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FROM : USLO, Khartoum 116

DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

REF : Khartoum 54, September 12, 1953

December 5, 1953

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SUBJECT: Increased Communist Activity Among Sudan Cultivators

Communist influence among Sudanese cultivators has increased considerably in recent months. Principal developments have been an apparently successful bid to create unrest among the Gezira Scheme tenants, and the organization of a cotton boycott by cultivators in the Nuba Mountains.

Communist Influence Among Gezira Scheme Tenants

Members of the Communist-dominated Sudan Workers Trade Unions Federation have been successful in promoting a rival organization to the existing Gezira Tenants' Association. Now, however, a defection of 25 of the 50 elected members of the Tenants' Association to the new group will necessitate complete new elections in the Association with the probable result that the rival organ will take over the Association. According to T. H. B. MYNORS, Deputy Governor of Blue Nile Province, agitation among the Gezira tenants draws on two principal sources of discontent. 1) During the boom years of 1950-51 and 1951-52 the tenants received unprecedented income and in consequence they increased their rate of expenditure considerably. Now, although cotton income has dropped to pre-1950 levels, the tenants have continued to spend at the higher rate with the result that many of them are deep in debt. 2) Because of recent high income Gezira Board reserves stand at pretty much maximum levels. (Maximum legal levels are £E3,000,000 in the General Reserve Fund and £E3,000,000 in the Tenants' Reserve Fund.) The debt-burdened tenants want the Board to release a portion of these reserves in the form of payments to themselves.

During a visit of the reporting officer to Mad Medani on December 1, 1953, a delegation of 2000 cultivators demanded an audience with the Deputy Governor (in the absence of the Governor) and presented a detailed list of demands incorporating the above-indicated points. The demonstration arrived and dispersed peacefully after meeting with the Deputy Governor. After the meeting was over, the Deputy Governor indicated to the reporting officer that the tenants seemed to be intransigent in their demands and that Labor Branch conciliation would be useless. He was of the opinion that some form of compromise would probably have to be worked out between the Government and the tenants.

The new movement among the tenants is led by El Amin Mohammed EL AMIN, a tenant of the Keteir Block in the Gezira Scheme. According to the Governor of Blue Nile Province, El Amin's group is trying to link up with the "Cultivators'

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Movement" in Northern, Kassala, and Kordofan Provinces, (Khartoum 54, September 12, 1953), and its monetary resources exceed visible income. (Attached as Enclosure No. 1, UNCLASSIFIED, is the Governor's fact sheet on this movement in Gezira.)

Nuba Mountains Cotton Boycott

According to press reports on November 17, 1953, the "Nuba Mountains Cotton Cultivators' Association" called a general strike for an indefinite period. They demanded that their association be officially recognized, that cotton prices paid to cultivators should be amended, and that the Government cotton monopoly be re-leased. The Ministry of Agriculture has issued statements at least three times exhorting the Nuba cotton cultivators to sell their cotton, and explaining the structure of Government payments to the cultivators. A Ministry announcement of November 27 indicated that cotton is now being marketed at Kadugli and Tolodi in the Nuba Mountains. It would appear from this that the boycott is thus defective.

Government-Farmer Shares of Income

In both the Gezira Scheme and in the Nuba Mountains the Government and farmers share cotton income, and in both instances the Government (in the Gezira Scheme, the para-Government Gezira Board) maintains reserves to support prices paid to cultivators in the event that the world cotton market slumps. Net income in the Gezira Scheme is divided among the Government (for water and land supply), the Sudan Gezira Board (for administration, including marketing), and the tenants, on a 40-20-40 basis. Net income in the Nuba Mountains is divided between the Government (for administration, including marketing) and the farmers on a 20-80 basis.

Reserve funds will be used this year in the Nuba Mountains to support the price paid to cultivators; the Government has announced that it will guarantee a minimum price per kantar of short staple seed cotton at  $\pounds 1.800$ , but that it will pay  $\pounds 2.000$  per kantar unless cotton prices drop from present levels. Without price support, world cotton prices (quoted on November 1, 1953 at  $\pounds 10.800$  per kantar of grade 1 lint cotton) would result in payment of  $\pounds 1.680$  per kantar of seed cotton under present arrangements.

Forward marketing of Gezira long-staple cotton has only just begun and no public announcement has been made concerning the price support policy for the coming year. The income of each tenant in the Gezira was  $\pounds 830$  in 1950-51,  $\pounds 300$  in 1951-52, and somewhat under  $\pounds 190$  in 1952-53 (all figures approximate). From these totals the tenants must deduct cultivation costs and repayments on agricultural loans, but additional to these sums they also receive free water and land for food crops, and social services. (Tenants normally hold 40 feddans of land, of which 10 are devoted to cotton production each year and somewhat less than this amount for food crops.) Tenants normally hire labor to assist in cultivation, and the Liaison Office has been informed of instances wherein all work is performed by hired labor.

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Comment:

Both from policy statements in the Communist organ al-Sarahah and from reports of activity among the cultivators, it is evident that the local Communists, operating principally through the Workers' Federation, are carrying on an intensive campaign to establish a cultivators' bloc which will parallel and work with the Workers' Federation. Both in the Gezira Scheme and in the Nuba Mountains the technique for causing agitation is the same. Cultivators who have become accustomed to high income during the boom cotton years of 1950-51 and 1951-52 are being told that present reduced income is due to unjust distribution of income by the Government, and that they are entitled to a higher percentage of the total profits. Since many cultivators are in debt, it is not surprising that any move to obtain added income is receiving widespread support.

*Joseph Sweeney*

Joseph Sweeney,  
United States Liaison Officer.

Enclosure:

✓ Fact sheet on the movement among the Gezira Tenants submitted to the Sudan Government for distribution by A.P. CULLEN, Governor of Blue Nile Province.

CC: London  
Cairo

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Encl. No. 1  
Desp. No. 116  
From Khartoum

Fact Sheet on the Movement Among the Gezira Tenants  
Submitted to the Sudan Government for Distribution by  
A. P. Cullen, Governor of Blue Nile Province

P R O J E C T

Mad Medani, 31st October 1953

Public Relations Officer,  
-----GEZIRA TENANTS - MEETINGS

For some weeks a certain El Amin Mohamed El Amin, tenant of Keteir Block, Sudan Gezira Board and his associates have been organising meetings of tenants at various places in the Gezira. The ostensible purpose of these meetings has been the discussion of 14 demands by the tenants regarding conditions in the Gezira. It has been announced that a mass meeting will be held in Wad Medani on 6th and 7th November to discuss the demands and appoint a committee to pursue them. So far the meetings have been orderly.

2. The "14 Points" are all old matters which have long been subject for discussion, especially with the Gezira Tenants Association, and their resuscitation now appears to be a way of arousing interest among the tenants. The objects of the movement appear to be (a) to foment extremist opposition to the Gezira Tenants Association and (b) to link up a "Cultivators' Movement" between this Province, and Northern, Kassala and Kordofan Provinces. It is alleged that El Amin and others have communist tendencies: they appear to have plenty of money, more than has been subscribed at their meetings and there are signs of a link-up with Workers Federation and Students' Organisation. Mohamed El Amin himself hold only half a tenancy and has not been prominent before.

3. A summary of the "14 Points" and replies thereto was contained in the recent broadcast of Sh. Ahmed Babikir El Izeirig, Chairman, Gezira Tenants Association.

4. The above is intended as "background" in case you receive reports on this movement.

A. P. CULLEN  
GOVERNOR BLUE NILE PROVINCE

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