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DATE: November 17, 1954

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SUBJECT:

Muslim Brotherhood in the Sudan
1954-11-17, Azhari, Islamists, QrA

The Muslim Brotherhood in the Sudan has never been a particularly strong organization, but it is generally respected as a defender of Islam. With the difficulties of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt the Sudanese organization has naturally received more publicity. Its greatest strength is in the "three towns" (Khartoum, Omdurman and Khartoum North) and in this area its supporters come primarily from among university students and the effendiya class of the same approximate age, although a few older civil servants and merchants also belong. Its exact membership is not known but informed guesses here place the figure as around five hundred with an active core of around a hundred.

It is sufficiently respected as an organization in the Sudan that no public figure would care to speak out against it. Considered an extreme rightist group by Sudanese intellectuals, the average Sudanese thinks of it primarily as a defender of the tenets and traditions of Islam. Since the Anglo-Egyptian Canal Agreement the Sudan branch has cooperated with the local Communists in attacking the agreement. It has condemned the RCC attitude toward the Brotherhood in Egypt and this anti-RCC attitude has meant that the local branch receives more public support from the Opposition than from the Government. As far as can be learned it contains members from both the Khatmia and Ansar sects with the Khatmia in the majority; this has not occasioned trouble so far as it had previously not espoused any issue or cause which cuts across sectarian lines.

On November 11, 1954, En Nil, an official organ of the Umma Party, published an interview between the Leader of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Sudan and Tahrir, a semi-official Egyptian news-magazine. Although the Leader was not identified in this interview he is Ali Talballa, a civil servant in the Ministry of Social Welfare who works on problems of the Southern Sudan. The interview reportedly took place over the telephone and was released to the local press by the press secretary of the Local Muslim Brotherhood, Omer Ed Darouti, a local merchant. The questions that follow were reportedly asked by Tahrir and answered by Ali Talballa and indicate that the local branch supports its brother organization in Egypt:

Q. What do you think of the conspiracy against Colonel Gamal?

J Sweeney:am
REPORTER

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