country from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The introduction of the IMF recipe that "advised devaluing the Sudanese pound, restraining demands for

28 Abdel Salam Sidahmed, *Politics and Islam in Contemporary Sudan* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 195.

29 Akbar Ahmed, *Discovering Islam: Making Sense of Muslim History and Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 201–213.

30 Robert L. Tignor, "The Sudanese Private Sector: An Historical Overview," *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (1987): 201.

imports, redirecting attention to the traditional sectors of agricultural and economic activity, like the Gezira, as a means of stimulating exports, and controlling the expansion of the currency, particularly by imposing limits on banks loans."[31] But the IMF recipe and the rescheduling of the Sudanese debt as dictated by the Paris Club—a group of official creditors whose role is to find solutions to the payment difficulties experienced by the Sudan—only added to the economic crisis the country experienced. "By 1984 the Sudan's debt was estimated to be over US $10,000 millions, the repayment of which would require more than 100 per cent of all export earnings."[32] The multiplication of the local, the regional and the international factors acted individually and together to demolish the modest welfare state in the country that had at one time provided free education, free medical services and subsidies on the basic commodities that the poor needed the most.

On the other hand, the devastating violent developments which had taken place during the 1970s, the different coup attempts that came close to unseating Nimairi more than once, and the rising opposition and confrontations to the regime convinced both parties that they could not destroy one another. However, this made it possible for both parties to secretly accept reconciliation talks. The National Front and its political parties reached a negotiated agreement first with al-Sadiq al-Mahdi that temporarily defused anticipated threats to Nimairi's regime. The national reconciliation, as negotiated between the regime and the National Front, "called for the release from detention and amnesty of opposition politicians and restructuring the SSU so that the opposition could participate fully."[33] According to al-Mahdi's understanding, the reconciliation meant dismantling the infrastructure of the oppressive state by abolishing the State Security Act and revising certain provisions of the constitution that limited human rights, individual liberties, and democratic practices. The outcome of the reconciliation with al-Sadiq al-Mahdi was not impressive. Apart from the release of political detainees including al-Turabi, and the return of leading politicians from exile, including al-Mahdi and Philip Abass Ghabboush, nothing seemed to materialize in the field of the political processes. By 1978, al-Mahdi had left the Sudan, while al-Hindi declined to come back to the country and remained in exile until his death in 1981. For al-Turabi and the Islamists the situation was different, as it provoked a variety of transformative developments. Some of them were not imagined or planned for by al-Turabi or the Islamists, who "embarked on a policy of détente with the regime"[34] as he described it. The first major strand of significance in this respect was the breakaway of the Egyptian educated Sadiq 'Abd Allah 'Abd al-Majid and his minority group from leadership of al-Turabi and his Western educated group. 'Abd al-Majid was one of the early Sudanese who joined the Muslim Brotherhood Society in Egypt during the 1940s and remained faithful to the ideals of the movement as laid by its founder Hasan al-Bana and subsequent Egyptian leadership and to the notion of *bai'a* [oath of allegiance] to the mother organization. 'Abd al-Majid's breakaway was an opportunity for al-Turabi

31 Ibid., 200.

32 Ibid.

33 Al-Mahdi, *al-Wifaq wa al-firaq bien (al-Umma) wa (al-Jabhaa) fi al-Sudan*, 10.

34 Hamdi, *The Making of an Islamic Political Leader*, 15.

to reassert himself as a pan-Islamist leader and to rebuild the movement, which was "virtually decimated" as a parallel organization by the repeated crackdowns of 1973, 1975 and 1976.[35]

Another strand of significance was the introduction of the Islamic banks to the country and the opportunities that it opened for the Islamists to create their own niche in the political and economic markets. This launched the process of reshaping their organization and transforming it into a corporation. Both Nimairi and the Islamists saw Islamic banking as a desperately needed opportunity. For Nimairi and his ailing economy, this was an opportunity to bring in some hard currency in order to help his bankrupt treasury. He opened the country for Islamic financial institutions starting with Faisal Islamic Bank. The Faisal Islamic Bank, whose principal patron was the Saudi prince, Muhammad al-Faisal Al Saud, was officially established in Sudan in August 1977 by the Faisal Islamic Bank Act and started its operations in May 1978. 'Abd al-Rahim Hamdi, a well-known Islamist considered to be the architect of the Sudanese version of the Islamic economy, who was an economic consultant to the prince at that time, played an important role in facilitating this process.

It was clear from the start how leading Islamist personalities from different areas of specialization dominated the upper administrative offices of the bank creating a strong link between the bank and the party. When we look at the Faisal Bank annual report for 1984 we find the upper echelon of the bank includes very famous leading Islamist personalities like Muhammad Yusuf Muhammad, Yasin 'Umar al-Imam, Rabi Hasan Ahmad, Ahmad Ibrahim al-Turabi, Hasan Muhammad al-Bayli, and Yusuf Hamid al-Alim, together with well known Islamist businessmen such as Bashir Hasan Bashir, al-Haj 'Abd al-Khaliq, as well as a list of Islamist bankers and economists and professors that included the banker al-Bagr Yusuf Mudawi, Musa Husien Dirar, Abdien Ahmed Salama, and al-Sidiq al-Darir.[36] In addition, the Faisal Islamic Bank and all other Islamic Banks and their affiliates were all favored by tax exemptions. In turn, that situation gave the educated Islamists groups together with a new emerging group described as *tujar al-Jabhah* an opportunity to control and/or benefit from these institutions and to manage them as the economic arm of the Islamists' political institution at the beginning. It is in this connection that a corporation under the guidance and supervision of al-Turabi continued to grow. Most prominently, al-Turabi gave both religious and political cover to operate that way. He argued that, "despite the fact that this initial temptation [to wealth] almost terrorized the newcomer to business and made him renounce his desire, the condition improved when the elements working in the free economic field increased. [Accordingly,] individual bogey to earn a living and to struggle against [such] temptation has become an educational and organizational bogey that made the necessity to maintain free work exchanged for embarking on such a field for the sake of obtaining the interests of *da'wa* [religious call], education, and also the movement through it."[37]

35 Abdelwhab El-Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in Sudan* (London: Grey Seal Books, 1991), 113.

36 Faisal Islamic Bank Sudan, *Annual Report*, 1984 (Khartoum: 1985), 2.

37 Quoted in Haydar Ibrahim, *Siqout al-Mashru al-Hadari* (The Collapse of the Civilizational Project).

This explanation has important consequences, since it connected the operation of these financial institutions to the party's mode of operation and situated al-Turabi as the CEO of this corporation. Consequently, as al-Turabi observes, "things started to get better when the elements working in the field of free economy increased and the personal concern in getting a living and resisting temptation became an organizational and educational concern, the necessities of assuming free work has changed to become a general orientation for the interest of the *da'wa*, *tarbiya* and the movement."[38] But al-Turabi's notion of *da'wa* and *tarbiya* disguises the very existence of the corporation and its mode of appropriation, while revealing his awareness and appreciation thereof. Hence, many of the Islamists inside and outside the country have become active participants and beneficiaries of this Islamic economy and they have changed themselves from propertyless educated barefoot activists into a propertied middle class. By the 1980s the Islamist movement owned about 500 companies with a capital of more than USD $500 million inside the country and USD $300 million outside the country according to Hidar Taha.[39] This change of fortunes for a significant sector of Islamists came with new approaches to politics and social life. The *modus operandi* of transformation that is the most effective means to overcome the record of weakness—or the phase of *marahalat al-istda'f* [phase of weakness] to the phase of power or *marahalat al-tamakkun* [phase of power]—and to bring about an Islamic state is an economic approach that would empower the Islamists' middle class and their organizations and bring in these institutions under the guardianship of al-Turabi.

The long experiences of well-placed Islamists who found employment in oil rich Arab countries have taught them to fill financially rewarding positions in the state and the private sector without constituting a political threat to their host country and its political system. It is for this reason that Islamists in oil rich countries have exercised and experienced a separation of wealth and dissension.

This new development did not provide jobs for young graduates, because places on the boards of Islamic banks and corporations and leadership in trade unions and professional associations were for middle aged Islamists only. However, during the heyday of the Islamists' state in the Sudan from 1989 to 1999, economic wilding—morally uninhibited pursuit of money by individuals and businesses at the expense of others—had gone on the rampage.

The ambitions of this invisible corporation and al-Turabi, its Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (which were to challenge and control the state *from without* during the Nimairi regime and finally to take full control of it *from within* and *from without* through a military coup in 1989), and the regime that emerged out of it produced different reactions. The first attempt to gradually turn the Corporation into an invisible government controlling the May regime *from without* led to a violent response from Nimairi and his regime, and ended up in having most of the Islamist leadership including al-Turabi in prison in February 1985. The military coup of 1989, however, was the corporation's ultimate answer to reinstate itself as the sole government in the country and as a pilot scheme for an Islamist state. Ever since, and under what

38 Ibid.

39 Hidar Taha, *al-askar wa al-Inqdh* (Cairo: Markaz al-Hadara al-Arabia, 1993), 55.

they described as *al-Mashrou al-Hadari*, the Corporation and its CEO *shaikh* Hasan ruled the country together with those who were affiliated with the corporation. Throughout that period of time, the Islamists as artisans, workers, and employees of the corporation and the franchises that sprang out of it accepted and willingly carried out the dictates of the corporation, turning its Islamist project into a regime, and building a new personality cult around *shaikh* Hasan.[40] The Islamists inside and outside the Sudan contributed immensely to the personality cult of al-Turabi and his leadership built upon the primacy of the role of the *shaikh*, the "modern" Islamist jurist, as the political and religious reference and the architect of an Islamist order and its controlling ideology. He continued to be the one who creates and defines the concepts, presents the ideas, and initiates and explicates the political and religious *ijtihad* as every one in the Islamist movement "left all the thinking to the Secretary General."[41] Moreover, by celebrating al-Turabi as an almost infallible thinker and leader, above criticism, the Islamists at the higher end of their intellectual scale produced books such as Abdelwahab el-Affendi's *Turabi's Revolution,* Mohamed E. Hamdi's *The Making of an Islamic Political Leader: Conversations with Hasan al-Turabi*, T. Abdou Maliqalim Simone, *In Whose Image: Political Islam and Urban Practices in Sudan*. There were also many new PhDs including Amin Hasan Omer, al-Tijani Abdel Gadir, Muhammad Wagii Allah, and Mohamed Haroon among others, in addition to several PhD dissertations, Masters thesis, and thousands of media interviews and articles. On the lower end, many foreign public relations promoters and image builders such as Sean Gabb, Director of the Sudan Foundation in London, Mansoor Ijaz, the founder and chairman of Crescent Investment Management LLC (CIM), and Lyndon LaRouche worked hard to sell al-Turabi's image to Western audiences, media and governments and to build websites and design programs for that purpose. All of that came in addition to local journalists and other writers who made their careers contributing to this personality cult. Out of all that narrative, an innovative and modernized Sunni equivalent of *velayat al-faqih* [the rule of the jurisprudent], tantamount to the divine orders of *shaikh* Hasan, emerged to reinvent an infallible personality. In such a situation, *shaikh* Hasan, the sole arbiter and the supreme holder of religious considerations in the Islamists' political and social constitutions, is entrusted with absolute power to exercise political and religious authority and to lead local and international Islamist regimes. But toward all forms of opposition, the Islamists and their leader worked hard to control the mind, as much as possible, by promoting this cult and shrouding it with myth and evidently controlling all forms of communication. The Sudanese Islamists' project under the leadership

40 It is significant to note that the title *shaikh* Hasan al-Turabi is recent and it was formulated and exclusively used to replace Dr. Hasan al-Turabi after the 1989 coup in order to personify his role as the chief ideologue of the Islamist movement. In fact, the term *shaikh* meant no more than a title of respect for a senior religious or tribal personality. A closer look, however, shows that the title *shaikh* gained a new meaning to describe the role of al-Turabi as the grand jurist and the supreme religious and political reference to the movement and the regime before 1999.

41 Abdelwhab El-Affendi, "Mudilat al-Suber Tanziem fi Siraat al-Islamien (Sabiqan) fi al-Sudan" [The dilemma of the Super Organization in the struggle among the (former) Islamists in the Sudan] (Khartoum, *Al-Shahafa* daily, 29 November 2006).

or *shaikh* Hasan according to the Islamists propagandists "fits the requirements of the comprehensive civilization project" which the Sudanese Islamists present to the world as the alternative "to the current project, and they [the Sudanese Islamists] represent an alternative to the international leadership on the road of social and civilizational progress."[42]

The military coup of 1989 and its aftermath have been accompanied by a close association between the corporation and violence as one of the main operative factors within the progression of the Islamist project. The combination of these broad strands of the project, including the state as "community, the state as a hierarchy, and the state as coercive apparatus",[43] highlights the distinctive feature of the Islamist state. Although the military coup in itself was a violent act, violence continued to be used "not only to set a group apart as an enemy but also to annihilate it with an easy conscience." [44] That violence had not only been confined to militaristic and coercive dimensions, but equally to ideological and political ones. In these dimensions lay the deployment, mobilization, and organization of *jihad* as a broader strategy carried by the state as a multi-faceted sort of violence against Sudanese citizens "with an easy conscience." Violence has, therefore, become an operative function that characterized the regime's approach to political engagement, disagreement, and resolving conflict.

With the demise of al-Turabi in 1999, the regime found for itself a different expression within a public military authoritarian project. The crisis over the leadership among the Islamists was deep and had many direct, indirect effects and side effects. Some of these effects were doctrinal, others were not. Chief among these doctrinal factors was that a faction within the Islamists preferred the military leader as an alternative to the Islamist *shaikh* and they accepted the usage of the coercive power of the state against the ideological leadership *shaikh* Hasan's brand of regime and the dictates of the corporation. Here, such a turn is significant as it indicates that neither the religious practice nor the Islamist character of the regime was so unique. It is precisely in such an understanding that Ghazi Salah al-Din's comment that the "Islamists did not rule" is more of an irony rather than a reality.

But against these realities and background, it might be clear that what could be the deep operative factor that promoted the disintegration of the entire Islamist project was a combination of moral and religious circumstances relating to the distance and the sharp contrast between the practice of a regime advocating Islam and what the ordinary Sudanese Muslim understands and expects from an Islamic rule. Against these views, what could be of great significance here is the serious disconnect between an emerging social and economic structure—a Corporation—growing

42 Amin Hasan Omer, *al-Mushrou al-Islami al-Sudani: Qiraat fi al-Fikr wa al-Mumarsa* [The Sudanese Islamic Project: Readings in the Ideology and Practice] (Khartoum: Markaz al-Dirasat wa al-Bihouth al-Igtimaitatu, 1995), 23.

43 Charles Tripp, "States, Elites and the 'Management of Change'" in Hassan Hakimian and Ziba Moshaver (eds), *The State and Global Change: The Political Economy of Transition in the Middle East and North Africa* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), 212.

44 Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Pantheon books, 2004), 8.

within its own terms of *tamkiin* (given authority in the land) in power and wealth and a well ingrained culture of *taqwa* (righteousness), or the ideals of an imagined Islamic model of rule, imbedded in a creed of justice and delayed gratification as the operative factor in the Sudanese Muslim worldview. Just as the unrestricted self-indulgence of the Corporation continues to grow and fortifies its ways and means, the constitutions of the culture of the *taqwa* increasingly gains more value, and clashes, sharply rejecting such pursuits for wealth and power—or what the Sudanese describe as the growth of *al-habro malu*. The Corporation, the *shaikh* within his personality cult, and their Islamist partisans worked together to create the first Islamist republic, its peculiarities, and its internal conflicts. It appears that the varying and conflicting interests of the CEO on one side and those of the power groups—military and civilian—running the government on the other, who perceived an imminent danger in *shaikh* Hasan's program, was the origin of the palace coup against al-Turabi in 1999. While above all else, it appears that the moral dilemma of the regime at large which progressed through its lifetime was the function of the failure of the Islamist project. Within the conditions surrounding the rise and development of the Islamist project, ideology—regardless of its representation—found itself subordinate to military rule for the second time in the history of the Sudan. The first time was under General Ja'afar Nimairi and the second time was under General 'Umer al-Bashir. History was replete with military rulers challenging their patrons. The major difference between the two occurrences is that the first one followed a bloody pursuit to reach its goal, while the second one used the prison as a medium of state power to succeed its ideological *shaikh* leader. Here, an examination of the broad environmental factors containing the reproduction of the multiple dimensions of the corporation, the set of positions taken by the Islamists to impose what the Sudanese describe as *nizam shimoli* (a totalitarian regime), and the progression of the first Islamist republic needs to be matched by the main trends of the socio-political factors and within their interaction and dissociation in time and place.

For these general reflections and constructions on the succession of the 1989 *Ingadh* coup and the reproductions of the regime that emerged out of it to be better understood, a more detailed examination of the constituting elements and how they fit themselves together with the developments of one particular case within the making of the Islamist republic—namely, how the party transformed into a corporation and the corporation tried to transform into a secret government—must be undertaken. Here we need to return to 1969, when the Nimairi coup disrupted the democratic process, and reexamine how the country experienced two crucial developments of political and economic underground markets. At the heart of this experience lies a series of transformations founded upon new internal and external factors that not only shaped, but changed the essential nature of the Islamist movement and incorporated into its political orientation and its daily pursuit an internal governing regime that made that movement a new and different creature following its own course, with unchecked power, ruling from the top down, with management free from any system of supervision or accountability. This in turn, was reflected in disbanding the party and instating a shadowy body called the Council of Forty that had been hand picked by al-Turabi from a diverse group from privileged social status that included members of the military, the managerial elite, and business personalities

[*al-habro malu* or *tujar al-Jabhah*] who all shared loyalty to the leader. This entity sets the regime's strategy and acts as a harmonious political body after the party and its *majlis al-shura* [consultative council], the highest governing institution, were dissolved. The forty unelected council members—which continued to expand after that—represented a core group around which layers of a *nomenklatura* were established by the appointment for the major state offices and financial institutions. This Corporation and those who controlled the state through it—as the state became a functionary of that corporation—used their new power potentials to manipulate the market and chase out the old market class, replacing them with an Islamist group. These processes generated a system through which the state, the market, the financial institutions, and the entire political system were managed and controlled by that invisible corporation under the leadership of its CEO and Islamist *shaikh* Hasan. But this takeover of the social, political and religious institutions by the corporation and the attempt to create a sustainable political, economic and religious system as a model for the entire country and beyond did not prevent that corporation from facing serious challenges to the entire system—the regime—from outside, and to its leadership and its mode of operation from inside. In many respects, the most serious outside challenge for the regime came from the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), an opposition front composed of Sudanese political parties, trade unions, and officers purged from the army by the regime and independent national personalities. The internal challenge to the leadership and the model was the memo of the ten in 1999 and its effects which were described by many as a palace coup that removed al-Turabi from all positions of power and authority. Later, the National Congress Party [*Hisb al-Mo'tamar al-Watani*], which was created by the Islamists in 1998, whatever significance might be attributed to it, sprang up as a habitual outcome of that process and immediately turned into a battleground where al-Turabi received the most humiliating defeat from his disciples. The result of that power struggle was a serious split among the ranks of the Islamists where a small splinter group broke off of the National Congress Party and established the Popular National Congress Party [*Hisb al-Mo'tamar al-Shaabi*] under the leadership of al-Turabi in 2000. The National Congress Party under the leadership of 'Umer al-Bashir stayed as the ruling party.

Chapter 5

The First Republic, Its Shaikh, and Community

From the end of June 1989 until December 1999 the Sudanese Islamists under the uncontested leadership of *Shaikh* Hasan al-Turabi established their first republic and they tried their very best to keep it intact and working. During this time, there was a common conception of a state, and the Islamists, their sympathizers, and their collaborators were mobilized, directed, and controlled by the "high leadership"[1] of *shaikh* Hasan al-Turabi. This first decade of the Islamists' project provides an instance from which one can investigate and appraise the practice, disposition, and consequences of the regime and its state. The dismissal of al-Turabi on 12 December 1999 represented a significant retreat from this project and the end of the first Islamist republic, in so far as it swept aside the religious and political reference the *shaikh*, or "the leader." At the same time, it reflects internal and external developments and challenges to the regime that allowed another group of Islamists to assume power and take the regime in a different direction, establishing their second republic. Gradually, as the influence of the totalitarian system began to decline due to these internal and external pressures and challenges, the need for the leadership of *shaikh* al-Turabi also dwindled.

During the first phase of the Islamist state and the first republic (1989–99), the theory of the regime's protagonists and their approach to governance was confined to a single paradigm, which was al-Turabi's version of *al-hal al-Islami* [the Islamic solution]. Within that period, the Islamists as a "community" and a "hierarchy" sought to systematically harness the "coercive apparatus" of the state in order to institute an Islamist social and political order.[2] As a community, the Islamists connected the state to the regime in power, while the coup developed a different identity that integrated individuals and groups from the army, the disbanded party, and the security apparatus within the corporation. What really bound all of them together was a faith in the *shaikh*, and they were expected to listen to him. The hierarchy which emerged out of the new organization of power under al-Turabi's leadership laid the blame on the

1 The term 'high leadership' was coined by Ernest Gellner in his book *Muslim Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) and elaborated further in his book *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1992) to describe leadership such as Khomeini's, but it fits al-Turabi quite well. See Gellner, *Postmodernism*, 6–22.

2 I will use here Charles Tripp's three aspects of the state in the Middle East and North Africa. See Charles Tripp, "States, Elites and the 'Management of Change'" in Hassan Hakimian and Ziba Moshaver (eds), *The State and Global Change: The Political Economy of Transition in the Middle East and North Africa* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), 211–31.

previous Sudanese experience as an old order antithesis to what they assumed to be an Islamic order. The ideologies, strategies, and policies of this one-dimensional conception of the Sudanese Islamists perceived Islamic order and its relationship to the functions of the corporation produced a distinctive polity of violence formulated to "discipline and punish". At the same time, the population continued to react to this situation as a flawed and illegitimate appendage of the coercive apparatus of state power.

At this point, it might be useful to discuss these transformations in relation to al-Turabi's theory of the state and how this theory was translated into a program of action that affected people's lives inside and outside the Sudan and reproduced different encounters within the ranks of the Islamists as well as the Other, ranging from underground opposition to open conflict and armed confrontation. For this study the state refers to an institution rather than a government. The state is the overarching apparatus that includes the ideological, administrative, bureaucratic, legal, and security systems that act coherently to structure and administer relations within different levels of a particular territory. The way the state deploys and restrains its different patterns of authority, power, communicative capacities, and other means of domination determines its character. On the other hand, relations between the state's spheres of power and control and society's provinces of activity differentiate between governing systems. In this sense, the state continued to be an area of concern for the Islamists from a very early time. They reinvented a statement that says *Allah uzaa' bi al-Sultan ma la uzaa' bi al-Quraan* [What God does not restrain through the (power of the) Qur'an, He restrains through the might of the Sultan] as a doctrine of political action. According to this understanding, the state is the most powerful instrument for change in the true sense of the word. Hence, the primary function of the state-directed regime, according to the Islamist model, is to operate in a manner that attempts to converge autonomous institutions that normally act independently within the civil, religious, and the political spheres. This is an important representation, because the totalitarian setting within such a model attempts to deploy state power to eliminate and demolish all civil societies and political institutions. Within this approach to power, the Islamists in the Sudan, their strategists, and their allies tried very hard to establish such a state. Two of the propositions that arise out of this argument are specifically pertinent. The first one is that the totalitarian nature of the Islamist regime, for reasons related to its ideological, cultural, and existential attributes, is in certain aspects dissimilar to most regimes that fall within the category of typical Middle Eastern or African military regimes. The second is that the end of the first Islamist republic has been different from that of other past Sudanese dictatorial or military regimes.

In light of all this, it is important to ask how totalitarian the regime is. Furthermore, it must be asked how the Islamist state developed the capacity to carry out the objectives of a totalitarian system. To answer these questions, we must first examine the roots of totalitarianism within the Islamists political discourse and plan of action. The period that preceded the 1989 coup, as explained in the previous chapter, saw a serious transformation as a new class of Islamists developed an ideological and political hegemony that gave them the ability to control the social and political experience of the Islamist party and to subordinate it to the Corporation. After

the coup, the Islamists would operate "like a particular group whose function is to present an imaginary unity, to project the image of a society at one with itself" by concentrating all power in their hands and identifying their totalitarian program with the state.[3] These developments may initially be examined with respect to the central idea of totalitarianism and its relationship to the Islamist project and its theory and practice.

The State, Islamism, and Totalitarianism

The term totalitarian has been used widely in connection with the Khartoum regime since its earliest days. The Arabic term *Nizam shimuli* [totalitarian regime] is well adapted to Sudanese everyday language in describing the current regime. It is frequently used by Islamist and other scholars, Sudanese and non-Sudanese politicians, and journalists together with the opposition parties and other detractors of the regime. The Islamist scholar and writer al-Tayib Zein al-Abdin, for example, describes the regime as a totalitarian system in a series of articles published in the Sudanese daily *Al-ra'y al-'Am*, which were republished in 2003 in his book *Maqalat 'an al-Harkaa al-Islamia fi l-Sudan* [Articles about the Islamist Movement in the Sudan]. At the same time, the Sudanese scholar Haydar Ibrahim Ali, argues that the Islamist regime represents "an improved version of totalitarianism", albeit one that came to power through a military coup and that wrote its constitution without any real public participation.[4] Furthermore, the Sudanese statesman al-Sadiq al-Mahdi describes the regime as totalitarian and well aware of its illegitimacy.[5]

What is totalitarianism and how does it relate to the Sudanese Islamist governmental experience and perspective? It is worth mentioning that the term *lo stato totalitariano* was coined by Benito Mussolini to describe the nature and role of the Fascist state in Italy during his reign from 1922 to 1943. In his Doctrine of Fascism, Mussolini argued, "If the [nineteenth] century was the century of the individual … we are free to believe that this is the 'collective' century, and therefore the century of the State."[6] According to Mussolini, such a goal could be accomplished only through a one-party regime concerned with the "total" activities of the people including their work, their leisure, their religion, and even their private lives. The basic concept of the totalitarian state was best expressed in Mussolini's well-known phrase, "everything in the state, nothing against the State, nothing outside the

3 John B. Thompson, Editor's Introduction, in Claude Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1986), 6.

4 Haydar Ibrahim Ali, *suq t al-Mashrou al-Hadari [The failure of the Civilizational Project]* (Khartoum: the Sudanese Studies Center, No Date), 52.

5 Al-sadiq al-Mahdi, *al-Wigaq wa al-Firaq bayin "al-Umma" wa "al-Jabha" fi l-Sudan 1958–1995 [Agreement and Disagreement between the "Umma" and the "Front" in the Sudan 1985–1995]* (Cairo: The Umma Party External Information Unit, 1995), 43.

6 Benito Mussolini, "The Doctrine of Fascism", available from http://www.worldfuturefund.org/wffmaster/Reading/Germany/mussolini.htm; accessed on 31 March 2007.

state."[7] Another formulation that sums up a universal dimension to this perspective is attributed to Antonio Gramsci, who describes totalitarianism as any philosophy that seeks to be comprehensive and/or has a systemic impact on societal organization. Peter Berger adds another parameter to these ideological and philosophical dimensions, describing a totalitarian regime as the one that seeks "to impose state control over every institution of society, regardless of whether it engages in political activity or not."[8] As Berger explains, this is done with the intent of converging society in its political, cultural, and economic totality within an all-embracing state-directed assemblage.[9] Claude Lefort adds that in similar situations, all the processes of integration, homogenization, or unification of society are supposed to be carried out by a single entity, namely the political party in power. Thus, Lefort explains, the apparatus constructed by this party and the state it establishes contrives to dissolve the entire political and social subject with all their diversity and differences and to transform the overall society into an "us" that produces a regime, which attempts adamantly to bring about a "People-as-One" society. On the basis of this analysis, Lefort explains that the ideology of the party and its state propaganda together with the ideology of terror were instrumental in obliterating freedom and instituting a totalitarian structure.[10] In this sense, one can clearly see how the Sudanese Islamist regime shares the characteristics of a typical totalitarian system. An examination of the intellectual roots of this orientation might throw some light on how the particular ideologies and political structures of totalitarianism developed within the Sudanese Islamist project.

In terms of the emergence and development of the ideological foundation of the totalitarian impulse and the formulations of the state and its relationship to twentieth century Islamist movements in general, it is important to notice the central position that the concept of totalitarianism has found in the world of thought and the discourse of some Islamist movements. The totalitarian concept found its expression in the writings of Abul A'la al-Mawdudi (1903–79) of India and Pakistan, who influenced the Islamist discourse and shaped the views about the state of many Islamist groups and individuals. It was al-Mawdudi's contention that, "sovereignty belongs to Allah alone and that the state shall exercise its authority as His agent."[11] He adds that, in the Islamist state, "no one can regard any field of his affairs as personal and private."[12] He further elaborates that "the Islamic state bears a kind of resemblance to the Fascist and Communist states."[13] Al-Mawdudi emphasizes the importance of

7 Ibid.

8 Peter L. Berger, *The Capitalist Revolution: Fifty Propositions about Property, Equality, and Liberty* (New York: Basic Books, Inc. 1986), 83.

9 Ibid.

10 See Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society*, 286–9.

11 Abdul Rashid Moten, "Islamic Thought in Contemporary Pakistan: The Legacy of 'All ma Mawd d " (ed.), Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi, *The Blackwell Companion to Contemporary Islamic Thought* (Blackwell Publishing: Malden, 2006), 181.

12 Abul A'la Maududi, *Islamic Law and Constitution*, Translated by Kurshid Ahmad (Delhi: Taj Company, 1986), 144–7.

13 Ibid.

one-party rule, which he calls "the very antithesis of Western Democracy."[14] In this account, al-Mawdudi "preferred to speak of the Islamic system as a 'theodemocracy' as distinct from a theocracy or clerical state, in which the popular will was subordinated to and limited by God's law."[15] As John Esposito explains, al-Mawdudi "had no problem characterizing an Islamic government or theodemocracy as 'Islamic totalitarianism'."[16] Al-Mawdudi believes that the social change that brings about an Islamic totalitarianism "would not result from violent toppling of the existing order by mobilizing the masses, but by taking over the centers of political power and effecting large scale reforms from the top down."[17]

Yasin 'Umar al-Imam states that, while the young Sudanese political and intellectual elite espoused a secular Marxist ideology, the writings of al-Mawdudi and the Indian Islamist Abu al-Hasan 'Ali al-Nadwi (1914–2000), who was rector of Nadwatul 'Ulam , provided a modern Islamist interpretation to the world. Al-Imam also observes that Arabic translations of the works of al-Mawdudi and al-Nadwi were widely circulated among members of the Islamist movement since a very early time. The main ideas of al-Mawdudi and al-Nadwi, which introduced the framework of Islamist analysis of the Muslim condition in the contemporary world, revolve around al-Nadwi's description of Western civilization as the contemporary *j hiliyah* [age of ignorance] and *madiyya* [materialism] and al-Mawdudi branding Western political ideologies as paganism. Al-Mawdudi and al-Nadwi complemented each other's contribution in developing four broader sets of formulations that enthused a delink from the Islamic tradition that gave the policies inspired by the theories under consideration a real effectiveness. The first of these sets of ideas is the one that gave preeminence to the pursuit of power and political inspiration over the religious structure. Second, within this new confirmation of Islam as an ideology, primacy was given to the rejection of those beliefs that had been perceived by al-Mawdudi and al-Nadwi as distorted, as well as secular creeds that relate to nationalism, socialism, communism, democracy, capitalism, and secularism itself. In this school of thought, these creeds "constitute one single entity which has developed in the West in direct opposition to the message of original Islam."[18] Third, within this new orientation, *tawhid* [the indivisible sovereignty of God] as *modus vivendi* and the duty of *jihad* [struggle] as a *modus operandi* were elevated to a position from where they should command and restore society to its rightful place in the world. Fourth, by articulating an exegesis of the Quran and selective readings of Muslim texts and past "*ulam* " and *fugaha* contributions, al-Mawdudi introduced an ideology that inspired new forms of local and global *jihad* and its different manifestations. This paradigm shift and

14 Ibid.

15 John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 135.

16 Ibid.

17 Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, "Mawdudi and the Jama'at-I Islami: The Origins, Theory and Practice of Islamic Revivalism," in Ali Rahnema (ed.), *Pioneers of Islamic Revival* (London: Zed Books, 2005), 108.

18 Youssef M. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990), 94.

strategic point of departure from the Muslin tradition has set both al-Mawdudi and al-Nadwi apart, presenting them as the fathers of Islamism *par excellence*, Hasan al-Banna's organizational prowess notwithstanding. This approach made it possible to introduce a new field of an Islamist discourse weaned away from the Islamic tradition and incompatible with the *Nahdah* [renaissance] discourse of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad 'Abdu, which with its pan-Islamic resonance emphasized the need to come to terms with Western means of advancements as represented in science and democracy. At the same time, this paradigm shift set apart the fathers of Islamism from the champions of *al-Nahdah*, who were aware of "the dangers inherent in the growth of the European influence over the affairs of the empire, but thought they could be resisted with the help of the liberal Powers themselves."[19]

In contrast to tradition, the historical construction of the origins of some Islamist movements and the deep seated feeling of novelty that these Islamists shared with each other, gave these movements a feeling of exceptionality and superiority. This was true not only of movements in the Sudan, as explained before, but also of Islamist movements everywhere that did not trace their origins to the Muslim Brotherhood. It thus becomes apparent that such a break with the Islamic tradition raises issues of significant importance. Chief among these issues is that, "the cultural break between tradition and modernity must be induced by Europe."[20] Consequently, "the appropriation of western concepts and ideas to construct an Islamic resistance to the West"—what Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr calls, "borrowing and assimilation"—made al-Mawdudi and al-Nadwi's ideas highly esteemed as the framework for an Islamist modernity.[21] On this issue two distinct trends of far reaching effects might be discerned. On the one hand, this new brand of Islamism inspired both admiration for and disagreement with the writings of Sayyid Qutb within the Islamist movement. It was Qutb who elaborated on the ideas of al-Mawdudi and al-Nadwi and assimilated them in his writings, constructing an all-embracing ideology of Islamism only to be recycled and operationalized by latter-day Qutbist individuals, groups, and movements such as al-Takfeer wa al-Hijra, Jamaat al-Jihad, and al-Qaida. This ideology has been contested or rejected outright by many Muslims and those in Islamist circles.

On the other hand, it was Hasan al-Turabi, the founder of the first Islamist state, who turned al-Mawdudi on his head by opting for a military takeover instead of "taking over the centers of political power and effecting large scale reforms from the top down."[22] Although he never mentioned or quoted him by name, al-Turabi followed al-Mawdudi's views of "Islamic totalitarianism", giving them a technical rather than an ideological application. Nonetheless, he wrestled with the opposing

19 Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 103.

20 Reinhard Schulze, "How Medieval is Islam? Muslim Intellectuals and Modernity" in Hochen Hippler and Andrea Lueg (eds), *The Next Threat: Western Perceptions of Islam* (Chipping Norton: Pluto Press, 1994), 59.

21 Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, "Mawdudi and the Jama'at-I Islami: The Origins, Theory and Practice of Islamic Revivalism," in Ali Rahnema (ed.), *Pioneers of Islamic Revival* (London: Zed Books, 2005), 105.

22 Ibid., 108.

ideas of a Muslim lived experience "carrying open horizons of anticipated similar experiences"[23] on the one hand, and totalitarianism in its every aspect on the other. Here, al-Turabi's contribution is both important and interesting, as he was and has remained the main author among the Sudanese Islamists of a relatively meager literature about the Islamist state and was the master of the code of action of that state and her tragic hero at the same time.

Totalitarianism in Theory: Three Points of Reference on al-Turabi's Islamist State

There are three points of reference that relate to al-Turabi and the Islamist state. The first point outlines a brief historical background to the transformations inside the Islamist movement since 1964—the date that marked the steady evolution of the movement from an elitist group into a popular movement and later into a corporation as explained before. The leadership of al-Turabi, the newly elected Secretary General of *Jabhat al-Mithaq* [the Islamic Charter Front (ICF)] at its founding conference in 1964, started the first steps in a departure from the Egyptian Brotherhood orientation that it assumed during its early days and towards a reconciliation with the Babikir Karrar orientation. Al-Turabi himself explained that the Islamist movement in the Sudan "developed a marked sense of self-awareness, positioning itself accurately within its own specific time and place parameters."[24] This distinction is important, as the Egyptian Brotherhood orientation has generally pursued a reformist political ideology emphasizing *tarbiya* [education], or "characterized by education and reform" as al-Turabi explains.[25] Leaders of the Egyptian model, the evolutionary path, have always argued that ruling an Islamic government should be the eventual outcome after society has been prepared to accept the *shari'a*. In this respect, the Egyptian model that "had emulated an earlier model of Islamic life" according to al-Turabi, represents the start rather than the transformation of the Islamist movement in the Sudan. This approach represents political Islam in terms of its privatization, as political action aims primarily "at re-Islamizing the society from the bottom up, bringing about, *ipso facto*, the advent of an Islamic state."[26] The Sudanese Islamists, under the leadership of al-Turabi leaned toward a "revolutionary" pole—closer to al-Mawdudi—where the Islamization of society should be accomplished through the systematic exercise of state power. Consequently, they saw the inevitability of the establishment of an "Islamic order necessitating the intervention in public affairs—

23 Alfred Schutz, "Common-sense and Scientific Interaction in Human Action" in *Collected Papers Vol 1* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1954).

24 Mohamed E. Hamdi, *The Making of an Islamic Political Leader: Conversations with Hasan al-Turabi* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998), 14.

25 Ibid.

26 Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994), 24.

the capture of the state as an imperative"[27] Within the Sudanese Islamists' ideology and practice, this "order excludes any secular space, even a contingent one."[28]

It was al-Turabi who tried to modify the ideas and ideologies of his movement and to restructure these ideas and experiences so that they would suit him and his group's pursuit of power by selectively borrowing from contemporary Islamist theorists (especially al-Mawdudi and al-Nadwi), past Islamic heritage, Sudanese Islamists' and communists' ideas and experiences (Babikir Karrar and 'Abd al-Khaliq Mahjub in particular), and Western nuggets of knowledge. For a considerable period of time, he and his group have contrived against the apparent failure of communist, pan-Arab, and mainstream nationalist ideologies and models of governments in the Islamic world.

Operating in a political and religious market that has been dominated for more than a century by a population whose adherence goes to *al-Turq al-Sufia* [Sufi orders] and two major political parties deriving their power base primarily from the Khatmiyya and Ansar orders, al-Turabi and his group tried all kinds of trickery and political maneuvering—with some success—to make their political presence felt. The Islamists' aggressive offensive against Sufi orders and their leaders and saints has remained fiercely antagonistic and is fueled by a discourse emphasizing the re-Islamization of the political, social, and economic life of the Sudan. It is crucial to note that al-Turabi and his group have always thought that the popular or Sufi Islam, the religion of the majority, has embroiled "Muslim society in inexorable discord."[29] Projecting himself, his group, and their role as both the purveyors of radical difference and restorers of an essential identity, the Islamists viewed state power as necessary in order for the movement to consolidate the vision and formation of an Islamic Umma.[30]

The second starting point gives an intentionally disproportionate attention to al-Turabi's political thought from his writings and speeches. It is amusing here to give some weight to the Sudanese sense of satire as it observes that there are two Turabis: one for export, and the other for local consumption. To an even greater degree, al-Tayib Zein al-Abdin attests al-Turabi knowingly made a false oath when he took the office of Secretary of Information and Foreign Relations at the Sudanese Socialist Union.[31] This attribute fits very well with Hannah Arendt's characterization of the typical totalitarian leader who shows different faces to different groups. Arendt argues that, "[s]ince the Leader has monopolized the right and the possibility of explanation, he appears to the outside as the only person who knows what he is doing."[32] He also projects himself as "the only representative of the movement with

27 Ibid., 24.

28 Ibid., 41.

29 Ibid.

30 T. Abdou Maliqalim Simone, *In Whose Image? Political Islam and Urban Practice in Sudan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 85.

31 In an interview by author, audio recording, Omdurman, Sudan, 30 December 2005.

32 Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego: HBJ A Harvest/HBJ Book, 1979), 375.

whom one may still talk in nontotalitarian terms."[33] Nevertheless, we need to read al-Turabi as a political theorist, and thus what he says, especially as an architect of the Islamist state, has had a great impact on the state of affairs inside the Sudan and to a certain degree outside the Sudan.

Of course, al-Turabi's ideas have been consistently challenged within and outside Muslim scholarship and within the ranks of some of the Islamists' opponents. There are even some inside and outside the Sudan who accused him of apostasy and demanded his trial. This is not to dispute the importance of these ideas or his intellectual contribution. While these ideas and their contestation illustrate one side of the current Islamist discourse, they also represent part of the social change that shaped the ideas and politics of certain Islamist movements. What is certain is that there exist ideas that al-Turabi and other Islamists promoted as their own version of modernization theory with the state as its central focus. The advocates of the Islamist movement claim that they developed an alternative anti-Western approach to Western polity and its different capitalist and Marxist paradigms, but it is worth noting at the outset that this approach is influenced mostly by colonial experience and Western thought. In other words, the discourse that attempts to confront the Western worldview does not necessarily operate outside the realm of Western scholarship and intellectuality that is deemed by the Islamists to be exogenous to Islam.

By "Unitarianism," al-Turabi and his party meant a special construction on the connection between their theological concept of *wahdania* [the divine oneness as one of God's attributes] and the ideology of society as one representation of a connection between thought and oppressive practice. The connection between this particular Islamist theological concept of oneness and totalitarian notions of government is apparent. In a totalitarian context, the state's role is to regulate all aspects of the public and private life of the individual, applying strong and sometimes oppressive measures to reach that goal. This explains the despotic nature of the thesis that drives the Islamist ideology. As Olivier Roy observes, such an ideology "cannot tolerate either intrinsic segmentation (social, ethnic, tribal, or national) or political authority that is autonomous with respect to the divine order, even in a contingent manner."[34] For the Islamists, this inclusive ideology, or total order, which subordinates the rights of the individual and society in all aspects of life to the collective will of the *Umma,* finds legitimacy in *hakimiya* [God's absolute sovereignty]. "Only under these conditions will God's absolute sovereignty, *hakimiya,* prevail, governing all aspects of the life of the individual as well as the society."[35] Thus, the state becomes, as al-Turabi argues, "only the political dimension of the collective endeavor of Muslims."[36]

The third starting-point addresses the transformation of this ideology into *nizam* [a total order], by which the regime in the Sudan has created a totalitarian project. This project assumes that there exists only one single order, *al-hal al-Islami* [the Islamic solution] and one constitution, which is the Quran. According to al-Turabi,

33 Ibid.

34 Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, 40–41.

35 Ibid.

36 Hassan al-Turabi, "The Islamic State," in John L. Esposito (ed.), *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 241–51.

this "cannot be done by rehashing old, ideological slogans without first developing a new and authentic set of roots, or usul."[37] Here, al-Turabi bases the legitimacy of his ideology and leadership on the primacy of the role of the *shaikh*, the "modern" Islamist jurist, as the political and religious reference and the architect of this order and its controlling ideology—an innovative, modernized Sunni equivalent of *welayat alfaqih* [rule of the jurisprudent]. In such a situation, al-Turabi, the arbiter of religious, political, and social constitutions is empowered to exercise political and religious authority and to lead an Islamist regime with power bestowed from God. That order together with its ideology should be transformed into a structure of power that provides the means for the "Islamization" of the society. Moreover, these regimes and constitutions of power, their ideology, and the subsequent state model that the Islamists have attempted to establish upon them demonstrate three key features of totalitarianism: the ideology of one single order, the autonomy of the state, and the system of security oppression.

In his 1992 presentation to selected US scholars published as *Islam, Democracy, the State and the West in the Round Table* sponsored by the now defunct World and Islam Studies Enterprise (WISE)[38] and the University of South Florida, al-Turabi explained the philosophical premise of his ideology. He argued that, "It is not just that God is one, absolutely one, but also the existence is one, life is one; all life is just one program of worship, whether it's economics, politics, sex, private, public or whatever. And society is also one. So Unitarianism is a fundamental principle that explains almost every aspect of doctrinal or practical Islam."[39]

Even before the 1989 military coup that brought the Islamists to power in the Sudan, the Islamists affirmed in the Sudan Charter[40] issued January 1987, that "the Muslim community in the Sudan, which represents the majority of the population" according to the Charter, is "Unitarian" in its "religious approach to life. As a matter of faith, they do not espouse secularism." The Charter further affirms that the Sudanese Muslims "have a legitimate right by virtue of their religious choice, of

37 Ahmed Moussalli, *Moderate and Radical Islamic Fundamentalism: The Quest for Modernity, Legitimacy, and the Islamic State* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999), 155–80.

38 The World and Islamic Studies Enterprise (WISE) launched a program of round table forums in May 1992, by inviting Hasan al-Turabi for a one-day debate with a group of twenty-three academics of Islam and Middle Eastern studies. The program was supported and hosted by the University of South Florida. Al-Turabi's presentation and the round table discussion were published in the monograph *Islam, Democracy, the State and the West: A Roundtable with Dr. Hasan Turabi*.

39 Arthur L. Lowrie, *Islam, Democracy, the State and the West*, 13.

40 In 1987 the NIF published a highly controversial document called The Sudan Charter in which it stated that the Muslim community in the Sudan is by far the majority one, that the Muslim community is "unitarian in their religious approach to life. As a matter of faith, they do not espouse secularism." Accordingly, the Charter argues that the Sudanese Muslims, therefore, "have a legitimate right, by virtue of their democratic weight and of natural justice, to practice their values and rules of their religion to their full range—in personal, social or political affairs." The Charter explained what an Islamic state could grant in terms of personal, family and social autonomy to non-Muslims. Objections to the Sudan Charter came from both the non-Muslim side and the Muslim sides in the Sudan.

their democratic weight and natural justice, to practice their values and rules of their religion in full range—in personal, familial, social and political affairs."[41]

Totalitarianism in Practice

The regime has created its own model out of al-Turabi's ideology. The bureaucracy created by the ruling Islamists is also an outcome of direct involvement with the different patterns of authority and power exercised by this group through the state. It is also an outcome of the interacting dynamics within and between the competing and inherent forces of the ongoing socio-political developments, and the attempts of the ruling Islamists to monopolize the local political, religious, economic, and social markets. At one profound level, from the first day, the Islamist groups have believed that their grip on power was threatened. These patterns of fear, challenges, and entanglements with other opposing political actors have shaped the form of governance against all types of imminent or anticipated threats to their domination of power. This is why to understand the form of a bureaucracy of the most horrifying practices in the history of the Sudan one has to keep in mind the kind of threat the regime has been facing from the first day. Under these circumstances the state has been called upon to play a very specific role. Out of this role the Islamist state theory can be summarized in the following formulations.

The State and Its Community

To develop a uniform bureaucracy that can help control and monopolize the political, religious, economic, and social markets, the hierarchy of the old state bureaucracy in the country has to be forced to serve the ideological and political program of the Islamist political bureaucracy. Accordingly, a bureaucracy that normally represents the "the antithesis of democracy"[42] has assumed the upper hand in the Sudanese state. This attempt by the Islamists was meant to extend the bureaucracy of the party transformed into a corporation, to take direct control of the state, and eventually to manage through that process the entire society. Hence, the course and the order of presentation and practice of the Islamist polity ushered in after the Islamists assumed power in 1989 had invented the transformation of this new structure as a device of domination. In an interview published in the Sudanese daily *Al-ra'y al-'Am*, Hasan Makki explained how the process pursued by the Islamists after the 1989 coup "turned to be an authoritarian project aiming to consolidate the power of the Leader or the Guide."[43] Makki maintains that, "the organizational structure of the [party] took a one-way direction for the control of information and a similar way for the direction of the decision making process to the extent that the party's image became

41 For more about the Sudan Charter see Appendix.

42 Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society*.

43 An interview by Isam Mahgoub El-Mahi, "Dr. Hassan Mekki: The Dilemma of the Islamists Movement in the cast aside of the Elite," *Al-ra'y al-'Am* daily, 17 May 2000, Khartoum.

similar to other totalitarian parties."[44] This step is significant because it explains al-Turabi's project for a total transformation of the party into a corporation, exercising power through a central government emerging from a "state as community" based on "collective identity definition and growing expectations about the role of the state as representative of the community." Members of this community, "regardless of their own personal predilections or the strength of their religious beliefs,"[45] represent the corporation and its top down core values that fit into totalitarian designs and techniques of control.

But for the regime to stay in power and to assume its political program, the community, which is the regime's engine, has to work in coherence and unity under the leadership of the *shaikh* "within the society as a whole, maintaining continuity in its action, binding together in a permanent way those who lend it its support, finding a structure which guarantees its unity independently of the uncertain participation of its members."[46] Although the Islamists have attempted to avoid fragmentation and polarization by disbanding the party and instating a forty member council supposed to represent a cohesive core of an Islamic community or a *nomenklatura* that represent the functions of the corporation. The state and its community was made up of Islamist civilians, military groups, and individuals including managers and workers who had been transferred and promoted back and forth from the party to the private economic institutions, from government to the public sectors, and from the private and public sectors to government. Through a certain bond of trust or pretense of loyalty to the Leader or the corporation, they fostered a temporary relationship among themselves based on their respective goals to assume power. What was used to bind these groups together was their individual ambitions to ascend to power through a certain mode of exploitation of the prevailing opportunity. United into groups of individuals, who combined political status, ethnic solidarity, and financial power, their performance projected the image of loyal members meekly carrying out the orders of the Islamist regime as embodied in the person of the Leader, *shaikh* Hasan. Such a performance constituted these groups and their leader as a community that could lead the system to its promised goals.

When one examines the events of the early days of the Islamist regime, it is amazing to see that the replacement of people described by Makki as the elite and the "creative few" with "those who have the ability to preserve the accomplishments of the Islamist movement and to control the country under its banner"[47] was part of a long process. This replacement was driven by the corporation's need for workers with the requisite mentality. However, Simone adds a new dimension to this analysis when he refers to "significant splits in the National Islamic Front (NIF) over future

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44 Ibid.

45 Charles Tripp, "States, Elites and the 'Mangement of Change'" in Hassan Hakimian and Ziba Moshaver (eds), *The State and Global Change: The Political Economy of Transition in the Middle East and North Africa* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), 219.

46 Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society*, 120.

47 An interview by Isam Mahgoub El-Mahi, "Dr. Hassan Mekki: The Dilemma of the Islamists Movement in the cast aside of the Elite," *Al-ra'y al-'Am* daily, 17 May 2000, Khartoum.

political strategies" during the year that preceded the 1989 coup.[48] He maintains that several of those he described as "progressives", who were "arguing for an ongoing commitment to the democratic process and serious negotiation with the South,"[49] left the country by 1988. If one considers the recent history of the Islamist movement in the Sudan, one might see that these "progressives" and "creative few" had been in retreat since 1987 when the NIF held its general conference. The power conflict inside the movement that has been taking form within the last two decades expressed itself in a way that the old guard of the party was unable to contain. The conflict between certain NIF factions was less marked before the conference, but the progression of events was nonetheless critical. The inter-group power conflict was partly resolved when al-Turabi managed to bring together the rising Islamic economic class and its institutions together with the younger power-hungry generation of the Islamists. It was a surprise, at first, to most observers that a new, younger generation represented by Ali Osman Muhammad Taha had started to ascend to power within the ranks of the NIF. The gradual process of replacing the old guard and the remaining "progressives" with members of this corporate community began before the coup took its final shape by disbanding the party and concluded when al-Turabi invited all members of the NIF, including the founding fathers of the movements, to a fancy dinner at the house of one of the members in Khartoum North. According to some of the witnesses who were present at that dinner al-Turabi raised the hand of Ali Osman M. Taha as a representative of the new leadership of the new ruling community, declaring that the Islamist movement had now entered a new era. Significantly, al-Turabi had distributed prayer beads and copies of the Quran in which words of thanks were hand written by him to each member of the old guard for their dedication and service.[50] From that point on, decisive hostilities were launched against those who attempted to criticize these new changes.

Hasan Makki maintains that as an outcome of these developments some of those who opposed these changes either left the country or isolated themselves from the group. But the culmination of dissent inside the movement, including the opposition to the developments that followed the conference in 1987, the opposition to the idea of the coup in 1989, and the disbanding of the NIF in 1990, ran deeper within the Islamists' closed circle.

Some aspects of this dissent had been expressed within the Sudanese media, especially the print press, by al-Tayyib Zain al-'Abdin, Hasan Makki, and Muhammad Taha Muhammad Ahmad. Later, other Islamists, including Abdelwahab el-Affendi and to a lesser extent al-Tijani 'Abd al-Qadir, emerged as major critics of Islamist experience in power. When al-Turabi, who proved to be a political survivor with an

48 Simone, *In Whose Image? Political Islam and Urban Practice in Sudan*, 66.

49 Ibid.

50 This story has been the talk of the town for years and been written in the local newspaper by three of the Islamists: Ibrahim al-Desouqi 2000. "What were the reasons that Lead to Ramadan Resolutions? And What is the Duty of the Islamists Government Then?" *Al-ra'y al-'Am* daily, 8 March 2000; al-Tayib Zein al-Abdeen, in *Al-ra'y al-'Am* daily, Khartoum 2000, and Hasan Mekki, during the same period and referred to by Abdel Rahim 'Umar Mohy al-Din in his Book *al-Turabi wa al-Igahd: Siraa' al-Hawa wa al-Hawiya*, 131.

exceptional ability to exploit every situation to his favor, was dismissed from the National Congress Party, this could be viewed as the final episode in the long saga of replacing the old guard of the Islamist movement by a younger generation. Numerous events and cases could be cited as evidence that al-Turabi's preeminence among the young disciples of the Islamists who were so eager to replace the old guard deserves to be reexamined. Important among these events was the power conflict between Ali Osman, other rising power groups, and the remainder of the old guard immediately after al-Turabi was assaulted by Hashim Bader el-Deen in Canada in 1992 after which it was assumed that he would die as he stayed unconscious for some time. That incident was an eye opener for the Islamist community in power and a call to operate and assemble themselves differently and an indication that it might be high time to strengthen each group's network. Members of these competing groups started seeking alliances outside the community and empowerment within tribal and specialized groups such as the media and regional networks.

The State as a Hierarchy

In addition to these developments, there are other significant issues that merit attention. Fundamental contradictions have emerged within the new community regarding their relationship with the state bureaucracy, the competing groups and personalities of the Islamist movement, ethnic and regional groups, and society at large. Claude Lefort argues that the "bureaucracy is 'normally' at the service of the dominant class, since the administration of public affairs in the context of a given regime always presupposes the preservation of its status."[51] Considering the aggressive attitude of the Islamists in power and the waves of purges since 1989 that have replaced the higher and middle levels of the state bureaucracy with party loyalists, as well as the fact that these groups have never been representative of or part of the dominant class in the country, the Islamist community's designs ran counter to the interests of the bureaucracy. As the bureaucratic stratum, which is composed of government officials, salaried employees, and professionals, has had a long history with different types of dictatorial regimes, taming this bureaucratic stratum has not been easy. Historically, this sector, as "characterized by the exercise of delegated authority"[52] through the skillful management of the power of professional, state, and government organizations, constituted a major player in Sudanese political life. Their status position "potentially at the center of power and knowledge"[53] enabled them to define themselves as playing a dual role. First, as occupants of executive positions, those of them who were involved in higher echelons of bureaucratic hierarchies have always been part of the decision-making process in running the country's day-to-day affairs. It is true that the last three decades have witnessed a serious brain drain in this area due to the emigration of higher numbers of employees, the increasing frequency of political purges (especially by the Islamist regime), and the decline in government

51 Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society*, 116.

52 Ralf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), 54.

53 Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society*, 117.

salaries relative to other professions, however the functional position they occupy by virtue of their closeness to the seat of authority has been unaffected. With the expansion of the state apparatus, undercurrent movements within the bureaucracy started to play out their favorite game of controlling the means of knowledge and information. This may in turn explain how these elements have effectively influenced the developments that led to the disintegration of the regime, as we will see later. Secondly, as a sector with a long history of unionization, such professionals identified themselves with a political role and a distinctive position between power factors. These unionized professionals continued to pride themselves as the instrumental power behind the success of the civil disobedience movements that removed two military dictatorships in 1964 and 1985. Thus, as far as the general order of the bureaucracy is concerned, the continuous waves of purges and oppression that its members have received from different dictatorial regimes, have reaffirmed at every step that the real power of the bureaucracy rests in their impartiality, professionalism, and group solidarity.

As explained earlier, religion has been given a totalitarian disposition in order to suit a specific ideology enforced by the regime's manipulation and terror processes. The crucial principle here is the *h kimiyah* [accountability to Allah alone], which has become the central representation that maintains the logic around which the regime operates. Within this religious and political arrangement, al-Turabi placed himself at the center so that he alone would understand, know, and direct the various inward organisms of the regime. On the one hand, he "is separated from the elite formation by an inner circle of the initiated who spread around him an aura of impenetrable mystery which corresponds to his 'intangible preponderance'."[54] Hence the task of the *shaikh* as a supreme leader has changed "to impersonate the double function characteristic of the movement—to act as the magic defense of the movement against the outside world; and at the same time, to be the direct bridge by which the movement is connected with it."[55] Al-Turabi has played the role of the supreme leader by exercising an aptitude for absolute preeminence that transcends the day-to-day compact with the outside world to encompass a semi-divine dimension. He always reminds his local and international audiences of his foreign language capabilities, his "understanding of the laws of history, and his ability to speak in the language of people high in status such as the Pope or the Archbishop of Canterbury as well as to those of ordinary status such as a black African or Frenchman or a Dutchman."[56] He claims that he could not find time to speak to Sudanese and Muslim immigrant communities in the West because, as he says, "Western audiences take up all my time."[57] Equally, as the *Shaikh*—the sole religious and political reference for the regime—al-Turabi feels "happy and pleased when the outside world or the West attacks him … for the service they are rendering to Islam by attacking" his character.[58]

54 Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego: HBJ A Harvest/HBJ Book, 1979), 382.

55 Ibid.

56 Hamdi, *The Making of an Islamic Political Leader*, 73.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

By such formulations, al-Turabi projects himself as the sole owner of "the keys to history", or the solutions for all "riddles of the universe," or the "intimate knowledge of the hidden universal laws which are supposed to rule nature and man."[59] Before his fall from power in December 1999, al-Turabi was described by benefactors of the regime and his personality cult builders as the magnificent leader, the strategic genius, and the *shaikh* whose "profound fundamentalist knowledge puts him in a class of his own."[60]

The State as a Coercive Power

Since its takeover of power in 1989, the Islamist regime has been involved in methodical and systemic patterns of terror. All sectors of the population have been oppressed by the state terror machine in a variety of ways. The regime, as the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights demonstrated in its 1996 report, "has criminalized political and ideological dissent, engages multi-faceted security forces to monitor citizens' behavior, and has installed a system of rewards and punishments based on adherence to government policies and public observance of government Islamic practices."[61] The death penalty was clearly stated as the punishment for "any Muslim who advocates the rejection of Islamic beliefs or announces his own rejection of Islam by word or act."[62] And as the Islamist state was propagated by the regime as a representation of Islam, this provision was primarily designed to apply to those Muslims who oppose and criticize the regime. Other control mechanisms and patterns of coercion included the state of emergency and curfews from dusk to sunrise, arbitrary detention, and security personnel who visit homes and businesses and issue threats of bodily harm, torture, purges, and killings. Moreover, measures have been taken to force the population to conform to the regime's dress code for women, public morality, and mandatory training in the Popular Defense Force.[63] Even more striking than this is the phenomenon of "ghost houses."[64] In these private

59 Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 384.

60 Hamdi, *The Making of an Islamic Political Leader*, 9.

61 Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, "Beset by Contradictions: Islamization, Legal Reform and Human Rights in Sudan"; available from http://www.africaaction.org/docs97/sud9701.lch.htm; accessed on 31 March 2007. In 1995 the Sudanese Chief Justice Obied Hag Ali invited the Lawyers Committee, a human rights committee that works to promote international human rights and refugee law and legal procedures in the United States and elsewhere, to visit the Sudan and view the legal system in operation. In April 1995 a search mission delegation of the committee visited the Sudan for two weeks. The report was based on their findings.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid.

64 Following the military coup in 1989, the Islamist regime has created restrictions, under the National Security Act, on daily life and all political activity in an effort to maintain control. Secret detention centers, notorious for torture and ill treatment, known as ghost houses, that turned political dissension into detention and physical and mental torment, were created and operated by individuals trained by the regime. The Sudanese refer to the oppressive rules the regime has imposed as the "red line," and anyone who breaks these rules and crosses that line

homes and offices, security forces "committed the cruelest acts of mental and physical torture including beatings, mock executions and sleep and food deprivation."[65] Hundreds of Sudanese trade unionists, members of political parties, human rights activists, university professors, civil servants, army officers, and journalists were tortured in these houses by security personnel. If the concentration camps were the "most consequential institutions" of totalitarianism, as Arendt described them, the ghost houses—"the dwelling of horrors"—would represent the core of this Sudanese regime's totalitarianism. The ghost house utilized different and horrible torture techniques that characterized the regime's evil designs for domination. These systematic measures of repression and coercion do not represent an accidental characteristic of the regime. They are calculated measures that correspond to the regime's means of control. Such means of control are typical of the way in which totalitarian regimes demand unlimited power by dominating the entire population without exception in every aspect of their lives.

To gain a total dominance over public opinion and the entire situation in the country, the regime attempted through its control of all media outlets and its own model of institutionalized propaganda campaigns to maintain a monopoly over the truth. To pursue and implement policies of its own choosing, the regime outlawed all political parties, professional organizations, trade unions, and civil society organizations. Furthermore, the regime tried its hardest to destroy the economic and religious base for the religious sects, the Khatmiyya and the Ansar and that of their supporters in particular.

The above argument allows for some general observations that seem relevant to the overall issue of the relationship between the Islamist regime in the Sudan and totalitarianism within the period 1989–99.

The first observation to be made here is that what happened in the Sudanese political field since 1989 represents the first attempt in the history of the country by an ideological party bureaucracy to seriously exercise its power over the state bureaucracy in an effort to use the state and its institutions to mobilize and control the entire population. The slide into this new situation took a variety of forms:

First, the consistent and patterned strategy of purging the higher and middle ranks of the state apparatus and the continuous replacement of professional employees by loyal party personnel. Second, tightening the control over the state apparatus by allocating responsibility in an authoritarian manner and by exercising a one-way movement of power from top to bottom that consolidates the decision-making in the hands of the party hierarchy. Third, using the party personnel in different state departments and offices as an auxiliary arm of the security apparatus in order to feed information about the loyalty of government employees to the regime. Fourth, using the coercive powers of the state to eliminate other seats of power. Accordingly, waves of arrests of trade unionists, political parties, and leaders of professional organizations, and activists swept the country. Fifth, the regime worked very hard to evacuate the groups of underclass and dislocated citizens whose role started during

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while expressing their political or civil independence, especially members of political parties, trade unions and journalists, is severely tortured in these ghost houses.

65 Lawyers Committee for Human Rights 1996.

demonstrations against the military regime of Major-General Ibrahim 'Abbud in 1964, and were effective in demonstrations against Ja'far Nimairi's regime in 1985 and other governments from the central and sensitive parts of greater Khartoum. Furthermore, the physical brutality of the regime and the forceful conscription of thousands of students who were sent to the war zone in the South and other places has weakened, but not yet killed the student movement. Sixth, using the state apparatus to help the new middle class, specifically members of the *nouveaux riches* of the black market and currency dealers who are called the parasite class, or *al-habaro malo*, to consolidate their economic position in an attempt to eliminate the old middle class whose political allegiance has normally been to the two major parties. In view of this, we must ask whether the Islamist regime could be identified with any of the past dictatorial regimes the Sudan had experienced before. The perceptions, practices, and theories of the character of the regime identify it as a new model of totalitarianism.

What I have briefly enumerated is evidence of the transformation into a total domination. There is a stark difference here between this type of rule and the one-party rule we find in certain Arab and African countries. The totalitarian traits of the regime have been manifested from the beginning, when the regime imposed its own model of authority. This model attempts to "efface social division, to absorb all processes of socialization into the process of state control, [and] to push the symbolic into the real,"[66] as Lefort describes the attributes of other totalitarian models. This is the very essence of totalitarianism. The failure to take seriously what the regime has been advocating about itself has led most opponents, as well as other observers, to misread the true nature of this model.

The Islamists have tried to formulate and carry out a totalitarian-derived ideology of Islamization disregarding the countercurrents of major political, religious, economic, and other societal forces. Such realities seem to be absent from the religious knowledge, the political practice, and the social imagination of the Islamists and their allies. A similar consideration could give some explanation to why the Islamists were not able to see or understand the sources of the state bureaucracy's influence. At the same time, whatever the flaws and shortcomings of the theories and practices of the Islamist experience, it is extremely important to include the instances in which inter-group conflict has worked with other factors to expedite the disintegration of the inner layers of the regime. There is no single proof or evidence that leads to the conclusion that the Islamists' model has failed because of its relation to Islam. All the evidence leads to the inference that the whole model has failed because of its relationship to totalitarianism.

66 Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society*.

Chapter 6

A Call to Jihad

The signing of the Geneva Memorandum of Understanding between members of al-Turabi's Popular National Congress Party (NCP) and John Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) in February 2001 raised ripples of unease and exasperation among the ranks of the Islamists in the Sudan and abroad, who saw themselves developing and supporting a cause of both local and global *jihad* initiated by the Islamist regime in the Sudan. For those who supported the cause, the war in the south against John Garang and the SPLA/M was perceived as a fight against an unholy alliance of crusaders and communists to defend Islam and the new Islamist state. It was al-Turabi who had once described John Garang as a "Marxist" who manipulated racial, religious, and ideological issues to rally support for his cause. Al-Turabi claims that "when John Garang goes to Africa, he will tell them: 'we are Negroes, Africans being persecuted by Arabs.' If he comes to Europe he will probably say it's a case of Muslims persecuting Christians. If he goes to [Marxist] Ethiopia he'll say this is the bourgeoisie persecuting the oppressed classes of Northerners and Southerners alike."[1] Hence, for those Islamists who demonized John Garang and saw in him a standalone representation of such an eminent internal and external threat to the Muslim *umma* and the Islamists' civilizational project, the memorandum generated anger and outrage. Not surprisingly, any compromise or reconciliation with Garang would turn the world of those groups upside-down. Hence, the memorandum came as a shock to his supporters and sympathizers. In his book *al-Turabi wa al-Ingahd*, Dr. 'Abd al-Rahim 'Umar Muhy al-Din, an Islamist scholar and activist who chronicled the conflict between al-Turabi and the Islamists who removed him from power in 1999, describes the shock and the feeling of bitterness that engulfed those Islamists whose worldview was shaped for years by al-Turabi's rhetorical stance that the war in the south was a *jihad* against a crusade and communist threat and consequently the path of *jihad* will continue until God grants the land to his righteous people. Muhy al-Din argues that the Islamists in the Sudan and abroad must have remembered the parade of martyrs who had lost their lives in the war in the south. Those martyrs include, as Muhy al-Din maintains, 'Abd al-Khaliq al-Turabi, the younger brother of Hasan al-Turabi, 'Uthman Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir, the brother of 'Umar al-Bashir, Dr. Muhammad Ahmad 'Umar, architect Mahmud Sharif, among others. For all those and other hundreds who died in the south, al-Turabi personally was in the lead, conducting what the Islamists call the martyr wedding ceremonies. Muhy al-Din adds that it would have been easier for those who continued to rush to the Popular Defense Force (PDF) training camps to

1 Arthur L. Lowrie (ed.), *Islam, Democracy, the State and the West: A Round Table with Dr. Hasan Turabi* (Tampa: The World and Islam Studies Enterprise, 1993), 67.

hear about the death of al-Turabi or about him stepping down from the leadership of the Islamist movement than to hear about an agreement with Garang to impair the Ingadh regime.[2]

Whatever it may be, the development of both the local and the global *jihad* dogma that continued during the first Islamist republic and had reached its dead end even before its leader was ousted by his former disciples, represents another face of the Islamists' totalitarian orientation in practice. The development of this *jihadi*-centered discourse, orientation, and practice represented not only the political and military deployment of every resource of the state to create a system of indoctrination, containment, and ultimately control of the country, but paradoxically, has produced anti-systemic impulses, trends, and movements inside and outside the regime that participated effectively in the end of the first republic. One of the assertions that needs to be investigated further is the idea put forth by Richard Miniter in his controversial book *Losing Bin Laden: How Bill Clinton's Failures Unleashed Global Terror*, that Usama bin Laden's expulsion from the Sudan, and the end of one phase of global *jihad* that it signaled, may have been the first step towards getting rid of al-Turabi himself. To address the issue of local and global *jihad* in the Sudan within its different transformations, this chapter focuses on the proximate social, political, and international conditions that worked for and against this development.

Jihad Inc.

Hasan al-Turabi told a distinguished audience of twenty-three American scholars of Sudanese, Middle Eastern, and Islamic studies who met with him in a one-day roundtable debate at the University of South Florida in 1992 that, "The word Jihad is actually a reciprocal word in its verbal formation; it means a struggle against the other, so it is essentially a defensive enterprise and not an offensive one."[3] But in this statement there is more than the offensive/defensive polemic, especially when it comes to the reality on the ground in the Sudan at that time, how that struggle materialized, and who is that Other. At this meeting al-Turabi did not give adequate answers to many hanging questions. In an interview conducted with him by the Islamist-oriented London magazine *Impact International* in March 1993, however, he briefly explained his work in the Sudan, saying that his major task "is to Islamise public life—civil, business, police, military, economy and culture in all their dimensions."[4] He added, "our (power) lies in our Iman and we need a lot of *shawkah* [material power] in order to face the challenges that confront us."[5] The challenges he refers to include the "gap between the military and civilian, and this explains perhaps some of the political instability and military take-over; after a while the

2 'Umar Muhy al-Din, *al-Turabi wa al-Ingahad: Siraa' al-Hawa wa al-Hawiya Fitnat al-Islamien fi al-Sulta min Muzakirat al-Ashara ila Muzakirat a-Tahahum maa John Garang.* (Khartoum, Marawi Bookshop, 2006) 434–5.

3 Arthur L. Lowrie, *Islam, Democracy, the State and the West*, 29.

4 Interview Dr. Hasan al-Turabi, "Challenging Times, but Madinah is our Model", *Impact International* (London, 12 February–11 March): 7–9.

5 Ibid.

civilians become very jealous—and it's mostly the civilian elites who initiate the uprising—and the people followed them although most of the uprisings not (sic) necessarily popular. It was elites, trade unions, government, professional unions, that's how it all started, most of the time. We want to overcome this."[6] For that reason al-Turabi perceives the militarization of the entire society as the solution. He argues, "I think the idea is to dissolve the army, just dissolve the army in society, so to speak. The idea of popular defense force goes some way to do that. But people should organize for their own defense. If the army needs to broaden its base, then it can call upon these forces. Otherwise, these forces are people who are engaged in their daily occupations and go only when they are needed."[7]

The militarization of society came out of the grand scheme known as *al-Mashru' al-Hadari* [the Civilizational Project]. Out of this grand scheme, *al-da'wa al-shamila* [the comprehensive call] emerged as the operational plan. Two aspects merit special attention here: the first concerns the definition of the concept of *da'wa* as an ideology-based design, and the second relates to how this understanding has been operationalized by the Islamists within *al-da'wa al-shamila*. The Arabic term *da'wa* [lit. "call", "invite", or "invitation"] comes from a well-known Qu'ranic passage that reads "Invite to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching: and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: for thy Lord knoweth best, who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance."[8] Both the concept and the practice have transformed through the ages. According to Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori, "never dissociated from the political and social contexts of Muslims, *da'wa* has been used to propagate the specific claims of dynasties such as the 'Abbsids and sects such as the Isma'ilis. Under the latter, in fact, the term became virtually synonymous with propaganda, and Isma'ili missionaries (*du'a*) of the Cairo-based Fatimid dynasty (969–1171) became accomplished at recruiting followers to both a religious doctrine and political affiliation. Education was central to all conceptualizations of *da'wa*."[9] Today the tradition of *da'wa* "has begun to be formulated in a subtle but important way. Education remains central, and even the pattern of politicization has recurred. For example, one of the main Shi'i groups in Iraq opposed to the rule of Saddam Hussein (b. 1937) bears the name of Hizb al-Da'wa al-Islamiyya (Islamic Call party), and one of the chief instruments for the dissemination of Libyan religious and political ideas is Jam'iyyat al-Da'wa al-Islamiyya (Islamic Call Society). Yet the tradition of *da'wa* is also being redefined to include the idea of social welfare activism—free medical clinics, soup kitchens for the poor, subsidized housing, and other forms of mutual assistance which often substitute for ineffective or nonexistent government services."[10] In the Sudan the *da'wa* tradition takes four forms. First, there is an old and well established tradition conducted by *du'at* [missionaries] generally graduated from a specialized school

6 Arthur L. Lowrie, *Islam, Democracy, the State and the West*, 94.

7 Ibid.

8 The Holy Quran (16:125).

9 Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 35.

10 Ibid.

of Islamic training like al-Azhar in Egypt or an equivalent Sudanese institute of learning. These *du'at* were employed by the state and given positions as Imams to lead the prayers and give religious lessons to the community at state-run mosques. The second form relates to the Wahabi *madhab*, whose adherents perform some form of conversion to their brand of Islam. A third group is found among certain religious scholars who conduct *da'wa* apart from the state as a private activity supported by the Muslim community in an effort to counter missionary proselytism, especially in the south and the Nuba Mountains. The chief proponents of such activities were Shawqi al-Asad and Muhammad al-Amin al-Qurashi. The final group consists of the Sufi *turq* and *shaikhs* who have spread their teachings among the population since the fifteenth century. Most of these groups and orientations compete and sometimes challenge each other's monopoly on Islamic knowledge and interpretations, but some of them operate within distinctive political agenda.

The Islamists, however, emerged as an organized entity, without the validation of specialized religious training, challenging all these groups and actors. The Islamist activists in the Sudan, like other Islamists in Egypt and other parts of the Muslim world, "drew on the respected cultural tradition of the da'wa but adapted it to new purposes."[11] The Islamists' approach to *da'wa* targeted "self-identified Muslims whose understanding and observance of religion were viewed as faulty or incomplete."[12] This approach put into practice the Islamists' deeply rooted mode of reductionism and disrespect for all other religious expressions and representations. In addition, the Islamists "introduced new content into the message of *da'wa*. Rejecting the confinement of religion to matters of private faith and ritual, they emphasized that Islam was both *din wa-dawla.*" Hence, besides "enlarging the domain of Islamic regulation, the Islamists propagated a new, activist, interpretation of proper Muslim conduct."[13] Consistent with other developments within the Islamist movement in the Sudan over the last two decades and especially during the lifetime of the first republic an ideology-driven *da'wa* has emerged, which according to professor al-Taj Fadl Allah's characterization, turned the *da'wa* into one of the tools of political pursuit and not the other way around.[14]

Out of such a paradigm shift emerged the ideas of *jihad* and militarization of society. According to these ideas, 'Umar al-Bashir argues that, "a policy to militarize the civilian population has led to the creation of a large Popular Defense Force."[15] Alex de Waal and A. H. 'Abd al-Salam maintain that *al-da'wa al-shamila,* which they describe as the core of *al-Mashru' al-Hadari*, "was at its peak in the years 1992–6", but that its "precepts informed official Islamisation policies both before and since."[16] They add that, "it moulds to fit different situations. In the Nuba Mountains,

11 Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 126.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Al-Taj Fadl Allah, interview by author, audio recording, Khartoum, Sudan, 30 December 2005.

15 Sudanow, December 1993, 28.

16 Alex de Waal and A. H. Abdel Salam, "Islamism, State, and Jihad in the Sudan" in Alex de Waal (ed.), *Islamism and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa* (Bloomington and

for example, it has been integrally associated with *jihad*, while in much of Northern Sudan, it is a component of Islamic social planning."[17] Many attribute the idea of *al-da'wa al-shamila* to 'Ali 'Uthman Muhammad Taha, who established one of the largest ministries in the history of the country under the title of the Ministry of Social Planning and who developed the concepts of *al-da'wa al-shamila* and *al-Enqlab al-Islami* [the Islamic total transformation], a term that might have been borrowed from the Iranians and owe its currency to the Revolutionary Guard *Sepah-e Pasdaran-e Enghelab-e Islami*. The doctrine of the total transformation is one of al-Turabi's ideas that clearly assigns the responsibility of leading the entire Islamization process to a similar manifestation that would influence local and global *jihad*. Over the course of the first republic, the Islamist discourse became dominated by some of the ideologues who tried to promote al-Turabi's ideas. Zakariya Bashir Imam, a leading Sudanese Islamist, defines the role and describes the function of the policy of Islamic social planning in an article published in the *al-Inqadh al-Watani* daily, which was translated by Alex de Waal in the following terms:

> The idea of Islamic Social Planning means a continuing revolution for the remolding of the human being and the institutions in society in accordance with Quranic guidance ...
> Islamic Social Planning aims to achieve:
> - A complete and comprehensive remolding of the Islamic personality with a view to making it a living, honest and conscious characterization of Islamic concepts, values, and teachings.
> - Building and reconstructing all state institutions on principles derived from the Quran.
> - Establishing an Islamic society formed on the basis of Islamic principles and rules without coercion.
> - Establishing an Islamic state to propagate rights, justice, spread peace and security in all fields and actualize solidarity, compassion, and support among all people, especially Moslems.
>
> Establishing an international Islamic civilization and a new international order based on justice and fairness and the recognition of the cultures of others and their cultural, religious and ethnic distinctions.[18]

What Zakaria describes here is the grand Islamist scheme in its totality and that includes both the local and global *jihad*.

'Ali 'Uthman, who has been described by fellow Islamists as a shrewd, manipulative, and cold political bureaucrat with no claim to the world of theories and thought, was the second person in the movement hierarchy after al-Turabi and was the one responsible for the movement's military wing among other responsibilities. He presided over the Ministry of Social Planning and as such he wielded a great deal of power and became the overseer of internal affairs of the entire regime. During that time, which has been described as *tamkiin* [given authority in the land], the totalitarian polity of the regime spread its roots. Accordingly, there was a division

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Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004), 89.

17 Ibid.

18 Quoted in Alex De Waal article, "Creating Devastation and Calling it Islam: The War for the Nuba, Sudan", in *SAIS Review*, Vol. XXI, No. 2 (Summer–Fall 2001): 117–32.

of labor, in which 'Uthman had control of the internal affairs and the organizational structures of local *jihad*, while al-Turabi took the external or global *jihad*. Both local and global *jihad* were "developed in the Arab and Islamic Bureau, a quasi-official entity chaired by the Islamists' leader, Hassan al Turabi."[19] The Bureau included other main Islamist political and security leadership such as 'Ali 'Uthman, al-Tayyibb Ibrahim (Muhammad Khair) (aka Sikha), Nafi' Ali Nafi', Majdhub al-Khalifa, and Qutbi al-Mahdi. According to this description, Islamic social planning represents the heart and soul of the Islamist totalitarian project.

Both the local and the global *jihad* were organized and conducted within a well defined structure. The Ministry of Social Planning was the body assigned to plan, organize, and conduct the local part of the project. Within the ministry, "a department of Da'wa was established, and the "Comprehensive Da'wa' Funds" Association was formed (initially named the Social Charitable Funds Coordination Council). The latter brought together most of the jihadists and *da'wa* organizations active in the Sudan, both prostatatals and NGOs. Thereafter the activities of Islamic agencies hugely expands."[20] The regime invented "a hybrid creature ('charitable Companies') which enjoys exemptions from business taxes and custom duties because of their alleged contribution to the '*jihad* effort' in the south. For instance, by making a one time US $5,000 donation to the supply department of the Popular Defense Force, a company would qualify as 'charitable' and eligible to receive government concessions on taxes and duties worth millions."[21] In very short time, the *jihad* business was turned into a corporation with registered offshore NGOs; in addition to "bankrolling the '*jihad*' and 'comprehensive call' enterprises, these NGOs were licensed to conduct business. They formed an alternative to raising money in the Gulf that an otherwise cash-strapped government encouraged."[22] Moreover, the *zakat* as collected by the state became one of the sources of support for the local *jihad* in the south and Nuba Mountains.

The comprehensive *da'wa* program was widely heralded in the state media, especially the TV, in an effort to showcase the regime to the local community and representatives of the international community as effectively implementing infrastructure improvement according to Islamic terms. This desire to emphasize the value of this program was an attempt to validate Islamist efforts as state managers, as well as to improve the tarnished international image of the country.

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19 Alex de Waal, "Averting Genocide in the Nuba Mountains, Sudan"; available from http://howgenocidesend.ssrc.org/de_Waal2/; Internet; accessed 31 March 2007.

20 Alex de Waal and A. H. Abdel Salam, "Islamism, State, and Jihad in the Sudan" in Alex de Waal (ed.), *Islamism and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004), 90.

21 The International Crisis Group, *God, Oil, and Country: Changing the Logic of War in Sudan* (Brussels: The International Crisis Group Press, 2002), 104.

22 Ibid.

The National Defense Force and the Operationalization of *Jihad*

At a roundtable discussion in Florida, Hasan al-Turabi described the National Defense Forces (PDF) as an alternative to the national army to carry out the mission of the comprehensive call for *jihad*, and to protect the regime from armed opposition in the north and the rebellion in the south. 'Umar al-Bashir described and defined the duties and the functions of the PDF, saying that it was "designed to provide the Sudanese people with the opportunity to receive comprehensive training, broad enough to engender a profound remolding and re-education of the Sudanese nation on new lines. Military instruction will form a part of this training, which will embrace almost every aspect of life in an effort to imbue the Sudanese people with the values and qualities of patience, perseverance, dignity, ambition, solidarity, and sacrifice. These values and qualities are indispensable if Sudan is to be transformed into a state of abundance, peace and prestige."[23] The PDF found its recruits from four sources that included tribal militias, volunteers and recruits from the ranks of Islamists, compulsorily conscripted students and civil servants, and forcibly drafted males between the age of eighteen and thirty according to the Popular Defense Forces Act of 1989. Under the National Service Law of 1992, all men between eighteen and thirty-three years of age are liable for military service. Military service is for twenty-four months, or eighteen months for high school graduates and twelve months for university and college graduates. To obtain a secondary school certificate, a requirement to enter university, boys aged between seventeen and nineteen were obliged to do twelve to eighteen months of compulsory military service under a 1997 decree the PDF recruits receive military training by instructors from the army and indoctrination from a group of Islamist ideologues headed by Ibrahim al-Sanusi, a senior Islamist and a very close ally of al-Turabi. After weeks of training in the camps, they would be dispatched to the military zone. As Burr and Collins explain, it was clear that the Sudanese PDF would "become neither a revolutionary guard nor efficient paramilitary organization. It was a rabble in arms, volunteers, used by the Sudan army in its southern civil war as cannon fodder whose depleted ranks had to be filled by forced and unpopular conscription."[24]

The PDF was mandated to organize and supply tribal militias with weapons to conduct military operations in the conflict zone. The growth of most of these tribal militia predated the Islamist regime and was an outcome of the complications of the war and subsequent violence in the south. According to the Sudanese scholar M. A. Mohamed Salih, "Tribal militias which did not exist during the Mahdist state in the 1880s are now thriving, with much vigour and direct and indirect support from the Government. It is a situation in which law and order are no longer administered through the legitimate state institutions which are entrusted with the task of keeping the country united and intact. Law and order in the South and other parts of the Sudan

23 Sudanow, December 1993, 28.

24 J. Millard Burr and Robert O. Collins, *Revolutionary Sudan: Hasan al-Turabi and the Islamist State, 1989–2000* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2003), 18.

are taken up by the fist of the most powerful and feared."[25] By the end of the Nimairi regime in 1985 there were signs that the Sudan Popular Liberation Army (SPLA) had developed a new strategy for the war by launching military operations in the southern part of greater Kordofan province and the northern part of greater Bahr al-Gazal province, a meeting place for different ethnic groups including the Nuba, the Baggara, the Dinka, and the Nuer. The failure of successive governments to extend protection to citizens, their property, or their wellbeing in these marginalized areas created a dynamic of lawlessness, violence, and counter-violence soon filled by a disastrous and shortsighted plan started by the transitional government of General 'Abd al-Rahman Suwar al-Dahab (1985–86) and followed by other successive governments. Under this plan, these governments, against the advice of their military advisors, continued to equip some of the tribes in these areas with automatic weapons in an attempt to check or stem the advance of the SPLA. Many military experts and political leaders objected to the plan at the time and continued to warn against its predictable dire consequences. In the period that preceded the 1989 coup and the Islamist regime, the government relied on surrogate forces raised from 'tribal' militias, which were subsequently incorporated into the PDF, including the Murahalin (Misiriyya and Rizaqat of Southern Kordofan and Southern Darfur), the Rufa'a of the Southern Blue Nile, the Anyanya 2 (Nuer) and Murle of Upper Nile and Jonglei, and the Mundari and Toposa militias of Eastern Equatoria.[26] At the Bergen Forum, which was attended by scholars and senior government officials as well as representatives of the political parties and the SPLA, many expressed their alarm. Among these was M.A. Mohamed Salih, who argued that, "The creation of the tribal militias cannot be justified for, at least, three reasons: first, tribal enmities tend to persist and it will take many decades before the wounds of war will heal. The most important function of the army is its role as a guardian of national unity and, therefore, it should be the only institution entrusted to monopolize that role. Second, the use of arms by civilians is apt to create chaos and a situation of anarchy and this is exactly what is happening in the South today. Third, any indication that the state is weak and cannot afford to defend its citizens is a sign of political and economic crisis. The only way out and the only possibility for the state to save its face is peace because it is only during peace that the state can assert its identity and serve the public interest."[27]

Nevertheless, the Islamist regime incorporated the tribal militias within its comprehensive call plan. Al-Bashir claims that "it is widely believed that the army's

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25 M. A. Mohamed Salih, "Tribal Militias, SPLA/SPLM and The Sudanese State: 'New Wine in Old Bottles'" a paper presented in the *Management of the Crisis in the Sudan: Proceedings of the Bergen Forum 23–24 February 1989*; available from http://www.fou.uib.no/fd/1996/f/712001/index.htm; Internet; accessed on 31 March 2007.

26 Douglas H. Johnson, *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), 151.

27 M.A. Mohamed Salih, "Tribal Militias, SPLA/SPLM and The Sudanese State: 'New Wine in Old Bottles'", in *Management of the Crisis in the Sudan: Proceedings of the Bergen Forum 23–24 February 1989.* Edited by Abdel Faffar Mohmed Ahmed and Gunnar Sorbo, available from http://www.fou.uib.no/fd/1996/f/712001/backmoh.htm, accessed October 2007.

victories in the south and southern Kordofan were only made possible by the support of the PDF."[28] Beginning in 1991, the regime mounted severe attacks against the Nuba through the PDF, deploying the tribal militia and the army. The regional government of Kordofan closed access to the area even for humanitarian aid workers only to declare *jihad* as the "final solution" to the "Nuba problem". A state sponsored *fatwa* was issued in 1993 by a group of Muslim leaders supporting the *jihad*. The Nuba are citizens in the first place, and mostly Muslims, the idea of launching *jihad* against your own citizens transformed the ideology of the civilizational project into an excuse for killing and devastation. As the political project of the Islamist state "is both inclusive and exclusive in its intentions. Inclusive, because it has been advocated as a way of hastening the conversion of non-Muslims: exclusive because even within the broad category of Muslims it has sought to exclude political secularists."[29] Hence, the project of *al-Enqlab al-Islami* was in its essence a totalitarian scheme aiming to achieve a total social transformation of the Sudan into an Islamist state through violence. This program includes a centralized form of violence based on an infrastructure of violence as a mode of governance. This infrastructure was not limited to expected forms of control mechanisms and patterns of coercion; it also included enforcing a state of emergency, curfews from dusk to dawn, the arbitrary detention of thousands of people, and security personnel who visit homes and businesses and issue threats of bodily harm, torture, purges, and death. Additionally, this trend of violence expanded to include a decentralized form directed toward other areas in the country where there was an insurgency against the government or where there were "allegedly 'un-Islamic' practices of groups such as the Nuba."[30] Because many in the periphery, "including many Nuba, were in armed revolt against this socio-cultural project (as well as its accompanied political oppression and economic exploitation), this led to a merger between social transformation and counter-insurgency."[31]

The local *jihad* in the Nuba Mountains takes on added significance for two reasons. First it represents one of the prime examples of the totalitarian project "of destroying those groups who resisted, either by physically eliminating their members, or by eradicating their cultures and assimilating the survivors."[32] Second, the way the *jihad* against the Nuba was conducted, using the tribal militia, became a model of local *jihad* that could be promoted and followed elsewhere to counter insurgencies. Within its multifaceted functions, the PDF, as its first leader Ibrahim ʻAbd al-Hafiz claimed, was assigned the duty of "consolidation of religious values in society and effecting a comprehensive departure from the [present] reality of ignorance and illiteracy and the actualisation of total interaction with the Islamic project."[33]

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28 Sudanow, December 1993, 28.

29 Johnson, *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars*, 128.

30 de Waal, "Averting Genocide in the Nuba Mountains, Sudan."

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Alex de Waal and A. H. Abdel Salam, "Islamism, State, and Jihad in the Sudan" in Alex de Waal (ed.), *Islamism and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004), 90.

In the urban areas of the Sudan, thousands of unprepared high-school graduates were forcefully conscripted and thrown into war zones in the south. In addition, according to the *Child Soldiers Global Report 2004* presented by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, the government, its allied militias, and armed opposition groups in southern and western Sudan used child soldiers "extensively". The report states that, "An estimated 17,000 children were in the forces of the government, allied militia, and opposition armed groups, and between 2,500 and 5,000 in the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). The SPLA claimed to have demobilized more than 16,000 children; however, recruitment of children continued to take place in the SPLA-held territories."[34] Both the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and UNICEF expressed concern at the continued recruitment and use of child soldiers. The complications of these types of violence have served as a breeding ground for innumerable atrocities, chief among them forced labor and the abduction of children and women. During the 1991–94 fighting between the Riek Machar[35]and John Garang factions, thousands of Dinka men, women, and children of all ages were killed. Machar accused Garang forces of burning thirty-five villages, killing mostly women and children, destroying crops, and looting cattle in the Nuer region. This fierce fighting caused a famine that hit the east bank of the Nile in 1993, in which tens of thousands died in the so-called "Hunger Triangle" between the villages of Adok, Waat, and Kongor straddling the Nuer-Dinka divide.

One of the most tragic outcomes of the entire situation has been the dispersal of thousands of Sudanese professionals, journalists, and other knowledge workers who left the country to find refuge abroad. Thousands of those who opposed the regime fled the country for fear of persecution and settled in countries of first or second asylum as political refugees. Among these refugees is the group that has become known around the world as the Lost Boys of Sudan. According to records from the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees, "Sudan has the largest displaced population in the world with some 570,000 Sudanese refugees in neighboring countries of Chad (70,000), following the fighting in Darfur in August 2003, DRC (69,000), Egypt (30,324), Eritrea (88,000), Kenya (59,000), Uganda (223,000) and three to four million internally displaced persons. In addition to two million deaths directly attributed to the fighting, the lives and livelihoods of a significant number of people have been disrupted."[36]

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34 *Child Soldiers Global Report 2004* (London: Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2004), 318.

35 Riek Machar Teny Dhurgon, a Nuer, was third in command in the SPLM/A after John Garang de Mabior and Salva Kiir Mayardit (both Dinka). A supporter of succession for southern Sudan, with Lam Akol and Gordon Kong Chuol he split from the SPLM/A in 1991 to form the Nuer-dominated SPLM/A-Nasir faction (1991–94).

36 UN High Commissioner of Refugees, 2004 Supplementary Appeal for Sudan (Geneva, Switzerland, 2004).

The Global *Jihad*

Global *jihad* can be seen both in terms of its connection with the Islamists' grand scheme of the civilizational project and as its external extension. After April 1991, al-Turabi organized the Popular Arab and Islamic Conference (PAIC) in Khartoum which was attended by about 500 delegates annually. According to the British newsmagazine *The Economist*, the PAIC "was the culmination of a quarter-century of study, political activity, and international travels by Turabi during which he had met with the Islamists of the Muslim world where his rhetoric and ability were acknowledged in the exclusive fraternity."[37] The delegates at these meetings represented various Islamist groups from around the world, hoping to promote the Sudanese capital as a major center in the Islamic world and to claim the leadership of the world Islamic movement. According to al-Turabi, the PAIC represented a radical alternative to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) "led by intellectuals and not reactionary traditionalists."[38]

As the *al-da'wa al-shamila* represented the core of the local *jihad*, the PAIC represented one of the instruments of global *jihad*. The PAIC "established a permanent secretariat with Hasan al-Turabi its secretary general and Ibrahim al-Sanusi, an Islamic Front stalwart, as deputy secretary-general while retaining his position as director of Islamic indoctrination for the Sudanese PDF."[39] The PAIC consolidated al-Turabi's position as the leader of and spokesperson for the revolutionary global Islamist movement. According to al-Turabi, the quick success of this global Islamist movement has turned "the Islamic phenomenon into a mass movement." He elaborates, that "It is no longer Islamic movements; it is now Islamic masses who have taken over control."[40] This expansion of global Islamism territorially and ideologically, will end up introducing an alternative to the traditional Islamist Brotherhood, both local and international bodies, which have always been at the center of al-Turabi and Ayman al-Zawahiri's criticism and scorn. Al-Turabi argued that, "many Islamic movements are now completely outflanked. It is not only the governments that are being undermined by this massive movement of Muslim people, but it is the Islamic movements themselves; the *Jama't Islami* and the *Ikhwan Muslimun* for example. They have to go popular or perhaps perish."[41]

For the Sudanese Islamists, the PAIC represented "'the most significant event since the collapse of the Caliphate' and the 'first occasion where representatives from mass movements from all over the Muslim world came together in one place' to represent an alternative to the timidity and acrimonious backbiting between the Arab League and the OIC."[42] In this instance, the Sudanese Islamists and their benefactors inside and outside the country had expected the emergence of a model that could reinstate a certain version of political Islam as an alternative ideology and

37 Burr and Collins, *Revolutionary Sudan*, 56.
38 Ibid., 57.
39 Ibid., 60.
40 Arthur L. Lowrie, *Islam, Democracy, the State and the West*, 55.
41 Ibid., 56.
42 Burr and Collins, *Revolutionary Sudan*, 57.

an example after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the demise of East European socialism. For al-Turabi, the demise of that brand of communism coincided with what he believed to be the promise of an emerging Islamist order that would liberate the entire human race "from the clutches of all kinds of material, political, occult, or psychological control."[43] Al-Turabi himself advocated that the Sudanese Islamist state model would act as a launching point for "pan-Islamic *rapprochement* … proceeding from below."[44] He expected that model "would radiate throughout the Muslim World." Hence, al-Turabi explains, "if the physical export of the model is subject to Islamic limitations in deference to international law, the reminiscence of the classical *Khil fah* and the deeply entrenched Islamic traditions of free migration (*hijra*) and fraternal solidarity would make such a state a focus of pan-Islamic attention and affection."[45]

For al-Turabi, the "present growth of Islamic revivalism means a sharper sense of inclusive-exclusive identity, a deeper experience of the same culture and stronger urge for united action, nationally and internationally."[46] He further elaborates that "once a single fully-fledged Islamic state is established, the model would radiate throughout the Muslim world,"[47] which is a concept articulated later by Islamists such as *al-Qa'ida*.

In their new state, the Islamists transformed Khartoum into a hub and base of operations receiving, training, and providing a sanctuary for a network of radical individuals and groups from different parts of the Muslim world. In a discussion about the action to be taken towards more than one million Africans living in the country but ineligible for Sudanese nationality, the Chairman of the Legal Affairs Committee in the National Assembly, Hasan al-Bili, stated that, "our nationality and passport under Shari'a is 'No God but Allah' and Sudan is an open country for all Muslims, especially those who fight for the Islamic state and those who are persecuted in their own countries and who look to Sudan as a safe haven."[48]

As the regime granted citizenship to Islamists from all parts of the world, three strategies emerged out of the policy of the regime in coordination with its global Islamist allies. The first one focused on destabilizing the Muslim and Arab regimes, which were considered anti-Islamic, in an attempt to replace them with Islamist states by force. This could be accomplished either by following the Sudanese model of military coup—*Islamization from above*—or through a manipulation of a grand plan that includes the Arab-Afghans who were hardened during the war against the Soviets and later returned home with the intention of mobilizing the masses—*Islamization from below*. Second, by the early 1990s, some of the pan-Islamic brigades who came to Afghanistan from different parts of the Muslim world

43 Hamdi, Mohamed E, *The Making of an Islamic Political Leader: Conversations with Hasan al-Turabi* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998).

44 Hassan A. Turabi, "Islam as a Pan-National Movement and Nation States: And Islamic Doctrine of Human Association"; available from http://www.sufo.demon.co.uk/reli002.htm; Internet; accessed 21 January 2001.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 Quoted in Ali Dinar's *Sudan News and Views*, Issue 4, 1994.

had returned to their countries after the defeat of the Soviets and their allies in Afghanistan. These first generation Arab-Afghans, who received training in warfare techniques in Afghanistan and forged an Islamist ideology of global *jihad* based on armed struggle, found in the Sudan a base, or what I call a federated *qa'ida*, for spreading this ideology. The term federated is appropriate, because this *qa'ida* acted as an autonomous entity with a high degree of independence from the Sudanese state. The strategic location of the Sudan made it an ideal place for the nascent *al-Qa'ida* to build a power base and start to operate in a certain manner so as to influence change in the Arab and Muslim world. Third, the Sudanese regime gave shelter to Usama Bin Ladin, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and global *jihadists* from the entire world, allowing them to use Sudanese territory as their base of operations. This new kind of activism and the politics that emerged out of it invoked feelings of fear at home and alarm and frustration abroad. This was evident when the Sudan's Arab and African neighbors started accusing the Khartoum regime of deliberately acting to destabilize the region by battling these countries through the infiltration of "trained terrorists" and by giving different types of assistance to internal radical Islamist groups actively engaged in efforts to undermine the security of the governments in these countries.

Through such acts, the Islamists planned toward what some perceived as instigation of a global *jihad*, or open hostility toward what they describe as *al-istikbar al-'alami* [the international arrogance] in a direct reference to the West, and the United States in particular. But the Khartoum era had its ironies. It is true that the first and only Islamist regime in the entire Sunni Muslim world gave global *jihadists* the opportunity to build an infrastructure and operational base, but it also constrained their activities as the local, regional, and international threats to the very existence of the Sudanese regime became so pervasive as to limit its role as a host for such an emerging "global terror." From this inauspicious start things only got worse for the global *jihad* and its leaders, as developments show.

Bin Laden goes to Khartoum

With a few to export, a massive budget deficit, and continually mounting war costs, the Islamist regime was keen to attract financial support from Islamic groups and encourage Islamists to invest in the Sudan. In late 1989 Osama Bin Laden, who had early discussions with al-Turabi about investment in the Sudan, established his Wadi al-Aqiq holding company in Khartoum. In 1991, bin Laden was able to move from Saudi Arabia, were he was under house arrest, to Khartoum. Bin Laden invested heavily in Sudanese businesses and agricultural projects through the Islamic banking system. Some of these large agricultural projects were suspected to be training camps. Under the protection of Hasan al-Turabi and the Islamist regime, Bin Laden was able to rebuild his new qa'ida [base] by bringing to the Sudan the main and most important associates from the Arab Afghan leaders including Ayman al-Zawahiri, Thawrat Salah Shahata, Abu 'Ubayda al-Bensheery, Arab Afghan,

members of Islamic Jihad among other militant jihadists. The Islamist regime, not only granted al-Qa'ida protection and the opportunity to operate in "coordination between the Sudanese government and the members of the group"[49], but it gave them the privilege to use of Sudanese state powers to grant passports, visas, and other consular documents to al-Qa'ida operatives. This allowed the group's operatives to legally bypass some security levels on the pretense of diplomatic immunity, easing their ability to travel across the globe.

In their new found federated *qa'ida,* Bin Laden and his group, began organizing and executing their new global jihad operations. In 1993, according to Bin Laden himself, Arab *mujahidin* who were in Afghanistan "participated with their brothers in Somalia against the American occupation troops and killed large numbers of them."[50] The federated qa'ida's revolutionary aims went beyond Somalia to include Saudi Arabia, were attempts were made to organize underground opposition to the regime in Riyadh. The Sudanese capital witnessed an open war between Bin Laden inside and outside the mosques of Ansar al-Sunna, a Wahabi group who were accused of trying to assassinate Bin Laden on behalf of the Saudi regime several times without success. Bin Laden and his Jihadists retaliated by attacking Ansar al-Sunna mosques during Friday prayers. This war took a different turn in 1994 the Saudi authorities stripped Bin Laden of his citizenship. On the other hand, the Sudanese security preempted attempts on the life of Ayman al-Zawahiri by the Egyptian intelligence in the Sudan. Within these assassination attempts and counter attempts "the Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak narrowly escaped death in an ambush during a state visit to Ethiopia. When the organizers were traced to Sudan, Washington and Cairo added to the pressure already on Khartoum from Riyadh to expel ben Laden from the country."[51] In 1996, due to increased international pressure on the regime, bin Laden was told to leave, and he returned to Afghanistan.

The development of oil production for export in the Sudan provided the regime with a more legitimate source of financing. This oil money together with mounting international pressure supplanted the need to supply sanctuary to Bin Laden and his jihadists.

All of these developments in the fields of local and global *jihad* worked together and separately to create an anti-systemic impulse that contributed to the collapse of the first republic as we will see in the following chapters.

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49 Montasser al-Zayyat, *The Road to al-Gaeda: the Story of Bun Laden's Right-Hand Man,* (London, Pluto, Press, 2004) 57.

50 Bruce Lawrence (ed) *Messages to the World: Statements of Osama Bin Laden,* (London, Verso, 2005) 55.

51 Ibid.

Chapter 7

End of the First Republic

On the night of 12 December 1999, which incidentally was the fourth day of the fasting month of Ramadan, President ‘Umar al-Bashir appeared on national television and announced that he was dissolving the parliament and imposing emergency measures for three months until elections could be held. As a result of that action, al-Turabi lost his position as speaker of the parliament, from where he had been taking legislative steps to strip the president of some of his powers. He hoped to accomplish this by creating a new office of prime minister elected by the parliament. Under the leadership of al-Turabi, the parliament also proposed that state governors be elected directly by the people, instead of being selected from a list of names chosen by the president. Had these arrangements succeeded, al-Bashir would have been rendered an ineffective figurehead. The announcement came as a surprise to most, but the confrontation had been brewing for some time behind the scenes.

The palace coup against Hasan al-Turabi on 12 December radically changed the political environment in the Sudan and to a lesser extent in the wider region. It gave rise to an uneasy feeling among most Sudanese citizens and even political groups, who vigorously debated whether or not the coup was merely another game the Islamists were playing, similar to the events of 30 June 1989 when al-Turabi was sent to prison as a cover up. However, the resulting legal battles and the failure at reconciliation and mediation between the two camps of the Sudanese Islamists led by high-level Islamists from abroad and the sharp accusations that began to fill the local media soon focused both local and international minds on the reality of the situation. It soon became clear that the conflict was real, and that the end of the first republic was at hand.

One year before the events of December, ten of the regime’s leading Islamists surprised the meeting of the *Majlis a-shura* [the Shura Council] by distributing a memorandum which was not scheduled in the meeting’s agenda. The memorandum was called the Memorandum of Ten because it had ten signatories, including seven of the young Islamists, one from the old guard, one from the military, and another from the second generation of the Islamist movement. They were Sayyid al-Khatieb, Ghazi Salah al-Din al-‘Atabani, Ahmed Ali al-Imam, Ahmed Torien, Bakri Hasan Salih, Ibrahim Ahmed ‘Umar, Bahaa al-Din Hanafie, Mutrif Sidiq, Nafie Ali Nafie, and ‘Usman Khalid Modawi. The memo was a critical assessment of the ten years of the Islamist experience in power and offered suggestions for reforming the governing structures of the ruling Congress Party. The proposed reforms stripped al-Turabi of his powers as secretary general and concentrated these in the hands of al-Bashir. According to ‘Abd al-Rahim ‘Umar Muhy el-Din, the memo was written by an obscure Islamist by the name of Bahaa’ al-Din Hanafi who used to describe himself as antisocial. Dr. Hanafi, who was a graduate of an American university, was

known among the Islamists for being openly critical of al-Turabi. Ghazi Salah al-Din al-'Atabani, one of the ten and the Information Minister at the time, told the *Voice of America* that "the memo was not viewed as part of a plot against Professor Turabi, but he says it started a process that culminated in the December 12 emergency measures."[1] In actual fact, what transpired then was the extension of the influence of one faction of the Islamists to the highest level of institutional power.

From the outside, the new ruling elite that came to the front during the previous ten years of the first Islamist republic and formed the backbone of the regime under the leadership of al-Turabi appeared like a united working group. Thus it was only with the removal of al-Turabi that the discord within the ranks of the Islamists, the cracks inside the regime, and the decline of the republic started to show clearly. Al-Bashir himself was perceived by many as a subservient military man who was lifted from obscurity by al-Turabi and deprived of any real authority, but continued to meekly follow his *shaikh*'s commands. For years, al-Bashir was one of those who contributed immensely to al-Turabi's personality cult by praising his leadership, his place in Islamic history, and his contributions to the Islamic state. Moreover, before 1999, al-Bashir tolerated al-Turabi's harsh insults, even as the *shaikh* made a habit of discrediting the president of the Islamist republic and annulling his decisions, and denied all allegations of a disagreement or conflict between the two to the local and international press. Although from time to time al-Turabi would "generously" praise some of quality of the General to the foreign press, his true feelings were betrayed in an interview with Mohamed E. Hamdi one year before the palace coup when he said that, "Omer now represents Sudan's contemporary history, but he will not do so a hundred years hence, just as he did not have anything to do with it twenty years ago."[2] This statement reveals al-Turabi's high opinion of himself and his place in history in contrast to the passing importance he attributed to al-Bashir.

Of course, the demise of the first Islamist republic was more complicated than a mere changing of the guard. It was a transformation that marked the end of the first republic and it was a direct result of serious corrosion from within augmented by external forces. The conflict between al-Turabi and al-Bashir and their supporters that came out in the open in 1999 after years of power struggle between the two men was only the tip of the iceberg. Because al-Bashir wanted to keep his military attire and his supporters their ideological garb while maintaining the continuity of the Islamist project without al-Turabi's leadership, not only were the history of these developments, al-Turabi's character, the state model, and the ideas that governed the entire experience deliberately distorted, but al-Turabi himself was also openly attacked and even thrown into prison on more than one occasion. On the other hand, al-Turabi continued to express in different forms and forums similar negative and distorted claims about his opponents and the entire experience. In his newly published a book, *al-Siyasa wa al-Hukm: al-Nusum al-Sultniya bayna al-usul wa Sunnan al-Waq'ai* [Politics and Governance: Ruling Orders between the Fundamentals and the Conventions of reality],which he wrote while he was in prison, al-Turabi writes "to

1 Scott Bobb, "Sudan Power Struggle", *Voice of America* (Khartoum, 23 December 1999).

2 Mohamed E. Hamdi, *The Making of an Islamic Political Leader: Conversations with Hasan al-Turabi* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998), 59.

establish a complete extrication from the history of *al-Ingadh* while condemning it without a forthright confrontation with that past."[3] So, although the conflict reflected a serious crisis within the regime, the state, and the Islamist movement at large, many observers and even some of the Islamists themselves did not yet comprehend the depth and breadth of the end of the first Islamist republic. The fault line here could have been seen more clearly within the latent and manifest intervening factors that augmented the end of the first Islamist republic. The effects of these intervening factors have been operating through a mediating process, in which conflict among the Islamist power groups has become, in turn, the medium that affected the outcomes.

In examining these factors it is important to stress the formal and informal activities and strategies of political and religious actors, as well as the debates and critical activities of intellectuals, journalists, and politicians, as part of the mechanism of generating a new political culture that could mediate new spheres to curb the regime's political and totalitarian designs. All these sets of factors and events worked both together and separately to accelerate the regime's uneasy transfer of power and to usher in the end of the first Islamist republic. This might be seen as what Gramsci calls "one of these cases in which these groups have the function of 'domination' without that of 'leadership': dictatorship without hegemony."[4] In the second Islamist republic the focus of the system highlights a Nimairi-like military state where, this time, a "narrow clique" of the Islamist elite are managed, ruled, and "protected by the armour of coercion" represented by 'Umar al-Bashir. It seems that in analyzing the regime, factors of political conflict have been overemphasized at the expense of other factors such as religion and societal change. This chapter focuses on these underlying developments and accentuates their role in the disintegration of the first republic.

Islamism versus Islam

To start with, it should be emphasized that one of the major challenges to the Islamist regime and its state has expressed itself in terms of religion. As the regime based its legitimacy on Islam and the promise of creating an Islamic polity, this constituted a severe blow to the entire Islamist project. It is important to point out that much of the debate within concerned circles and observers on the disintegration of the first republic is taken up with the internal factors that relate to the conflict among the Islamists themselves. Yet most discussions about the disintegration of the first republic, including that of the Islamists and their rivals, failed to consider the religious context of the conflict. Both the Islamists and their rivals limited their discussion, assessment, and critique to elements of the conflict accounting for only one of the aspects of the outcome of the crisis. Hence, other factors, might be equally or more potent, and therefore need to be accorded equal if not more recognition.

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3 Al-Tijani Abdel Qadir, "Ikhwanuna al-Siqar wa Mshariihim al-Kubra" [Our young Brothers and their big projects] (Khartoum, *al-sahafa* daily, 26 November 2006).

4 Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 105.

It might seem paradoxical that the regime's absolute claim to Islam and its attempts to marginalize and suppress other religious expressions has led to the most serious rival claims that embedded themselves in Islam on the one hand and to the diminishing appeal of the Islamist project on the other. Based on both arrogance and naïve presumptions, or what al-Tayyib Zain al-'Abdin and Hasan Makki[5] called *skrat al-Sulta* [power intoxication], the regime believed that its program of Islamization would wipe out its political and religious enemies and competitors and would lead to the creation of an "Islamist conformity."

However, in almost no time it became obvious for an increasing number of the population that disagreement with the regime shifted from mere differences of opinion to rigid beliefs among both the enemies and sympathizers of the regime, which led Hasan Makki to the conclusion that the Sudanese Islamist project "has totally failed."[6] Later, Abdelwahab el-Affendi took the issue a step further by describing al-Turabi's "experiment in power" as "a total disaster, not the least for him."[7] For many Sudanese politicians, scholars, journalists, and observers, the most important question has been what mechanisms the Sudanese people might utilize to change the regime and restore a democratic path once again. Some continued waiting for an *intifada* similar to October 1964 or April 1985 to put an end to the regime. Others expected or tried violent means such as inciting an insurgency from the eastern part of the country or instigating a military coup. Neither the fear of their imminent downfall among the regime loyalists, nor the expectation of their removal among the regime's antagonists has inspired a thoughtful analysis of the role of Islam in the demise of the first republic. This in itself represents a serious predicament for the Sudanese Islamists in the first place, and for the non-Islamist scholars at the same time, because there are still some among the Sudanese Islamists who believe that al-Turabi's state model is the best and the most viable option. Despite their awareness of the quagmire they are in, others advocate that the "narrow clique" of Islamists and its military shield is capable of ruling the country in the future. Emerging Islamists, such as Abdel Hai Yusuf,[8] would like to prescribe an additional dose of Islamism to redeem the system by reconstructing the fields of religion and the state, because both present representations of Islamism—inside and outside the regime—have gone astray. All these developments call for a discerning appraisal of four major trends that emerged with profound ramifications for the entire Islamist political and social experience in the Sudan. Collectively, these trends have acted to seriously lead the regime's dogma of Islamization and its political deployment of totalitarian undertakings to dead ends. The problem that emerged out of this situation, created

5 Both Makki and Abdin expressed similar ideas in the interview with the author.

6 Hasan Makki, *Al-ra'y al-'Am* daily, 5 May 2000.

7 Abdel Wahab El-Affendi, "Hassan Turabi and the Limits of Modern Islamic Reformism", in Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi (ed.), *The Blackwell Campanion to Contemporary Islamic Thought* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 157.

8 For more information about Abdel Hai Yusuf and what he advocates, see Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim's article "Shaikh Abdel Hai Yusuf: Mowatanat al-Ahar Beina al-Istithna' wa al-Taqwa" [Shaikh Abdel Hai Yusuf: Citizenship of the Other and the Politics of Piety].

the general conditions for the end of the first republic and the rise of the forces of the partisans and party bureaucrats.

The first major trend concerns the manner in which Islam, which was meant to be an empowering force for the Sudanese regime, the Islamists, and their political system, turned out to be a constraining element for their state project. The Islamists' discourse, the method by which they shaped their scheme of action, and their regime's mode and sphere of operations have thrown the project into a consistent progression of crisis. Here, the Sudanese experience provides an interesting example of the difference between those dynamics operating on the level of the political party and those operating on the level of the state's ideology and practice. On the former level, before the military coup of 1989 and during the multiparty and Nimairi periods between 1964–89, the Islamist movement gradually positioned itself as a visible player owing to a combination of its religio-political discourse and its mobilization techniques. During the democratic periods the political process in the country was governed, for the most part, by accepted democratic rules that gave each political party and player similar access to the Sudanese political marketplace. In contrast, during the dictatorial period of Nimairi's rule the Islamists tried to increase their popularity, first through open opposition to the regime and later by collaboration. In the 1986 general elections, after the overthrow of the Nimairi regime, the Islamists emerged as the third political party in the country winning fifty-one seats in the parliament, including twenty-three out of twenty-eight of the seats elected by the University Graduates' Electoral College. The 1989 military coup suspended these rules and imposed its own set of rules in the name of an Islamist polity. The state's ideology, discourse, and action fused Islamism and the functions of the Corporation together with a totalitarian polity. The Islamists wasted no time before unleashing their reign of terror in which the state retained ultimate power over all aspects of human life, welfare, discipline, and punishment. The second major trend concerns the way that Sunni Islam has been shaped by different and continuous interactions and modes of operation through the ages, which has given rise to unique patterns of differentiation within identifiable separate spheres and their specialized institutions. Within this fashion of differentiation three distinctive culturally and institutionally autonomous spheres have emerged, namely the official, the public, and the private. A brief observation of these modes of differentiation deserves special attention.

1. The official includes the governing body, whether the leader holds the title of Caliph, Sultan, Imam, or King, and regardless of the institution he presides over. Sami Zubaida rightly affirms that "public authorities over the centuries of Muslim history, while declaring allegiance to the holy law, largely bypassed it in matters of state."[9] Within this context, the official sphere, which represents a limited governing body, is entrusted with the guardianship of the community and the faith.
2. The public includes the *shari'a* and its "*ulam* " and judges. Over the centuries, the public sphere has systematically grown to include "the moral and the

9 Sami Zubaida, *Law and Power in the Islamic Law* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 2.

strictly legal in Islamic law."[10] Muslims have developed "by the necessity of an inner logic of the religious history of Islam" a certain mechanism that reproduced a body of knowledge and legislation that addressed all aspects of human behavior, including spiritual, mental, and physical. In practice, as Sami Zubaida explains, "legal principles and institutions did become quite specialized and differentiated."[11] Moreover, "legal theory and its elaboration also became a specialized activity, often distinct in its institutions and practitioners from the practical application of the law of the courts and notaries."[12] Another dimension to this system of differentiation comes from Fazlur Rahman, who argues that, "It would be impossible for any single person to claim that the result of *his* thought was the unique content of the Shari'a".[13] Instead, it was the community, through the guidance of its "*ulam* ", that developed the legal system. As such, the "*ulam* ", as Ayubi puts it, "carved out for themselves a certain "space" as a moral authority and intellectual elite, and at various times enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy *vis-à-vis* the ruler."[14]

3. The private sphere includes all the religious and civil society institutions that are segregated from the domain of the public sphere and developed a life of their own. In this sphere, to borrow Peter Berger's explanation, the decision to join one institution or another is a matter of private preference and individual choice. Accordingly, the norms and values of the private sphere are irrelevant to the operations and the institutional contexts of the other spheres.[15] These private sphere institutions include religious sects, other religions, and political and civil society organizations and institutions.

The boundaries between these differentiated spheres have been constructed through different social, religious, and existential processes with the institutions of each sphere performing within its specialized functions. In the case of open activity and creative strength in which neither prejudice nor restriction of opinion or activity is practiced each one of these spheres developed a life of its own and became the source of imaginative, intellectual, and social energy evidenced by different forms of the Islamic contribution to human civilization. Although these three spheres are closely related to each other, their Sunni constructions presuppose their autonomy and their resistance to being governed by the dictates of any single entity. The strength and the permeability of the boundaries of these three spheres could be achieved through a mechanism of unconstrained affirmation and mutual acknowledgement of the autonomy and self-representation of each other. Within this differentiation

10 Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, second edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 116.

11 Sami Zubaida, *Law and Power in the Islamic Law* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 11.

12 Ibid.

13 Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, second edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 102.

14 Nazih Ayubi, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World* (London: Routledge, 1977), 33.

15 Peter L. Perger, *The Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967), 133–4.

process, the ideal Islamic state has been perceived by some Islamic scholars as a state that "could hardly be distinguished from [other states] in world history."[16] In modern times, and since the end of the caliphate in 1924 in particular, Muslim scholars have been vigorously debating the nature of the state that would best serve Muslims.[17] It is evident that Muslims in different parts of the Islamic world and at different times have held a variety of opinions and views, sometimes conflicting, about the nature of the Islamic state and the relationship between religion and politics. The point to be emphasized is that throughout Islamic history, the Islamic state "has claimed for itself a religious *raison d'etre*"[18] as Nazih Ayubi puts it. Ayubi maintains that the Islamic state is "neither an autocracy nor a theocracy but rather a nomocracy."[19] Within this categorization, the state is envisaged "as a vehicle for achieving security and order in ways that would assist Muslims to attend to their religious duties of advocating good and preventing evil."[20]

This reflection raises a very important issue in the Sudanese Muslim worldview and history of the state and its relation to past experiences of convergence and differentiation. A major consideration here is that from at least the early days of the Funj Kingdom (1523–1821) the sphere of private Islam in the Sudan has thrived in a pluralistic and unregulated manner. Even when other religious spheres were backed by the state, the Sufi *turq* [religious orders] managed to survive state oppression and to regain their vitality and pluralism when repression eventually faltered. In fact, because of this underlying pattern of differentiation, some if not most of the Sufi *turq* developed their own way of involvement in politics without being totally manipulated by the state. In 1885, the Mahdiyya, a religiously inspired revolution against Turko-Egyptian rule, captured the capital Khartoum and established an Islamic Mahdist state. Sufi Islam was one of the main reasons behind the popularity and success of the Mahdist revolution, but it was also an important factor behind the failure of the Mahdist state. The Sufi *turq* who initially supported the Mahdi during the revolution against foreign rule (1881–85), later resented the Mahdist centralized theocratic state and its attempts to converge all other religious representations. A clear indicator of the interplay between these *turq* and politics could be observed from the very beginning in the competition between certain Sufi *tariqa*, such as the Khatmiyya, and the Mahdi for the hearts and minds of followers. Others among those who supported the revolution went underground or openly resented al-Khalifa Abdullahi's rule when he tried to converge all religious representations in one state religion. Some of those who outlived the Mahdist state denounced the Mahdiyya and regarded it as "a period

16 Qamaruddin Khan, *Political Concepts in the Qur'an* (Lahore: Islamic Book Foundation, 1982), 74.

17 Hamid Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977), 52.

18 Nazih Ayubi, *Political Islam*, 29.

19 Nazih Ayubi, "Islam and Democracy," in David Porter, David Goldbalatt, Margaret Kiloh, and Paul Lewis (eds), *Democratization* (Cambridge: Polity Press and the Open University, 1997), 347.

20 Ibid., 348.

of reaction, despotism and suffering which should never be allowed to re-emerge."[21] Yet this differentiation took a more advanced form during the colonial period with the emergence of the nationalist movement. As John Voll explained, new patterns of interaction with politics emerged as nationalist movements developed and different Sufi *turq* and holy families who were "often associated with state activities during the condominium" became active in political affairs.[22] He adds that "brotherhoods like the Idrisiyyah, Majdubiyyah, and Isma'iliyyah are important in both urban and rural life in Sudan and represent a style of active societal structures that are relatively independent of the political processes directly associated with the central state."[23] Voll concludes that, "These associations may be in competition with the Ansar and Khatmiyyah for societal influence, but they did not emerge as an alternative mode of political mobilization."[24] It was not surprising that similar reactions from Sufi Islam including the Mahdists and the Ansar in their reformed politico-religious Umma Party surfaced after 100 years when another Mahdi, this time with a PhD from the Sorbonne, as explained earlier, attempted a plan of action that emphasized a state religion within a comprehensive program of coerced regimentation and convergence of all religious representations into one single entity.

Another form of differentiation that could be traced back to the Funj Kingdom is embodied in developments in the public sphere related to the emergence of the *qadis*, the "*ulam* ", and a judiciary. As in other Muslim societies, the history of the Sudanese Muslim communities represents an example of "the relationship between the ruler and the scholar, its evolutions, and historical episodes of conflict and accommodation."[25] In his article, the "Evolution of the Islamic Judiciary in Sinnar", Jay Spaulding explains that the "new indigenous urban communities shared with their predecessors, the *khawajas* (the foreign merchants) of the town of Sinnar, both a practical need and a religious preference for Islamic judicial institutions."[26] The growth and evolution of such institutions which included *qudat, fuquhaa*, *mufti* and a "system of appeal from lesser courts to that of the sultan"[27] indicates some aspects of a differentiation process by which although "the kings were slow to relinquish the substance of their judicial powers, by the close of the seventeenth century they had been obligated to yield to the extent of appointing *qadis* for some of the urban centers of northern Sinnar."[28]

Over the course of his political career, al-Turabi wrote several books, lectured prolifically, and continuously addressed the media. An examination of al-Turabi's writings and speeches about the state before and after 1989 reveals a marked

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21 Gabriel R. Warburg, "Islam and State in Numayri's Sudan, Africa", *Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 55, No. 4 (1985): 400–413.

22 John O. Voll, "The Eastern Sudan, 1822 to Present", in Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels (eds), *The History of Islam in Africa* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2000), 160.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Sami Zubaida, *Law and Power in the Islamic Law* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 74.

26 J. L. Spaulding, "The Evolution of the Islamic Judiciary in Sinnar", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1977): 408–26.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

change of perspective. Nevertheless, neither he nor his disciples tried to interpret Sudanese history with a religious meaning, as they have always looked at their history as a strategic departure from the Sudanese religious self-understanding and self-conception. Although al-Turabi's doctrine was to maintain "international obligations and territorial independence", he never tried to look at this territorial independence in relation to the place's religious experience. For this reason, he argues that the "[t]he ideological foundation of an Islamic state lies in the doctrine of *tawhid*—the unity of God and human life—as a comprehensive and exclusive program of worship."[29] In showing what the Islamic state is not, he maintained that it is not secular, not nationalistic, and not an absolute or sovereign entity. He claimed that the Islamic state is not a primordia, because the primary institution in Islam is the *umma*.[30] But, beyond this charade of what the Islamic state is not, al-Turabi failed to indicate what the Islamic state is. As stated earlier, during the period of his collaboration (1977–85) with Ja'far Nimairi's dictatorship, al-Turabi put "greater emphasis on converting society than on gaining political position."[31] In 1982, he told an interviewer that the "state is only an expression of an Islamic society" and that it "is based on consultation or *shura,* that means a democratic society where everybody should participate."[32]

According to this characterization, al-Turabi argues that "the separation of religion and state has characterized most of the history of Islam, except for the years of the original community of the Prophet and his immediate successors."[33] He maintains that, "the Islamic polity was 'a government of law', a nomocracy; and was therefore one, the *sharia* being the only natural, divine and positive law in force."[34] He argued that the modern postcolonial state is irreligious and should "atone to religion".[35] Within this atonement process, he disqualified the "*ulam* ", the Sufis, and the Western-educated elite. For him the "*ulam* " are "intruders" on Islam and would not recognize the principle of *shura* [consultation], the underpinning of Islamic polity, on the pretext of its infeasibility. The Sufis, on the other hand, "propounded ideas which were imbued with superstition".[36] According to al-Turabi's view, neither one of these two groups "could contribute significantly to the task which now lay

29 Hasan al-Turabi, "The Islamic state," in John L. Esposito (ed.), *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 241.

30 Ibid., 242–3.

31 John Esposito and John Voll, *Islam and Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 92.

32 Ibid.

33 Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim, "A Theology of Modernity: Hasan al-Turabi and Islamic Renewal in Sudan," *Africa Today*, Vols. 3–4 (Summer/Autumn 1999): 164–222.

34 Hassan A. Turabi, "Islam as a Pan-National Movement and Nation States: And Islamic Doctrine of Human Association"; available from http://www.sufo.demon.co.uk/reli002.htm; Internet; accessed 21 January 2001.

35 Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim, "A Theology of Modernity: Hasan al-Turabi and Islamic Renewal in Sudan," 164–222.

36 Tim Niblock, "Islamic Movements and Sudan's Political Coherence," in Harve Bluechot, Christian Delmet and Derek Hopwood (eds), *Sudan: History, Identity, Ideologies* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1991), 263.

ahead: the re-interpretation of Islamic texts, identifying the norms which underlay the *sharia* and using to create social, legal and political structures appropriate to contemporary conditions."[37] As for the "*ulam* ", who are incapable to produce anything of value because of their out-of-date education, according to Turabi, they need to undergo special education to become "more enlightened and look at religion in its wider meaning as a force against falsehood and injustice in all areas of life."[38] But the "Four Cleanups Movement" is still less useful with the Sufis and with those who "want to control wealth in the name of religion, or the rulers themselves who use religion to gain legitimacy for their authority. Most of these have now been exposed, if not eliminated altogether."[39] By contrast, the Western-educated elite are divorced from the people and its Islamic heritage and subscribes to the Western secular ideal of separation of state and religion which is not compatible with Islam.[40] Hence, because of the inadequacy of these social and religious groups, the Islamists saw themselves as "the vehicle through which this intellectual vanguard could establish a new understanding of Islam,"[41] and it had been incumbent upon them to build their own state and to revitalize a society drained of all forms of Islamic expression.

Al-Turabi has consistently expressed his contempt for the "*ulam* " arguing that they "tend to rely on narrow texts, and can turn the Islamic approach into a list of prohibitions."[42] When the Islamists seized power, the "*ulam* " retained a limited traditional role similar to that they held under the colonial and postcolonial states. In 1992, the Revolutionary Command Council issued a decree limiting the *fatwa* council authority to *ahwal shakhsiyya* [personal affairs], *'ibadat* [ritual duties], *mu'amalat* [transactions], *mirath* [inheritance], *waqf* [endowment], and *wasiya* [will]. As a consultant to the Islamist regime in the Sudan, T. Abdou Maliqalim Simone justifies the conduct of the Islamist regime since its formative years, by saying that it "has continued to hold back many of the *hud* regulation in their entirety, partly as a concession to Western pressure".[43] It was paradoxical, however, as al-Sir Sidahmed affirms that, after a decade of absolute rule, the regime that based its legitimacy on a claimed monopoly of Islam "was not able to state in the constitution it issued that the religion of the state is Islam."[44] The normal consequence of such an orientation is not only "the clear resentment on the part of many of Jabha's [NIF] former young supporters that the Islamic movement has not really revitalized Islam but rather the

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim, "A Theology of Modernity: Hasan al-Turabi and Islamic Renewal in Sudan," 164–222.

41 Ibid.

42 Quoted in Tim Niblock, "Islamic Movements and Sudan's Political Coherence," in Harve Bluechot, Christian Delmet and Derek Hopwood (eds), *Sudan: History, Identity, Ideologies* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1991), 263.

43 T. Abdou Maliqalim Simone, *In Whose Image? Political Islam and Urban Practices in Sudan* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 99.

44 *Asharq al-Awsat*, Newspaper, 16 July 2000.

state—giving it a new lease on life as an instrument of alienation,"[45] but resentment on the part of the "*ulam* " as well. One of the early examples of such resentment on the part of the "*ulam* " was the resignation of *shaikh* Sidiq al-Darier, the former chair of the Ifta Council, in protest against the 1992 RCC decree.[46] But al-Turabi's attitude toward the "*ulam* " can be seen in the light of the regime's totalitarian nature insofar as he wants power to be concentrated in the hands of a leader who acts in a dual secular and religious capacity.

In his study of the Islamist model of the state in the Sudan, T. Abdou Maliqalim Simone makes three important observations. The first one concerns "[t]he tendency of the current Islamic thrust … to converge the religious and the secular by relying heavily on the potential remoralization of the society as a means to work out and address secular issues."[47] The second observation concerns the central role of the state, which "is to become the very instrument of Islamic propagation, not simply the engineer of policies amenable to it."[48] The third observation deals with opposition and criticism. As Simone writes, "the movement converts the defense of individual freedom, something conceptually compatible with Islam, into a veiled attack on Islam. This construing of a call for the preservation of individual freedom as an attack on Islam then justifies the curtailment of [human] freedom—something otherwise difficult to reconcile with Islamic principles."[49]

In the period before the regime's attempts at reconciliation with the opposition in 1999, the terms "political parties," "*turq*," and "pluralism" were fiercely attacked by the regime and its ideologues as part of *ta'ifiyya* [sectarianism] and relics of the past. According to al-Turabi, the political parties "would not be democratic because political parties or a government governed by the House of *Khatimyyah* and the House of the *Mahdi* was a dynastic thing."[50] What came from these attitudes towards the Other and the violent policies that emerged from them only deepened the split between the Islamists and other religious representations in the country. The emergence of the Islamist regime not only effectively denied the rest of the population their political, civil, and sometimes religious participation, but it carefully organized all the state's efforts to force the belief that the Islamist affiliation is superior to citizenship and all other religious representations. This exclusion of the majority of the population led to three notable responses.

First, contrary to what the regime might have imagined, the imposition of an Islamist state religion awakened among the orthodox and Sufi adherents as well as non-Muslims more interest in reaffirming their religious identities in a way that would reflect the gamut of human expressions of religiosity and group solidarity. This religious affirmation has other deeper and far-reaching consequences. Confronted

45 Abdou Maliqalim Simone, *In Whose Image? Political Islam and Urban Practices in Sudan*, 99.

46 al-Tyib Zien al-Abideen, *Al-Ra'y al-'Am*, Newspaper, 7 June 1999.

47 Abdou Maliqalim Simone, *In Whose Image? Political Islam and Urban Practices in Sudan*, 91.

48 Ibid., 84.

49 Ibid., 86.

50 Arthur L. Lowrie (ed.), *Islam, Democracy, the State and the West: A Round Table With Dr. Hasan Turabi* (Tampa: The World of Islam Studies Enterprise, 1993), 26.

with the looming threat of Islamism, or "al-Turabism," as an enforced religion, other Muslims were handed the unenviable task of defending the most critical function of their religion as they have been practicing it, which has been to hold together the essence of the social significance of their being as Muslims. This new challenge has been felt as commanding the majority of the Muslim population to at least invent their creative ways of resistance to such an invasion of their inner souls. Another notable consequence can be seen in the way that some of the adherents of Christianity and African religions have become more militant in affirming their religious and cultural resistance to the new state form of Islamization. Finally, some of the secularists continued to respond by affirming the right to freedom of belief along with other human rights. Thus, religion as a private activity presented a serious challenge to state-imposed religiosity and became a source of empowerment for those who stood in defiance of the regime.

In her testimony before the US Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa on 25 September 1997, Jemera Rone of Human Rights Watch, quoted Father Marc Nikkel, describing southern Sudanese as "seeking an explanation, solace and defense in Christianity and its global ties as perhaps never before."[51] Others among the Muslim population developed very identifiable social practices, finding refuge in Muslim Sufi sects where they could feel a strong tie to an oppositional religious, political, and cultural identity. Observing the high numbers and the different age groups of those who attend some of these Sufi functions and Friday and Eid group prayers shows how some continued to affirm their religious identity by such open door practices performed outside the field of the state religious sphere. In an interview in the *al-Sahafa* newspaper, Shaikh Abd Allah Ahmad al-Rayyah, leader of the Qadiriyya sect, explained that the political parties are inclusive in their representation of all religious sects.[52] Even during the most oppressive period of the regime, fields of anti-state religion started and continued to appropriate themselves in clear manners that take place during weekly Sufi *dhikr* gatherings, annual commemorations of *hawliyyas* [annual celebration of Sufi saints], annual celebrations of *mawlids* [the Prophet's Birthday], and other religious occasions. The oppositional activities of the Sufi orders, the major sects of the Khatmiyya and the Ansar (that provide the two major opposition parties with their mass support), and other religious groups have made the Islamists and their regime keenly aware of the narrowness of their power base. These forces have responded to their political exclusion by socially isolating the Islamists and pro-regime people. Sufi brotherhoods have thus succeeded in setting up their own effective social networks. A key function of these networks is their role as an alternative communicative apparatus to counter the regime's propaganda machinery.

Second, with the transformation of the social structures of the Islamist movement into a corporation and the development of a community built around the Islamist state and the regime's *nomenklatura*, a gradual but continuously growing number of disillusioned Islamist intellectuals started to identify themselves and to make their

51 Jemera Rone, "Religious Persecution in Sudan," Testimony before the USA Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on Africa (Human Rights Watch, 1997).

52 *Al-Sahafa*, Newspaper, 10 February 2000.

presence known. While around the core group of the regime's state community and the regime's *nomenklatura* other layers had been established by appointments to major offices in the state as a reward for loyalty to the regime, other individuals and groups started to distance themselves from the regime. As totalitarian policies, which were presented as Islamic, and the new class made up of representatives of the corporation, including a mixed bag of Islamists, chronic opportunists, speculators, businessmen, and army and security personnel, began to exert their influence within the new Islamist state, a gulf opened between them and certain Islamist intellectuals. The disenchantment of these intellectuals with the regime's political and economic performance led to the emergence of a group of Islamist dissidents like Hasan Makki, al-Tayyib Zain al-'Abdin, 'Isam Bashir, and Muhammad Taha Muhammad Ahmed, which began to grow to include some of the young Islamist media cadres, chief among them Osman Merghani, Adel al-Baz, and Maghoub Aurwa. Clearly disturbed by the performance of the regime, other Islamists distanced themselves from the entire project. Some of these, including Abdelwahab el-Affendi and al-Tijani 'Abd al-Qadir, based their self-criticism and their criticism of the movement on different assumptions. Most, if not all of these dissidents still maintain their faith in an "Islamist" orientation of some sort despite their opposition to al-Turabi and the regime's policies. Since their credentials as Islamists were unimpeachable, they could not be accused of being enemies of the Islamist project, and their commitment to the Islamist movement has given their attacks on the regime a special weight and credibility that are disturbing to the regime. Out of the intensification of the internal and external criticism and satire that marked the year that preceded the end of the first Islamist republic in 1999, trends of timid criticism by some of those inside the regime emerged and focused on certain ills of the system. These trends later culminated in what was described in the Memorandum of Ten as explained earlier.

Third, by trying to promote and impose their particularist worldview through state power, the Islamists turned religion into a source of both social cohesion and social strife. Since any Islamist particularism perceives its own version of Islam as legitimate religion, the Islamist "in-group" used all its mobilization skills and the media to suppress oppositional political and religious groups. A state of *jihad* was declared against Muslims and non-Muslims who opposed the regime, the regime's Popular Defense Forces were portrayed as *mujahideen* [jihad warriors], and those lost in the regime's battles became martyrs in the cause of Islam.[53] The regime's head of state, 'Umar al-Bashir, likens the boycott to which his regime has been subjected to the siege early Muslims suffered in Medina during the battle of *al-Khandaq*.[54] The opposition made the Islamist regime more aggressive in its attempts to win over, or at least neutralize, those it perceived as an "out-group."

In conclusion, the variation of Muslim and non-Muslim responses to Islamist state religion and its enforcement set the stage for other dramatic responses within the state, among the Islamists themselves and in Sudanese society at large.

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53 Abdel Salam Sidahmed, *Politics and Islam in Contemporary Sudan* (Surrey, UK: Curzon Press, 1997), 223.

54 Ibid.

The Islamist State versus the State Bureaucracy

What happened in the Sudanese political field after 1989 represents the first attempt in the history of the country by an ideological party to seriously exercise its power over the state bureaucracy in order to use the state and its institutions to mobilize and control the entire population. The slide into this new situation took a variety of forms.

First, the regime followed a consistent and patterned strategy of purging the higher and middle ranks of the state apparatus and continued to replace them with loyal Islamist personnel and members of the Corporation. Second, the regime tried to get control over the state apparatus by allocating responsibility in an authoritarian manner and by exercising a one-way movement of power from top to bottom in an attempt to consolidate decision-making in the hands of the leader. Third, it used the party personnel in different state departments and offices as an auxiliary arm of the security apparatus in order to feed information about the loyalty of government employees, including the Islamist ministers and other political appointees, to al-Turabi. Fourth, by using the coercive powers of the state to eliminate other seats of power, waves of arrests of trade unionists, activists, and leaders of political parties and professional organizations swept over the country. Nevertheless, the Islamists were not able to see or understand the effectual sources of the state bureaucracy and its ability to shape reality at will on the basis of its monopoly over sources of knowledge. As the bureaucratic stratum, which is composed of government officials, salaried employees, and professionals, has had a long history and a chain of memory in which past experiences with different types of dictatorial regimes have always been alive, taming this bureaucratic stratum has not been easy. Historically, this sector, as "characterized by the exercise of delegated authority"[55] through the skillful management of the power of professional, state, and government organizations, place the bureaucratic stratum as a major mover of Sudanese political life behind the scenes. Their status position—"potentially at the center of power and knowledge"[56]—enabled them to define themselves as playing a dual role. First, as occupants of executive positions, those of them who were involved in the higher echelons of bureaucratic hierarchies have always been part of the decision-making process in running their offices, departments, ministries, and eventually the country's day-to-day affairs. It is true that the last three decades have witnessed a serious brain drain in this area due to the emigration of large numbers of employees, the increasing frequency of political purges, and the decline in government salaries relative to other professions, however the functional position they occupy by virtue of their closeness to the seat of authority has been unaffected. With the expansion of the state apparatus, undercurrent movements gave the bureaucracy its second role, which was to control and utilize the means of knowledge and information to counter, reduce, or neutralize the Islamists' conduct as soon as the political appointees began to discover

55 Ralf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), 54.

56 Claude Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1986), 117.

that in order to remain in their positions with any degree of success the Islamists had to rely on the bureaucrats' specialized knowledge. Step by step, the new political appointees and their ministers (the Islamist community around the state) began to surrender to the rationalization of the state bureaucracy and to distance themselves from the ill-conceived and antagonistic functions of the party. This may in turn explain how these elements have effectively influenced the developments that led with other intervening factors to the disintegration of the regime and perhaps the end of the first republic. The internal feuds and rifts between those who joined the government of the Islamists and those who joined the party can only be understood within this dynamic. It was the function of the state and its bureaucracy that enabled those who joined the state community to act with some autonomy and to capture the reins of power at the expense of the *shaikh* and his program, which was perceived as destructive to the state.

Second, another important factor giving impetus to this group's collective power is that they have a long history and tradition of unionization. Such professionals identified themselves with a political role and a distinctive position between power factors. These unionized professionals continued to pride themselves on their role as the instrumental power behind the success of the civil disobedience movements that removed two military dictatorships in 1964 and 1985. Thus, as far as the general order of the bureaucracy is concerned, the continuous waves of purges and oppression that its members suffered at the hands of different dictatorial regimes have reaffirmed at every step that the real power of the bureaucracy rests in its impartiality, professionalism, and group solidarity.

The third particular reality which demands recognition is that the Sudanese people have withheld their mandate from the Islamist regime and have exploited all opportunities to demonstrate their opposition despite all the oppressive means employed during the ten years of the first republic. Furthermore, the Sudanese experience with the military dictatorships of Ibrahim 'Abbud and Ja'far Nimairi has convinced broad swathes of the population of the possibility of overthrowing such regimes through popular uprisings. What is important here is that the moral authority that they derive from the echo of such experiences has continued to bear on the practice, the political expedience, and the self-interest of this sector as the backbone and the nervous system of the state. As a consequence, one could easily see the mediating effects of such factors in shifting the climate and bringing those groups of the Islamists who acquired ministerial and other leading positions within the state to surrender to the logic of the bureaucracy.

Islamism versus the Media

The Sudanese have learned profound lessons from their long experiences of resistance and revolt against military regimes. One of the most important of these lessons was that, although military coups take power, past experience has shown that such regimes cannot keep power indefinitely. This has left a lasting impression on the people's political imagination and political culture. Out of this imagination, as explained earlier, a Sudanese civil religion that celebrates the uprisings of October

1964 and April 1985 has emerged. The underlying pressure of the social and political reproduction of this political imagination or civil religion, has contributed to a certain national identity infused with political meaning. Examining the resistance of the Sudanese people to dictatorial regimes, one of the most effective modes has concerned the way in which the people dislodge or rid themselves of the grip of the regimes' propaganda machine. Here follows a three-part outline of observations about the communicative systems that the Sudanese people utilize whenever public communication has been forcefully broken up.

Alternative Media

Before the June 1989 coup, the Sudan enjoyed one of the most free and most diverse press corps in Africa and the Middle East. There were about forty-one daily newspapers, six biweeklies, sixty-one weeklies, nine bimonthlies, and seventeen monthlies. These one hundred and thirty-four publications did not include academic and professional organizations' newsletters or publications. The Islamist regime immediately dismantled this structure and in its place they established a new media system. Within that new media system, the Sudan News Agency (SUNA) was reinstated as the sole authorized news agency for gathering and disseminating the news. All newspapers, radio stations, and TV broadcasts had to take their news stories from SUNA. The distribution house was also reinstated as the sole authorized body for distribution of local, national, and international publications. Finally, the Press and Publications Council was reinstated to oversee the selection and licensing of journalists and publications. More than one thousand professional reporters and journalists who used to work for the print press before the coup lost their jobs. Furthermore, two new dailies, *al-Sudan al-Hadieth* [New Sudan] and *al-Ingahd al-Watani* [National Salvation] were licensed and established, and the weekly *al-Qwat al-Musallah* [the Armed Forces] was turned into a daily newspaper.

There is nothing astonishing about the fact that a totalitarian regime would concentrate on the media in an attempt to pursue a program of "shaping the minds," because such regimes are always preoccupied with regulating or controlling the media. But whenever a totalitarian regime starts to exercise control in the fields of information and opinion, citizens resist by inventing their own alternative media. This alternative media creates what John Downing describes as an "alternative public sphere," to which we should pay great attention. Such an alternative public sphere works "as a way of understanding the alternative media of social and political movements, and the new spaces those media open up for debate, reflection and organization around crucial issues neglected or distorted by mainstream media."[57]

The type of communication that takes place among people is normally different from the top-down style of communication that the official media provides. Through the intelligent management of their resilient social and political institutions of non-governmental communication, the Sudanese people have managed to keep reasonably

57 John Downing, *International Media Theory: Transition, Power, Theory* (London: Sage Publications, 1996), 26.

well-informed and connected. It is interesting to note that most institutions of civil society and other different types of social gatherings have been transformed into an efficient alternative communicative apparatus, building upon an established culture of traditional communication. A brilliant example in this respect is the way that gatherings such as wedding ceremonies and funerals are being utilized to serve this purpose. In the Sudan, several social institutions and the people engaged in them have played a significant role in defeating the "culture of fear" that the regime's oppressive machinery has been trying to instill. To the great frustration of the regime and its security organs, the Sudanese inside and outside the country share information and disseminate criticism about the regime with such effectiveness and speed that they render the regime's propaganda machine impotent and ineffectual. To understand the impact of such a process, we need to study the speed and range of the information proliferated by such media.

The Wasteland of the Official Electronic Media

Historically speaking, Radio and TV in the Sudan have always been monopolized by the government. The mechanism by which dictatorial governments dominated the media outlets made the performance of these outlets in the area of information and opinion rather poor compared to the print media. One of the most effective ways of controlling the media under such regimes is to force communicators into the habit of self-censorship. The term self-censorship is firmly connected with what is described as cultural production. Generally, self-censorship is "the prime factor, the daily cement—or better, in some ways, the oil—of the system of control over cultural production."[58] For the electronic media and its personnel, who suffered greatly under previous governments, the rules of self-censorship have been internalized. Over and above this poor performance, governments made things worse by appointing commissars with no professional knowledge or experience to direct both radio and TV.

The question of censorship and self-censorship opens the door for debates about the underlying movements that manipulate the power conflict between the different factions of the same regime and how some journalists try to use that for their own agenda. In his book, *The Velvet Prison*, Miklos Haraszti paints a picture that rings true in most totalitarian regimes about the complex situation that emerges out of the contradictions of the power relations that operate within such regimes. He writes that, "the state represents not a monolithic body of rules but rather a live network of lobbies. We play with it, we know how to use it, and we have allies and enemies at the controls ... Generosity from the above will be matched by docility from below ... It is like an empty sack that artists with a secure existence fill with anything that will not burst it."[59]

Furthermore, the Islamist regime came to power at a critical time in the history of modern communications. The proliferation of global and regional mass media has

58 Ibid., 67.

59 Miklos Haraszti, *The Velvet Prison* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), 87.

dramatically increased the quantity and the quality of the flow of information and opened new spaces for interaction. The connectivity of the Sudan to regional and international media through Arabsat, Intelsat, the internet, and other international satellite and communications systems has made the government electronic media the least watched inside the country, drastically reducing the effectiveness of the government's propaganda. Due to the easy access to different media outlets, including short wave radio news disseminated in Arabic through the BBC, VOA, and Monte Carlo radios, the ordinary Sudanese citizen was provided with increasingly reliable news services. Additionally, the Sudanese middle class and intellectuals have been provided superior entertainment and information content through CNN, MBC, BBC TV, and more recently al-Jazeera and other Arab and international channels.

The Unyielding Print Media

Not surprisingly, the print media, being faithful to its long tradition of confrontation with governments, have shown varying degrees of professionalism in opening some breathing space for divergent and oppositional views. This phenomenon sheds light on the ground rules set to govern the performance of the electronic media that are fully controlled by the government and the print media that have been playing the adversarial role with varying degrees of success. Accordingly, we find an interesting situation where the electronic media, mainly the radio and TV, act as one-way media and the print press act as a two-way medium. Over the course of their ten-year experience with the regime, more and more political dissenters were drawn to newspapers. The print press's historical adversarial role helped to create a credibility gap as readers were in a position to compare what they read with what they were exposed to by the government controlled media. Hence, although the press and its personnel have always been a target of the regime's consistent and systematic harassment and severe interference during the lifetime of the regime, the regime's attempts to operate the political and cultural nervous system of the nation through the media has been a total failure.

On the other hand, Sudanese journalists in Arab countries and abroad, such as Osman Merghani of the London based *al-Sharq al-Awsat* daily, Babikr Eisya of the Qatar-based *al-Raia*, al-Sir Sidahmed, a communist based in Saudi Arabia, and Abdel Rahman al-Amin, the editor of Washington DC, based *Washington Agenda*, to name a few, played an important role in keeping in tune with Sudanese politicians in exile and transnational professional journalists, academics, and human rights activists. One of the very effective developments in this field relates to the publication of several newspapers in exile, perhaps most notably *al-Khartoum* daily which was published in Cairo for almost nine years. By the mid-1990s, the World Wide Web as the epitome of communication technology gave the ongoing conversations and political debates within the Sudan an even wider audience both inside the country and around the world. Sudanese web sites, discussion groups, and listservs in English and Arabic created a broad input into an expanding virtual civil society and a well informed and critical public.

The analysis of media communication and the changing nature of its role in light of developments in the country would be incomplete without an appreciation of the overall situation. Accordingly, what has taken place in the field of the media in the Sudan was not a deliberate or calculated move on the part of the regime to improve its image. Rather, it was an outcome of a power conflict in which Sudanese journalists inside and outside the country played a significant role. The outcome of this conflict is that the outer layer of this oppressive regime has fallen apart and most likely what we see taking place now is a symptom of a more serious development which is the disintegration of the inner layers of the regime.

As pointed out earlier, the print media became the magnet for those intellectuals and journalists who partly or wholly opposed the policies of the regime. The new relationship between the press and these individuals simultaneously empowered both the intellectuals and the professional journalists and constrained the regime. On one level, dissidents found in the print media a powerful tool to draw support for themselves and to denounce the regime after years of frustration and marginalization. But on another level, this step has led to the opening up of a series of cycles in the dynamics of media communication. At the time that dissidents started to assume a louder profile and to attract the attention of a wider audience, professional journalists in the print media started assuming a professional role, pushing off the demarcated limit, and putting the press in an advanced power position. At the same time, those active in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), the opposition umbrella organization, made use of what the press offered them. Consequently, the NDA opposition, which has been active underground and in exile since the Islamists seized power, acquired a local and a regional presence.

The failure of the regime in "shaping the minds" of the Sudanese populace has led to the intensification of conflict among the ruling groups. After the palace coup against al-Turabi in December 1999, the stage was set for further fragmentation and disintegration. Within this disintegration, one notes the emergence of shifting alliances and alignments whereby some of al-Turabi's staunchest supporters among the security personnel, the party militia, and the business community have switched over to join the government.[60] Another significant development was the attempt on the part of each faction within the regime to build bridges with the opposition with the professed intention of bringing about a national reconciliation. Within the scramble for this reconciliation, al-Turabi turned to al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, the leader of the Umma Party, while al-Bashir, his deputy ʻAli ʻUthman, and their security chief Qutbi al-Mahdi turned to Muhammad ʻUthman al-Mirghani and his Khatmiyya sect, but both groups scrambled towards John Garang at different times. Still others, such as ʻAbd al-Basit Sabdarat, turned to Jaʻfar Nimairi, their old benefactor.

Here, it seems that the role of the print media deserves more credit than most people have realized. The relationship between the media performance and coercion is particularly significant. As a consequence of the above mentioned developments,

60 Hasan al-Turabi lives in the exclusive al-Manshiyya neighborhood in Khartoum and in referring to the conflict between al-Turabi and al-Bashir the press refers to the factions of "al-Manshiyya" and the "palace." I am using the term "government" here to refer to al-Bashir's faction.

uncertainty and ambiguity have paralyzed the system, because the security forces are unsure of how to handle the new groups who oppose the regime using the print media, especially those who belong to the Islamist camp. This situation made it rather difficult to handle the outpouring of communication of opposition in its different media, including critical articles, news analysis, opinion columns, and cartoons.

The significance of this uncertainty and ambiguity within the ranks of the security system and their confusing and conflicting signals that paralyze the regime may be examined in the light of what happened under Nimairi's regime. The last period of Nimairi's regime had shown similar signs of ambiguity and insecurity due to the symptoms of collapse his regime was showing. At that time, different types of corruption among the ranks of the regime's security personnel became more overt. Similar corrupt practices among the current regime's security personnel are prevalent. And the whole situation has been exasperated by the domestic, regional, and international isolation of the regime.

Many of the intervening factors mentioned above, which crippled the first republic, amount to a sharp departure for the regime from its first decade of existence toward a different second republic. Those who moved al-Turabi out of power, who were hand-picked, trained, and taught by him to wear the neck scarf and to use the cell phone (or as the Sudanese saying goes "libs al-shal wa Istimal al-jawal") as a sign of middle class prominence, ultimately changed through the years to become his enemy.

Chapter 8

The Road to Darfur: Islamism without al-Turabi, Authoritarianism without Nimairi

There might be more than meets the eye when reflecting upon the way in which the first Islamist republic came to an end. It is true that one could see clearly now within the fields of those intervening factors surveyed in the previous chapter, the contours of a bigger map of a complex changing political scene rooted in the social world of the Sudanese power struggle and its competing claims that include but go beyond the skirmishes and disputes among the Islamists, their party, and state communities. It involves, at the same time, as explained before, political, economic, and professional groups and their opposing visions that had charted courses of action and responses to a version of Islamism within their practice of power.

The underlying currents of these conflicts have been woven within a fabric that grew out of an engagement with a range of internal and external factors relating to an understanding of the state within its ideology of governance, hegemony, and authority as imagined as an imposition of a local and global order, and the notions and recognitions and lack of rights as traversed with myth, ideology, and practice within a particular understanding of the politicization of religion. It is true that Hasan al-Turabi played a significant role in guiding the movement through troubled seas and that he facilitated the transformation of its members from barefoot activists into a propertied middle class. He taught them *libs al-shal wa Istimal al-jawal* as his supporters say. This class of Islamists who grew into a privileged entity out of the development of the Corporation and who consolidated their power position through their relationship with the state during the lifetime of the first republic have neither been an autonomous nor a monolithic entity. Like any other class structure, the Islamist association reflects what Darhrendorf describes as a continuum of "two aggregates of authority positions." These two positions are, "one—that of domination—is characterized by an interest in the maintenance of a social structure that for them conveys authority, whereas the other—that of subjection—involves an interest in changing a social condition that deprives its incumbents of authority."[1] This continuum has created a multitude of cleavages that characterized the forms of behavior and the intensity by which political actors within the center and periphery started and continued to talk back, interact with, and challenge the second Islamist republic. From this, two conclusions can be drawn with regard to the transition of

1 Ralf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), 176.

the state into the second republic. First, the way that all took form and expression to this transition has brought about an unrestricted animosity and a never-ending conflict within and among the Islamists, who have used the state's coercive power against al-Turabi and those who supported him. Second, the pattern of what could be described as a statist transition in which the leading group—to use the Antonio Gramsci's concept of "bureaucratic centralism"—"is saturated, that is turning into a narrow clique which tends to perpetuate its selfish privileges by controlling or even *stiffing* the birth of oppositional forces."[2] In several important respects, therefore, in the transition to the second republic and its "bureaucratic centralism", al-Bashir and his group have been trying to control not only the other Islamist rival but also other contending parties who have been trying to take advantage of the new situation for their own purposes.

The second state which was born out of this change of direction was executed by some of the Islamists described earlier as party artisans in alliance with elements of the military. The state which they hastily created has concentrated all power in the hands of 'Umar al-Bashir, who now has all the power to manage that narrow clique. At the same time, the National Congress Party (NC), which was once perceived and described as the ruling party has also been turned into the party of the state. The second republic's ruling elite have always been labeled as members of a riverain group that belong to the Jaaliyeen, the Dangla, and the Shaygia tribes. Such labeling, for all its oversimplification and exaggeration, could be partly true, but does not provide an accurate characterization of the situation. The ruling elite behind the second republic that make up the core group of the "clique" can be divided into three distinct categories of Islamist artisans, although certain people have overlapping affiliations: senior party bureaucrats, security personnel, and the military Islamists. The first category includes Ali Osman Muhammad Taha, Ibrahim Ahmed 'Umar, 'Usman Khalid Modawi, Mahdi Ibrahim, Ali Muhammad Osman Yasin, and the group of physicians that Sudanese satire depicts as Médecins Sans Frontières, including Ghazi Salah al-Din al-'Atabani, Magzoub al-Khalifa (died in car accident in 2005), and Mustafa Osman. The security category includes Nafi Ali Nafi,[3] Qutbi al-Mahdi, Hasan Dahawi, Salah Gosh, Ali Kurti, Abdelrahim Hussien,[4]

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2 Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 1139.

3 Nafi Ali Nafi, former lecturer of agriculture at the University of Khartoum, and graduate from University of California at Davis. He was the Sudanese intelligence chief. Nafi was responsible for connections to Iranian Security, and was thought to have been involved in the planning of the assassination attempt on the life of President Hussni Mubarak of Egypt in Addis Ababa 1995.

4 Abdel Rahim Muhammad Hussain Brigadier (PSC) (Engineer). Minister of the Interior. A hard-liner who acted as the covert NIF chief in the armed forces before the 1989 coup. After the coup, he, Bakri Hassan Salih, and Ibrahim Shams al-Din supervised the Islamic Security Force, an organization created by the National Security Act of 1990. Other leaders of Islamist officers include:

(a) Bakri Hassan Salih, Paratroop Lt. Colonel and friend of al-Bashir before the coup. Former director of the Islamic Security and Security of the Revolution operation, which was operated shortly after the coup.

al-Tayeb Ibrahim (*Sikha*), and Bakri Hasan Saleh. The last group includes ‘Umar al-Bashir, Abdelrahim Hussien, al-Tayeb Ibrahim (*Sikha*), Bakri Hasan Saleh and al-Hadi Abdalla. These three groups that emerged as the regime’s *verkhushka* [pinnacle of power] formed the new leadership of the NC, the state, and the regime as well as part of an Islamist middle class. This *verkhushka* has been projecting itself as different now that they have freed themselves, the party, and the state from all vestiges of the *shaihk*’s control and his troublesome way of conducting politics. On the other hand, their awareness of the weakness of the entire Islamist project became clear when the “sacred canopy” of the regime started to shred, forcing them to examine different sources of power through negotiated deals of reconciliation with national and regional oppositional groups. Competition among these groups and the feuds that have been brewing among the first category in particular, has created a new power struggle with its own dynamics. While it formally turned the transition to the second republic into some sort of domination without leadership as explained before, it also turned ‘Umar al-Bashir into a political entity that manages all three groups of the *verkhushka*. To strengthen their positions, each member of these groups continued to build around himself a smaller clique with total loyalty to himself based on blood or tribal relationship. One associated aspect of continuity of this process is to be found in the strategy employed by the Islamist regime within the first and second republics to appoint governors, senior employees, and even tribal leaders as a way of expanding the state machinery in the center and the regions and empowering a class of the Islamist elite through whom the regime could control all aspects of national life. This explains why the choice of regional governors was one of the biggest battles that al-Turabi and his supporters fought with those who unseated him.

While it is true that al-Bashir has never been known for his vision or leadership and his *verkhushka* has not promised to restructure the regime or to implement any serious democratic changes, the transition to the second republic seems to have taken a different route. First of all, the regime is firmly linked to the element of fear in its dual forms as a primary representation and confirmation of its deeper feeling of insecurity and as a tool of survival for the regime. So, although they have been divided by their personal ambitions, fear remains the cement that keeps those *verkhushka* groups together. Second, the regime started negotiations with different opposition groups with a strategy that would turn reconciliation with the opposition, in the form of separate negotiated deals with each party, into a kind of complicity or to *recycle* the entire political process into a new form of power relations through which the regime would emerge victorious. Third, the regime continues to exercise new forms of intimidation and ways of inducing fear, using the state to extend or cut back rewards for those who have been opposing it. These three aspects, however,

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(b) Ibrahim Shams al-Din Ibrahim (1959–2001), A State Minister of Defense who died in a plane crash in the south on 4 April 2001. Member of the RCC with Abdel Rahim Muhammad Hussain and Bakri Hassan Salih, and one of the troika that dominated the IS-SOR Islamic security apparatus created by the National Security Act of 1990.

(c) al-Tayeb Ibrahim (*Sikha*), aka al-Tayeb Ibrahim Muhammad Khair, Lt. Colonel-Doctor and former Chief of Islamic Security.

represent one single dimension of the process the regime is now putting into action. In defining this process, one can see what is unfolding as the second republic's new approach to power and its contender's way of rehabilitating their state in two distinct strategies.

As past events have shown, the regime is reworking its approach to the security forces and the legal system in an attempt to achieve its ends. In the first course of action, the National Security Forces are given wide-ranging powers of detention, investigation, surveillance, and other access to the private homes and communications of citizens. The second course of action concerns the way in which the judicial system leads the regime's attempts at control. This is particularly evident in the court system that was invented to deal with special cases. These two approaches are coordinated with equal intensity but in two different directions to deal with new problems as they unfold. And as the regime boasts about what it describes as the expanding margin of civil and press freedoms, serious steps have been taken toward an authoritarian system with an absolute and maximum claim over all citizens.

Consequently, these ongoing developments, which indicate the decline of the apparatus of the Islamist project and its regime, illustrate that it is more significant to look at the new course of Sudanese politics, as reproduced within the process of the regime's disintegration, on the one hand, and the regime's attempts of transition and consolidation, on the other. However, it is critical to observe the range of the offensives and operations deployed by the regime through the state apparatus and the party, and how such actions may affect the system's survivability. As the regime tries now to circumscribe the expanding fields of political, press, and civil activities, a new shift in its strategies emerges.

In his inauguration speech on 12 February 2001, al-Bashir declared that the objective of the regime is to establish a strong government. According to al-Bashir, such a strong government might preempt and constrain what are seen as growing challenges to the regime in the form of alternative centers of power. The leaders of the regime are persuaded by their own logic that they might fix their government without risking disintegration. An authoritarian approach is thus planned and pursued as the ruling objective of the regime.

This chapter examines two broader consequences of this transition, which are matched by the violent trends and vicious circles that set the tone and the temper of the conflict among the Islamists, while they also reveal the tension between contending and competing visions and ambitions that collided within the evolving fields of the pursuit for political power.

Islamism without al-Turabi

On 21 February 2001, armed security men took Hasan al-Turabi, from his house in Khartoum to Kober prison. This was the fourth time that al-Turabi had been sent to Kober prison during his political career. The first time was when Ja'afar Nimairi came to power through a military coup in 1969, the second was in 1985 just before Nimairi's overthrow in April, and the third was when al-Turabi's Islamist group seized power in the 1989 military coup. Al-Turabi claimed that he was detained

in 1989 as part of a plan to enable the Islamist regime to consolidate its grip on power while pretending the coup was merely a military act engineered by al-Bashir and his nationalist officers. After the conflict between him and al-Bashir reached an irreconcilable edge, al-Turabi himself disclosed that, "I ordered Omer to go to the Palace and I went off to prison." Nothing could be more tragic for the man who built the Islamist movement in the Sudan than to see the people that he hand-picked and nurtured until they reached the highest levels of power and prestige send him to jail. It was related to the late John Garang that he said to some of the Islamists that "we have heard of the revolution that eats its children but we have never heard of the revolution that eats its father."

The events that began with the removal of al-Turabi from all seats of power and escalated into his imprisonment have far-reaching consequences, not only because of their impact on the political orientation of the Islamist regime, but also because they released the *jinni* of long suppressed conflicts in the Islamist movement that had been brewing within the corridors of power for the duration of the first republic. These events and the blind hatred that they inspired within the ranks of the Islamists not only baffled most Sudanese at home, but also dumbfounded other Islamists in the region and abroad. In the statement issued by ninety Islamist leaders from around the Muslim world and Europe, which was published in the London-based *al-Quds al-Arabi*, they expressed their bitter feelings about the detention of the seventy-year-old *shaikh* by his own colleagues, or as they called them, his own "brothers". As for the Sudanese public, al-Turabi's Islamist republic had died. This republic and its civilizational project, "had never erased the allegiance of those Sudanese loyal to the Mahadiyya and Khatmiyya Brotherhoods leaving Turabi the leader of a small minority movement in the urban communities where the Blue and White Nile meet."[5] For the official Arab and Muslim state members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) who in 1994 at the Seventh Islamic Summit Conference endorsed the Code of Conduct on combating international terrorism, al-Turabi's removal caused more than an audible sigh of relief. For Egypt and its president Hosni Mubarak, who accused Khartoum twice in 1994 and 1995 of exporting terrorism to Egypt and devising plans for his assassination, the removal of al-Turabi was a welcome step toward better relations between the two countries. Hosni Mubarak's security chief Umar Suliaman did not hesitate to suggest the liquidation of al-Turabi who represents a more serious threat to the Sudan than John Garang.[6] Of course, the idea of liquidating al-Turabi was not confined to Suliaman, as some of the Islamists in the NC debated passionately about the idea. In his book *al-Turabi was al-Ingadh; Siraa al-Haw wa al-Hawia*, Abdel Rahim 'Umar Muhy al-Din documented that at least two of those who attended a meeting argued for his liquidation.[7] Furthermore, it came as no surprise that the Board of Sudanese "*ulam* " denounced al-Turabi in

5 J. Millard Burr and Robert O. Collins, *The Revolutionary Sudan: Hasan al-Turabi and the Islamist State, 1989–2000* (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2003), 279.

6 'Abd al-Rahim 'Umar Muhy al-Din, *al-Turabi was al-Inqadh; Siraa al-Haw wa al-Hawia Fitnat al-Islamien fi al-Sulta min Muzakirt al-Asharaa ila Muzakirat al-tafahum maa John Garang* (Khartoum: Marawi Bookshop, 2006), 412.

7 Ibid., 448.

a statement issued on 27 February 2001, describing him and his supporters as *fiaa kharija* [a small deviant group] and urging the state to take this issue seriously and by facing the al-Turabi–Garang coalition with decisiveness and caution and without transgression or injustice.

According to the Information Minister at the time, Ghazi Salah el-Din al-'Atabani, one of al-Turabi's former disciples, al-Turabi, who was under house arrest during the final six months of 2000 and then again from February 2001 until October 2003, was arrested for "conspiring with the rebels to topple the government."[8] His detention has followed several announcements, by himself and by some of his party leaders, about a ten-point Memorandum of Understanding signed in Geneva on 19 February 2001 between his party, the Popular National Congress (PNC), and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). According to news reports on 21 February, representatives of al-Turabi and John Garang announced in Geneva that they had agreed on "the escalation of popular resistance to force the government to depart from its totalitarian course and let the nation choose a patriotic government that achieves just peace and builds true democracy that preserves liberties and basic human rights."[9] Later, in a press conference in Khartoum, al-Turabi himself called on the Sudanese people to rise up against 'Umar al-Bashir.

It is striking, when one closely examines the course of events in the Sudan over the ten years of the first Islamist republic, that the leader and architect of the movement, the person who most people believed to be the political and religious reference and the real power behind the regime, became its most feared enemy. So, by arresting al-Turabi, the regime has converted the imagined threat of a former leader, whose disciples betrayed him and who had been trying desperately to thwart his rivals' attempts to sideline him, into a very real threat. But as one proceeds to investigate the evolution of events in the country during these years, other societal realities seem to have emerged that direct attention towards even more complex developments.

It is true that the struggle against al-Turabi inside the movement rarely came out in the open, and more importantly, that the different generations of Islamists continued to contribute to al-Turabi's personality cult and to build a political entity around him. Yet, what transpired after al-Turabi's downfall created a real dilemma and a serious moral conflict. As soon as the power struggle came out into the open and by the time the *shaikh* was removed from power, each of the Islamist parties, including those who supported and those who went against him, unleashed their most lethal weapons against each other. It was surprising that it took Ahmed Abdel Rahman, for example, who was one of al-Turabi's longtime lieutenants and closest associates, forty years to divulge to the Sudanese public that al-Turabi was given a taste of his own medicine.

Following the signing of the MOU, the regime cracked down on the PNC by detaining more than thirty senior party officials in Khartoum and elsewhere in the country along with al-Turabi as well as shutting down their daily newspaper *Rai al Sh'ab* and the party's offices throughout the country. The cycle of enmity between

8 AP, Former Sudanese Parliament Speaker Arrested, 21 February 2001.

9 PANA, 21 February 2001.

the contending Islamist parties was taken a step further with the purge of most al-Turabi loyalists from government and the security apparatus, and by taking harsh measures that shook the financial standing of his supporters in the private sector. In what has been described as "a witch hunt," al-Turabi's "second and third tier supporters" were followed relentlessly.[10] Badr al-Din Taha, one of al-Turabi's senior disciples, claimed that the humiliation that they suffered from the other party was far worse than what the communists did to them.[11] But it was al-Turabi himself who expressed the bitterest sentiments about the hostilities between him and his former disciples.

The Road to Darfur

Of course, the mutual hostility of the Islamists has been ruthless and merciless. However, the same al-Turabi supporters who had subjected other political, social, and ethnic groups to such treatment now complained of their fate, after the regime turned against them. But this mutual hostility that came with the second republic has brought together and out into the open very serious elements with dire consequences. The first of these elements relates to the way that the Islamists' will to order and strategies of control turned into impulses that brought in their wake certain claims of difference represented in regional solidarity of some sort that presented itself in individual and group demands and later metamorphosed into everything that had been resented and feared. It was one of the Islamists' strategies to encourage those of their members who belong to Sufi *turq* or leading tribal families to penetrate these institutions and replace their fathers or relatives as leaders. Professor El-Tag Fadl Allah argues that this did not materialize.[12] Nevertheless, the Islamists reassured themselves that they could replace the Umma Party in Darfur for two reasons. Firstly, because of the high numbers of Dafurian students who have been joining the Islamist movement for the last four decades, especially at the University of Khartoum, and secondly because of the successful mini-*intifada* led by the young Darfurian Islamists that forced Ja'far Nimairi to replace al-Tayib al-Mardi whom he appointed as a governor of Darfur in 1983. Among the leaders of the so-called al-Fashir *intifada* were Daud Bolad, al-Shafii Ahmed Muhammad, Amin Banani, and Farouq Ahmed Adam. In the period after the downfall of Nimairi, the Islamists discovered that their dreams about Darfur were far from reality as their gain in the 1986 elections was limited to the two seats won by Ibrahim Abakr Hashim and Abdel Gadir Adam. Later some of those young Darfurian Islamists began to turn against the movement as their two parliamentarians defected to the DUP.

As the Islamist movement started to expand after the 1960s, the Darfurians were at its heart. However, as the movement transformed into the Corporation after the 1980s, certain aspects of identity management, as described before, qualified

10 International Crisis Group, *God, Oil, and Country: Changing the Logic of War in Sudan* (Brussels: International Crisis Group Press, 2002), 42.

11 Muhy al-Din, *al-Turabi was al-Inqadh*, 412.

12 El-Tag Fadl Allah, interview by author, audio recording, Khartoum, Sudan, 30 December 2005.

some and disqualified others for access to the different strata of the Corporation and designated the Darfurians an inconsistent status. That is to say that there was a discrepancy between a person's achieved prestige on the one hand, and that person's ascribed prestige on the other. By the time the Islamists came to power, this identity management had produced well defined formations within the movement. Some of the Islamists from Darfur such as Daud Bolad—a prominent Islamist student leader in the al-Fashir *intifada*—dissented and allied themselves with the SPLM in a 1992 rebellion in Darfur against the Islamist regime. Bolad's experience within the Islamist movement convinced him that inconsistency between his achieved and ascribed status had located him in "a place of involuntary exile."[13] This tension led him to rebel against the regime in an attempt to change the system as a whole. What was tragic about Bolad's ordeal was that his rebellion was crushed and his life was taken by an old friend and bodyguard from his university days, al-Tayeb Ibrahim (*Sikha*) the then-governor of Darfur. Another example comes from Ali al-Haj, who became the focus of the satire and ridicule of the other faction of the Islamists, and continued to feel bitter, evaluating his "own complicity with his position, as to what one did wrong."[14] This example represents the other part of the continuum within the subjected part of the Islamist association. These examples represent a dichotomous class conflict among the Islamist middle class.

Hence, what has been augmented as a product of the conflict among the Islamists and wrongly described by some as an issue of race and ethnicity has entered into the center of the politics of both the regime and the country as a conflict between "domination" and "subjection" within the Islamist middle class. The "latent interest" of each one of these two groups became "manifest" when the Islamists assumed power and started using the state as a regulatory authority structure. It is true that some among the Islamists from both sides would like to characterize the conflict in racial terms. Others would like to see it as *finta bi al-sulta* [obsession with power]. But what seems like an expressive language describing a deeper conflict with racial and ethnic terminology and labeling, has been transformed by some into a vehicle to political power. This in itself has recreated a new kind of politics of belonging, where an in-group takes power.

As complex as it might look, the conflict that split the NC into two antagonistic groups is actually another round in the battle within the Islamist middle class in relation to authority. In essence, it is about the struggle for domination, especially when the Islamist state community, including 'Umar al-Bashir, felt that al-Turabi and his supporters were planning and taking serious steps toward a program that would threaten their presence in the house of power and eventually undermine their interests as a group. It is true that the groups of *gharaba* [western Sudanese] in general, and Darfur in particular, who stand behind al-Turabi constitute a substantial block in his National Popular Congress Party (NPC). But this by itself might represent an important aspect for such an extraordinary emerging political association. It presented a project of substantial numbers of the Islamist elite with specific cultural and ethnic

13 T. Abdou Maliqalim Simone, *In Whose Image? Political Islam and Urban Practices in Sudan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 205.

14 Ibid.

characteristics and "tactical necessity and common interest."[15] This construction in itself might help create a higher ideal and expectations, because al-Turabi himself is not a *gharabi* and his leadership to the new party might help to break the closure practices enforced by what have been described as the riverain Northern elite, the dominant group in the NC.

In this respect, it seems that the regional issue and the race issue have added two tools to the Islamists' kit in the political fight. Cultural prejudices on the one hand, and the creation of different techniques for breaking the barriers and closure on the other, have been played by both parties as ammunition in their ongoing fight against the other. When these two processes come together, an interesting phenomenon emerges that is worthy of exploration.

Certain developments were informed by and in turn influenced the latent conflict between the two groups before it came to the surface in 1999 and afterwards when it became manifest. The first development relates to *al-Kitab al-aswad* [*The Black Book*], which was prepared and printed before, but only widely distributed immediately after the split. The book was published in two parts, the first in May 2000 and the second in August 2002. On the day it was published, as many as 1,000 copies of the book were distributed after Friday prayers in mosques and other places in Khartoum. The following day, copies were placed at the desks of senior government officials including 'Umar al-Bashir. According to Professor Abdullahi O. El-Tom of the National University of Ireland, who translated the book into English, more than 50,000 copies were photocopied and circulated before eventually being posted on the internet.

William Wallis of the British daily, the *Financial Times*, who interviewed one of the authors of the book, was told that the group compiled the book "over a period of five months and with many clandestine meetings in which each member kept his own network of collaborators to himself—somehow plucked sensitive records from state archives. From these and more public information, they catalogued iniquities to rival apartheid in South Africa, documenting the narrow ethnicity of senior officials in successive governments, and castigating the moral bankruptcy of the incumbent regime that had based its legitimacy on Islam."[16] Although Khalil Ibrahim, the leader of the *Harakat al-Adl wa al Muswaa* [Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)], claimed that he wrote *The Black Book*, another member of the movement Idris Mahmoud Logma, told Wallis "that he and 14 others—including one former state minister, [a clear reference to Khalil Ibrahim] prominent among Islamists—developed the idea for the analysis. Most of them were young Muslims from black African tribes in Darfur who had graduated from Khartoum universities."[17]

It is worth quoting at length from *The Black Book* in order to understand its argument. A basic theme in the book is that since its independence in 1956 the Sudan has been subjected to a pattern of rule described as follows:

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15 Cliford Geertz, *Old Societies and New States* (New York: Free Press, 1963).

16 William Willis, "*The Black Book* history or Darfur's darkest chapter" (London: *Financial Times*, Saturday 21 August 2004).

17 Ibid.

> resources were moved to concentrate in the Northern and Central Regions leading to impoverishment of other Regions. As a result, marginalized Regions became zones of out migration. People had to move in search of food, work and services, all of which concentrated in the Central and Northern Regions.[18]

The book goes into great detail to explain that northern Sudan with 5.4 percent of the total population of the Sudan provided 79.5 percent of the representation in government. Moreover, the book analyzes the distribution of constitutional posts in the first five national governments from 1956 to 1964, when northern Sudan maintained a representation of more than 50 percent and occasionally exceeded 70 percent. Since independence, not a single president came from outside the northern region and many military coups have failed simply because their leaders came from outside the fortunate region. The failed military coups of 1977, 1980, and 1991 stand as testament to this reality.[19]

As a result of all these policies and the system pursued by successive governments, the book claims that "Destruction of marginalized Regions has become a feature of Sudan, particularly during the reign of current Regime. Much worse are the marginalized Regions that are governed by Governors who do not come from the Northern Regions. The State of Western Darfur and the State of Southern Kordofan provide a good example in this regard. They were both brought to their knees simply because their governors happen to be from within these States. When they were replaced by Governors of the 'right northern ethnic groups', funds were released and the States became somewhat functional. So acute this problem was that a pillar of the government in Khartoum declared Federal funding for western states can only be released following his personal approval, verbal or written."[20]

The authors "appeal[ed] to those who are in charge to think hard" in conciliatory terms: "We understand that justification has always been made to behave in a specific way but the road to move forward is clear. Our northern brothers must be ready to compromise and be fair in dealing with national issues. They must open up government positions to all according to their qualifications, competence and experience. They must stop abusing their positions and halt directing illegitimate resources to their own home areas."[21]

Abdullahi El-Tom argues that after the events of December 1999, "an intense power struggle ensued in the country." As he describes it, "The Government as well as Turabi's factions toured the country for support. Delegates which toured the western Regions found that public agenda were mainly dominated by three issues: western highway project, pay of public servants, in particular teachers, and the Black Book."[22] El-Tom adds that, "al-Turabi declared that he senses an Islamic touch in

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18 *The Black Book: Imbalance of Power and Wealth in the Sudan*, available from http://www.sudanjem.com/sudan-alt/english/books/blackbook_part1/blackbook_part1_20040422_bbone.pdf; Internet; accessed on 31 March 2007.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Abdullahi O. El-Tom, "Review article – The Black Book: Imbalance of Power and Wealth in Sudan"; available from http://www.ossrea.net/publications/newsletter/oct02/article9.htm; Internet; accessed on 31 March 2007.

the Black Book."[23] Reading the whole book, one might find some difficulty finding that "Islamic touch." This is nothing more than the spin that al-Turabi wanted to give to an activity informed by the conflict between two factions among the Islamists. However, it might be important that in their conclusion, the authors talked about their project as an Islamist project connected with the regime, while at the same time, they talked about their intention to reform the regime. The authors argue that "this Regime took over (1989) to augment the project of Sudan as a model of an Islamic state. Muslim countries everywhere are looking at our experience. Its failure is a failure of Islam as much as it is a failure of Sudan as a nation. It is time to set things right. We appeal to those who are in charge to unite and commit themselves to justice, protection of individual rights and promotion of the national interest."[24]

Whatever the case, as Logma told the *Financial Times*, during the time when they were writing, they "were not thinking of rebellion", but rather they "wanted to achieve [their] aims by democratic and peaceful means". He concludes by saying, "Later we realized the regime would only listen to guns."[25] On its own terms, a second group of Islamists led by the fifteen personalities who wrote *The Black Book* followed the path of Daud Bolad, who they described as a martyr in their book. Among these fifteen personalities, Mohi al-Din identifies Khalil Ibrahim, Idris Ibrahim Azruq, Suliman Jamous, and Jibrial Ibrahim as among the most devout and dedicated to the Islamist movement and regime.[26] Here, as de Waal argues, "the 'Black Book' marked a symbolic rapprochement between the Islamists and the secular radicals of Darfur. Hence the unlikely alliance between the latter group, who were busy putting together the Darfur Liberation Front (renamed in early 2003 the Sudan Liberation Army, or SLA) and the Islamist-leaning Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)."[27] It may be true that the book "caused a stir throughout the country and showed how northern Sudan was becoming polarised along racial rather than religious lines,"[28] but it is equally true that the contenders on all sides operated with opposing arguments, accusing the other party that they were rallying along racist lines.[29]

Here we must ask ourselves an important question. What made the regime so frustrated that it would act violently toward al-Turabi and his party after the Geneva agreement? Abdel Rahim 'Umar Mohi el-Din argues that after the MOU and al-Turabi's press conference, al-Turabi's call for an *intifada* in which the Darfurians and southerners around the city would participate might escalate into an armed confrontation. The security apparatus alerted the government to this danger and advised swift action against al-Turabi and his party members. This fear comes from the steady growth of an underclass in the shanty towns surrounding the cities of Khartoum, Omdurman, and Khartoum North as well as other urban centers in the country. The war in the south, the drought and desertification, and the instability and

23 Ibid.

24 *The Black Book: Imbalance of Power and Wealth in Sudan.*

25 Willis, "*The Black Book* history or Darfur's darkest chapter".

26 Muhy al-Din, *al-Turabi was al-Inqadh*, 461.

27 Alex de Waal, "Counter-Insurgency on the Cheap"; available from http://www.lrb.co.uk/v26/n15/waal01_.html; Internet; accessed on 31 March 2007.

28 Ibid.

29 Muhy al-Din, *al-Turabi was al-Inqadh*, 460.

insecurity in Darfur led to massive dislocation and displacement of the citizens of western and southern Sudan. The migration and settlement of the rural and urban poor have been a serious concern for this government and previous ones. The growing presence of these groups around the capital and its twin cities has become a nightmare for the government. This has been especially true since the split of the NC and the regrouping of al-Turabi's faithful followers around the PNC, which draws most of its support from individuals and groups from western Sudan. In the past, this underclass and its younger generation that has moved into the cities, which is called *Shamasa*[30] in the local Sudanese dialect, has added intensity and manpower to the street demonstrations. In this way, this underclass played an important part in the success of the uprisings of 1964 and 1985.

One of the serious dilemmas that this group faces, especially the southerners in the shanty towns, is that they are accused of providing an attractive entryway to foreign missionaries. This act has made the government view these foreign missionaries with suspicion, and in turn, they perceive the underclass "as people easily prone to outside manipulation, as a symbol of the Christian conspiracy against Islam."[31] In addition, the underclass has been viewed as a political threat and has been stigmatized socially and culturally in the local press. With the surfacing of what could be interpreted as xenophobia or racism, even more severe forms of subtle and overt violence against the underclass might be instituted by the government. This kind of terror, in addition to the amputation of limbs, floggings, and *kasha*,[32] which echoes some of the atrocities carried out by Nimairi and his NIF allies in the period 1983–84, could be repeated using past methods or by way of new techniques as the need arises. As they sustain the breeding ground for the growth of more *Shamasa*, the kind of punishment referred to is an introduction to upcoming orchestrated campaigns to chase them out of the areas surrounding the urban cities.

Taking into account the regime's awareness that a massive force for riot and rebellion has always been at hand, any attempt of organized protest causes serious alarm and will be promptly subdued. So it seems that what made the government act decisively against the al-Turabi-Garang MOU was its fear about the possible manipulation of the underclass of the urban cities. The announced plan to work together—to escalate "popular resistance to force the government to depart from its totalitarian course"[33]—is hard not to read as an indication of collaboration in order to monopolize the western and southern segments of the underclass and the *Shamasa* to support a planned *intifada.*

The violence against al-Turabi and his party produced serious difficulties for the regime. In trying to secure their position by launching a preemptive strike against

30 *Shamasa* is an Arabic term meaning "the people of the sun". It refers to the thousands of homeless children in the three cities. Some of them wash cars, some steal, and others beg. Some of them move across the railway line between big cities as transients. They have developed a certain language for communication and have a tightly knit structure.

31 Simone, *In Whose Image?* 126.

32 "*Kasha*" is an Arabic term meaning to drive away or round up. It refers in this context to the mass arrest and deportation of thousands of displaced southerners and westerners from the Khartoum slums.

33 AP, Former Sudanese Parliament Speaker Arrested, 21 February 2001.

him and his camp, the regime moved the battleground from Khartoum to Darfur. Although the leaders of the rebel group of JEM deny their relationship to al-Turabi's PNC, without the conflict among the ranks of the Islamists and the developments that ensued out of it, the situation in Darfur would have been very different.

As far as the first republic and its leader were concerned, it is the leader who survived his project. It might be true that "no one familiar with the Sudan's perpetual survivor was prepared to write Turabi's political obituary."[34]

What is Next?

Many would agree with Alex de Waal and A.H. Abdel Salam that "Islamism in the Sudan is in an impasse. It cannot move forward: it is not equipped with the political imagination of state practice to make sense of the modern world, or to run the state."[35] But the Islamists are still trying to use the state power to tempt, attract, and sometimes fight back encroaching enemies and challenging situations. Four conventions have come into play in anticipation that they should grant a certain degree of compliance with the general rules of the regime. This is not to say that the mode of operation of these conventions has in any way reproduced any level of public correspondence that could make the regime's hold on power strong. On the contrary, while there are indicators that the more public despair of the regime's political moves increases, the more what the Sudanese describe as *al-ijmaa al-sikuti* [the consensus of silence] manifests itself. This culture of silence, which is very popular in the prevailing political imagination, represents a core concept in the mechanism of resistance and defiance that the Sudanese people have been exercising as a counter-ideology holding back the regime's designs for the last seventeen years. The dialectics of these movements—the bipolar division of the Sudanese political world, a blustering system of indoctrination and repression, and an ongoing consensus of silence—have reproduced a space that has maintained and energized the mode of operation of opposing courses of action. Hence, the regime's grand strategy of containment, which is built around a collapsing system despite their hard work to make the state institutions function, is directed to make the regime resilient to such pressures and eventually emerge as the sole political power in the country. To understand how this mechanism of containment works, we need to look beyond the flimsy exercise of power. These four conventions revolve around the following questions:

- How to handle dissent or rebellion within the ruling party?
- How to take advantage of the leftover of past political processes of reconciliation or maneuvers to preempt strategies of less popular political figures and entities?
- How to contain the more popular and menacing political figures or parties as individuals and groups?
- How to handle peace partners?

34 Burr and Collins, *Revolutionary Sudan*, 278.

35 Alex de Waal (ed.), *Islamism and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004), 112.

Thus, if past acts of aggression and coercive measures during the first republic toward individuals and groups could be reenacted, it would send the message to opposing political groups, the media, and the entire population that the security apparatus could reassert itself as before with impunity. But even in the absence of arbitrary arrests, detention, and torture, the regime continues to effectively crack down on opposition through other measures set to contain dissent or rebellion within the ruling party itself, and for rewarding, intimidating, and coercing people. The above mentioned four questions assert a crucial reexamination of the ongoing shift toward the function and strategies of the second Islamist republic, and they need to be addressed individually.

How to handle dissent or rebellion within the ruling party?

From the very early days of the second republic, individual and group action against the regime and the party, especially by those Islamists who still professed loyalty to the regime, was not tolerated. The most indicative observation to be made here is that the manner and the speed by which the Amin Banani Neo case was handled represent a model for similar affairs and cases in the future. Banani, the former junior Minister of Justice, is a *gharabi* who was able to break the barrier of closure practice and was rewarded for siding with al-Bashir against al-Turabi by becoming a junior minister at the Ministry of Justice.

Not conscious of his position within the power structure, the ambitious Banani thought that the position of the Speaker of the House should be occupied by a representative of the western region—Darfur—and that he should be the candidate. When the seat was given to another *gharabi*, Ahmed Ibrahim al-Tahir, Banani launched a media skirmish against the ruling *verkhushka*. He accused the group that removed al-Turabi from positions of power in the party in 1999 of continuing to repeat Turabi's mistakes. He further accused them of "lacking a broad political vision and [acting] with a mentality close to a security mentality."[36] Banani was sacked on Wednesday, 7 February 2001, just one day after these remarks were printed in *al-Sahafi al-Dawli.*

Since the ruling Islamist *verkhushka* sent this very clear signal to the ruling National Party members by firing Amin Banani Neo from his post as State Minister of Justice, the group seems to be keeping things under control with a mixture of carrot-and-stick incentives.

How to take advantage of the leftover of past political processes of reconciliation or maneuvers to preempt the strategies of less popular political figures and entities?

In his inauguration ceremony, al-Bashir said that reconciliation should be based on "mutual recognition between the government and the opposition." He added that "citizenship is the basis of rights and obligations of the Sudanese" and that "expression of diversity must be possible." But citizenship is more than an empty

36 *Al-Sahafi al-Dawli*, Khartoum, 7 February 2001.

word in so far as it demands the consent of all individuals to the civic culture. It would involve equality before the law, as well as political and social rights. Interestingly, one of al-Bashir's first decrees after he won the election was to extend the state of emergency for another year.

While it is clear from what al-Bashir said that reconciliation according to the regime does not mean commitment to any program of action or any kind of *perestroika* that allows for some kind of a democratic mechanism in the form of political pluralism, it is also clear that there is a deeper feeling among those who are negotiating with the regime that the reconciliation train has been derailed to suit the regime's goals. But it seems that the most frustrating thing of all to those politicians involved in what the regime has called the reconciliation process, and talks with the regime, is the tantalizing method the regime is practicing while deliberately encroaching on all private space won through years of opposition and hard work.

It is once again useful to remember that the regime has been engaged in a series of attempts to weaken the external opposition by playing on disagreements within the major political parties in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). It "succeeded" in negotiating a separate reconciliation arrangement with al-Sharief Zien al-Abideen al-Hindi, the former secretary general of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), who later returned home and collaborated with the regime after he had broken away from his party. But al-Hindi's return had very little significance, if any, even before his death in 2006, because he lacks popular support and convincing leadership qualities.

In another attempt, the regime negotiated the return of the former dictator Ja'far Nimairi. In one important respect, and for a variety of reasons, the last presidential election in December, for all its shortcomings, represents a *recycle* for Ja'far Nimairi. This is so because he came from fourteen years of exile in Egypt in May of 1999 with the illusion that he would return to the presidency in a landslide victory.

How to contain the more popular and menacing political figures or parties as individuals and groups?

More important, however, is the return of al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, the former elected Prime Minister and the leader of the Umma Party, and forty members of his party from exile in Egypt and Eritrea. The Umma Party walked out of the opposing NDA after signing an agreement in Djibouti with the government in December of 1999 for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Sudan.

In retrospect, it might have been one of the regime's objectives to double contain al-Sadiq al-Mahdi and al-Turabi by letting different factions of the Umma Party fight amongst themselves while al-Turabi and al-Sadiq al-Mahdi battled over supporters in western Sudan. This is, however, where another important fact comes in. While al-Sadiq al-Mahdi and his party have been exploring different aspects of emerging problems in the country, agonizing over solutions to old and new inter- and intra-party problems, the regime has been trying to sideline him. Such an approach is not new to the regime. Since the late 1990s, the regime has fed on its own approach toward the major opposition parties, the Umma and the DUP, by negotiating separate deals with weaker dissenting groups within each party, while denying the major

group any access to power. Thus, the Umma Party's parallel levels of talks with the government have added to the turmoil within the ranks of leading politicians in al-Sadiq al-Mahdi's party. These negotiations have been adding to the rising tides of frustration and pressure within the Umma Party, and among supporters in the country who have been expressing strong objection to any reconciliation with or participation in the current government. It seems that the essence of the problem in the Sudan is that of the enormousness of social change as the country undergoes all of these diverging trends that affect the dynamics of all the different fields of political and social action.

How to contain government partners?

On 9 January 2005, a peace agreement between the Islamist regime of Khartoum and the SPLM was signed. The agreement has been thought by many to put an end "to last century's longest war in Africa, with the largest number of victims."[37] A national unity government was formed of the National Congress Party, the SPLA, and the DUP. The Umma Party, the largest opposition party in the Sudan, opted out of that government and has been pressuring for an agreement to be ratified by a national forum with the participation of all political parties. The NC took 52 percent of the seats and the SPLM 28 percent, while the remaining 14 percent were reserved for all other northern parties. What is problematic about this and became a source of frustration between the two main partners is that the Islamists have been trying to continue with a system of control that puts other partners, including the SPLM, in a state of subjection.

37 UN Security Council, Press Release SC/8290, 1 November 2005.

Conclusion

This book began with a study of the Islamist movement in the Sudan through its different stages of development since the 1940s, as well as the challenges that it faced and the emergence of the power structures and personalities behind its first republic. Though the movement was influenced by a great many people through the ages, one personality, Hasan al-Turabi, has had the deepest influence on the movement since his rise to power in the 1960s. But by leading the way to the first republic, al-Turabi, like so many other tragic heroes, ended up destroying himself and the movement as well. He stayed in the leadership of the movement for too long, and as a result many of his followers found it convenient to delegate their judgment and their thinking to him. When they did this, they ceased to be thinking activists and assumed the role of mere artisans. Al-Turabi and his ambitious civil and military lieutenants planned their way to power through a short cut and exploited the opportunity to enrich themselves that came their way. In the process, they transformed themselves from barefoot intellectuals into a propertied middle class and the movement from a small political group into the Corporation.

The Islamist movement in the Sudan was different from other movements in the region, because during the democratic periods it enjoyed years of free exercise of political practice alongside other Sudanese political expressions. In the interludes, however, its members suffered through years of dictatorial rule and suppression of political practices together with other political parties in the country. They were offered the opportunity to compete with other political entities in the Sudanese political market and at one time they were even mandated to speak on behalf of their constituency in the parliament. Nevertheless, their experience with power during the first republic left a legacy of intolerance, oppression, death, and destruction. One of the most dangerous consequences of their exercise of power was that it produced groups of functionaries who acted with colossal brutality at the ghost houses and other killing fields. It is no wonder that during the tragic moments of the plight of their leader that one of his closest colleagues could not find a sympathetic word, preferring to let him taste his own medicine.

Nevertheless, the end of the first republic did not mark the end of the Islamist movement in the Sudan or even the end of al-Turabi's political career. However, the end of the republic has not been kind to either one of them. Both al-Turabi and his Islamist detractors are living in a "state of suspended extinction" as each side has been turned by the other into an object to be eliminated through the tools that they both know very well from the days when they were used on old enemies: the state apparatus of coercion and private violence.

Through this study we have seen that for five decades, the Islamist movement in the Sudan has experienced one split after another, but none of these schisms was as serious as the last one, and none has been so self-destructive. So much for the movement as applied to the vision, the plan for the future, and the imagination. After

the split, al-Turabi's former disciples discovered that they had sacrificed the mind that used to think, plan, and explore new frontiers for them, only to find themselves and their movement hostage to a new form of control. They traded the potentially soft power of the *shaikh* for the intrinsically hard power of the general. In effect, they traded Islamism without al-Turabi for an authoritarian military system without Ja'far Nimairi. In so far as this is the case, it is only a matter of time before the hard power of the general fades away just as Nimairi's power did before. When this happens, will this branch of Islamism go away with it? Will there be a way for this branch of the movement to dislodge itself from the current constraining state of affairs and to embark on a new stage in the evolution of Islamism?

Although al-Turabi survived the palace coup against him, managed to establish his own party in such a short time, and continued to present himself as an angry person seeking revenge, it seems that there is nothing left for him to do other than to expose the corrupt practices of his former disciples that existed before he came to power and the mayhem that ensued after his downfall. The book he wrote while in prison exposes his embittered soul. Al-Turabi's strategy is simple and clear; he wants to convince the world that it was his enemies' dictatorial character that prevented him from being the democratic person that he is.

On the other hand, al-Turabi managed to sideline an entire political generation both within and outside of the Islamist movement. The 1989 coup sent the leadership of the political parties, trade unions, and other professional organizations *en masse* to prison. Other harsh totalitarian measures drove some of them either underground or into exile. He was also very effective when it came to sidelining his lifelong colleagues within the movement. Is it time for him to go? And if so, does this indicate that the *shaikh* is politically spent and with him a certain type of leadership is dying out?

During the lifetime of the Islamist regime, the camp of Islamist dissenters continued to grow. Until this day, they still present themselves as individuals frustrated with the performance of the past and current regimes. They sound angry and self defensive, as if they are seeking validation from the "sacred history" of a movement which is no longer valid. It is healthy to have such a critique and examination to the past period, but it would be admirable, while they are within such a moment of historical action, if they could rise above their frustration and anger in order to present something that would add to the national discourse with regard to their vision for the future of the movement. What is the Islamist movement then? Is it the elite groups cemented together by the leadership of a charismatic leader frozen in time and place?

Through the last three decades or so the movement turned into a Corporation with an unrestrained lust for wealth and power. When the movement assumed power through a military coup, this impulse regenerated itself into different forms of individual greed that precipitated a wilding culture with devastating effects for the country. The first fatality of that wild pursuit was the welfare state that helped bring these children of urban and rural poor to life through public health services and eventually to prominence through public education. The ongoing capitalist changes introduced by the Corporation have pulled the rug out from under so many people that poverty has become a social class phenomenon. It is a moral failure that the severity

of such a widespread and deep calamity and the inhuman nature of a system that continues to produce such poverty can only be seen from the bottom, only by those who suffer from it. How could state and civil society institutions reassert themselves to care and cater for the ordinary person who strives to act for the common good rather than wild self-interest?

In its frustrated quest for survival, the regime and its benefactors perpetuated a strategy based on separate arrangements and agreements with armed groups and movements that had wrestled vigorously with the regime before. Under these arrangements, these groups and movements entered into an unequal partnership with the regime, and a fragmentary peace that lacked the support or the endorsement of the Sudanese people or other political entities was the result. Leaders of these movements and groups have now come to settle in Khartoum, the city that they love to hate and which they once perceived as the citadel of their oppression and the mainstay of the unequal distribution of power and wealth in the country. Because the leaders of these movements and groups trust neither the regime nor the state it represents, each one brought with him an army with all its light and heavy weapons for his own safety. The presence of these armies turned Khartoum and its residential areas into a place similar to Beirut before its bloody civil war. Consequently, fear and apprehension have taken hold of Sudanese society, and in this tense situation even minor causal events could provoke violent acts. And if anything like that happened, would an escalation of violence give recourse to these armed groups to take steps against some real or imagined enemy. Is it possible for some to mobilize additional resources and use violent means to pursue objectives or ambitions beyond the barriers of legitimate political boundaries?

Finally, could the long and bitter experience of the Sudanese Islamist movement be enough for the Sudanese Islamists, their sympathizers inside and outside the country, and other Sudanese actors to sit down and agree upon a way to free the state from a future of such ideological entrapments, like those of the Islamists, which exacted a heavy toll upon the entire Sudanese populace, including the Islamists? The answers to these questions must be found before the Sudan can put its long history of conflict and experimentation behind it and move into a future where no ism is left uncontested.

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APPENDIX

SUDAN CHARTER: NATIONAL UNITY AND DIVERSITY

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First: religious affiliation and the nation

1. The People

A) Sudanese are one nation:

– United by common religious and human values, and by the bonds of coexistence, solidarity and patriotism,

– And diversified by the multiplicity of their religious and cultural affiliations.

B) The Bulk of Sudanese are Religious:

The following principles shall therefore be observed in consideration for their dignity and unity:

1. Respect for religious belief, and for the right to express one's religiousness in all aspects of life. There shall be no suppression of religion as such, and no exclusion thereof from any dimension of life.

2. Freedom of choice of religious creed and practice, and sanctity of religious function and institutions. There shall be no coercion in religious affiliation, and no prohibition of any form of religious practice.

3. Benevolence, justice, equality and peace among different religious affiliates. They shall not prejudice or hurt any other by word or deed. There shall be no hostility in religion—none shall excite antagonism, impose domination, or commit aggression among religious individuals or communities.

C) The Muslims are the majority among the population of the Sudan:

The Muslims are unitarian in their religious approach to life. As matter of faith, they do not espouse secularism. Neither do they accept it politically. They see it as a doctrine that is neither neutral nor fair, being prejudicial to them in particular: it deprives them of the full expression of their legal and other values in the area of public life, without such detriment to those non-muslim believers

whose creed is exclusively relevant to private and moral life. Historically, the Muslims are not familiar with secularism, which developed from a peculiar European experience—arising from the conflict between the Christian Church and secularists in politics, economics and science. The doctrine is, therefore, of little relevance to the historical development or the legacy of the islamic civilization.

The Muslims, therefore, have a legitimate right, by virtue of their religious choice, of their democratic weight and of natural justice, to practice the values and rules of their religion to their full range—in personal, familial, social or political affairs.

D) In the Sudan there is a large number of those who adhere to African religions, a substantial number of Christians and a few Jews:

These have their particular beliefs, and do not believe in Islam, and should in no way be prejudiced or restrained only for being in minority. That is their due by virtue of their own creed, in concurrence with the Islamic Sharia and the fundamental rights of all men to freedom and equality.

Non-Muslims shall, therefore, be entitled freely to express the values of their religion to the full extent of their scope—in private, family or social matters.

2. The State

The State is a common affair among all believers and citizens of the Sudan. It observes the following principles:

a) In the Sphere of Freedom & Equality:

1. Freedom of creed and cult for all is guaranteed, (in a context of the prevalence of general freedom, of the supremacy of the constitution, of the rule of law and of government that is judicially and religiously responsible).
2. The privacy of every man is also guaranteed; his intimate personal affairs are immune against the powers of government; every one may conduct his devotional life in the manner he chooses.
3. None shall be penalized for any act or omission, if such is a recognized ceremonial or mandatory practice of his religion.
4. None shall be legally barred from any public office only because of his adherence to any religious affiliation. But religiousness in general may be taken into consideration as a factor of the candidate's integrity.
5. The freedom of religious dialogue and propagation is guaranteed; subject to any regulation that may ensure social tranquility and regard for the respective religious sentiments of others.

b) In The Sphere of Law:

The state shall establish a legal system in full consideration of the will of the Muslim majority as well as the will of the non-muslims. Wherever the entire popular

mandate is harmonious, a basis of national consensus is thereby provided for all laws and policies. Where mandates diverge, an attempt shall be made to give general, if parallel, effect to both. In common matters where it is not feasible to enforce but one option or system, the majority option shall be determinative, with due respect to the minority expression.

The Sudan does not conform to the doctrine of centralism or absolute universality of law. (Its people have in fact been simultaneously governed by various legal systems, Islamic, civil or customary, applied according to person, subject matter or district.) The scope of some laws can be limited as to particular persons or places—such that a general legal order is established intersected by personalized or decentralized sub-orders.

Thus:

6. Islamic jurisprudence shall be the general source of law:
   – It is the expression of the will of the democratic majority.
   – It conforms to the values of all scriptural religions, its legal rules almost correspond to their common legal or moral Teachings.
   – It recognizes, as source of law, the principles of national justice and all sound social customs.
   – It specifically recognizes the principles of religious freedom and equality in the manner mentioned above; and allows for partial legal multiplicity in regard to the religious affiliation of persons or to the predominance of non-muslims in any particular area, in the manner detailed below.
7. Family law shall be personal, as rules of conduct intimately relating to a person's private religious life, where—in a variable legal system can be practically administered with reference to the specific religious affiliation of the parties in a limited, stable social unit: the family.

   Thereby the privacy and the religious and cultural autonomy of the family is safeguarded.

   Thus:

   a) Every parent is entitled to bring up his issue in the religious manner of his liking. The freedom of religious education and its institutions is ensured.

   b) The rules relating to marriage, cohabitation, divorce, parenthood, childhood and inheritance shall be based on the religious teachings of the couple. To the Muslims shall apply the Sharia. To scriptural religious denominations shall apply their respective church laws. To the followers of local cults shall apply their special customs. Any of these or others can of course choose to be governed by Sharia.

8. The effectiveness of some laws shall be subject to territorial limitations, considering the prevalence of certain religions or cultures in the area at variance with the religion dominant in the country at large, and regarding matters where an exception can be made from the general operation of the legal system—not according to each person's or family's choice but to the dominant choice in the area. In these matters exclusive local rules can be established in the area based on the local majority mandate—any local minority remaining subject to the democratic principle.
   Thus the legislative authority of any region predominantly inhabited by non-Muslims can take exception to the general operation of the national law, with respect to any rule of a criminal or penal nature derived directly and solely from a text in the *Sh'aria* contrary to the local culture. The said authority can instead opt for a different rule based on the customs or religion prevailing in the area.
9. The general presumption, otherwise, is for law to be effective country-wide over all persons and regions, except for any limitation deriving from the requirement of the constitutional decentralization system or from the very letter and purpose of a particular law.

Second: ethnicity and nationhood

***The Sudan is one country*:**

– Whose people are bound by one common allegiance to nation and land.

– But are diverse as to ethnic origin, local custom or cultural association.

– Wherein Arab origin is mixed with African origin, Arab culture with African culture, with inputs from other origins or cultures.

– Ethnic and tribal origin shall be duly respected. Customary rules of solidarity and conduct, special to a specific tribal or local precinct may be observed. But ethnicity is a natural trait not deriving from human attainment and no good as a basis for discriminating between people or citizens in socio-political or legal relations. Moreover the expression of ethnic arrogance, rancour or strife should not be allowed.

– Local subcultures (tongues, heritages, ways of life, etc....) are respected and may be freely expressed and promoted—without deviation towards the excitement of animosity between fellow country-men, or the hampering of free dialogue and interaction, between subcultures towards the development of a national human culture, and without derogation from the national education policies or from the status of the official language.

– In its foreign and domestic policy, the state shall show consideration for the import of its different cultures. It shall pay regard in its international relations to the sense of cultural attachment or geographical neighborhood of the different sub-nationalities or inhabitants of the Sudan. It shall, for example, allow for no discrimination between nationals of different origins in policies of information or housing, and shall not show bias in foreign relations towards the development of pan-Arab rather than pan-African ties.

Third: the region and the country

***The Sudan is a united state*:**

– Independent by virtue of its own national sovereignty.

– Whose people are mobilized in one central political allegiance.

– But diverse as to its far-flung regions inhabited by heterogeneous populations wherein prevail different needs, circumstances and standards of life.

– The nature of the Sudan generally calls for an increased national effort to reinforce the unity of the land and to strengthen the central national allegiance.

– It requires also with respect to the governance of the country due consideration from regional remoteness and socio-political disparity.

– In consideration for the identity of the different regions and the special needs, conditions and cultures of their inhabitants, and for the difficulty of administering the Sudan from one centre, there shall be established separate regions governed autonomously in certain regards and integrated into the national government otherwise.

– For the same considerations the composition of the central government Leadership shall incorporate elements from all regions. Government shall be organized in collegial and composite forms to allow for this representation. Some regional balance shall also be observed as far as possible in public service enterprises and in the different institutions of national government and administration.

– In consideration for the unity of the land, the national constitutional system shall preserve the integrity of those national powers necessary for maintaining a united sovereign country and for promoting the development and insurgence of the nation or coping with the states of national emergency. The general laws and policies shall also ensure the oneness of the national territory by regulating and facilitating contact, communication and intercourse

as well as the free circulation of persons, goods and information across regions towards a closer interaction and a more perfect union of the entire nation.

A) The Sharing of Power:

– The regional self-government system established in the South by virtue of the Self-Government Agreement of the early seventies, and by constitutional amendment in the North since the early eighties, is based on the principle of assigning to regional authorities the right of the legislative initiative and executive autonomy with respect to certain matters, without restraining the central authority from legislating on the same matters with absolute authority that overrides regional laws.

– A federal system would transfer to the federated regions matters of an even wider scope, but, more importantly, attribute to regional measures immunity from interference by central authorities through participation or abrogation, except with regard to a matter specifically designated as concurrent.

– In view of the scope and degree of federal autonomy, federalism requires the setting up of adequate infrastructure—material and human, and presumes the provision of sufficient financial resources independently raised by or transferred to the regions. All this may not be possible except through a process or a period of preparation and gradual transition to be duly conceived.

The detailed evaluation of the respective government powers and relationships in the Sudan may lead to preference for a mixed system—comprising federal and regional elements in any equation or with respect to different matters. Besides this system of decentralization, a measure of deconcentration may be introduced. This is an administrative policy that merely broadens the scope of delegation to regional departmental branches with full central political control.

– Some of the major powers normally reserved for the centre to be administrated with high centralization or with administrative deconcentration are: national defence and security, foreign relations, nationality, immigration and aliens, trans-regional means of communication and transport, the judicial system and the general legal codes, the financial order and its institutions, external and inter-regional trade, the natural resources—fluvial subterraneous and atmospheric, the general education and economic plans, ... etc.

– Some of the matters normally assigned to the regions to enjoy thereto the initiative or the monopoly of legislation, according to the regional or federal principle respectively, are: regional security and administration, local government, culture, social affairs, tourism, education, health and social services, agriculture and industry, regional commerce, ... etc.

– Some of these matters or of any other residual powers may be concurrent, for joint action by the centre and the regions.

– Provision should be made for a sharing formula between the centre and the regions with respect to land, internal revenue resources, joint major economic projects, the organization of professions and trades, the institutions of higher education, ... etc.

– Provision should also be made for safeguards of the freedom of communications, traffic and the passage of information, persons and goods, for the immunity of lands, projects, institutions and functionaries belonging to one authority as against the interference of another authority.

– Provision should likewise be made for a defined emergency regime that permits the national authorities to transgress the normal limits and equations, of power sharing to the extent of the necessity (wars, calamities, constitutional collapse ...).

– Provision should finally be made for the participation of the regions in all constitutional amendments that relate to their legal status.

– Consideration for regionalism can also be confirmed by special arrangements in the composition of central agencies response for the planning of national policies. The political traditions and the financial means of the Sudan may not make a bicameral legislature commendable as long as the national deputies are in fact representatives of regional constituencies. As to the leadership of the executive branch of government, the parliamentary system of government might be preferred, as it is based on collegiate executive power and allows for any political convention or usage governing regional representation or balance.

The balanced presence of regions may also be observed in any consultative councils or permanent committees under the auspices of the executive, or even in the civil service.

– The National Islamic Front stands for the adoption of a federal system in the constitutional regulation of decentralization in the Sudan, with equal regard to all regions, or with special arrangements for some, and through any process of gradual transition.

B) The Sharing of Wealth:

– In view of the wide discrepancy in the relative economic standard of the regions, and in order to ensure a fully integrated economic development, so that no region in the land would claim exclusive rights to natural resources within its borders, the national government would not be deprived of the means necessary

for the upkeep of the common weal, no region would be left too far behind in the general progress of the country and no region would be left too far behind in the general progress of the country and no region would develop without positive contributions for the development of the country at large—through contributions to central state resources, the attraction of emigrant labour and the intensification of economic exchange in the national market:

1. The state shall adopt a comprehensive plan for economic development with a view of promoting general prosperity and ensuring the balance of regional development through the encouragement, direction and dispensing of projects towards depressed sectors and areas.
2. In the transfer of national funds in support of regions, the state shall take into consideration the relative size of the population and the feasibility of utilization as well as a positive preference for less developed regions to further their growth towards parity.
3. Notice should be taken, in the composition of national economic and planning agencies for the balance representation of the different regions.
4. The persons and the institutions of the private sector should be encouraged to intensify their economic initiatives in those regions that are disadvantaged. The same should be observed in the extension of administrative, funding or taxation concessions.
5. The state shall endeavour to link all the regions of the country through roads and other means of communication and transport, so that the economic movement should freely and evenly roll on across the national territory.
6. Every region where a national project is situated, may retain a reasonable share of the opportunities and returns provided thereby, without prejudice to the due share of the state as a whole in all national opportunities and resources.

Peace, transition and constitution

In the pursuit of peace and stability the substantive issues which have always been in dispute among Sudanese are better taken up first for dialogue and resolution. Only thereafter should procedures and measures necessary for implementing any national consensus be dealt with. The most important of the latter is an agreed arrangement determining the destiny of the present political institutions, of the various national political forces as to participation in public life.

The national concord and the program for its implementation shall be decided upon in a general constitutional conference whose legal resolutions shall be ultimately put before the constituent authority for adoption in the permanent constitution or in appropriate legal measures. Political resolutions shall be the subject-matter of a national charter.

A national body, agreed upon by all parties concerned, shall be charged with preparation for the conference—undertaking studies, organizing the paper work and extending invitations to participants. A government agency shall handle the necessary technical and administrative work under the supervision of the above-mentioned body.

The various political forces shall conduct preliminary consultations and dealings designed to coordinate stands and points of view, and shall promote a favorable political climate to ensure the success of the conference.

Participation in the conference is open to all national political forces, whatever the respective weight and irrespective of recognition of, a participation in the present government or political set-up or otherwise and of operation inside or outside the Sudan. (The participation of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement is subject to an agreed cease-fire arrangement.)

Observers from African countries as well as international regional organizations and the United Nations Organization may be invited to attend the conference.

The conference shall determine all the issues of substance concerning the ordering of public life in the Sudan, especially its justice as to differences of religious association and cultural identity or as to distribution of power or wealth, and shall consider any constitutional or political matter relating thereto.

The conference shall also settle the issues of transition, including:

2. The completion of the Constituent Assembly as to full regional representation.
3. The form of government during the transition.
4. The administration of southern and northern regions pending the establishment of a final constitutional system.
5. The plight of those citizens who were displaced, or who incurred damage, deserted the public service or left the country because of the state of fighting and insecurity.

The resolutions of the conference shall be adopted by unanimity, while recommendations may be adopted by majority.

The National Islamic Front

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