

Authority NUD 959347

By KJ NAR MAR 24 2008

~~NSA~~
~~HEE~~
~~CEB~~
122

THE MINNEAPOLIS STAR
Evening
AND
THE MINNEAPOLIS TRIBUNE
Morning and Sunday

August 10, 1956

1956-8-10, *Armeni, Interview*

Mr. Arthur Beach
Charge d'Affairs
U. S. Liaison Office
El Mahdi Building
Khartoum, Sudan

Dear Mr. Beach:

You will find enclosed the article I wrote for my newspaper about political affairs in the Sudan.

I am very much indebted to you and your staff for much of my information. Thank you for all the help you gave me.

Sincerely yours,

Scott Long

Scott Long
Editorial Cartoonist and Writer

jm

Enclosures

Start With Freedom

EDITORS NOTE: This is another in a series of reports on Africa by Scott Long, Minneapolis Tribune editorial cartoonist and staff writer. Long and Carl Rowan, Tribune staff writer, left Minneapolis in February and returned in April. Long's report on the Sudan follows.

By SCOTT LONG

Minneapolis Tribune Staff Writer
Copyright 1956 Minneapolis Star and Tribune Company

Is the prime minister of the Sudan already a dead duck politically?

Some people in Khartoum, the capital, think so.

The Sudan is the newest independent country in the world and one of the biggest in Africa. It is where the Arab and the black world meet. It was supposed to get independence in 1957 but the Sudanese jumped the gun last year. They have been independent for five months now.

"I guess you could say we were just lucky, that we just up and declared our independence," said Ismail El Azhari, the prime minister. He nodded as though he didn't believe it himself.

Azhari is a stocky, dark-skinned Sudanese, 54, with short graying hair, a neat mustache and a permanent, harried smile. It was 105 degrees. He offered me what would have been my fourth Coke for the morning.

"We don't really have any problems now," he said. "Now we are free the only real problem is: should we prepare a constitution to be ratified by the present legislature or should we elect a new constituent assembly to ratify it?"

No problems?

Problems were lined up two-deep in his large waiting room—black Sudanese in white turbans and white gowns, drinking Cokes, perspiring, waiting for their turn to bring some new request before the prime minister.

All Azhari has to do is write a new constitution and a new electoral law, mollify the two strongest religious leaders in the Moslem northern half of his country, resolve the differences between the north and the black, pagan south, and settle the question of the use of the waters of the Nile with Egypt.

To begin with, everybody thought the Sudan was going to become part of Egypt. Azhari himself ran and won his last election on such a platform.

The Sudan and Egypt are strung together like two shiny gold beads on a single economic fact—the Nile river. They have a lot in common.

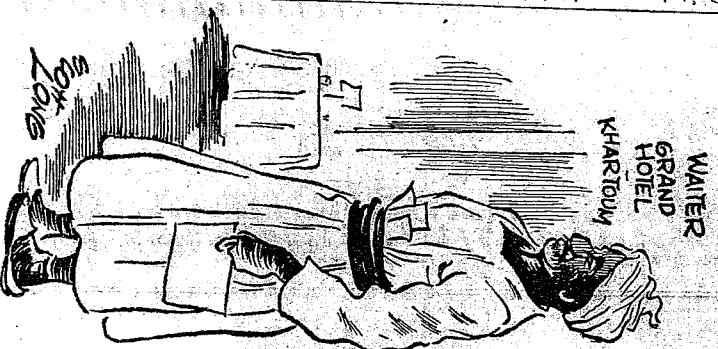
FROM KHARTOUM to Cairo the land is an ocean of sand, hundreds of miles of barren country that can scarcely support a rabbit. The river is the only thing that enables green things to grow.

Some think the British talked Azhari into reversing his stand on unity with Egypt and declaring independence prematurely.

Some think Azhari discovered there really was more popular opposition to unity with Egypt than his last election in-

African Deadline

Continued on Page Four



2 million itself
No problems in Sudan? Poor Azhari!

Gaining freedom is never the end of national problems. It is only the beginning.

TOMORROW: Color most important political problem in Africa.

New Consti Face Religious Battle

Continued from Page One

dicated. The army was opposed.

SOME THINK the Sudanese feared Egypt's premier, Gamel Abdel Nasser. Nasser had just dumped Naguib, his predecessor, who was part Sudanese.

What everybody in the Sudan does not know is that Azhari pulled the rug out from under both his chief Moslem supporter, who was genuinely pro-Egypt, and his chief Moslem opponent who had been advocating independence for a long time.

They are the two strongest religious leaders in the Sudan and had been bitter enemies. Sir Ali Mirdhani Pasha and Sir Abdel Rahman el Mahdi Pasha have now joined forces and are against the prime minister. It is in this climate that the Sudan must get a new constitution and decide who is going to be able to vote.

THE SUDAN now operates under a document adopted in 1953 titled "The Transitional Constitution of Sudan."

It doesn't specify who gets the vote. All 97 members of the present house were elected, nearly all directly.

Twenty-two of the 97 house members are from the southern part of the Sudan and the number of their seats is based on an estimate of population. The Sudan is in the process of taking a complete census.

If it should prove that southern Sudanese are entitled to more seats than they now have, Azhari would have to deal with another first class headache.

NORTHERNERS wouldn't agree to increasing the southern membership of the house without a fight.

The Arab and the black world do not meet without friction.

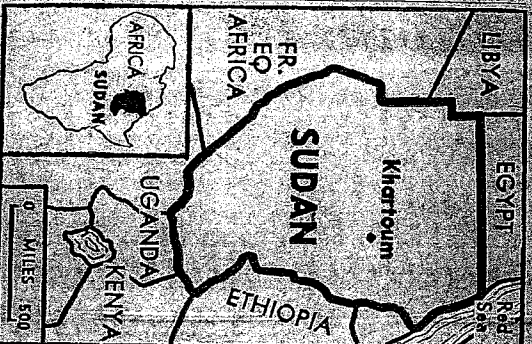
Politics in the Sudan is in a state of flux. Everybody seems to belong to the same party now, the party of national independence . . . but there are other issues in the making which will separate them into actions.

One is religion. Southern Sudan is not Moslem. Will Islamic principles govern the new constitution?

"WE ARE CLOSE to the spirit of Islam," said Ismail I Atabani, a Sudanese editor. "Most of our civil relations, laws governing man-to-man relations, and contracts re-derived from Islam."

The prime minister is now getting the principal Moslem leaders and will probably lose the next election. But as each new group of leaders takes over and is forced to grapple with the same set of problems Azhari it will find itself taking religion, too, and will be thrown out in its turn.

That should amuse you again.



Sudan uses some and wants a greater share.

AN AVERAGE of 84 million cubic meters of water flow through the Nile each year. Egypt uses 48 million and Sudan uses four million.

If the Aswan reservoir is enlarged, as planned by Egypt, 10 million more cubic meters will be lost by evaporation. This leaves 22 million to be divided between the two countries (and ignoring Uganda and Ethiopia which also have a claim) for future expansion of their irrigation systems.

Sudan demands 16 million of the 22 and has a good claim on the basis of population. Egypt offers Sudan seven million instead. If the new dam is to be worthwhile Egypt



Gaining freedom is never the end of national problems. It is only the beginning.

TOMORROW: Color, most important political problem in Africa.