Chapter Three

The Role And Contribution Of Islamic Movements
INTRODUCTION:

The influence of Sufism on Islam in the Sudan has been significant. Various Sufi turuq (orders) came to Sudan from Egypt, Hijaz and Maghrib in the 12th and 13th centuries.¹

Although, Sufism is not directly political in content, the Sufi turuq pervaded, and by the beginning of 1800, they significantly imprinted the country’s social structure, and made Islam largely a popular trend, rather than rigid and orthodox dogmatic religion.²

It was due to the despotic attitude of the Turko-Egyptian rule (1821-1885), that some of the Sufi turuq began to transform its role from mere spiritual reforms and guidance, to a more political one. This developed a vague link between nationalism and Sufism in the Sudan. In other words, between Islam and socio-political structure.³

Sufism is generally understood "as Islam minus state."⁴ However, the association between Islam and state in the Sudan

¹ Tariqua, plural of Turuq, is a Sufi order prevailed in North and West Africa. In the Sudan it has considerable socio-political and most of the time socio-economic weight.
² Riad Ibrahim, “Factors Contributing to the Political Ascendancy of the Muslim Brethren in the Sudan,” Arab Studies Quarterly, vol. 12, nos. 3-4, 1990, p. 38.
⁴ Ibid., p. 57.
was eloquently brought to the limelight by the Mahdiyya reign (1885-1898), which "provided the missing link between Sufi Islam and the state." The Mahdist state, therefore, provided "Islam a permanent place in the body politic of Sudan." 

The re-conquest in 1899 by the Anglo-Egyptian army, had isolated the country from cultural interaction with its northern neighbour (Egypt). This led to exposure of its elite to the Western secular culture more than the Islamic one. In this context, the Sufi turuq leaders were also largely moulded by the impact of the colonial policies against them. As a result of these policies they almost lost the ability to initiate any significant social mobilization. Therefore, most of those who later supported greater socio-political role for Islam in the society, as propagated by the Muslim Brothers, belonged to the young generation mostly below thirty years of age. 

Those young Islamists were largely influenced by the Egyptian Muslim Brothers, who made their imprint on the Sudanese Islamic movement, in its initial period. Yet, Mahdiyya

6 This is according to Saddiq al-Mahdi, one of the Sudan's former Prime Minister. Ibid., p. 57.
made a profound impact on Islam's role in the country's socio-political fabric. Based on that role the Sudanese Islamic movement aspired to participate by the engagement in the game of power from the very beginning. This gave it an edge over its contemporary movements.

The Islamic movement in the Sudan was largely influenced by the Egyptian Muslim Brothers. The relations between the two began by the mid forties (1944-1945), when the first direct contact was established between them. Consequently, the nucleus of the Muslim Brothers organization was formed in the Sudan; its first Murshid (leader) was directly appointed by Imam Hassan al-Banna of Egypt.\footnote{Ibid., p. 34. Hassan al-Banna was an Egyptian scholar found the Muslim Brother Organization, he was assassinated in 1949.}

As seen earlier the Sudanese national movement was eventually dichotomized into two sections: the unionist and the protagonists of independence. The first supported full unification with Egypt, while the latter zealously backed the idea of a completely independent Sudan.

That dichotomy stretched its shadow on the Muslim Brothers, when the rift loomed between the supporters of unity with the Egyptian Muslim Brothers stream, and the protagonists of
an independent Sudanese Islamic movement.\(^9\) Anyhow, by 1954 the Islamic Brothers in the Sudan took an independent line from the Egyptian one.\(^10\)

The indigenization of the movement came after they realized that the nature and characteristics of the Sudanese socio-political structure was different from that of Egypt. Moreover, a complete unification with the Egyptian Muslim Brothers would isolate them from the strong independenist political trend, led by Ansar to whom the Brothers were more closer attached than Khatmiyya.\(^11\) However, the schisms among the Islamists, unlike other political groups in the country, did not divert their movement from achieving its main objectives, which was to work for building a modern Islamic state in the Sudan.\(^12\)

The Brothers were more of a well organized pressure group, than a political party. Their involvement in the political arena came in the beginning, partly, as a reaction to curb the communist’s influence at the Khartoum university.\(^13\)

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\(^9\) Ibid., pp. 48-9.
\(^10\) Ibid., p. 41.
\(^12\) The first schism occurred during the time of its establishment, and the second one took place when it opted to participate Nimieri’s regime, after the national reconciliation agreement with him in 1977.
This is why the activities of the Muslim Brothers within the students community, initially were pronounced with a definite and specific method for radical change.\(^{14}\) However, this enhanced them to formulate their own concept, through which they intended to transform themselves from a small pressure group to a full-fledged political party,\(^{15}\) which emerged in December 1955, and was known as the Islamic Charter for Constitution (ICC).\(^{16}\)

The pursuit of the ICC to draft an Islamic Constitution was halted by the first military coup of November 1958.\(^{17}\) However, through the influence of the ICC the Muslim Brothers managed to mobilize support for them among other Islamic groups in the Sudanese society, by stressing the importance of Islamizing the country's polity, and having an Islamic constitution. This was in spite of their call for Islamic Constitution which was not supported by the two major parties (Ansar and Khatmiyya).\(^{18}\)

After the downfall of the military regime due to the popular revolt known as the 21\(^{st}\) October Revolution of 1964, the Muslim

\(^{14}\) Ibid., p. 61.
\(^{15}\) Ibid., p. 61.
\(^{16}\) Ibid., p. 73.
\(^{17}\) The coup was initiated by the Prime Minister, Abdallah Kahlil, from Umma party, by inviting the army commanders to take over. Abd wi-Rahman Mukhtar, Kharif al-Farah: Sudan Secrets 1950-1970, (Khartoum: 1996), pp. 163-64.
Brothers worked on the same line and they formed a new platform, known as the Islamic Charter Front (ICF), which polarized greater support for the Islamic constitution. This encouraged ICF to enter the parliament for the first time, as an independent party.19

Elections in the Sudan’s democratic experiments used to be held in geographic constituencies, which are open for any eligible candidate, and the graduate seats, which is exclusively reserved for the graduates. The graduates seats are almost monopolized by the secularists and leftists, who are influential in the intelligentsia circles. Thus, most of the 15 seats which were allocated for the graduates were won by them.

Nonetheless, the Islamists performance in the election (held in April 1965) brought tangible advancement; the ICF candidates for the graduates constituencies won two seats; its leader, Hassan al-Turabi, topped the list.20

Notably, in that election the ICF had a woman candidate, a practice which was not preceded neither by any Islamic movements in the region, nor by the traditionally Islamic parties, namely Ansar and Khatmiyya.21 Ultimately, that election raised

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19 For more details about the graduate constituencies, see the first chapter under the subtitle: THE THIRD DEMOCRACY AND DISENCHANTMENT.
20 Makki, n. 8, pp. 110-11.
21 Ibid., 111.
five ICF representatives to the parliament, from geographic constituencies, besides two seats in the graduate constituencies. They secured 5.1% of the total vote for the ICF, while the communist and secularist conglomeration attained 5.2%. 22

The lesson from that election enhanced the ICF to modulate its strategy, in a way that effectively addressed the needs of its supporters in both levels: the urban elite, and people in the rural areas. Also that aspired modulation had to consider the fact that ICF's interests transcended that of small Islamic movement, which was rather entangled by students community, to that of a full-fledge political party with a wide range of interests.

That interest manifested itself on several occasions. It related to incidents which occurred outside Sudan, such as the assassination of the two Nigerian leaders: Ahmado Bailo and Ababaker Tafawa Bailo by the Nigerian army in January 1966 and the execution of the famous Egyptian Islamic scholar Sayed Qutob in December 1966. In both the incidents ICF organized big demonstrations in which slogans against both Nigeria and Egypt were raised. This, was in addition to their active engagement in

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mobilizing popular support for the Palestinian and Algerian freedom struggles.\textsuperscript{23}

Moreover, during the rhetoric that preceded the war of June 1967 between Egypt and Israel, the CIF decided to freeze its differences with Egypt, so as to unite the efforts for the war.\textsuperscript{24} Egypt, on the other hand, has always been keen to have a government in Khartoum that would fall in line with its vested interests. But the combination of two factors: “politicized Islam and the antagonist Umma party,” which always accompanied the Sudanese democracies, obscuring the Egyptian aspirations.\textsuperscript{25}

Democracy in the Sudan, however, provided a conducive atmosphere for political trends, which seemed to be undesirable by Egypt. Besides its official stand against greater socio-political role for Islam, it used to lens its relations with Umma party from the antagonistic historical angle.\textsuperscript{26} In this respect the Egyptian President Nasser was not happy to see burgeoning relation between some Sudanese leaders with the late King Faysal of Saudi

\textsuperscript{23} Makki, n. 8, pp. 65, 118-20.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p. 15.
\textsuperscript{26} For the more information on their historical differences, see the previous chapter, under the subtitle: GENESIS OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT.
Arabia, whom he regarded as an obstacle for his Pan-Arab ambitions.\textsuperscript{27}

Nimieri and the Communists

Arab nationalists and Communists along with Free Officers Organization were behind the second military coup of May 1969.\textsuperscript{28} The coup obstructed ICF’s efforts to widen its support for the aspired Islamic Constitution to be passed in the parliament. However, the regime’s Communist colour from its inception was not hidden. This largely tarnished its popularity as communists were known in the Sudanese popular psyche for their blasphemy.\textsuperscript{29}

On the other hand, the Communist hard-liners’ role in the two massacres against the Ansar in Omdurman and in their traditional headquarters, \textit{al-Gazira Abba}, was instrumental. At the latter, the Muslim Brothers along with Ansar fought the communist-backed regime.\textsuperscript{30} This brought Ansars and the Islamists closer against their foe, the communists.

However, Nimieri’s honeymoon with the communist did not continue for long time, due to the latter’s over ambitions, as a

\textsuperscript{27} Makki, n. 26, 14. 
\textsuperscript{28} For the origin of the Free Officers see foot note number: (154) in chapter two. 
\textsuperscript{29} Makki, n. 8, pp. 127-28. 
\textsuperscript{30} The Brothers lost one of its leader, Mohamed Salih Omer. On that subject see Makki, n. 26, pp. 28-29.
section of the communist hard core officers launched the short-lived bloody coup (19-21 July 1971) against Nimieri, whom they considered reluctant to execute their programmes.\textsuperscript{31} This, in addition to the fact that the communist were not happy to see any of the national unity slogans materialised, as Nimieri appeared to be more abreast with it.

For the communists, the crux of the National Unity supporters composed mainly of reactionary forces. The communists therefore, preferred to bring down Nimieri's regime rather than let it tilt towards their traditional foes.\textsuperscript{32}

The repercussion of the abortive coup attempt exemplified the straw that broke their relations with Nimieri forever. It was also coupled by dramatic change in the regime's position: from one of anti-Western Bloc to becoming one of the America's closest ally in the region; and naturally the change soured the regime's relations with the USSR and Communist Bloc.\textsuperscript{33} It also indirectly helped the Islamists cause, by completely eliminating their strong foe, the communist party.

\textsuperscript{31} M.M.A. Karar, Sanawat al-Ghayboba: Al-Hizeb al-Shiyoo'i al-Sudani, Sana Ola May'\textsuperscript{u}, (Khartoum, Sudan: 1987), pp. 21 ff.
\textsuperscript{32} Reda, n. 33, pp. 142-77.
\textsuperscript{33} In the 1972 Conference of the Communist Parties, the Sudanese Communist Party's abortive attempt on power was described, in official statement, as 'mistake' by the Czech Communist Party. For more information on this matter see Ibid., pp. 177-78.
As a matter of fact, the regime’s harsh policy against the Islamist and Ansar, helped the Islamists to strengthen its relation with that sect, and projected them as one of the major power that opposed the communist-guided regime.

The ban on the communists, activated the mostly pro-West secular elite in the regime. Accordingly, political and economic support was generated from the Western countries, and the region’s rich countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to the regime. In addition, the Addis Ababa Peace Accord in 1972 was reached to put an end to the prolonged South Sudan problem.

Furthermore, Nimieri, in his endeavour to clear his tainted image of being a communist supporter, became religiously more inclined, especially towards Sufi sanctuaries, with which he developed close rapport. This link was further enhanced by a charter of support which was signed by 107 Sufi Sheikhs (in his second term of presidency).

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34 Al-Boni, n. 15, pp. 29-30.
36 Ibid., p. 29.
The National Reconciliation

The opposition to Nimieri multiplied both the inside and also from outside the country especially from Libya, under the umbrella of the National Front. Libya on the other hand, saw Nimieri's growing relations with the West as a defection from its anti-Western line.

The Islamists became the dominant mobilizing force in the Sudanese universities and secondary schools, as appeared from the Shaaban uprising in August 1973 against the regime. 37

In July 1976 the National Front launched a daring military attempt across the Libyan border to topple Nimieri's regime. It was unsuccessful due to several technical, administrative and political reasons. In addition to lack of proper co-ordination and mutual trust of Ansar's leaders in the Brothers was also responsible. They feared that the Muslim Brothers may inculcate their influence on their followers, and therefore, the two groups were almost isolated, which further prevented co-ordination between them. 38 It is significant that all these issues brought about important change in the regime's policy. 39

37 Makki, no. 26, pp. 48-50.
38 Ibid., pp. 51-52, 58-82. The Islamists regarded the Constitution of the National Front, as elusive towards the Islam as a political choice for the front; moreover, Saddiq al-Mahdi was more keen to make the front as canopy that shelter all the
For its stability, the regime realized the importance of a national reconciliation with the opposition, in which Ansar and Muslim Brothers were instrumental.

Shortly after that abortive attempt, far reaching change took place in Ethiopia, where the communists captured power in February 1977. This development sandwiched Nimieri between his two anti-Western socialist neighbours, Libya and Ethiopia. His strained relations with them made him more responsive to the mediation of Saudi Prince Faysal. Therefore, in the wake of the regional and internal development came the national reconciliation agreement in July 1977.

The agreement between the regime and the opposing National Front, generated an important debate within the Islamic movement: mainly on the issue whether to engage itself with the regime, a need that was factually supported by many who were frustrated by the experience of locating their base outside Sudan, an experience from which they reached a conclusion that for the opposition, with its different ideologies. This could be one of the reason the induce the Islamists to rethink their future role if the front.

39 For more information about that futile attempt you may refer to (the third phase) under the subtitle: MAY AND THE SECULARIST DISMAY.
40 Makki, n. 26, p. 71.
41 Ibid., pp. 71-3. The Saudi prince known as the initiator of the chain of the Faysal Islamic Banks in many Islamic countries. In the Sudan, the bank largely symbolize Islamic banking system.
42 Ibid., p. 74.
betterment of the movement it should be based itself inside the
country, or to continue its opposing stand.43

The need for participation, by the Islamists, was favoured
by a majority among them. According to Hassan al-Turabi, for the
Islamists to grow as a political movement, there would be no
option than participating in the political game.44 However, their
engagement in Nimieri’s regime precipitated a rift among them,
where some of them defected from the movement. The splinter
group, named itself the Muslim Brothers, maintained closer
relations with *al-Tanzeem al-Do’wali Lil-Ikhwan al-Muslimeen*
(Muslim Brother’s International Organization - MBIO).45

The MBIO seemed to be hunted by an idea of centralized
leadership, which was supported by many Muslim Brothers in
other Arab countries. But for the majority in the Sudanese Islamic
movement, the idea was not appreciated, due to the fact that
Sudan’s socio-political structure largely differed from that of
Egypt and many other Arab countries. Thus, the aspired Islamic
reforms could be achieved only by motivating the people by

43 Ibid., p. 74.
45 Makki, n. 26, pp. 90-91
working among them, and not through commands and directions from outside.

This in addition to the fact that direct control of the MBIO would project the Islamists as externally-controlled stooge group, which would have negative implications on its popularity. Anyhow, the Islamists managed to maintain good rapport with the MBIO.46

Saddiq al-Mahdi, as a former Premier, was keen on power sharing, a desire which was not liked by Nimieri; while the Islamists, on the other hand, saw in their participation a chance to work and expand their influence, rather than seeking a share in power with Nimieri.47 Hence, they decided to commit themselves to build a strong organization, by increasing their numbers, horizontally - in all social strata, and vertically - through their participation in the government administration; from the later they aimed at accumulating their versatile experience for a greater role in the future. Consequently, their participation enabled them "to gain first hand experience with the state apparatus, legislation, and media and gave them easy access to state fund."48

46 Ibid., p. 91.
47 Makki, n. 26, p. 128.
The result of their participation was vocal in the elections of the third National People's Council in February 1978, after which the regime began to adhere to Islamic slogans.\textsuperscript{49} These slogans were gradually implemented, as when drinks were banned in some states.\textsuperscript{50}

The Islamists' representation in the elections of the fourth National People's Council in April 1981, was significant than the earlier one. This was proved when the Minister of Interior and Social Care, and the post of the Chief Editor of the regime's biggest newspaper, \textit{al-Ayam} were appointed from among the Islamists.\textsuperscript{51} Thus, the Islamists' performance in the third and the fourth National People's Council elections showed that they had made steady gain. But, their advancement disturbed Nimieri, who felt that they may become a potential threat to his regime. Therefore, he began to emphasize that the regime's Islamic orientation had nothing to do with the Islamists, and that it was one of the fundamental pillars of his regime. In a clear move to prove that he was self-motivated in his Islamic orientation, and that it was not due to the Islamist pressures, he authored two

\textsuperscript{49} Makki, n. 26, p. 87.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., p. 83.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., p. 93.

Nimieri was annoyed to see the Islamists burgeoning. This was reflected when he nullified a decree to ban alcoholic drinks, which was issued by the local council election in the city of Omdurman in 1982. 53

The Islamists, on the other hand, began to openly criticize corruption within the regime. That criticism cost al-Turabi the 1982 election of the Sudanese Socialist Union, the regime’s only political organ. Shortly after that election al-Turabi was removed from his post as President’s advisor on foreign affairs. 54

Nimieri Islamic Experiment

In an endeavour for his Islamic programme, Nimieri appointed three young legal advisors (two men and a lady) to draft the Islamic penal code. 55

52 Ibid., pp. 93-94.
53 Ibid., p. 96. That council was administered by the Islamists, after they won the majority in the aforesaid elections. Khartoum, the national capital is divided by the Blue and White Niles, and also by the River Nile. It consists of three cities: Khartoum, Khartoum North and Omdurman. The last was the capital of the Mahdiyya state.
54 Ibid., p. 98.
However, Islamization of laws should have been done with wide consultation, a matter that was not desired by Nimieri, since he used Islam as a card to serve his interests. Therefore, he decided to pursue Islamization and marginalized the Islamists role, whom he saw as serious rival. Thus, his Islamic experiment could, partly, be viewed as an endeavour to curb their thriving impact.

From that experiment he also hoped to siphon the expected public support in his favour, as Sudanese have always been responsive to the Islamic slogans. Under the banner of Islamization, he aspired to improve the deteriorating image of his regime. Furthermore, by using Islamic card, he aimed at pulling the carpet from beneath the Ansar and Islamists. However, it was largely due the pressure of the latter, that the regime expedited Islamization programme, and reluctantly began to streamline itself with newly-adopted Islamic orientations.

All these factors together motivated Nimieri to go further in the Islamic path. He was also pulled in that process by his Sufi

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56 Ibid., p. 441.
57 Al-Boni, n. 16, pp. 45-46.
58 Islamic slogans has been used by the two sectarian parties since independence. This showed that it was the major factor that mobilized public opinion in the Sudan.
59 Khartoum University Student's Union in August 1979 sent a memorandum to Nimieri asking him to urge Islamization programme. Makki, n. 26, p. 87.
inclination. In September 1983, few Islamic Penal codes were declared, and they came to be known as Shari’a.

The secularists and leftists branded Shari’a as a “legislative coup.” Saddiq Al-Mahdi was also critical of it from the beginning, presumably for political reason, but his criticism was articulated from an Islamic viewpoint, as he considered Islamic Penal Code as the worst way to re-introduce Islam to the society.

Unlike Ansar, the Islamists, despite their deteriorating relations with Nimieri, backed the project; as they saw in it an effective step forward to activate Islam in the society, which would also marginalize secular and leftist groups.

They, it did not hide their reservations on certain aspects of Shari’a. But their support to the Islamic laws was firm, and in order to strengthen Shari’a which was reflected in mobilizing massive processions to show public support to Shari’a. One of these demonstration was the biggest in the post-independence history of the Sudan. They also convened a successful

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60 Warburg, n. 48, p. 223.
61 Shari’a is a comprehensive religious system for Muslims. It covers all aspects of their life. Therefore, adding few Islamic-based Penal codes, which constituted very small part of Shari’a, was not appropriate to be called Shari’a.
64 Ibid., 103.
international conference on Shari'a implementation in the Sudan, which was held on the second anniversary of its pronouncement. Thus, the regime's anomalies seemed to have not prevented the Islamists from extending considerable support to it.

It appeared that their strategy in so doing was based on supporting the Shari'a, and avoiding any direct confrontation with Nimieri, as long as he continued the programme. Besides highlighting the shortcomings that accompanied Shari'a implementation, which was demonstrated by their opposing stand for the constitutional amendment, which viewed by many, it was also made to pave the way for a theocratic state, which by its virtue Nimieri would become unaccountable supreme leader, in the name of Islam.

Yet, the Islamists' acquiescence exasperated Nimieri, who in turn mounted his criticism against them.

This would lead us to conclude that Nimieri was not sincere in the pronouncement of Shari'a, and he merely used it as political tool. This was obvious in his contradicting decisions regarding the Islamization programme, especially when he issued a decree to

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65 Ibid., pp. 102-3.
66 Al-Bony, N. 16, pp. 82-87.
67 Makki, n. 26, p. 103.
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\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.. pp. 102-3.
\textsuperscript{66} Al-Bony. N. 16, pp. 82-87.
\textsuperscript{67} Makki. n. 26, p. 103.
banning drinks, and when he personally participated in employing the bottles in the Nile, at estimated cost of over (10) ten million US Dollars.\textsuperscript{68}

But the decision gave an indication, that he was serious about the Islamic programme, and was hailed by the Islamists world wide. In this connection he also banned the co-dancing in the night clubs; but to the surprise of many he inaugurated the Grand Hotel Discotheque, which cost One million US Dollars.\textsuperscript{69}

However, the severely debilitating drought-stricken economy, and the fast spreading starvation, which hit large areas in the Western region in 1984, increased the regime’s dependency on foreign aid, mainly from the United States of America.

On the other hand, Islamization, although it generated considerable domestic support for the regime, but was negatively received and echoed by some neighbours.

Internationally, it seemed as if it opened a Pandora Box for Nimieri and his regime, as heavy political, diplomatic and economic pressure stormed his weak and tarnished regime, the climax of that was demonstrated by the short visit of the American

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., p.100.
\textsuperscript{69} Al-Boni, n. 16. p. 94.
Vice President, George Bush, to Khartoum in March 1985.70 (The main reason behind that visit was to see the Falsha Ethiopian Jewish camp in eastern Sudan, from where they were flown to Israel. The visit was partly initiated in the context of appeasing the influential American Jewish lobby, whose support he sought in the coming presidential election. During the visit Bush met with some parties and trade union representatives who urged America to stop its backing to Nimieri. It appeared that the American Jewish lobby was keen that the American administration should not cease it support to Nimieri's regime, as long as he was facilitating the operations to transfer the Flashas to Israel.)71

Shari'a was, thus, pronounced in the wake of disturbed atmosphere, characterized by price hike in sugar, bread and petrol, and coupled with the eruption of June 1983 communist-inclined mutiny in the South. This had spread to large areas in that region, with the help of extensive foreign support. Also there was mounting external pressure to repudiate Shari'a. All these developments forced the regime to declare martial law in April 1984, which further eroded its popularity.72

71 Makki, n. 26, p. 105.
72 Khalid, n. 55, p. 437.
Nimieri, in his endeavour to use the Islamists as scapegoat, decided to paint them in dark colours, when he alleged that the Faysal Islamic bank’s trading in sorghum constituted one of the reasons behind the spread of starvation in Western Sudan.\(^\text{73}\) Shortly George Bush visited Sudan, Hassan al-Turabi and many others Islamists were arrested in March 1985, under the allegation that they were plotting to topple the regime.\(^\text{74}\) This virtually led to the collapse of alliance between the Islamists and Nimieri. This was a first step to revoke the Shari’a, which further vindicated that he was more motivated by the cause of his political survival than his commitment to Shari’a.\(^\text{75}\)

This along with other factors, exemplified the straw that broke the regime’s endurance, as it enhanced spontaneous peoples’ revolt against the government. The revolt was spearheaded by students, whose unions were mostly dominated by the Islamists, and were immediately backed by all the trade unions and other professional associations.

The army was left with no option than to interfere on 6th April 1985, to save the country’s integrity and national interests.

\(^{73}\) Makki, n. 26, p. 105.  
\(^{74}\) ibid., p. 107.  
\(^{75}\) Later, in hindsight, Nimieri regretted implementing Shari’a, and having relations with Islamists, Warburg, n. 48, p. 229.
Thus came to an end Nimieri's regime. The new rulers declared the formation of a one-year Transitional Government (TG), during which the question of phasing out Shari'a from the country (despite the significant secularists and leftists pressures) seemed to be difficult. The end of the TG's tenure paved the way for a new democratic era (1986-1989), in which Islamization took a new turn.

Islamization in the Third Democracy

The Transitory Government clearly defined its aims to make the situation conducive for a new election. Accordingly, it rejected all the demands of those who wanted the abolishment of Shari'a. The TG President General Siwar al-Dahab, "agreed with al-Turabi that the Islamic laws should be revised but not abrogated."76

The period that followed the TG government was featured by unprecedented secular and leftist efforts to abolish Shari'a and eliminate the impact of the Islamists on the political sphere. It was, therefore, an ideological and political war against Shari'a and its main propagators, the Islamists.

76 Ibid., p. 230.
However, an alliance was forged by those who demanded Shari’a’s abrogation, on the ground that its implementation in a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society like Sudan, would prejudice the social harmony and create serious problems in the country. Yet, neither Nimieri nor the subsequent regimes managed to abrogate it.

The Islamists faced these challenges, by forming a new Islamic party, the National Islamic Front (NIF); which compared to other political parties, was well organized, well administered and well financed, and also backed by a very significant media bureau.

Thus, it managed to persuasively address a wide social strata, including the elite, who were largely influenced by the secular and leftist propaganda in the past. That was shown in its fair performance in the 1986 elections, when it got twenty nine per cent of the total vote, and forty two per cent of the seats in Khartoum’s constituencies, which indicated that the Islamic orientation were predominant in the capital. But its most significant achievement was exemplified when it won 23 out of
the 28 reserved seats for the graduates. Thus, from the first year of its formation it won 51 seats in the Parliament.\textsuperscript{77}

The reason behind the impressive achievement, was largely attributed to the structure of the NIF, which managed to engage members from different educational, geographic, cultural and ethnic background, in which women also played a substantial role, in addition to the “political nights,”\textsuperscript{78} in which people, almost throughout Sudan, were addressed by the leadership, which created a unprecedented new political culture. This largely increased the Islamists popularity.\textsuperscript{79}

However, it was due to the Islamists’ long term planning, that they gradually established their influence within the elite and other social groups, including the Southern regions. The election results clearly indicated that a qualitative transformation towards Islam had began to emerge.

This change largely went undisturbed, despite various kinds of political manoeuvres by its rivals, who opposed Islamization, and the sectarian religious parties, who were exasperated by


\textsuperscript{79}The women movement in the Sudan has been playing significant role. The achievement of the women movement is primarily attributed to the Sudanese Islamic movement, and not to the secularists or leftists one. Makki, n. 26, p. 129.
Islamists advancement, which led to the erosion in the NIF rival’s popularity. The NIF, in turn, regarded the latter as misuser of "religion to further their inherited political ambitions."\(^{80}\)

The performance of the NIF during the third democratic period revealed that it transcended all its contemporary Islamic movements in the region, by its methodology and *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) in tackling complicated socio-political issues. For instance, NIF was instrumental in the decision to replace the contentious Shari’ a by a dual system, according to it the Southern regions would be exempted from the implementation of Shari’a. That was during the tenure of coalition government, between Umma and some other parties, in the government when al-Turabi was the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General.\(^{81}\)

However, the coalition did not last long due to the army’s political intervention in February 1989, when it presented a memorandum to the coalition government. This was regarded by the Islamists as a political coup, initiated by the secularist and leftist along with the sectarian parties.\(^{82}\) Subsequently, a new

\(^{80}\)Warburg, n. 48, p. 230.
\(^{82}\) Ibrahim, n. 3, p. 37.
coalition was formed by the two sectarian parties and the secular and left forces.

The Islamists demonstrated their opposition to the 'Palace Government' or the 'Palace Coup' as they named it, by mobilizing massive political rallies against the new coalition government, as it was established mainly with the help of the unauthorized Council of the Head of the State (CHS), which was largely a ceremonial and symbolic body. Its involvement was, therefore, regarded as a breach of the democratic principles.\textsuperscript{83}

The Islamists, on the other end, were perturbed by the army intervention, and the weak government response to it, which they viewed as a plot to frustrate their efforts in expanding the Islamization programme. This has been eloquently elaborated by John Esposito:

Democracy is preferred in the Middle East when it raises the prospect of 'old and reliable friends or client,' but when states transformed into more independent and less predictable nations, this generates worries that Western access to oil could become less secure. Thus stability in the Middle East has often been defined in terms of preserving the status quo.\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., n. 3, p. 37-8.
However, the new coalition government led to drastic exacerbation in the political environment. This resulted in the third coup, which was led by (mainly) Islamic- inclined middle-ranked officers.\(^{85}\)

Islamization After June 1989

The army intervention on 30\(^{th}\) June 1989, did not surprise anybody and the Islamists which was instantaneously supported by the junta.\(^{86}\)

The first major challenge which the new government faced, was the repercussion of the Kuwait liberation war, in which Sudan along with few Arab countries rejected the idea of foreign interference in the region to expel Iraq out of Kuwait in 1990-91.

Domestically, the decision was received with wide public support, but its repercussion were binary: it generated tremendous political and economic pressure on the country, and instantly vaporized any probability of petrodollar support to be injected in

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\(^{85}\) The term 'nationalist' is used by the new regime for those who are not oppose Shari’a, even Christian officers in the army, who are mainly from the South; three of them were among the group that initiated the last coup.

the Sudan’s ailing economy from the rich Arab countries; secondly, it enhanced the animosity between the new junta government and the United Stated and some of its allies in Europe and the region. That was reflected in the growing Western economic pressure on Sudan; it was exhibited when Holland decided to sever its economic aid during the time of the multiparty government, for its failure to reach a peaceful settlement with the rebels in the South (as claimed by Holland).

In fact the Southern issue has been used as cover to justify the economic pressure, which was intensified since the incumbent regime came to power, especially, after the Kuwait liberation war. Its repercussions largely strengthened the regime’s self-reliance policy.

However, the Gulf war precipitated US antagonism towards most of the Islamic movements in the region. Because these movements stood as a hurdle for the United States’ aspiration to control the socio-political directions in most of the developing

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87 Sudan along with few Arab countries proposed that the crisis should be resolved within the Arab League arena. They strongly opposed Western interference in that issue. Sudan stand ranked it as hostile to the West, specifically the United States of America and most of its Arab allies, which engendered drastic repercussions on the country’s economy. Al-Infaq al-Watani (Khartoum), 22 March 1996.
countries, "particularly those with Islamic orientation," This was stated in another way by Dan Tschirgi:

The Gulf War was a godsend to the Islamists. First, the massive defeat of the secular Saddam Hussein and his Baath Party was used by Islamists as a generic illustration of the sort of disasters that befall ungodly rulers espousing secularism. They were also able to lambaste other Arab leaders for allying themselves with latter-day crusaders in the destruction of an Arab Muslim country. The Gulf War undoubtedly contributed immensely to the prestige of the Islamists and to the potency of their message.

The above postulation seemed to be true, as the aftermath of the Gulf War benefited some of the Islamist and nationalist movements in the Arab countries. Few of them rallied the public opinion under the banner of lambasting the "system of Western values as a whole," for its instigation in the destruction of Iraq.

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90 Ibid., p. 208.
On the other hand, the upshot of the war negatively affected the traditional Islamic elements, who lacked the depth and perspective to highlight the political implication of the crisis.91

In the Sudan, Al-Turabi's opinion came on the same track, that "the Gulf War is a prime factor behind the success of popular Islam, (as) the Western-dominated anti-Iraq coalition brought popular Islamic resurgence."92 Hence, one can deduce that the government's stand towards the war widely boosted its popularity.

Anyhow, Islam has been used both by the government and opposition in several Muslim countries to enhance their legitimacy.93 So, Islam being a source of authority of legitimization obviously implies certain pre-requisites. The most important among them is the regime's Islamic credibility, which could be attained only through people's real participation in power, as "Islamic thought -- like all thought -- only flourishes in a social environment of freedom and public consultation (Shurah)."94

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91 Ibid., p. 209.
92 Warburg, n. 48, p. 233.
Real people's participation in power, as in the case of Sudan, required structural political reforms pertaining to transmission of influence, which was regarded as the most important variable in "the power relationships between itself and the community from which it borrows."95 The pursuance of that power or authority transmission to build a modern Islamic state, needs to be performed through institutions that gradually mould or abolish the influence of secularism and sectarianism.

These institutions are yet to crystallize, but according to al-Turabi the "Islamic regime can best come to power through democratic means rather than revolution."96 However, this statement may appear contradictory, when the Islamists threw their weight behind the military led-regime from its day one. But if we panoramically review the performance of all the three democratic reigns, with more concentration on the last one, we can come to the conclusion that they were characterized by serious structural anomalies, that left them almost deficient to lead any sort of democratic reforms.

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That was evidenced from the amount of people’s support to all the three blood-less military coups (except the 72 hours long communist one). This clearly showed people’s frustration and disappointment in kind of democracy, which proved its failure three times.

The search for a new political system to insure democratic and adequate people participation, without any form of guardianship under the canopy of religion, however, was still faced by a lacuna, embodied by need to engage all or the majority of the Sudanese people, some of whom are still living in the state of nostalgia for the erstwhile democratic period.  

Initiatives for “effective change is to come from below through gradual process.” Thus, initiatives must be, therefore, preserved and developed through institutions. To do that, Islamic thought and Fiqh must be looped with the growing and changing socio-political and socio-economic demands. This, furthermore, highlighted the fact that attempts to officialize Islamic establishments, as happened to al-Azhar in Egypt, and in Saudi Arabia would.

97 Almost all those who still haunted by nostalgic desire for the previous democracy are mainly secularists, leftist and the section of the sectarian leadership, as part of the latter have already reached modus vivendi with government.
98 Bell, n. 94, p. 5.
undoubtedly, tame these establishment and greatly discolour its credibility.\textsuperscript{99}

So far in the Sudan, as long as the process of power sharing is widening through the federal system, continuity of the process of transmission of influence, or power to a greater number of participants, is insured; because when power and authority are delegated to people, it would be extremely difficult to take back to any centralized form of government, without creating great deal of socio-political and socio-economical disruptions and chaos.

Islamists and the Military

The military has been playing a key role in political stability of many developing countries, and Sudan is no exception.

In most of the developing countries armies are following foreign model in their structure, and training.\textsuperscript{100} This relatively isolated them from having adequate “feedback about civilian life.”\textsuperscript{101} Yet, the military organizations in many developing

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{99} Ayoob, n. 3, p. 281.
\textsuperscript{100} Asaf Hussain, \textit{Political Perspectives on Muslim World}, (Hong Kong: The Macmillan Press, 1984), p. 36.
\textsuperscript{101} T. O. Odetola, \textit{Military Regimes and Development}, (George Allen and UN WIN, UK, USA, Australia, 1982), p.59.
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countries mostly remain the "only effective modern political structure in the entire society." 102

Therefore, being a well organized establishment in an atmosphere where most of the political parties are in shambles, is tempting enough to intervene, either by self-motivation or by invitation of a political party or certain ideology, as happened in the first coup in the Sudan, where Umma party requested the army to intervene to save the country's interests, as they perceived it.

The experiment of the military reigns in the Sudan, was characterized by conjunction with civilian bureaucracy, which to a large extent substituted the parties governments, and proved not to be just an ephemeral political phenomena. 103

Remarkably, the span of the democratic rule in the 37 years since the country got its independence in 1956, till 1993, was only 9 years, which vindicated the assumption that the Sudanese army has been playing a crucial role in the making of contemporary Sudan. 104

The performance of all the fragile democratic governments that ruled Sudan, on the other hand, strongly indicated that army

102 Hussain, n. 78, p. 36.
103 Odetola, n. 90, p. 80.
104 Mekki, n. 26, p. 158.
interference was inevitable, just to save the country's integrity and vital national interests.

Thus, for the Islamists, sectarianists and other ideological parties, it was essential to protect themselves by having their own base in the army. However, in the first coup (1958-1964) Umma party was the one which instigated the senior army general to intervene; the second coup (1969-1985) was initiated by the young officers of leftist and secular orientation.

The Islamists after their official engagement in the May regime of 1977, realized that for the sake of pursuance of their Islamic programme, they have no option than to infiltrate the army and gradually enhance their influence by establishing strong base of support for their programme within the army.\(^{105}\)

The Islamists seemed to have planned to emphasize on spreading their influence in the army, which gradually eliminated the secularists and leftist impact from that institution.

As "in Turkey the army is regarded as the nation's sworn guarantor of secularism,"\(^{106}\) the Islamists in the Sudan aimed at reorganizing the army structure in a way that would make the

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\(^{105}\) Warburg, n. 48, p. 228.

\(^{106}\) The International Herald Tribune (Paris), 21 April 1997.
question of phasing out Shari'a from the country almost impossible.

Accordingly, that task was fulfilled through intensive moral guidance and religious education, which was sponsored by many Sudanese Ulama (Islamic Scholars). Interestingly, Nimieri, whose Sufi-inclination was not hidden, personally sponsored the implementation of Islamic moral guidance programme in the army. This boosted Islamic awareness among the army personnel, at the cost of other anti-Islamic ideologies (leftist and secularist), which largely shrank.

The election that brought the erstwhile democratic reign, clearly indicated that the fruit of the Islamists plan for the army was ripe, when they won forty five per cent of the constituencies in Khartoum, in which the army personnel votes in some of these constituency were vital.

On the other hand, the tacit sympathy and support of the leftist and secularist to the advancing Southern rebel movement, which manifested itself in a communist and secular clad, enhanced the NIF policy to come out as the strongest supporter of the army among all other political parties.

\(^{107}\) Al-Boni, n. 16, p. 45.
While the sectarian parties were hesitant in showing their support to the army, the NIF, mobilized huge rallies to demonstrate its support. In addition it was the only political party which sent one of its senior member, Ali Osman M. Taha, who was the leader of the opposition in the Parliament, to the Southern region capital, Juba, where he held plenary meeting with army personnel and key people of Juba. That visit gave an unequivocal indication about Islamists stand behind the army.

In a effort to strengthen its position in the army, Umma party had appointed senior officers, known by their loyalty to it, at top posts in the army. However, some of them were unpopular among their colleagues.  

Thus, when some of these high-ranking officers participated in the political manoeuvres that followed the army memorandum in February 1989, (which led to the replacement of the coalition government) in which the NIF was vocal, by another minority secular government, the move was regarded by many as unconstitutional. And the memorandum projected those officers, in the eyes of their juniors, as anti-NIF; which induced anti-secular

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109 Al-Anbaa, 10 September 1997.
110 For details see page 16 in this chapter, or the second chapter under the subtitle: THIRD DEMOCRACY AND DISENCHANTMENT.
and anti-left Islamists and nationalists middle-ranked officers to initiate the last coup.\textsuperscript{111}

Concepts and Methodology

The majority in the Northern Sudan have been largely governed by sectarian religious loyalties, on one side, and by strong Sufi inclinations, on the other.

The sectarian parties were characterized by its traditional Islam, which lacked the criteria of providing a new Islamic model. This was evidenced by the intra-parties institutions, which also lacked any form of modification, and almost the two leaders (Saddiq al-Mahdi and Mohamed Osman al-Merghani) constituted the supreme and absolute authority in their respective parties.

Hence, the absence of accountability, apart from its negative repercussions on the two parties performance - in all the three democratic epochs, revealed that legitimacy of the two sectarian parties was not obtained from any Islamic institutions, simply because of its non-existence, but from the blind loyalty of their followers.

\textsuperscript{111} Al-Anbaa, 10 September 1997.
The reason behind this can be traced to the colonial rule and its impact on the traditional Sufism and its perception of Islam, which mostly remained unpoticized. When Sudan got its independence, except the communist party, most of other political parties had shown Islamic inclinations. Yet, none of them had proposed Islamization of the country's post-independence polity, when the political scene was dominated by religious sectarian parties. 112

However, while comparing the influence of Muslim Brothers with that of Ansar and Khatmiyya religious sects, we can conclude that the NIF was more politicized in its Islamic perception, and also more explicit in its opposition to the secularization of the Sudanese society. This was became its alternative model of a modern Islamic state, largely contradicted with the secular and leftist proposed model.

Consequently, the Islamists were faced with a unique situation, in which they had to find an acceptable equation to accommodate two major conflicting Islamic perceptions: Sufi-ritualistic and the Salafi school. 113 In other words, to amalgamate


113 Salafiyya is an Islamic school, stick to the literal meaning of Quran and Sunna, with little room for Ijtihad and Tajdid al-Fiqh (renewal of Islamic jurisprudence). The followers of this school strongly oppose Sufi and Sufism.
Salafi concept with the Sufi's, which would enhance the NIF capability to establish its aspired model. Avoiding the contentious issues, the NIF concentrated its efforts on *da'wa* (calling), as it is "the first step to establish Islamic working model."114 This dramatically increased the popular support for the NIF.

In the course of fulfilling that task, it optimized the efforts from its members participation. This was attributed to the fact that the NIF, unlike most the other political parties in the Sudan, strictly adopted the policy of self-dependence, which induced large segments to lay their trust and respect in it, and get positively engaged in its programmes.115

There were profound disagreements on the implementation of Shari'a.116 But, in the NIF experiment, unlike other sectarian parties, *Shoorah* was widely implemented in its body. This unequivocally strengthened the role of its members in scientifically administering the NIF's affairs. This was a matter which was hailed by most of those who attended its second national conference in January 1988, in which national and international journalists and even anti-Islamists were allowed to

attend, and for the first time participants from abroad were invited to take part in the deliberations as observers.\textsuperscript{117}

Therefore, the atmosphere of discourse and free dialogue, that the NIF succeeded to make it as part of its culture, greatly reduced the chances of opinion-clash and enhanced intra-party constructive discourse, to enhance its goal of transforming itself into a political, economic and civilizational power.

That aspiration obviously required tremendous efforts to renovate the standard of Islamic thought and Fiqh, which stand as an urgent necessity in the Muslim societies, to face the expanding influence of the Western model.

Though it is early to evaluate the experiment, but its outcome from the Sudanese Islamic movement case, clearly indicates that the expected change would largely follow the trajectory of the pro-renovation line among the Islamists; while the other Sufi, religious sectarianism and orthodox Salafi lines of thought, which to a large extent support the rigid idea of relative immutability of Fiqh, whose consequences sharply reduces the elasticity of Islam to positively cope with the changing and

\textsuperscript{117} Al-Sa’oori, n. 71, p. 10-11.
growing needs of modern societies. But that line is fast diminishing.

However, the need for renovating Islamic thought and Fiqh, requires a great degree of flexibility in order to positively absorb needs and aspirations of various cultures, as in the case of Sudan, where two different judicial systems between the country’s North and South are to be maintained.

Islamization and Modernity

Islam, as conceived by its followers, addresses all human needs everywhere and anytime. This means that Islam has the criteria to accommodate and modify cultures and traditions of various societies; but to properly address the variable needs of the people of different cultural backgrounds, the mechanism of Ijtihad and renewal of Fiqh and Islamic thought has been actuated by Islamic institutions in all Muslim societies, away from the official control.

Ijtihad and renewal of Islamic thought are not a contemporary phenomenon in the Muslim world. For the issue was first raised by Shah Waliullah (1703-1764); who is known as the greatest Indian intellectual Muslim, when he stressed that: “there
was a constant need for new *Ijtihad* as the Muslim community progressed and expanded and new generations had to cope with new problems.\textsuperscript{118} He was described by his contemporary as a person "ahead of his time."\textsuperscript{119}

Muslim societies differs from each other in various degrees, politically, economically, socially and, sometimes culturally. These differences require relatively different *Ijtihad*; in this context, the Sudanese Islamic movement was right to opt for autonomy from the MBIO; and to develop its own *modus operandi* in tackling prime strategic issues that directly related to the country's stability.

This is noticed in the present regime's endeavour to fabricate a party-less democratic system; with no attempts of the earlier three earlier democratic experiences.\textsuperscript{120}

By way of a brief analyses of the last democratic experience in the Sudan, the following conclusion is observed:

1- The two major players (Ansar and Khatmiyya) were more partisan, and largely depended on clannish

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., p. 66.
\textsuperscript{120} *Al-Sudan al-Hadith* (Khartoum), 30 January 1996.
support, rather than any political agenda, or known Islamic ideology. This led to development of a segregatory system, according to which political ascendance in them, was based more on loyalty than qualification. Hence, the mechanism of accountability and free election in them was largely dim and obscured.

2- Both the two parties raised Islamic slogans. This enhanced the role of Islam as a factor in the Sudanese democracy, and boosted people's aspiration and expectations for more Islamization, which required structural reforms, as both the parties lacked its criteria.

3- No real efforts were made to modify the Western democratic values, that pervaded the Sudanese democracy, which were mostly based on secular principles, although, apparently, it was vaguely guided by traditional principles of religion.

Given this analysis, the Islamists found themselves before a conceptual challenge to eliminate the negative influence of the erstwhile secular-sectarian experience; and to devise a system that
permits political development by actuating the masses and induce them to constructively engage in the governance of their affairs. However, the prime challenge was exemplified by the question of how to build a modern Islamic state in a multi-cultural society, such as Sudan?

Not like other military led governments in other developing countries, the incumbent one in the Sudan, took a different turn by adopting discourse as a method to solve the country’s major issues. This was vindicated when a series of conferences to frame strategies for all the prime issues, related to the war in the South, political participation, economic development, national security, diplomacy, women and youth etc., were convened. The outcome of these conferences portrayed the regime’s future plans, which aimed at bringing full Islamization, which implied “fundamental change in power structure and social controls.”121 The question of modernity emerged in Muslim societies during the colonial era.122 For the native Western-educated elite, in these societies, modernity largely has the same meaning that bore in it cradle, Europe, where it aimed at narrowing the gulf between the Catholic

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church and the new philosophical trends in the European societies by enhancing secularism.

The need to modernize the socio-political order existed in all the Muslim societies. So, for the Islamists, the socio-political and socio-economic advancement of their societies was considered a paramount task. But the advancement that they aspired to attain, largely differed from that implied by the secular connotation of modernity.

Bringing fundamental change in power structure and social controls to the Sudanese society, induced the Islamists to enshrine this need in their constitution, which was issued in February 1982, in which their movement was defined as: a "fundamentalist, renovationist of comprehensive goals and functional in its methodology."\(^{123}\)

Accordingly, modernity is perceived in the West, with its connoted methodological severance from the root of Islam.\(^{124}\) The concept was therefore, replaced, as specified in their constitution by the term "renovation," which requires unlimited scope for *Ijtiyahad*.

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\(^{123}\) Makki, n. 26, pp. 160-61.
\(^{124}\) Omer, n. 89, p. 25.
The fundamental principles of Islam are, of course, perpetual, therefore, the question of modernizing them does not arise. However, it is the perceptions and the way these principles are implemented, is the field where renovation works.\textsuperscript{125}

As seen earlier the new \textit{Fiqh} is required to handle a range of complicated issues in various arenas such as, politics, economics, social, cultural and so on. Obviously, if the Islamist-backed incumbent regime in the Sudan, strictly resorts to the \textit{Fiqh} of the traditional schools, none of these issues could be addressed adequately, in a way that help the Islamists (behind and within the regime) to fulfil the modern Islamic paradigm in the Sudan.\textsuperscript{126}

Conclusion

Nimieri, purely for his political survival made his regime a hotbed for almost all the political and ideological spectra in the Sudanese society. The Islamist, guided by their desire for Islamization of the society and the state, utilized their coalition with Nimieri to the maximum; to the extent that Nimieri’s reign


\textsuperscript{126} There are five main \textit{Maz’hab} (Fiqh-schools) in Islam: Hanbali, Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi’ee and Ja’fari; the first four are prevailed among the \textit{Sunni} Muslims, while the last is followed by Shi’ee Islam.
could be considered as a watershed in the history of Islamic revivalism in the post-independence Sudan.

Islamization in the previous democratic era, under the canopy of the NIF, was strengthened by the election statistics, which proved that it was advancing at the cost of both secularist and leftist on one side, and the traditional Islamic sectarian parties on the other.

The advancement of Islamization seemed to have binary effects on other parties, towards the end of 1988: when the dissolution of the government led to another conglomeration coalition, which precipitated the army intervention in June 1989; and externally, Islamization was not welcomed by most of the countries in the region in addition to the United States/West.

According to Akbar Ahmed the central difference between the West and Islam lies in their "two opposed philosophies: one based in secular materialism and the other in faith."[127] So, secular materialism constituted the base of the Western civilization and Western model of democracy. This standardized a perspective (in the West) from which most of the religious revivalists movements

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are lensed, and it antagonistically viewed, with an aim to halt any vocal role for religion in public sphere.\textsuperscript{128}

Generally religions and ethnic identity are intertwined. However, in the Sudan since the Mahdiyya rule, Islamic movement was the least effected by the ethnic or communal problems, and in fact it rather cast its shadow on them. This could be attributed to the non-fanatic feature of the Islamists, and their \textit{modus vivendi} method in their relations with non-Muslim. A matter that was vindicated way back in May 1957, when a Christian Sudanese presented nationalist poem at the inauguration of the party of Muslim Brothers' house in Wad Medani\textsuperscript{,129} presently, the capital of the Gazira state in the central Sudan.

Sudan is endowed with enormous untapped economic potentials. Yet, its economy is still weak. This weakness is the sensitive point the government has to always consider in its policy. The current President Omer al-Basheer realized this when he took over power and they found that sixty per cent of the budget was received from abroad.\textsuperscript{130}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{129} Makk, n. 26, p. 70.
\textsuperscript{130} \textit{Al-Sudan al-Hadith}, 18 January 1996.
\end{footnotesize}
Therefore, the fragility of the economy enhanced the economic pressure against Sudan, under the impression that it would make the government more lenient in its adoption of the Islamic programme. That antagonistic policy, against Sudan has been spearheaded by the US. However, the animosity against Islam was not a new phenomenon in the West. It has been existing since the crusaders era, when relations between the two were far from being cordial. The European fear of Islam was therefore, deeply rooted in the social psyche, “but in the early twentieth century the fear was not so much of what Islam was (or what the Europeans believed it to be) but of what mixed up with nationalism, it might become.”

True, the impact of Islam on nationalism had chiefly exasperated the West, who feared that greater impact of Islam on nationalism, would diminish the Western cultural impact on the Muslim societies; and that trend was reflected in the idea of anti-Europeanization.

The Islamists, on the other hand, were faced with the need to refute the partly irrational ‘Islamophobia,’ propagated by the

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131 Ayoob, n. 3, p. 275.
133 Ibid., p. 135.
West against them. That Islamophobia, apart from the historical significance, also stemmed from the fear that if an Islamic experiment gets the chance to thrive in any of the Arab countries, in addition to the harm that it may engender to the Western interests in the region, it may fuel the aspiration of other Islamists in many countries to be emulated. This was a matter that would impose drastic change on Western relations with many countries in the region, in which crucial Western interests lays.

Finally, this may justify the negative projection of Islamic movements by the Western media to the rest of the world, which is nothing but distorted.