

# Commission on Nomadic Peoples

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# Nomads of Northern Kordofan and the state: From violence to pacification.

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## Introduction

In November 1898, two months after the massacre of Karari which marked the decisive defeat of Mahdist resistance to the Anglo-Egyptian invasion of the Sudan, the commander of the invasion army, General Herbert Kitchener, proclaimed his *Aman* for the largely nomadic inhabitants of the western regions Darfur and Kordofan. "I now give you the *Aman* of God, his Prophet, and the *Aman* of His Highness the Khedive, and my *Aman*. Fear nothing as long as you are faithful to the Government."<sup>1</sup> The proclamation announced the recreation of public order and promised lasting welfare, peace and security. On the other hand it threatened those hesitating with their submission: "... let those now make up their minds, once and for all, for the arm of the Government is long."

There seems to exist a consensus in nomadic studies that nomadic society and the state are incompatible with each other. The state is conceived of as encroaching on nomadic societies and nomadic societies are at best seen as suffocating from the embrace of a benevolent state. In the worst, and more common, scenario they suffer from political oppression, cultural aggression, and economic exploitation.

Historical experience of state-building in nomadic areas corroborates this view to a large extent. But still, we should

not forget that it was also the great achievement of the modern state to bring basic security to nomadic society. When Marceau Gast (Gast: Call for papers to the conference on the nomads and the state, Lucca, Italy, April 1995) holds that nomads have to defend themselves against the state, we should also remind ourselves that one essential accomplishment of the state is to defend the nomads against the nomads.

Exactly this is the great achievement of the colonial state: to provide basic security even in regions as remote as the Libyan Desert, to grant a freedom of movement unimaginable in previous centuries and to relieve nomadic society from the pressure of endemic violence.

But in the beginning all was violence. The birth of the state is accompanied by violence, as Trutz v. Trotha so lucidly shows in his recently published book about the colonial state (v. Trotha 1994: 32). The state organisation has an overwhelming potential for violence that far surpasses the potentials of other political organisations. Certainly the colonial state in its conquering phase was no exception, as can be judged from the reportedly more than 10,000 dead after the battle of Karari (Daly 1986: 2). But then, on the other hand, the state has a potential to confine violence to its own use and, moreover, to restrain itself to the legally ordered uses of keeping a non violent social order.

Registration  
Opening Ceremony  
Sessions, Sessions  
Sessions, Closing  
Excursion to  
or Aomori/Hokkaido

This is a chance, however, and by no means a necessary development, as the history of the century-old state organisation in the region under consideration so amply illustrates. None of the earlier states in the region, including the Turco-Egyptian colonial state, had been able to achieve such a degree of monopolisation of violence and self restriction in its use, which in itself should be taken as an important indicator for the modernity of a state. It is doubtful whether in the more traditional states like the Funj and Fur Sultanates such a concept even existed.

Archival data presented in this contribution has been collected intermittently during an extended period of time since 1980 in an effort to understand the historical evolution of the political system in the course of doing social anthropological field studies with the Hawawir and the Kawahla in Northern Kordofan. Politically, the twenty years following World War I and the final inclusion of Dafur into the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan in 1916 have to be considered as the decisive formative period. During this period the foundations of the later political structure were laid in the course of colonial pacification and institution building.

It should be noted that the story about violence and pacification on the following pages is told largely from the angle of colonial documents from archives inside and outside the Sudan, with the exception of part 5 ("The organisation of raiding"). It is thus neither a balanced account – because the Kordofanian voices are not represented – nor does it follow established procedure in social anthropology – for it does not start from local concepts. Still, the reflections that led to the following presentation were provoked by local representations of Northern Kordofan history. In Northern Kordofan the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the time before the twenties is remembered as a time of violence and lawlessness. A

phrase like Inspector Harold MacMichael's "west of Sodiri [today the capital of the new Sodiri Province] the only law and only boundary was the sword", could well have been uttered by any informant talking about the time before the twenties. Local memory thus makes a sharp distinction between the time before colonial pacification when "everybody killed everybody else" and "the strong ate the weak" and the time of "the trustworthy judges". Especially the western savannahs live in local memory as "the land of fear" before the era of colonial pacification. The main aim of this contribution is to analyse the state of violence on the edge of the state in the Nile Valley (parts 2-4) and to account for this process of colonial pacification (parts 5-7). The argument is built around the enforcement of the state's monopoly of power and the limitation of its own use of violence. But it is never assumed that the state of violence reigning in the western savannahs represents a pristine manifestation of indigenous culture. On the contrary, violence "as usual" is treated in the framework of longstanding relations between nomads and the state. Thus, the greatest outburst of violence was set into motion by the approaching colonial state itself. But it was also tamed by the state when it developed beyond the capacities of the nomad's political institutions. This points to the colonial state's marked capacity for pacification by introducing its law and building political institutions to defend the rule of law.

A subordinate aim of this contribution consists in an effort to record events of a largely unknown North Kordofan past. This meant a deliberate decision to include much documentary evidence which in turn led to a dense and somehow enumerate presentation. Thus, readers who are interested in the argument and not in Kordofan events are advised

to skip parts 3 ("Violence as usual - raiding on the western frontier until 1906/7") and 4 ("Large scale raiding - a social structure saturated with violence", cf. Footnote 10).

### The state of violence on the frontier of the state

When Kitchener waved the double-edged sword of the state over the battlefield, promising protection and at the same time threatening to kill, the centralized military resistance of the Mahdist state in the Nile Valley had already been crushed during one of the first highly industrialized wars of the continent. The Anglo-Egyptian campaign, from the battle of Firket (April 1896) to the battles of Abu Hamed (August 1897), Atbara (April 1898), and Karari near Omdurman (September 1898), demonstrated, once and for all, the overwhelming superiority of industrialized warfare. The massacre of Karari was by all intents the end of the Mahdist state, even if the last remnants of the Mahdist army under the command of the *Khalifa* Abdullahi, successor of the *Mahdi* Muhammad Ahmad since the latter's death in 1885, were only defeated one year later near Umm Dibaikarat in Kordofan. But evidence for Kitchener's promises and threats had yet to be produced. During the first two decades after Karari, the arm of government proved by no means as long as Kitchener had stated.

The Military Intelligence Department described Kordofan in 1898 as being in a state of sheer anarchy (SIR 60<sup>2</sup>). The old capital of Kordofan, El Obeid, was found utterly destroyed when occupied by regular troops one year after the *Aman* in December 1899 (SIR 66). Contrary to the invasion of the Nile Valley by an imported industrial war machinery, the

savannahs west of the Nile were conquered in a series of nomadic raids, counterraid, and local rebellions fostered by the High Command of the Anglo-Egyptian army. After the occupation of Dongola and Ed Debba in the winter of 1896, bands of warriors from the Kababish, Sawarab, and Hawawir nomads were the first to side with the Anglo-Egyptian forces and receive modern arms to fight the Mahdists. Local rebellions against the Mahdist state and raids on loyal tribes who pastured their animals behind a screen of Mahdist outposts running from Safia to Gabra and Omdurman became fiercer the clearer the defeat of the Mahdist armies on the main battle sites in the Nile Valley could be judged from the perspective of the savannahs.

Warfare in the savannahs followed a certain pattern of ethnic soldiering already well established in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Northern Kordofan was part of a deep frontier<sup>3</sup> around and between states - within the reach of neighbouring states but never effectively controlled, not even by the Turco-Egyptian rule in the Sudan which came closest to a modern state. Yet, as far back as can be judged from historical records, the nomads have been drawn into the politics of neighbouring states. During the time of competition for hegemony between the Funj Sultanate in the Nile Valley (1501-1820) and the Keira Sultanate of Darfur (1650-1876 and 1899-1916) the nomads were already enlisted as allies in the conflicts between the rival powers, as well as in internal conflicts, and in police actions against other nomads beyond the reach of state control (Browne 1801: 177, 252; Bruce 1790: 520). During the era of Mamluk government in Dongola the nomads of the Bayuda Desert watched the western deserts against nomadic intruders. And at the time of the Turco-Egyptian invasion of Kordofan in 1821 the Kababish sided

with the invasion army, while the Nuba of Haraza, the Bani Jarar, the Hamar and other nomads of central Kordofan were on the side of the Darfurian government in El Obeid.

Of course, violence in the frontier society was by no means restricted to ethnic soldiering only. Warfare and raiding between different groups in their own interest were also rampant (Frantz 1979). Sometimes, nomadic groups like the 19<sup>th</sup> century Awlad Sulayman were pushed into an outburst of violence by the approaching state, sometimes, nomadic groups rose in rebellion against the state, the Tuareg rebellion of 1916/7 being a case in point. In all cases violence mainly took the form of raiding. We should be aware of the fact that states and seemingly stateless societies coexisted in this region since Pharaonic times. And whatever the exact nature of their relationships, violence was shaped by the proximity of the state and cannot be understood as a pristine manifestation of indigenous cultures, although it is sometimes as difficult to assess the exact impact of the state as it is to draw a sharp line between ethnic soldiering in the interest of a state and nomads fighting in their own interests. For it should in no way be assumed that nomadic groups played the part of tribal levies with the aim to support the state. They were in the game on their own accounts: to raid other nomads, to occupy grazing lands and wells, to loot animals, and to capture slaves. To be on the winning side in 1821, for instance, meant for the Kababish access to the rich grazing grounds in eastern Kordofan and control of the strategically important wells at Kajmar. From 1840 onwards Kababish and Hawawir were incited by the Turco-Egyptian government to raid Bani Jarar, Hamar, Zayadiyya, and other nomads from the fringes of Darfur with a view to control-

ling the caravan trade to Egypt (Parkyns 1850: 254 and 259; Colston, n.y.: 250; Malte-Brun 1863: 64-66). The same pattern was repeated during the Mahdiyya, except that the Kababish and Hawawir were on the losing side this time. The *Khalifa* Abdullahi outlawed them and urged their old enemies, Bani Jarar and other nomads of central Kordofan, to plunder them in the desert west of Dongola to where they had been forced to retreat (Wingate 1968: 338/9). When finally the Anglo-Egyptian invasion army arrived at Dongola in 1896, the Kababish and Hawawir were eager to seize the opportunity to settle old accounts in the shadow of the victorious invasion army in the Nile Valley.

The nomadic style is clearly discernible in the military operations in the western savannahs. Warfare consisted basically of raiding and counterraidering. With the defeat of *Amir* Mahmud's army on one of the main battle grounds near Atbara in April 1898, Kordofan fell into the state of anarchy described by military intelligence. Kababish and Hawawir raided camels of the Zayadiyya, the Hamar, the Shanabla, and the Bani Jarar which had been concentrated near Omdurman (SIR 58). Early in 1898 rebellious Missairiyya looted the Mahdist garrison at En Nahud, the garrison of Bara had already withdrawn to Omdurman (SIR 58). The Nuba of Haraza and even the Qirai'at near Omdurman revolted; in May 1898 the tribes of Darfur were in open rebellion (SIR 59). Some months later the Mahdist *Amir* of Kordofan, al-Khatim Musa, retreated with his troops to the garrison of El Obeid ceding the savannahs completely to nomadic warfare (SIR 60). After the battle of Karari various Baqqara groups fled from the battlefield to their homelands in southern Kordofan and Darfur plundering and looting on their way through central

Kordofan. Everybody was armed, and tried to seize whatever spoils he could from the ruins of the collapsing Mahdist state.

While the administration of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan slowly emerged from the destruction of the conquest in the Nile Valley, raiding was normal and widespread in the savannahs to the west. The administration was busy consolidating its grip in the central Nile Valley. The Fashoda crisis of 1898, widespread famine, and a mutiny in the Egyptian officers corps, at a time when military strength was considerably weakened by the withdrawal of English troops to the South African battlefields of the Boer Wars, seemed more urgent challenges than security in remote savannah areas. The new government had to confine itself to a few reconnaissance tours in the vicinity of the capital (CairInt 3-1-2<sup>4</sup>), occasional collection of arms from the nomads (SIR 67; SIR 68), and to urging tribal heads to come to Khartoum for formal submission (Wingate Papers 269/9/31<sup>5</sup>).

Meanwhile, violence in Kordofan continued unchecked. By the end of 1899 the caravan route between Omdurman and central Kordofan was described as very unsafe (Wingate Papers 269/9/31). Kababish raided the travellers on the road, in early 1901 they even looted Homra, a place on the road to El Obeid (SIR 77), half a year later traders were again attacked on the same road near Abu Tabbar (SIR 86). Even graver than incidental highway robbery were ethnic clashes during the first years after the conquest. They should be interpreted as consequences of the huge-population movements during and immediately after the Mahdiyya. With the beginning of the rainy season of 1900 the population of Kordofan had been requested to move back to their former homelands from

where they had been evacuated or fled (SIR 71). Their often contradicting claims which sometimes were rooted in an era as far back as the Funj Sultanate, lead to serious bloodshed. In April 1907 Kababish attacked and killed Zaghawa at Kajmar and destroyed their irrigated gardens and wells (SIR 153; SIR 157). Their conflict about the well-field at Kajmar dates back to the Turco-Egyptian invasion of 1821, when, in the aftermath of the invasion, the Kababish had defeated the Zaghawa, the latter then fighting on the side of Darfur (Robinson Papers 616/13<sup>6</sup>). During the same time, in 1906 and 1907, fighting occurred between Kawahla and Kababish, again at Kajmar (Beck 1988: 57), and again in December 1907, this time between Majanin and Shanabla (SIR 164). In June 1912 Kababish and Hawawir fought over the ownership of the wells at Safia (SIR 216; SIR 217). Kitchener's promise of security had still not come true.

Although the Anglo-Egyptian Government did not stay idle in the face of frontier violence, its initial efforts aiming at pacification were effective only insofar as they succeeded to shift the turbulent frontier slowly away from the Nile and the centres of administration to the virtually uncontrollable west and north of the savannahs. The Governor of Kordofan resided in El Obeid, one Inspector for the Western District was stationed at En Nahud, another one for the administration of Northern Kordofan at Bara. A company of Camel Corps, about 120 men, was garrisoned at Bara, a second company in the provincial capital. The savannah and desert regions of Northern Kordofan and Dongola were simply too vast to control effectively. Violence moved with the frontier.

The Inspector of Northern Kordofan tried to administer his largely uncontrolled district in a properly nomadic

style trekking amazing distances. Inspector Harold MacMichael, for instance, travelled more than 1,600 km on camel in the first quarter of 1909 alone (MacMichael Diaries 616/13<sup>7</sup>). Only when he happened to be near the place of ethnic violence did he sometimes find a chance for successful police action, as in February 1907 when, on trek near the wells of Sodiri, Kababish reported a raid and a murder committed by nearby Kaja (MacMichael Diaries 585/5<sup>8</sup>). As early as 1901 the first police post was established near Foga, the last village inside Kordofan on the road to Darfur (Lampen Papers 731/6/1-14<sup>9</sup>; SIR 101). North of Foga lay an administrative no man's land up to Ed Debba on the Nile in Dongola Province. Only occasionally flag-showing patrols passed through the area, in 1901 at the occasion of a boundary demarcation to Darfur (SIR 82; SIR 89), and again in 1903 to stop fighting between Kababish and Kaja (SIR 103; SIR 111). These flag-showing patrols were thought to offer some protection in the frontier area, but the population probably viewed them rather as extremely violent raids, since it transpired later that during the 1901 patrol the officer in command had simply ordered the burning of the Kaja villages near the border and that during the 1903 patrol the same Kaja were forcefully moved to the vicinity of the Foga police post (SIR 159). The first temporary police post in the Libyan Desert was established during the winter of 1905/6 at the wells of Matassi, some 70 km west of the Nile, by order of the Governor of Dongola Province after alarming news of raids from the west had reached the Nile. In February 1907 a second post occupied the wells of El Atrun to grant the salt caravans secure access to the salines and to intercept raiding parties that used the wells on their way through the Libyan Desert. Only one month later, news reached Dongola that the patrol

had lost its way in a sand storm. Twenty-two of the patrol were dead, the surviving were rescued and the post abandoned (SIR 154). The desert itself had defeated state control.

### Violence as usual – raiding on the western frontier until 1906/7<sup>10</sup>

As we know from the testimony of early European travellers, raiding and counterraiding in the Libyan Desert were normal affairs during the nineteenth century. Colston who met the Kababish and Hawawir near the wells of El Ain in 1875, for instance, noted in his travel account, "ils disent qu'ils souffrent beaucoup des incursions des Bédouins-voleurs qui viennent de Darfur et font jusqu'à vingt jours de marche; ils nomment ces brigands: Ziadixas, Hommours et Bennigarrar." (Colston n.y.: 250; see also Parkyns 1850: 254, 259; and Malte-Brun 1863: 64-66)

The first recorded raid from the west in this century took place in October 1901 when a raiding party of Zayadiyya from Darfur, obviously sent by the Darfur Sultan on a police action against the Bidayat of Ennedi, suddenly appeared in the Wadi El Milk near the wells of Bajariyya. They were attacked by Muwalka Hawawir and withdraw to the west after heavy losses (SIR 87). In 1903 and 1904 Bidayat nomads again raided the Kababish near Dongola capturing a total of 116 camels during four raids (SIR 147; NPH 878<sup>11</sup>; Sudan Government 1907). In 1905, the year of the Matassi post, no raids from the west were recorded. But in the following year 1906, the Dongola Kababish lost 35 camels during two separate raids from the west. These small raids of the early century fitted neatly into the well established pattern of small

scale raiding. They were in no way an exception to violence as usual on the western frontier.

In November of 1906, a salt caravan of Amayim from Upper Egypt consisting of 8 men and 45 camels met with a group of unknown armed men who suddenly appeared out of the night near the salines of El Atrun. The fact that the Amayim immediately opened fire at the strangers without prior inquiry already indicates the growing atmosphere of spreading violence and fear in the Libyan Desert which, some years later, led to unrestricted warfare. In the following fight, however, the strangers proved superior, the Amayim had to retreat to the oasis of Selima without their camels (SIR 149). Later the strangers turned out to be a group of Umm Mattu Kababish and Hawawir from Dongola and Kordofan Provinces who, after the fight with the Amayim, encountered a party of Zaghawa from the northern Darfur borderland in the vicinity of El Atrun whose tracks they followed to Zaghawa and Bidayat country near the Ennedi mountains. After raiding 250 camels – some of which they claimed had been raided from them by Bidayat in previous raids – they turned to the Midob hills where they captured 270 cattle before returning home (SIR 149; SOD 1912<sup>12</sup>). This is the first documented raid into the area north of Darfur from the east. The era of large raids had begun that eventually led to a state of generalized warfare between the nomads in the huge area from the Nile to Darfur, Fezzan, and Wadai.

The early attempts of Government at pacification were inconclusive. As early as 1901, the Inspector General, Rudolf von Slatin Pasha, had cautioned the Kababish and Hawawir against the consequences of raiding. A letter to the Governor General, Reginald Wingate, from March 1901 reads: "At Karima I found all the Hawawir and Kababish Sheikhs

waiting and gave them the hell of a dressing in your name. All the raiders have to be brought in and will be tried and punished." (Wingate Papers 282/3/159) In fact, nobody was punished nor even were suspected raiders brought to court, only in 1906, the year in which the Governor of Dongola established the post at Matassi, some of the Umm Mattu Kababish and Hawawir who had carried out the raid against the Zaghawa were found and forced to pay compensation to the Zaghawa, the money being handed over to Sultan Ali Dinar of Darfur and from him to the aggrieved Zaghawa (SOD 1912).

### Large scale raiding – a social structure saturated with violence

During the winter of 1907/8 the Sudan Government had laid a chain of mounted posts around the western savannahs from Matassi near Dongola to El Atrun, Umm Sunaita in the Wadi El Milk, and Sodiri in the Darfur borderland. But raiding intensified in spite of government action. A small raiding party of Hawawir and Umm Mattu Kababish returned successfully from the west in January 1908 (SIR 164). A second raid at the same time, involving more than a hundred Hawawir and Kababish, led far to the north into Wadi Mourdi against the Qur'an and the Tuareg who had recently immigrated to the area (SIR 163; SOD 1913). A third raid developed out of a hunting party. A group of twenty Hawawir and fourteen Kababish had gone hunting to the Taiqa Plateau where some of their camels were stolen. They followed the tracks of the thieves for ten days west to the wells of Gouro Gouro in Ennedi where they were attacked and forced to retreat with heavy losses (SOD

1913). In January Sultan Ali Dinar sent back two Dongola Hawawir who had been taken prisoners while attacking the Tuareg and who had later been surrendered to the Sultan when a party of the Tuareg immigrated to Darfur (SIR 164).

In March of 1908 the Governor of Dongola again severely warned Hawawir and Kababish leaders of the consequences of the raids. But already in August of the same year a party of Dongola Kababish killed a group of Bidayat and captured their camels at the salines of El Atrun. After news had reached Dongola, the Governor summoned Shaikh Fadl al-Mula Rakha, Head Shaikh of all Dongola Kababish, and during the interrogation it turned out that Shaikh Fadl al-Mula had not only been informed of the raid, but that he had even received some of the raided camels (SIR 164; Sudan Government 1909).

In the year 1910 several large counterraid came from northern Wadai which itself was in a chaotic state due to the French advance. Early in 1910 a large Bidayat party raided 250 Hawawir camels west of Dongola (Intel 2-45-382<sup>13</sup>). Two months later two large raiding parties, 150 and 250 western nomads respectively, reached Northern Kordofan and northern Darfur via the Midob hills. News of the raids arouse the whole frontier area to a state of extreme excitement (MacMichael Diaries 27.5.1910, 585/8). The Sudan Government sent a detachment of Camel Corps who were able to keep the main bodies of the raiding parties over in Darfur, but proved unable to prevent nearly daily attacks on Kordofan herds by enterprising small scouting parties (Intel 2-45-382; SIR 198; SOD 1910). And they were also unable to prevent a 400 men strong counterraid of Hawawir and Kababish from collecting practically under their eyes near Bajariyya in the Wadi El Milk. In the course of this raid

the participating Hawawir alone looted 120 Bidayat camels and recovered half of their camels which had previously that year been raided by the Bidayat near Dongola. In winter 1910/11 the camel market in Omdurman was reportedly swamped by camels carrying Bidayat brands (Intel 2-45-382; SOD 1911).

The pattern of large scale raiding was fully developed by 1910/11. Raiding and counterraiding reached a climax of unrestricted violence. In August 1911, near Abu Fas at the Darfur border, a party of Midob killed the men of a Kababish caravan carrying grain from the Kaja hills, in spite of a company of Camel Corps patrolling nearby (SOD 1911; SIR 205). In September and October several small raiding parties of Midob and Zaghawa killed five Awaida Kababish and raided fifty of their camels (SOD 1911). The raids became more violent and more frequent. In October a group of Atawiyya Kababish entered the Midob hills where they killed several Midob herdsmen and drove away 862 of their sheep (SOD 1912). Encouraged by this success, a second Kababish raiding party set out immediately to Midob and came back with 6,100 sheep after killing several Midob shepherds (SOD 1911; Intel 2-45-383). In November a small raiding party of Dongola Kababish and Hawawir again looted camels in the western desert (Intel 2-45-383). Later that year, a joint raiding party of 150 to 200 Kababish and Hawawir met five Qur'an in Ennedi. Three of them were shot on sight, the remaining two were tortured and forced to lead the raiders to an encampment of Tuareg which was found undefended owing to the fact that at the same time the Tuareg had set out on a raid east. Finally, the raiding party turned to Wadai to raid Awlad Sulayman and Qur'an (SOD 1913). Early in 1912 Kababish from Dongola Province attacked and looted a big caravan west of Wadi Hawar which

had carried arms and ammunition for Sultan Ali Dinar from Fezzan (SIR 200; Intel 2-45-382).

At the same time, in late 1911, a joint raiding party of western nomads collected forces against the Sudanese nomads. Bidayat and Qur'an participated as well as Tuareg under their leaders Kawsan and Mukhtar and Awlad Sulayman of Shaikh Salih Maqbul. The overall force amounted to 300 men. They were reinforced by a tribal detachment of Zayadiyya cavalry under the leadership of Sultan Ali Dinar's *Amir* Jadain az-Zayadi. At the salines of El Atrun their scouts met with a party of eighty Hawawir and Kababish. The latter immediately engaged in combat, but had to flee when the main forces entered the battle leaving twenty-five dead, thirteen taken captives, 500 camels, and their waterskins. *Amir* Jum'a later released some of the captives and even gave them camels to carry their water supply which marks one of the very rare gestures of grace in this otherwise relentless warfare. The slaves of the Kordofan nomads, including eight Bidayat who had been abducted in previous raids, and their camels were confiscated (SIR 211; SOD 1912; Intel 2-45-838). While seventy of the raiders returned to Wadai with the captured camels, the main body looted Kababish herds in the Wadi Maqrur and later invaded the Midob hills (SOD 1913).

The escaped Kababish and Hawawir struggled to reach their wells in Dongola and Kordofan Provinces after the encounter at El Atrun, several of them perished from thirst on the way. Not later than February 1912, a large counterraid of Awlad Howal and Atawiyya Kababish, as well as Khamasin Hawawir, set out to the west. They raided in the Midob hills, but were later engaged in a fierce battle by Zaghawa and pursuing Midob near Furawiyya in Zaghawa country. Some forty of the raiders went

further west till they reached the Bahr al-Ghazal region where they took to raiding the herds of local nomads, "Mena Mena"<sup>14</sup>, "Gaawa", "Mirrat", "Fezzan", and Qur'an (Intel 2-45-383; SIR 214; SOD 1912).

Again in April 1912, Kababish and Hawawir fought Zayadiyya in retaliation for the El Atrun incident loosing twelve men and capturing a number of camels (SIR 213). In December a group of twenty-nine Hawawir and Kababish was nearly annihilated by a raiding party from the west near El Atrun, only three of them reached the police post at Matassi (SIR 222). In May 1913, again near El Atrun, all men of a large Hawawir salt caravan were killed and their camels taken (SIR 226). Finally, in December 1913, two Hawawir and two Midob who had ostensibly gone hunting, but more probably scouting, to the area south of El Atrun were intercepted by a party of Bidayat and tortured for information. On learning that the Sudan Government had established posts at Marghumi (Dongola Province), El Ain (on the border of Dongola and Kordofan Provinces), and Umm Sunaita (Kordofan Province), the Bidayat party turned to raid into Darfur (SIR 233; Intel 2-45-394).

In a letter of protest, dated 1912 and addressed to the Governor of Kordofan, Sultan Ali Dinar enumerated losses of the nomads under his authority, namely Zayadiyya, Midob, part of the Zaghawa, and some Bidayat. According to his list, 11,000 sheep had been robbed, mainly from the Midob, in the twelve years since the turn of the century by Kordofan nomads, 1,500 heads of cattle and an equal number of camels (SOD 1912). On the other side, the Kababish lost 1,650 camels and thirty men alone during the years 1910-1912 (SOD 1912).

In the years after 1913, raiding from the west lost momentum. Although raids did occur between 1914 and 1916, they

became much smaller in scale. In April 1914 a Bidayat raiding party captured eighty camels and two Kababish herds-men in the desert west of Dongola (SIR 237), in January 1915 a group of 18 Bidayat kidnapped six Kababish children and drove off 15 camels (SIR 247). In October 1915 a small group of Bidayat tried to capture a slave and 16 camels near Dongola but was repulsed by alerted Kababish (SIR 255), and in January 1916 another Bidayat raiding party appeared near Dongola and even managed to steal the camels of the Matassi post (SIR 258).

These were all rather small raids following the pre 1907 raiding pattern. Various reasons account for the lack of large raids from the west during 1914 to 1916. First, government action to protect the Sudanese nomads had intensified. But probably more important were the changes in the larger political context of the frontier.

### The organisation of raiding<sup>15</sup>

The small raids before 1907 differed from the large raids which became the dominant manifestation of frontier violence after that date in a number of features, first of which, quite simply, was the number of participants. Whereas the small raiding parties usually consisted of less than a dozen, although in some cases up to fifteen or at the most twenty participants, the large raiding parties after 1907 mustered several hundred members. Sometimes large raiding parties split up in smaller raiding parties or they sent scouting parties which at times acted quite independently as raiding parties.

Conditioned by the strength of the raiding parties, different stratagems were used. Small groups compensated their lack of strength through swiftness and

secrecy. They suddenly appeared from nowhere after long marches through the Libyan Desert, where they kept hiding until they discovered an easy prey, usually a lone herdsman pasturing his camels far away from his fellows or a herd of camels grazing unattended. Ideally, a small raiding party in the early years confined itself to stealing. When they met with determined resistance they preferred rather to retreat to the desert than to engage in battle, although when cornered, they did not hesitate to kill. It is significant that during nine reported raids between 1901 and 1907 only seven Dongola tribesmen were killed and four wounded, and in the majority of the early raids there were no human casualties at all. Raiders were interested in camels, not in killing. But killing, though it was by no means ruled out, was clearly subordinate to capturing camels. Before the robbed found time to mount resistance, sometimes before they even noted that they had been robbed, the raiding party had already disappeared into the desert. During later raids, when raiding and counterraiding had already inflicted a number of casualties on either side, a growing number of raiders participated with the explicit aim of revenging the death of a relative and, being ignorant of the family relationships on the other side, tried to kill at least somebody, whomsoever. The longer the raiding lasted, the fewer were the restrictions on the use of violence. This was probably also due to the spread of more effective arms, since in the early raids the raiders, especially those from the west, were mainly armed with spears. Only from 1910 did bolt breech action rifles, imported by way of Kufra, come into use in the west.

If small raids depended largely on swiftness and surprise attacks, the success of the later large raids was due to their superiority in numbers. They did, in fact, exploit the surprise effect, but their

sheer size made it difficult to conceal their movements. On the other hand, they were not forced to hide, since they usually were able to overcome resistance. A large raiding party typically invaded foreign territory in superior force, stayed there for some time looting as many animals as they could get hold of, and, after retreating, left a broad trail of death and destruction. Large raiding parties usually did not confine themselves to raiding animals, but also killed or abducted all those who were not able to hide. Administrative sources state that by 1912 Hawawir and Kababish had killed more than 200 and abducted 500 men, women and children from the population subject to the Darfur Sultan, not counting the casualties of Tuareg, Qur'an, Awlad Sulayman and others outside of Sultan Ali's authority (SOD 1912).

Small raids captured a dozen or twenty, in exceptionally successful cases fifty or sixty camels. Large raiding parties looted ten times that number, 830 camels of the Kababish in 1910, 250 Kababish camels in the Wadi Maqrur in 1912, 500 Hawawir and Kababish camels at El Atrun in 1912, 700 camels of the Bidayat and Qur'an in 1916. Small raiding parties had to confine themselves to capture camels in the interest of swiftness, whereas large raiding parties with their crushing superiority could also loot cattle and even sheep, 270 heads of Midob cattle in 1906, 6,100 Midob sheep in winter 1911/12. After a small raid, individual nomadic households might well be ruined, but during a large raid a whole area was normally reduced to privation, if the victims did not succeed in recovering their animals or looting somebody else, with the obvious effect of intensifying and further spreading violence.

A small raiding party required a certain amount of planning, if only to maximize its chances to survive the 900 km

journey across of the Libyan Desert between the Nile and the Ennedi mountains. Surprisingly often, however, later small raids originated from spontaneous decisions in a climate of generalized violence. A salt caravan took the opportunity to attack another salt caravan, a group of nomads had originally gone hunting gazelle or collecting herbs when, by chance, they met other nomads whom they considered an easy prey. More often than not, an angry pursuit party evolved into a raiding party when, after losing track or otherwise being unable to recapture their animals, it turned to indiscriminate looting just to avoid returning home with empty hands, thereby drawing more and more groups into the violent cycle of raiding and counter-raiding. The large raids required several months, even years, of planning and recruiting men. The Kababish/Hawawir raid in winter 1910 took three months for the raiders to gather, the joint Tuareg/Bidayat/Awlad Sulayman raid of 1911 required more than one year of organisation.

Besides being in itself a consequence of earlier small-scale raiding through the unrestricted proliferation of raiding and counter-raiding, large-scale raiding built in several other ways on earlier small raids, namely when problems of leadership and information about formerly unknown areas are considered. The leaders of the large raiding parties were veterans of earlier small raids, among the Dongola Kababish Isawi Salim, Shaikh of the Dar Hamid Kababish, and Ahmad Abu Zimam who had already been a leader of the Sirajab Kababish levies on the side of the Anglo-Egyptian army in 1898. Among the Kordofan Kababish several outstanding leaders emerged: Hasan Mirair, whose brother Ali Mirair had already commanded Mahdist raids of Awlad Aun Kababish against the Hawawir; al-Hajjan Ali Musa (Sirajab

Kababish of Kordofan); Abdalla Sughri (Atawiyya Kababish); Ali Balla (Nurab Kababish); and the most relentless leader of raids, Umm Badda Abu Ghuraida of the Awlad Tuwal Kababish who was locked into an old blood revenge with the nomads of the west. Among the Hawawir a number of families produced leaders for the raiding parties: Adam Himaida, Shaikh of the Muwalka Hawawir, whose father, Adam Kardam, had served as an *Amir* during the Mahdiyya, commanded several raids to the west between 1901 and 1916; Nur Farah (Hararin Hawawir) was the leader of a number of raids from 1908 to 1912, in which year he was killed on a raid by western nomads. His brother, Sa'ad Farah, was killed while taking part in another raid one year later. Muhammad Abdalla (Fazzarab Hawawir), Ali Ibaid (Khamasin Hawawir), and Shaikh Nimr Hassan, son of the Hawawir Head Shaikh, Hassan Khalifa, whom he succeeded after the latter's death, also led several raids. But Shaikh Jabir Taqqa, Shaikh of the Khamasin Hawawir, proved by far the most important commander in raids. He had already been *Amir* in the Mahdiyya, his father, Ahmad Taqqa, had been Shaikh of the Khamasin and one of the most powerful men of the Hawawir during the Turco-Egyptian era<sup>16</sup>. Two of Shaikh Jabir's brothers, Kabjan Taqqa and Muhammad Sughri Taqqa, as well as his nephew, Muhammad Sharif Kabjan, were killed while raiding.

The leaders in raids were driven by motives that clearly went far beyond capturing camels. Typically, they had been victims of earlier raids, in some cases they felt a personal duty for blood revenge. But their most important motives were certainly more of a political nature. Leaders of successful raids gained enormous prestige, their names acquired a charismatic ring in nomadic society. As a

rule, they were men of influence in their tribes well before the raids to the west started. Already in the Mahdiyya and in the Turco-Egyptian era, some of their families had produced leaders of war. They perfectly incarnated a violent knightly ethos which played a prominent role for the legitimisation of power in those highly competitive times of beginning centralisation of power in the nomadic tribes. One prerequisite for a bid for power in those insecure days was that the contender could provide security to his followers and promise material gains (Beck 1989). If a Hawawir raiding leader, for instance, proved able to mobilise 100 or 150 participants for a raiding party - out of a total of less than 650 households - and came back east with slaves and camels, this was a clear demonstration of his power and bolstered his claims in the fierce competition for political leadership.

Experience from former raids was essential for leadership. It was even more so for guides. Although raiding parties did usually not hesitate to venture deep into totally unknown regions, in the Libyan Desert an experienced guide could prove even more important than an experienced leader. Sometimes, as during the first raids, raiding parties just followed the tracks of raiders from the other side. Sometimes, guides could be procured from neighbouring groups by offering an incentive. Midob and Zaghawa, due to their geographical position in the middle of the frontier area, seem to have been especially active as guides. Ignorance could at times even be compensated by violence, as in the case of raiders who kidnapped natives of the country and forced them to describe its topography or even lead the raiders. In later raids, at least, there was no shortage of guides who could rely on experience gained during earlier raids.

The logic inherent to unchecked raid-

ing dramatically increased the area of ethnic violence. The network of raiding reached its largest extension when, in the year 1911/2, peoples as remote from each other as Tuareg, Awlad Sulayman, Bidayat, and Hawawir, were drawn into one single system of raiding. In the east, raids led to the river Nile and to places within a distance of no more than 200 km from El Obeid. To the west, Hawawir and Kababish reached Wadi Mourdi and Erdi-Ma north of Ennedi and, in 1912, even the Bahr al-Ghazal region of Kanem north-east of Lake Chad, covering a distance of more than 1,200 km, or 35 days by camel, from the Nile.

The longer the raids went unchecked the firmer a tradition of violence evolved from the first small raids to the large raids involving generalized violence all over the huge frontier region. As the motives for violence changed, so did its nature. In the beginning, during the small raids, the motive was to carry off camels, taking advantage of the favour of the moment in a relatively sober, pragmatic way. When blood revenge entered the scene, the motives changed as did the mood of violence. Raiders set out determined to kill and devastate. Spreading fear set an automatism of killing on sight into motion, as the fight at El Atrun in 1906 illustrated for the first time. In the end, moral scruples against killing broke down collectively, as ethnic hate came to be directed against an enemy defined as a potential slave and a bloodthirsty animal. Raiders and killers became glorified, their warrior ethos set a pattern worthy of emulation by others. Finally, wholesale massacres of camps, including women and children, took place.

The literature about nomads is full of allegations that raiding among them follows a certain code of honour which serves to restrain violence. Accordingly, killing is supposedly limited to self defence, only slaves and animals are cap-

tured, women and children are left untouched, free men are later released against ransom. But nothing of that kind happened in the raids under consideration. Women and children were abducted and enslaved, people were tortured to lead the raiders to their herds, humans were killed at random or left wounded in the desert dying without water or camels for transport. Generally, violence became unconstrained.

One precondition for the development of rules of conduct in raiding which could have served to restrain violence was severely lacking, namely communication between the different peoples involved. Although the nomads of the frontier area had developed broadly similar lifestyles, and internally disposed of means of conflict containment similar to each other, there was no communication between them and no channels for negotiation. Where the leading men of a tribe could sit down together to negotiate, like inside Northern Kordofan, peace could be restored after a fight, or at least an escalation of violence prevented, by payments of compensation, reciprocal exchange of captured tribesmen, and blood money. Even between friendly groups raids have been known to occur, but violence was highly unlikely to escalate. Where cross-cutting ties resulting from marriage, trading relations, *khuwa* (ritual brotherhood) relationships, or neighbourhood involving habitual contacts between different tribes were dense, occasional raids would not provoke outright warfare. However, during the first decades of the century contacts between the more remote enemies in the frontier area were indeed restricted to raiding each other. Lacking communication proved to be one of the biggest problems, although there were occasional attempts. Amir Jum'a had released his captives after the battle of El Atrun with the offer to negotiate secure access to the salines.

After a Kababish raid on Midob in October 1910, Malik Jami<sup>c</sup> al-Khair of the Shelota Midob had sent envoys to Shaikh Ali at-Tom, the paramount Shaikh of the Kordofan Kababish. Near the camp of Shaikh Ali, however, they were captured by Kababish. Ali Balla, one of the Kababish leaders in raiding, immediately shot one of the envoys, the remaining ones were detained and robbed of their possessions (SOD 1912). Incidents like these obviously did much to deter further attempts at negotiation. Since 1912, several Kordofan families, including those of Shaikh Jabir Taqqa and Umm Badda Abu Ghuraida, tried in vain to establish communication with Bidayat and Qur'an to effect the release of captured relatives. On several occasions the services of Midob and Zaghawa middlemen and even of wandering Fallata *fakis* were tried (NPH 1913).

Much later, during the era of Native Administration, tribal leaders were usually called upon to restrain fighting tribesmen and press for negotiations after violent conflicts had occurred. In those early days, however, tribal heads were as often not interested in restraining violence, as they were unable to do so. In a good many cases they benefitted themselves from raiding, very often they used raiding to support their authority, and sometimes they may have sensed the ambiguous attitude of many government officials towards raiding. But basically, even if they tried, tribal leaders in Kordofan and Dongola after the turn of the century were in no position to force their followers to abstain from raids. Raiding clearly outgrew the possibilities of the nomads' political organisation; it went out of control.

## Government action before World War I – the quest for control

In the years around 1910 the structure of administration in the western savannahs was still rudimentary. Bara in the east of the Province, where one company of Camel Corps was stationed, remained administrative headquarters of Northern Kordofan District. Two more mounted companies were garrisoned at El Obeid, although for long stretches of time they were on duty in the unruly Nuba Mountains. The whole Province of Kordofan with a population of roughly three quarters of a million in 1912/3 including the Nuba Mountains (Balamoan 1981: 104) disposed of a police force of 280 mounted and 200 policemen on foot. The Department for the Suppression of Slavery had a further 70 mounted and 27 men on foot who, on occasion, also did normal police work. The Province of Dongola could only dispose of 57 mounted and 102 policemen on foot (SIR 199, Appendix). These troops were considered enough for occasional flag-showing treks, to suppress small local rebellions in a concentrated effort, or to establish a temporary post, but they were hardly enough to be present all over the two Provinces. Detachments of company size would succeed in keeping large raiding parties at bay through their sheer presence, like in 1910, when a large raid of western nomads turned into Darfur instead of invading Kordofan after learning of the presence of Camel Corps, or like in 1912/3, when a Bidayat raiding party turned back near El Atrun because of the posts at Umm Sunaita and Marghumi. But in 1910, when a big raiding party of Kordofan and Dongola nomads gathered at Bajariyya unnoticed, it became also clear that troops could only have a pacifying effect, when they were directly on the spot. What happened even some hours distant was likely to escape their

attention if the local population did not actively cooperate.

During the large raids early in 1910, the Sudan Government had proved unable to protect her nomads. In order to defend themselves, the tribal leaders demanded arms from the government, as in May 1910 the Kababish and in June the Kaja (SOD 1910). Government officials found themselves in a dilemma. Disarmament and restriction of violent self help were part of their program of pacification. But this meant that on the other hand their promises of protection had to be fulfilled. The alternative to handing out weapons was stronger administrative presence, permanent posts instead of occasional flag-showing patrols and temporary posts. A strong permanent post, however, required much more than a simple patrol in terms of food and shelter. Where grain was available locally, for instance in the Kaja hills, the post was too remote to be of much use; where it made sense, in the areas of the nomads, no grain was to be found. Food had to be carried from Bara. To transport the grain for the temporary post at Umm Sunaita in 1913 alone, 243 pack camels were needed, whereas the post itself consisted of only 65 soldiers, half a company, and 30 nomad scouts (SOD 1913). The concept of direct administration, so effectively practised in the Nile Valley, was clearly not applicable to the savannahs without creating huge financial problems.

To prevent raids from the west, the Sudan Government tried to press Sultan Ali Dinar to restrain the raiders. But the most relentless raiders, Bidayat and Qur'an, were outside the Sultan's sphere of authority. They even raided into Darfur. And even if the Sultan would have wielded enough authority over the nomads within his Sultanate - he was obviously faced with much the same problems as the Anglo-Egyptian Govern-

ment - it is doubtful whether he would have used his full power to restrain his nomads, given the attacks of outside nomads and his deteriorating relations with the Anglo-Egyptian Government. When the Sudanese Government became aware of the fact that Sultan Ali Dinar had no authority over the Bidayat and Qur'an, let alone the Tuareg and Awlad Sulayman, government officials even tried to get into touch with Ahmad ash-Sharif as-Sanusi at Kufra, also to no avail (NPH 1913; SIR 224). World War I finally interrupted these largely futile efforts.

The Sudan Government was neither able to create peaceful conditions which would render violent self help obsolete, nor was it able to restrain her nomads forcefully from self help. In all the years between the turn of the century and World War I, only two cases of restitution or compensation after a raid have been recorded, one in winter 1906, when the Inspector General forced raiders from the Umm Mattu Kababish to pay compensation to the Zaghawa, and the other, when Sultan Ali Dinar sent two captured Hawawir raiders back after they had been handed over to him by Tuareg. One incident in 1912 seems typical of the Sudan Government's failure to control her nomads. After it had transpired that camels raided in the west had appeared in Hawawir herds, a police patrol was sent to the Hawawir grazing area with an order to confiscate the camels. When the patrol arrived at the camp of the Hawawir Head Shaikh, they were treated as guests and the looted camels were even proudly pointed out to them. But when they tried to get them handed over, the demand was first met with surprise and then with a flat refusal. When the police tried to confiscate the camels by force they were threatened by gathering tribesmen, and when they were about to leave without the camels, the sergeant was even forced to accept some

money as a bribe to keep him silent. Back in Bara he reported to his superiors but there the matter ended (NPH 1912). The administration did not even try to assert its authority.

This strange reluctance of the Sudan Government to assert its authority by force may partly be explained by military weakness. Another, though related reason arose certainly from the ambiguous attitude of some high ranking officials, clearly discernible in Kordofan, less so in Dongola, who felt the dilemma of not being able to protect their nomads. Accordingly, they tended to turn a blind eye on their raiding, assuming that, eventually, their nomads took as much as they lost. But basically, government officials found themselves in a much deeper and more pragmatic dilemma. To uphold at least a semblance of government, they found themselves dependent on tribal leaders. Without their cooperation government in the vast savannah areas would have been next to impossible. In July 1907 the Inspector wrote about the Kababish in his "Report on Bara District": "The greater part of the tribe is a wild uncurbed mass that have never been brought into touch with the Government." (SIR 159)

In the early days of nomadic administration, given the weak concentration of power within nomadic society, administration depended very much on complex negotiations between government officials and tribal leaders. Tribal leaders, in turn, saw themselves forced to concessions at the demands of government officials in order to stay in office, but they were also dependent on the consent of their followers, which at times meant protecting them from government demands. The balance was by no means easy, but, as a rule, tribal leaders in a conflict of loyalties found it easier to put off government demands than to force unwilling tribesmen. In the end, govern-

ment was all-powerful, as it had so vividly demonstrated in the showdown at Karari, but for the moment it was far away and getting the support of their tribesmen in these days of internal competition for leadership was of first importance for tribal leaders. As late as 1916, the Governor of Dongola wrote on the subject of the "unruliness" of the Hawawir: "The Omda [Head Shaikh] and Shaikhs realizing that this province does not possess the necessary staff for controlling the tribe, treat all instructions with indifference." (CivSec 66-12-104<sup>17</sup>) And experience confirmed the tribal leaders' policies. Shaikh Jabir Taqqa, a notorious leader of raids, remained Shaikh of the Khamasin Hawawir, although convicted for highway robbery in Dongola in 1912 and wanted from that province since then (CivSec 66-12-104). In spite of the Inspector General's frequent threats to dismiss the Head Shaikhs of the Kababish, Shaikh Ali at-Tom, and of the Hawawir, Shaikh Hassan Khalifa, both stayed in power and were even awarded robes of honour, although both were known to be informed of at least the larger raids and even to share in the spoils. Government officials were only too conscious of the danger of a total breakdown of the nomad administration in case the most prominent leaders would withdraw their cooperation. Only one case of dismissal of a Shaikh for raiding activities is recorded for the whole time up to World War I, and that turned out to be self-defeating for the government. In 1909 Shaikh Fadl al-Mula Rakha, Head Shaikh of the Dongola Kababish, was dismissed after it had come to the notice of the Governor in Dongola that Shaikh Fadl al-Mula had concealed a raid of his Arabs. And even Shaikh Fadl al-Mula had to be reinstated in 1911, after his successor, Shaikh Isawi Salim, had proved inefficient because he commanded much less support from his

tribesmen than Fadl al-Mula, and was found even more active in raiding.

By 1912 it had become obvious to all government officials concerned that their extremely light administrative methods would not lead to efficient control in the frontier region and that occasional patrols only, with administrative headquarters as remote from the nomads' grazing areas as Bara, would not succeed to guarantee public security. After a heavy fight in June 1913 between Kababish and Hawawir about the wells at Safia, an Inspector especially for the nomads was posted in the middle of their dry season pasturing area with a view to closer administration and suppressing violence (SIR 216; SIR 217). Although World War I and the following staff shortage led to his withdrawal after several months, the posting of an Inspector especially to the nomads marked the true start of a Nomad Administration and also the start of serious pacification. The government was determined to continue her firm course of closer control after World War I.

### The international context

In the years preceding World War I, raids of the Kordofan nomads had spread to cover a huge area. The whole frontier region between the Nile in the east and the French advance to the west was affected. From Kanem the Awlad Sulayman participated in this interrelated system of raiding, from Ennedi the Bidayat (Bäle or Billi), also Tubu and Daza, indiscriminately called Qur'an by the Arabs. From even further afar Tuareg, originally from Air and Damergou, and Magharba from Fezzan and Kufra took part. Salt caravans from Upper Egypt were drawn into the raiding network, if only as victims. The tribes from the northern fringes of Darfur, Zayadiyya,

Zaghawa, and Midob were also part of the raiding system. Living along the big roads, that the raiding parties took on their way east or west, they were probably the most affected. If a raiding party was not able to reach its original aim, its members often resigned themselves to looting the Midob and Zaghawa instead. Sometimes they were raided twice by a single raiding party, once on its outward way and a second time on its way back, sometimes they were raided by the original raiders and a second time by the pursuing party.

During the first twenty years of the century, the whole frontier region west of the Nile was in a turbulent state of change largely induced by the outside advance of the colonial powers. As early as 1840 Awlad Sulayman had started to migrate from the Tripolitanian hinterland to Kanem and Borku where they succeeded in creating a predatory dominance. The decline of agriculture in nineteenth century Borku has been attributed to their presence (Fuchs 1961: 209). Even areas not directly affected by the powers sensed the gathering clouds of invasion. Bands of western nomads having been dislodged far away in the west carried violence in a chain reaction further east.

To the west, Northern Kordofan bordered on the semi independent Sultanate of Darfur. The old Sultanate, founded around 1650, had been annexed to the Turco-Egyptian Sudan in 1876 and fell to the Mahdist state when the last Governor, Rudolf von Slatin, surrendered towards the end of 1883. At the time of the battle of Karari, a certain Ali Dinar, a descendant of the Fur Sultans who had been a member of the Khalifa's bodyguard, took advantage of the Mahdist state's crumbling in the west to revive the Sultanate. In a determined action he marched to El Fasher, arrested the Mahdist *Amir* in the palace and declared himself Sultan. The Sudanese Govern-

ment had at first favoured another pretender, but he turned out to be no match for Sultan Ali. Reluctantly, the Sudan Government acknowledged Ali Dinar in 1900 as the semi-independent, though tributary Sultan of Darfur and in May 1901 appointed him Governor (SIR 85). As can be judged from this undecided action, the attitude of the Sudan Government towards Darfur was highly ambiguous. Sometimes Sultan Ali was treated as an autonomous ruler, sometimes as a subject of the Khartoum government. During his first years Sultan Ali himself was not certain of his status, but by 1910 he had in fact asserted his independence. As early as 1899 he started campaigns of submission into the nomadic frontier: the Bani Halba campaign in 1900, the campaigns against the Ma<sup>a</sup>liya, Rizaiqat, and Kaja in 1901, against Zaghawa and Masalit (Lampen Papers 731/671-14). The campaigns against Hamar and Kaja whom he treated as subjects of Darfur, but who considered themselves as belonging to Kordofan and, accordingly, asked the Governor of Kordofan for protection, led to the first conflicts with the Khartoum Government. During the course of a boundary demarcation in June 1901 between Kordofan and Darfur, Sultan Ali was forced to cede considerable areas to Kordofan. In November 1901 a Darfurian cavalry detachment was only prevented from crossing the border in the course of a retaliatory attack against Kaja and Kababish raiders by a force of Camel Corps near Foga (SIR 104; Lampen Papers 731/6/1-14).

In the north Sultan Ali's domain had badly defined borders with the Sanusiyya brotherhood's sphere of influence, and in the west a hardly better defined border with Wadai and the French sphere of influence. The exact boundary between Darfur and Wadai, then part of the French A.E.F., was demarcated as late

as 1921 (Grossard 1925). Until 1912 there were faint attempts to extend Turkish rule from the Libyan hinterland to Tibesti and Ennedi (Ciammaichella 1987: 119/20). In that year Italian troops invaded Cyrenaica to establish an Italian colony in Libya against the fierce resistance of the Sanusi brotherhood whose followers had eventually to retreat south to Kufra and well beyond into Ennedi on the old caravan route leading to Wadai. At the same time the followers of the Sanusiyya saw themselves driven back by the advance of French forces from south and west. After the battle of Bir Alali in Kanem in 1902, a series of battles between French troops and their local allies and the Sanusi leaders with their followers, mainly Awlad Sulayman and Tuareg, began which finally ended in the French conquest of Kanem and Wadai.

After the occupation of Abéché, the capital of Wadai in 1909, several thousand Awlad Sulayman and Tuareg, who had migrated from Kanem and even as far away as Damergou and Air (Chapelle 1982: 137), took refuge in the large frontier area north of Darfur and Ennedi which was for some years to come the only region completely outside of state control. Under their Sanusi leader, Si Salih al-Kiraimi, they drove the whole area into an outburst of violence. Si Salih organized raids into Darfur and against the nomads subject to French rule. In 1911 it was reported that in the course of only four years 800 natives had been killed and 3,000 camels raided (Bruehl 1930: 54). Si Salih's followers were recruited from local Bidayat and Qur'an tribesmen as well as from immigrated Awlad Sulayman and Tuareg. These were the Tuareg whom the Hawawir raided in 1908. When Kordofan raiders came back in 1911, the Tuareg had already taken refuge from French attacks into Darfur where they were received by Sultan Ali Dinar and settled in the vicin-

ity of Kabkabiyya (SOD 1913; SIR 225; SIR 246; Chapelle 1982: 137). In the winter of 1911/2 they all combined forces for the large raid on El Atrun and Wadi Maqrur. In 1914 French troops occupied Ennedi and Tibesti. The Tuareg, under their leader Kawsan, withdrew to Fezzan to join forces with the Sanusi troops there (Salifou 1973: 55-57).

Sultan Ali apprehensively watched the French advance. After the French occupation of Wadai several armed conflicts over the possession of the small buffer Sultanates Masalit, Qimr, and Tama between Wadai and Darfur occurred. After 1910 relations between the Sultan and the Khartoum Government went from bad to worse, mainly because the Government seemed unwilling to curb raids of Kordofan nomads into Darfur and was unable to give guarantees against a further French advance into Darfur. The outbreak of World War I found Sultan Ali as an ally of the Panislamic Front organized by Turkey against England and France. In 1914 the Turkish Sultan had declared the Holy War. In October of the same year Sidi Ahmad ash-Sharif as-Sanusi followed with his declaration of Holy War against the Christian powers in the Eastern Sahara, England, France, and Italy. In the year 1916 the whole Eastern Sahara between Ennedi and the Air mountains was in a state of revolt (Bourgeot 1978). In the same year Sultan Ali declared his war against the Khartoum Government.

With the French occupation of Wadai and the following incidents on the western borders of Darfur, the need to protect Britain's sphere of influence was felt to be more pressing in Khartoum. Governor General Reginald Wingate tried to postpone the outright occupation of Darfur, but after 1915 invasion was felt to be inevitable in Khartoum. When the Sultan declared war, the military preparations in Kordofan were already nearly com-

pleted (Daly 1986: 172-174). By the end of 1915 troops from Wad Medani, Bara, and El Obeid were already concentrated at En Nahud near the Darfur border (SIR 250). The administration tried to recruit the nomads of the frontier region as irregulars. The old pattern of ethnic soldiering of nomads on the side of the state was to be repeated again. In September 1915 the Rizaikat received arms, towards the end of the same year the Kababish were handed out 200 rifles (Daly 1986: 178), in February 1916 weapons were also issued to the Kawahla (SIR 259). Shortly before the invasion, the Governor of Dongola recruited 150 Hawawir irregulars to occupy El Atrun and intercept arms convoys from the north (SIR 262). Although raiding was explicitly forbidden in the instructions to the Hawawir leader, Shaikh Nimr Hasan, a messenger sent with further instructions after the party had left Dongola found El Atrun deserted, the Hawawir party having already left for a raid into Ennedi (Dakhliia 112-10-72).

On May 22, 1916, the Khartoum troops won the decisive battle against Ali Dinar's army some distance east of El Fasher. The Sultan fled to the Fur mountains but was finally hunted down and killed early in November (SIR 268). As had been the case twenty years earlier, the Hawawir and Kababish took the invasion as a great occasion for raiding. A group of Kababish marched to Midob where they raided Midob herds near Shakhakha on May 19. Three days later they already looted the Berti south of Midob (SIR 263; Lampen Papers 731/6/1-14). In June the Kababish again raided in Zaghawa country (SIR 264).

What had happened in Kordofan after the collapse of Mahdist rule was re-enacted in northern Darfur after the collapse of Sultan Ali's authority. Everybody set out raiding. In September 1916 a Qur'an raid into Midob was reported

(SIR 266), early in November a raiding party of 300 Qur'an and Bidayat looted the Berti and then fell on the Mahamid Umm Jalul. After killing ten men and carrying off 500 camels they ventured further south to kill fifty men and drive away 3,500 cattle near Abyad. In the course of the latter raid fifty women and children were also kidnapped (SIR 268). All this happened while the Anglo-Egyptian invasion army was nearby. At the very same time of the Bidayat/Qur'an raid, November 1916, a raiding party of Kababish and Hawawir reached Ennedi which they found unprotected. They looted 700 camels, abducted a large number of persons and freed Hawawir and Kababish tribesmen held slaves after previous raids of western nomads (Intel 2-6-29).

Towards the end of 1916 the commanding officer of the Khartoum troops organized a large action of pacification against the inhabitants of Darfur's northern border region in cooperation with French troops from Wadai. According to plans, a French column would march to Ennedi to bar Bidayat and Qur'an from withdrawing to the west, whereas the Kababish would occupy the wells of Bao, and the Hawawir were ordered to march towards Bidi from El Atrun (SIR 269; CivSec 66-12-104). But even before all troops had been deployed, the Hawawir party had again entered Ennedi and raided the Gaeda Qur'an near Gouro Gouro (Dakhliia 112-10-72).

These were the last large raids to the west. The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan had incorporated Darfur. Thus, the possibility to exploit the turbulent frontier situation came to an end for the Kordofan nomads. The state was to extend its authority deeper into the frontier area with an aim to finally cover the whole region. After World War I the Government was firmly determined to resume the task of

pacification interrupted by the war and the Darfur campaign.

### Native Administration – a fragile pacification

After the Darfur campaign a massive westward migration of the Kordofan nomads took place. The whole area between Wadi El Milk and the Darfur border which had been excellent, though highly insecure, rainy season pastures became an area of dry season pasture. The nomads started to dig permanent wells, at Umm Badir they even dammed a temporary *wadi*, thereby creating an artificial lake which eventually became a dry season watering place for tens of thousands of animals during the late twenties and early thirties. Pacification opened up the west and enabled the Kordofan nomads to escape from the congested areas between Safia, Omdurman and Kajmar (Beck 1988: 104). Colonisation of these new pasturing areas to the west relieved eastern Kordofan and the areas near the Nile of much pressure and overgrazing.

During the years immediately following World War I, the foundations for a long period of security and hitherto unknown welfare were laid in Northern Kordofan. During the twenties the Kaja and Nuba of the Haraza group of hills began their movements of downhill migration. The first traders were able to settle permanently in the safety of the developing small villages. Export of camels started on a large scale by way of the now secure desert trails to Egypt where they found a ready market. These were the founding years in Northern Kordofan (Beck 1992).

All these developments built on the rapid expansion of public security fol-

lowing the successful implementation of the Native Administration Scheme, a loose but efficient structure of administration in the spirit of Indirect Rule. Eventually, powerful tribal leaders emerged, and thus changed the social structure of nomadic society from a highly competitive political system to centralized leadership. The key to administrative success lay in the converging interests of the emerging leaders and the administration. Administrative officials would support a loyal tribal leader with various privileges and means of power to enhance his position in his tribe. Tribal leaders were established as judges and empowered to assess and collect taxes, and they were granted allowances to maintain a body of armed followers for enforcement of their authority, as long as they were willing to cooperate and to comply with administrative orders.

Already in 1917 an Inspector with forty mounted policemen was posted at the wells of Sodiri resuming the task of his predecessor at Safia which had been interrupted by the war. Towards the end of 1920 the Inspector could report to the Governor of Kordofan, "crime is now a rarity among the Kababish and the tribe has an absolutely clean sheet as regards production of persons wanted." There was, however, "still a very considerable traffic in slaves, the Kababish acting the part of ready buyers rather than as actual abductors."<sup>18</sup>

Northern Kordofan was on its way to final pacification, although peace and security were still in a fragile state related to the success of Indirect Rule and the containment of conflicts within the political institutions of the Native Administration Scheme. In the year 1925, an open war between Kawahla and Kababish about the possession of Umm Badir broke out (Beck 1988: 96). There were also violent clashes between Hawawir

and Kababish, Kababish and Midob, Zayadiyya and Kawahla. The difference to former ethnic violence lay in the fact that these conflicts were not allowed to escalate further. In 1922 peace was made between Kababish and Midob, in 1926 the conflict between Kababish and Kawahla, the roots of which went back to the Kajmar clashes of 1907 and even to the Mahdiyya, was settled after negotiations and payments of compensation organized by the administration (SMIR 333).

To be sure, Northern Kordofan should in no way be considered a paradise of everlasting peace after 1920. Certainly, animal theft and murder did not stop altogether. But the habitual recourse to violence came to an end. The time of large raids and counterraids was definitely over. Armed self help, formerly the only option to find redress, was suppressed and punished, as one incident typical of the changing situation may illustrate. In 1922 two cattle thieves were caught by some Kawahla tribesmen near the Darfur border. One was shot immediately, the other died while being whipped. Ten years previously the administration would hardly have taken notice, but in 1922 the killers were taken to court and convicted for murder (SMIR 339). In the 1923 rainy season thieves from Midob stole some 50 Kawahla camels. Before the Kawahla found time to mount a retaliatory raid into Midob country, the administration stepped in and separated neighbouring Kawahla and Midob camps, thus preventing violence from escalating (SMIR 350). By the end of the year, the District Commissioner of Northern Kordofan (the successor of the Inspector in the administrative structure) carried out a large scale investigation in the Midob hills in the course of which the thieves were tried and 76 stolen camels produced which were eventually handed back to their rightful

owners (SMIR 353). In successful administrative actions like these – taking offenders to court, restitution of stolen animals – the administration forced its way to the final pacification of the region.

Pacification meant disarmament and policing the area. But it was probably more important to institutionalize channels for the settlement of conflicts between the tribes, including a wide range of matters from grazing and watering rights to stray or stolen animals. From the thirties onwards, conflicts between the tribes became confined to the institutional framework of the Native Administration. Tribal leaders had acquired enough power to restrain conflicting parties from fighting and were themselves deeply entangled in a wide network of reciprocal obligations and common interests. Tribal courts, intertribal diplomacy and peaceful negotiations served to keep conflicts at a low level. Even a system of restitution of stolen or stray animals evolved contributing to the pacification of nomadic society. In the 1930s, regular meetings between tribal leaders of neighbouring provinces were held, in the forties and early fifties the administrations even organized yearly meetings between tribal leaders from Kordofan, Darfur and Chad.

### The last raids

After World War I no raid from Kordofan into Chad was reported, although some smaller raids in the other direction, from Ennedi to Dongola, occurred. The most difficult area to control was the Libyan Desert with the salines of El Atrun and the border area to the French A.E.F. The Ennedi mountains were still a largely uncontrolled refuge for "banditism" as raiding came to be defined in the course of time. In 1920 and 1921 small parties of

Qur'an raided camels west of Dongola (SMIR 323), further raids by western nomads occurred in 1923 and 1926 (SMIR 344; NPH 878). The last Qur'an raid in Dongola Province was reported as late as 1931 (Lea 645/9<sup>19</sup>). But these were isolated affairs that could be dealt with by normal police action. Most importantly, they provoked neither counterraid to the west nor an outbreak of generalized raiding.

El Atrun proved the most vulnerable point. In 1926 an Egyptian salt caravan was attacked near El Atrun, the men killed and one hundred camels carried off west (NPH 879), and in 1931 another salt caravan from Dongola was again raided by Qur'an. The Sudan Government sent a motorized detachment of the newly created Sudan Defence Force with light aircraft support to dislodge the raiders who, on the approach of the airplanes, fled west (Scoones 1982). This was the last raid on El Atrun.

The new outbreak of violence in the Libyan Desert was largely provoked by the Italian advance against the Sanusi brotherhood in Libya. By 1931 Italian troops had occupied Kufra, followers of the Sanusi had fled south where they combined forces with Bidayat and Qur'an to occupy the otherwise uninhabited small oasis of Nukhaila and from there committed raids on salt caravans (Bagnold 1987: 239). Toward the end of the twenties, French troops finally succeeded in occupying the Ennedi mountains and to start pacification across the border. In the course of their operations, the most famous leader of Qur'an raids in Ennedi, Aramai Gongoi, was killed (NPH 879; Chapelle 1982: 337). With the Italian occupation of Kufra and the French occupation of Ennedi the last region in the Eastern Sahara came under state control. Thus the whole frontier region became incorporated and covered by states.

Although animal theft and smaller violent clashes at the border between Chad and Sudan, where nomads from different tribes meet in winter to pasture their camels after plentiful rainy seasons, never completely stopped, meetings between tribal leaders, police patrols organized cooperatively by the administrations of the two countries, and agreements about the use of pasture and wells across the border did much to pacify the area. In 1951, for instance, Kordofan nomads were granted "laissez passers" to pasture 1,000 herds of camels across the border and were allowed the use of Bidayat and Qur'an wells inside Chad which is a clear indicator for the generally peaceful relations that had developed between the former enemies (NK 66.B.2.L.2<sup>20</sup>). In 1956 a group of Kababish herdsmen was even reported to have been found pasturing their camels on Libyan territory (NK 66.B.2.J.6).

To return from the depths of the historical records to the surface of the more general argument about the nomads and the state, in the forties, when Native Administration was fully developed, Northern Kordofan had changed drastically from the condition of generalized violence characteristic of the turbulent frontier in the first two decades of the century. The former frontier was firmly incorporated into the state and largely pacified. In the state's successful effort to monopolize the use of violence, society had been tamed to the rules of law. The habitual resort to violence had come to an end.

In a final evaluation of the relationship between the nomads and the state, it should not be forgotten that pacification changed not only the means and ways of pursuing politics. Certainly, nomadic society had to surrender its independence. Certainly, the state forced its laws and its administration upon nomadic society. There is no doubt that

there were losers in this process, namely the former warriors who ended up as outlaws. However, it is debatable whether ordinary nomads lost much. They lost part of their independence, but they were also released from the dependency on warrior classes. They lost their slaves (in the end), but they were also relieved from the threat of becoming enslaved themselves, and they had to pay taxes (although they were taxed lightly). But pacification also changed the whole quality of daily life. It opened up safe grazing areas and trade routes; it provided the foundation for economic development; and it relieved society from the pressure of endemic violence.

In fact, it may be argued that the nomads' political organisation had been unable to restrain violence. In order to keep the argument from slipping into a comfortable legitimisation of colonial domination, however, it should also be remembered that the condition of violence on the edge of the state had been largely, but by no means wholly, induced by the state itself.

## Notes

(1) The English version of the document (Proclamation of Sirdar [Commander in Chief of the Egyptian Army] to Sheikhs of Kordofan and Darfur; SIR 60, Appendix 97) uses the Arabic term *aman*. *Aman* in this context means the declaration of peace which goes with submission, a promise of security for the population consenting to the new government which also includes an amnesty for acts committed during war. The correlate for the grant of *aman* on the side of the conquered is formal submission, *bai'a*.

(2) Sudan Intelligence Reports, from No 318 (January 1921) Sudan Monthly Intelligence Reports, SMIR, available in Su-

- dan Archives, Durham, and in Maktab as-Sudan, Khartoum.
- (3) Ferguson and Whitehead (1992) call the area continuously affected by the proximity of the state, but not under state administration, the "tribal zone". Although this term captures well the processes of tribal formation, Lattimore's (1951) and Galbraith's (1959) concept of "frontier" is preferred in this account.
- (4) Cairo Intelligence Reports, National Records Office, Khartoum.
- (5) Wingate Papers, Sudan Archives, University of Durham.
- (6) Robinson Papers, Sudan Archives, University of Durham.
- (7) MacMichael Diaries 1909, April, Sudan Archives, Durham University.
- (8) MacMichael Diaries, 10.2.1909, Sudan Archives, Durham University.
- (9) The papers of the first Governor of Darfur, G. D. Lampen, deposited in the Sudan Archives, Durham University.
- (10) Readers with no particular interest in Kordofan history en détail might find the following enumeration of raids and counterraid tiring to read. In fact, the decision to include seemingly repetitive documentary evidence has largely been taken because, in spite of the heroic efforts of the National Records Office in the Sudan to preserve the rich national heritage of historic documents, some of the more remote archives where relevant documents are deposited will definitely not stand the ravages of time and climate. The pressed reader is advised to skip parts 3 and 4.
- (11) NPH stands for Extracts from Northern Province Handbook, Administrative Documents in Sodiri NK 66.E.5, Relations with Darfur, pp. 878 and 879, to be cited as NPH with page number.
- (12) SOD stands for a bundle of documents, 25 pages in all, found in the administrative offices at Sodiri in 1983, obviously part of a larger body of documents that deal with relations between Northern District Kordofan and the Darfur Sultanate in the years 1910 to 1914. The title page and several other pages were missing, most of the pages were in a very bad state of preservation. Photos are in the possession of the author. Here cited as SOD with year.
- (13) Intel stands for Intelligence Reports, National Records Office Khartoum.
- (14) The „Mena Mena“ are Nachtigal's „Minneminne“ (according to Le Rouvreur a Tubu name for Awlad Sulayman (Le Rouvreur, 1989: 299)) whose raids he witnessed in 1871 while on his way from Kanem to Borku (Nachtigal, 1980: vol 2, 352).
- (15) This part builds partly on information received from the late Salim al-Qiwair during interviews in summer 1983. Salim, born shortly before 1900, participated in Hawawir raids to the west in 1916.
- (16) Rudolf von Slatin, who shared Ahmad's food in the Omdurman Mahdist prison, described him as a Grand Shaikh of the Hawawir and as having been imprisoned for loyalty to the Turkish government (v. Slatin, 1896: 335 and 338).
- (17) CivSec stands for documents from the Civil Secretary's office, according to the classification of the National Records Office Khartoum.
- (18) Dar Kababish 1917-1920, Inspector Sodiri to Governor Kordofan, 13.11.1920, Document in Sodiri Administrative Council, S.C.R. 16-5.
- (19) C. A. E. Lea, Trek Journals, 8.3.1931-27.5.1931, Sudan Archives 645/9, Durham University.
- (20) Documents in Archives of Bara Council.

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## Résumé

Cette étude reconsidère la notion très répandue que les nomades sont victimes des processus de la formation de l'Etat. S'appuyant sur du matériel historique relevant d'une période critique pendant l'établissement de l'Etat colonial anglo-égyptien dans l'Ouest-Soudanais, l'auteur démontre que ce fut plutôt l'Etat qui imposa l'ordre et apporta la sécurité dans une région déchirée par la violence endémique. Le monopole de la violence exercé par l'Etat ainsi que le fait qu'il se limita à s'en servir uniquement dans le cadre légal devraient être considérés comme l'accomplissement majeur de l'Etat moderne africain. Les nomades du Kordofan ont nettement profité de ce processus.

## Resumen

Esta contribución testea la creencia muy divulgada que los nómades son las víctimas del proceso de formación estatal. Empleando material histórico de una época crucial en el establecimiento del Estado colonial anglo-egipcio en el Sudán occidental se argumenta que el Estado tuvo éxito para imponer seguridad y orden en una frontera azotada por violencia endémica. La monopolización de la violencia por el Estado y sus propias restricciones para disminuir el uso de la violencia dentro del marco legal deberían ser vistas como el logro esencial del Estado moderno en el África. Y en este proceso los nómades del norte de Kordofán estuvieron claramente en el lado ganador.

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