

**AHMED DRAIA UNIVERSITY– ADRAR**



**FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LETTERS AND LANGUAGE**

**A Research Paper Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
a Master's Degree in Anglo- Saxon Literature and Civilization**

**The Mahdist Revolt in Sudan  
1881 – 1899**

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**Academic Year: 2017-2018**

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## *Dedication*

We dedicate this modest work

To our beloved parents hoping that they are proud of us

To our lovely sisters and brothers who were always supporting us with their love

This work is also dedicated to all members of our families and all our best friends for their  
assistance and tenderness

To our teachers especially our supervisor Mr. Abdelwahid Abidi who was our model and  
ideal teacher

Also a special dedication to our beloved colleagues.

## *Acknowledgements*

First and foremost, we would like to express our deepest thank to Allah the Almighty without His mercy, grace, help and guidance, this research could never be done.

We would like to express our special thanks and appreciation to our supervisor Mr. Abdelwahid Abidi, for all his effort, support, motivation and advice as well as his patience with us throughout all the stages while working on this dissertation.

Second, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and deep appreciation to our members of jury for accepting and devoting their time to read and correct our dissertation.

Furthermore, we would like to send our greatest love and gratitude to our parents who are our source of success.

## Abstract

The Mahdist revolution took place in Sudan. It is a religious protest against the Turko-Egyptian rule. It contains two phases. The first phase started in 1881 and ended in 1885 under the leader Muhammad Ahmed. When he declared himself "the Expected Mahdi" and announced his revolt that is named after his name. Mahdi made several victories and established the Mahdist State in 1885. After his death he was succeeded by Abdullah T'aaychi who led the second phase of the revolt from 1885 to 1898. He waged several external wars in order to expand his sovereignty. This phase ended by the British-Egyptian invasion in 1899.

The research is designed to examine the Mahdist revolt in the Sudan from 1881 to 1885 and its stages. It chronicles the emergence of the Mahdiyya movement, and its leaders with their achievements. There is an attempt, all throughout this research, to survey the events and indicate the major changes that happened during the period 1881-1898.

This research may raise the following questions:

- 1- How was Sudan before Mahdiyya revolt?
- 2- Who was the leader of this revolt?
- 3- What were the several factors that paved the way to the Mahdist revolt?
- 4- What were the main changes during the Mahdist revolt?

**Key Words:** Sudan, the Turko-Egyptian, Muhammad Ahmed, the Mahdist revolt, Abdullah T'aaychi.

## الملخص

الثورة المهديّة هي احتجاج ديني ضد الحكم التركي - المصري وقعت أحداثها في السودان ، تتضمن مرحلتين المرحلة الأولى من 1881 إلى 1885 تحت قيادة محمد أحمد. عندما أعلن نفسه "المهدي المنتظر" وقام بثورته التي أخذت اسمه. حقق المهدي عدة انتصارات وأسس الدولة المهديّة في عام 1885. و بعد موته خلفه عبد الله التعايشي الذي قاد المرحلة الثانية من الثورة من 1885 إلى 1898. حيث هذا الأخير شنّ عدة حروب خارجية من أجل توسيع الدولة المهديّة، وقد انتهت هذه المرحلة بالغزو البريطاني المصري في عام 1899.

يهدف البحث إلى دراسة الثورة المهديّة في السودان ومراحلها كما يصف ظهور الحركة المهديّة ، زعمائها، إنجازاتهم و الوقوف على أهم الأحداث ، ومن ثمة البحث في هذه المذكرة على إشكالية الثورة المهديّة في السودان خلال الفترة الممتدة من 1881 إلى 1899 .

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## General Introduction

Africa has witnessed the emergence of many civilizations, some of which date back to the prehistoric times to present days. One of them is the civilization of South Nile Valley, or what is called Sudan. Since immemorial time, this region has been a mixture of cultures and a combination of civilizations as it has been a gateway to the heart of Africa. In addition, the ethnic and human religious differences formed a harmony among themselves to form the present day Sudanese society. Because Sudan is rich in natural and human sources, this made it the target of depletion and exploitation by the colonial powers. The Turco-Egyptian rule is one of the foreign rules which aimed to exploit its wealth for its interests. In 1821, the Sudan was invaded by Muhammad Ali, the Pasha of Egypt. In that period the corruption had pervaded. This is what made the Sudanese people revolt against Muhammad Ali's rule.

In 1881, Muhammad Ahmed proclaimed himself the Mahdi (the expected one or deliver in Islamic faith). He resorted to Islam in order to unite the various Sudanese tribes and communities to create an opposition to Turko - Egyptian rule. This revolt took place in the late nineteenth century under his rule from 1881-1885. After his death, Caliph Abdullah T'aaychi replaced him to continue the Jihad from 1885 – 1898. This revolt lasted until 1899, when the British forces destroyed the Mahdist state, and established the colonial rule over Sudan.

The revolutionary Mahdist movement achieved national and social integration of the ethnic components these components dissolved in one crucible and united for the struggle and liberation. Thanks to this revolt, the state transformed from a group of scattered kingdoms into the first national state extending from 1881 to 1899. This research attempts to explain how the Sudan was before the Mahdist Revolt ; in addition who was the leader of opposition forces against the Turku – Egyptian rule, and what were the main reasons for the revolt, and the main changes that occurred in Sudan as a result of this revolt.

The first chapter will proffer a geo – historical background to the Sudan including geographical location, ethnic composition, different civilizations, and the colonial situation in the Sudan in the late nineteenth century. This is important for the contextualization of the study.

The second chapter focuses on at the emergence of Mahdi's movement as the first phase of the revolt (1881-1885). It defines the Mahdiyya movement and its leader. Furthermore, it analyses his foreign policy and the main reasons of this revolt. It also discusses the main events that happened during that period.

The third chapter represents the second phase of Mahdist revolt (1885-1899). It starts by The Khalifa Abdullah T'aaychi's life and his internal and external achievements. Finally it ends by the British – Egyptian invasion.

Chapter One  
Geo- Historical  
Backgrounds  
to Sudan

## Introduction

This chapter attempts to give general background to Sudan before the Mahdist revolt 1881-1899. It provides a definition of Sudan with its geographical location. Besides, it gives a general overview of the main ethnic groups that shaped Sudanese people. Also, it introduces the ancient civilizations of Sudan and how its people interacted with different cultural and religious values.

### 1.1. General Information about Sudan

Sudan is an African country which is located in the northeastern part of Africa. It is characterized by diversity in its geographical areas. It also has various ethnic groups. On the other hand, the geographical prestige and the natural resources made Sudan attractive for colonial forces. So, Sudan is the largest country in Africa. The Arabs of Africa pointed out sub-Saharan Africa as *bilad as- Sudan* or land of the blacks.

The word Sudan means black; it originated from Arabic *sud*. During the time of the Nubia Kingdom, about 7000 BC, the Arabs from Saudi Arabia started searching for gold, ivory, fur, and other goods in return for salt, clothes and other trade products. Actually, in the beginning the Arab traders did not give a name for this large area. It was only a land of profits for them, calling it Sudan according to the color of its people (Mach Guarak09-10).

During the colonial period in Africa the land of north-eastern Africa was called Anglo-Egyptian Sudan by the British. The use of the name Sudan was after the independence of Sudan from Britain in 1956(Ekeh 28).

The name Sudan was used commonly to Africa south of the Sahara in medieval Muslim literature. This term has been applied to allude to the broad belt of plains and Savanna land along the Atlantic to the Red Sea and connecting between the Sahara and the forest areas. In English and Arabic it refers to the territory south of Egypt that shaped the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (1899-1955) and the independent republic of Sudan. It was applied in this meaning first during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and used to the African territories which were controlled by Muhammad Ali, the Ottoman governor of Egypt and his successors.

The borders of Sudan were formed by the colonial powers, with few modifications which were drawn after the independence in 1956. It has in common borders with, nine countries, and had a coastal frontier of the Red Sea. Sudan borders the Red Sea to the northeast; to the east has Ethiopia, and Eritrea; to the south has Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, and Kenya; to the west has Chad and Central African Republic; to the north has Egypt and Libya (see map 1).

Sudan includes three regions; Eastern, Central, and Western Sudan. Eastern Sudan consists of Ethiopia, and Eritrea that are considered as the modern states of Sudan which the Nubians and the Iksum kingdoms controlled. Central Sudan refers to the modern regions of Lake Chad, Darfur, Kordofan, and the Republic of the Sudan. Sudan had been a separate country since the coming of the Arabs with Africans to Sudan in the South Sudan, Blue Nile, Mountains, and some parts of Darfur. But the map of Sudan saw many changes because of colonial process. Sudan was the first sub-Saharan African nation to take her sovereignty from the British colonization. After independence, Khartoum became its capital city.

Geographically, Sudan has three different geographical components: a desert northern region, a semi-arid central region and rainy southern region. It has mountains, hills, lakes in the north and the south west and in southern eastern and southern has savannas and grass lands. There are also volcanic lands in Darfur region.

## **1.2. Ethnic Groups**

Sudan is populated by different groups and varied tribes, since the ancient time. They are differentiated by their history, religious and cultural values and their skin complexion. The Sudanese are influenced by the culture of the neighboring countries such as Ethiopia, Congo, Egypt and others who often intermarry with Sudanese. In addition, the Sudanese differ in the way they dress and the kinds of food they eat, how they dance and types of music they listen. They are divided into three distinct regional groups: those of African descent, those of Arab descent and those who have both ethnicities through intermarriages. Arabs make the most part of the population in the country. The other non-Arab groups are Dinka and the Beja people. These groups do not differ only in their descent but also in their religious backgrounds and their regional differences as well. In the west of Sudan we find Baggara people, a nomadic Muslim group with a mixture of Arab and African ancestry. The Baggara classify themselves as Arabs. The south has a great number of ethnic groups with African heritage which are the Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk and Zaned. Unlike the south and the west who are Christians, most people of the north are Arabs and Muslims. The most important of these groups are:

The Dinka is the second largest ethnic group in the country. The Dinka people are found in Darfur, southern and northern Sudan. They are known by their tall body and dark skin. Most of them are farmers and cattle herders. They use in their communication multiple languages such as Luac. They give a great intention to animals especially cattle, they use it in their religious sacrifices,

and even their old stories speak about cattle and sheep as well. The Dinka people engaged in wars with other ethnic groups on land and animals, mostly in Darfur (Essien, and Toyin 04-05-06-07).

The Zaned are the indigenous people of Sudan, or they are known as the blacks. The Zaned belong to Bantu groups. They come from the Central African Republic and the Congo (formerly Zair). They exist in the western Equatorial and in the southern Sudan. They are generally hunters, herders and farmers. They cultivate different types of fruit such as cassava, yams, palm trees, and many kinds of fruit. They are the third largest group among the Nilotic people. They are strict in their traditional beliefs, rituals, and they gave a great respect to the chiefs. Their language is Zaned.

The Nubians are commonly known as the people of the Nile. They live between Northern and southern Egypt. The Nubians speak different languages as Halfawi, Donyolawi and Sukot. They give more importance to art and architecture.

The Beja are the nomadic group who has relation with Bisharin and Hadendowa ethnic groups in northern Sudan and Eritrea. They are regarded as the oldest people who lived in Sudan with the Nuba people. They were always in competition with them, but they could not defeat them because of their raveling's tradition. Beja people gave interestto their traditions and cultures to make them alive for their future generations.

The Arabs were generally merchants, nomads and religious crusaders. Arabs spread their arts, cultures, traditions and religion by intermarriage with Sudanese and by trade. The exchange between African and Arab cultures shaped a new type of identity which gathered the two cultures. Juhaynah and Jalayin people are the largest Arab groups. Arabs played a great role in spreading Islam in other non-Arab ethnic groups. They are commonly found in the areas between the Red Sea and the Nile. They established Islamic schools, madrassas and mosques in their regions, the north. The Arabs have taken important position in the government.

Arab people gave interest not only to their religion but also to their traditional dress which were used by their ancestors. For example, men wear Jaballah, long lighter cloth, and a turban whereas, women wear long dress and in public they do not show their hair and their face. These groups of tribes with their ethnic, cultural and human differences interacted to produce what is known as the Sudanese people.

In Sudan there are over 500 major languages. Arabic is the official language of Sudan. In the south, Sudanese refused to use Arabic in the school curriculum (Essien, and Toyin06-12). Scholars

stated that there are four great language families which are spoken in Africa. Three of them are in Sudan; Nilo-Saharan, Niger-Kordofanian and Afro-Asiatic languages (Anders 53).

### 1.3. Ancient Civilizations of Sudan

The early people of Sudan lived in small groups collectively. They collected wild plants and berries to survive. These people thought that all living things, plants and animals have a spirit. They employed simple tools of stone scrapers, knives, spearheads and fishing hooks. The Nilo-Saharan people developed from gathering to cultivation. They collected seeds from grass, roots, and fruit of various plants, then cultivating them in fertile lands. On the other hand, other peoples started raising domestic animals among them goats, sheep, and dogs. Throughout time people started building permanent houses along the Nile shore. In addition, as a result of the suitable conditions of living as a drier climate of the region, people began migrating from Sahara to the Nile. That created a need for new forms of social and political organization. Hence, kingdoms and royal dynasties developed along the Nile in present-day Egypt and Sudan (Uganda 18-19). Sudan witnessed several civilizations in different periods of time. Among them are:

#### 1.3.1 Kush Civilization 3100 B.C- 350A-D

Kush civilization is in Nubia. Ancient Egyptians called it (Nubia) Kush. Nubia is considered as a true African country in which the black kings and Nubian civilization is the oldest in the world. Anders stated in his book, *A Concise History of South Sudan*, that:

The Nubians were Sudanese nomads who originally lived in Sahara from 10000 to 6000 BC. Those Nubians were closely related to the living in South Sudan today. Over the centuries, some Nubians migrated into Kordofan, the valleys along the Blue Nile, westward to Darfur and to the south. All are Nilo-Saharans, related through their common ancestors in Nubia and the Sahara, together with those who live in Nubia and in east Sudan today. (20)

Kush (Nubia) is separated into two parts Lower Nubia and Upper Nubia. Lower Nubia is in the north nearby Egypt whereas; Upper Nubia was to the south nearer to the starting point of the River Nile. The Egyptian named the area south of Egypt along the Nile as Kush. During the time of the prophet Isaiah, Egypt was ruled by pharaohs of Kushite origin. Also, the word Kush is found in the original Hebrew Bible and it is spelt Cush in English bibles. But the Greeks overset the Hebrew word Kush to the Greek word Aithiopia which means Black face (Anders 22).

The Kushite are the people who built the oldest cities in Africa south of Egypt. Kerma is regarded as the oldest city of the Kush civilization. It was set up during 2500 and 1500 B.C. It is considered as the earliest non-Egyptian African city. Its rulers were buried with huge number of sacrifices. Kerma is full of buildings which were used for religious activities and for storage as well. It is believed that this settlement played an important role in exports from the southern Middle Nile into Egypt.

### **1.3.2. Napata Civilization c.750 BC- c.270 BC**

Napata civilization was established around the ninth century as a rebirth of Kushite civilization. It was a strong kingdom which controlled the whole of Egypt. The leaders of Napata are known as Pharaohs. They were greatly influenced by Egyptian customs in which they use Egyptian gods in their decorations with African features. They aimed to encourage the Egyptian culture in Kush. Kushite Kings regarded themselves as protectorates of the Temple of Amune and the Egyptian religion and tradition. The King Alara combined Upper Nubia in around 780 B.C. This civilization is established in Napata at Jabal Barkal. Taharqa was one of the most important kings who captured the borders of Nubia, Libya and Palestine. But unfortunately for him the Assyrians overcame him at Egypt, and then he returned to Napata where he died. After that this civilization marked its end in 720 (Levy and Zawiah 21-23).

The Kushite kings were very strong; they conquered Egypt and ruled it for about sixty years. But after their defeat in Egypt, Meroe became the capital of the Kingdom of Kush instead of Napata (Anders 23-24).

### **1.3.3. Meroe Civilization 350 B.C- 350 A. D**

Meroe civilization was born in around 400 B.C. It survived nearly 700 years. It was generally based on farming the banks of the Nile. They built pyramidal tombs of their Kings and Queens of Meroe. This civilization was found at the time of Greek and Roman domination of Egypt. After several attacks by Roman Empire in 23 B.C and Nomadic groups, Axumite Empire of Ethiopia overcame Meroe in about A.D 350



### 1.3.4. The Funj Kingdom 1504AD- 1821AD

According to some experts, the origin of the Funj people was referred to cattle nomads from Ethiopia, borders of the Blue Nile, and others from further south along the White Nile. They were not Arabs and not Muslims (Levy, and Zawiah23-24). They were black and descendants of the ancient kingdom of Alwa. In 1504, the Funj Kingdom established by Amara Dunqas, who was the first mek, sultan or king. Its capital was Sennar, south of the present- day city of Wad Medani (Anders 46-47). This civilization was established by the Funj.

The Funj kingdom set up its administrative center in Sennar. It was considered as the only organized empire with standing armies. But, with the emergence of the Ottoman Empire; the Funj Kingdom began to lose its power, because of the competition process over fertile land and resources (Mach Guarak 22-23).

The Funj Islamic state destroyed the Christian Kingdom of Alwa in 1504 and allied with Abdallab. Thanks to this alliance, it lasted till the second decade of the nineteenth century (1821). But it witnessed its decline because of the internal rivalry between the powerful provincial rulers. That competition decreased the power of the sultanate. Through time the soldiers of Muhammad Ali Pasha, the Khedive of Egypt moved toward Sennar. This kingdom marked its end, when the last sultan of the Funj, Badi VI gave up to Ismail Pasha at the opening of his capital. In that time Sudan became under the rule of the Turku- Egyptian rule (1821-1885) (Abdelwahab 88).

## 1.4. Religions in Sudan

Religion has played major roles in the social life of Sudan since ancient times (before Christ). Sudan is a land of various religions as:

### 1.4.1. Christianity in Sudan

After the ruin of the city of Meroe, three states had risen as its political and cultural successors which are: 1) Nobatia in the north; its capital is Faras which is Egypt in the present day. 2) Maqurrah which is at Dongola. 3) Alwah, (Alodia) that is in the middle of old Meroe. Its capital is at Sawba. All these three kingdoms were ruled by Aristocratic warriors. These three Kingdoms were called the three Nubian Kingdoms. By the sixth century the Nubian kings started to convert to Christianity. Christianity came to Nubia through the process of trade between Christian Egypt and Nubia. Not only that, but also it emerged because of the stampede of the Christians, from Egypt to Northern Nubia, from the persecution of Roman Emperor during the third century. By the 5<sup>th</sup> century Christian community increased in the capital of Nobatia, Faras. In the 6<sup>th</sup> century

missionaries, called as Abyssinia, had come from Ethiopia to Soba where there was a Christian community. In around the sixth century A. D Christianity became the dominant in the northern Sudan. The Nubian Christian Kingdoms set up churches and many cities. They encouraged literacy in Nubia. The Bible was translated to Nubian languages. These Christian churches lost power since their early part of evolutions because of the annexation of Muslim Arabs to Egypt, in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. With this the Nubians became unable to be in contact with their mother church in Egypt, in Alexandria.

#### 1.4.2 Islam

Thanks to Arabs Islam came to Sudan. They migrated from Arabia to North Africa bringing Islam with them. The first contact between them and the Nubians was because of trade in spices, slaves, and the search of jobs. They intermarried with Sudanese and converted them to Islam. In addition, during the rule of the Funj kings, Islamic teachers migrated from Egypt to North Africa and taught the Qur'an to the Funj people. They even established schools for that purpose. Thanks to Islam Northern Sudan became united. The kingdom in Alwa became the Islamized kingdom of the Funj by 1504 (Anders 33-45).

#### 1.5. Sufism in Sudan

In the 12th and 13th centuries, Sudan saw various Sufi *turuq* (orders) that came from Egypt, Hijaz and Maghrib. These *turuq* made great effectiveness of Sufism on Islam in that area. Ibrahim said that: "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" (38).

Sufism played a vital role in bending Sudan. The most important *turuq* in Sudan are:

The Shadilyya is the first Sufi order known by the Sudan which belongs to Abi Hassan Al-Shadily. It entered Sudan early before the establishment of Funji Sultanate (Chaker 16-17).

The Qadiriyya is founded in Baghdad by Abd-el-Kader Al Djilalini in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. It entered Sudan by Taj-edine Albahari in the 16th century. It is the most popular order in Sudan.

The Summaniya created by Abdelkarim Summany. It was a branch of khalatiya dating back a few hundred years after the advent of Qadiriya. It entered Sudan by Ahmed Tayeb Weld – Bachir, who came to Sudan and got married.

The khatmiya at the end of the Funj Sultanate, the khatmiya order was introduced by Muhammad Al Mirghini, who is regarded as one of Mecca's scholars in the period (1815- 1819) (Mustapha Hassen 428-429).

### **1.6. Colonial Sudan (1821- 1881)**

Muhammad Ali, during his rule (1805-48) in Egypt, followed an expansionist foreign policy. After the conquest of Hijaz in 1811-19, Sudan was invaded by the Turks from 1820-1821. Unlike the other military expeditions of Muhammad Ali, the conquest of Sudan was durable that remained over 60 years.

The economic and political conditions of Egypt paved the way to the conquest of Sudan. During the rule of Muhammad Ali, Egypt witnessed many reforms on the side of industry. He made a mercantilist economy that created a need for new export markets for Egyptian commodities. Furthermore, the process of enlarging the mercantilist structure increased the demand for new sources of raw materials.

Sudan is the neighbor of Egypt and throughout history it had been thought that Sudan is rich in gold and other material resources. Accordingly, Sudan became natural target for Muhammad Ali's economic desires. In addition, the trade links between different parts of the Sudan and Egypt- Darfur, Kordofan, Sinnar and the red sea regions- were uncomfortable due to hostile tribes and in order to be able to trade their goods, they had to protect these trade routes. Furthermore, Muhammad Ali sailed up the Nile in order to extend trade with central Africa.

However, the political factor is considered as the most important reason for the Egyptian conquest of the Sudan.

The new elite that ruled in Cairo after the defeat of the Mamluks in 1811 had to strengthen and maintain its superiority over the old social and political order, to do so, it had to destroy the remaining Mamluk fugitives who had found shelter in the northern Sudan and who constituted a permanent threat to Muhammad Ali. The conquest of the Sudan and destruction of the Mamluks would reinforce Muhammad Ali's partial independence from the Ottoman Empire. (Moore-Harell 9-10)

**Map 1 General Map of Sudan**

<https://www.google.com/search, General Map of Sudan, Atlas & source /Su. html>. (May 3, 2018).

Another reason for the conquest was military. Muhammad Ali wanted to remove Albanian troops and bring new modern European armies (particular of Napoleon's). Native Egyptians were working as peasants; they had not been recruited in the army for centuries. On the other hand, the Ottoman Empire did not allow the export of the Mamluks from Turkey even Muhammad Ali had abolished those who were in Egypt. For that reason, he wanted to enroll the slave of the northern Sudan to serve in his new army (Moore-Harell 09-10).

In the early nineteenth century, the Ottoman viceroy of Egypt, Muhammad Ali, started his process of colonization on the Sudan. He invaded Sudan in 1820, and in 1821 Muhammad Ali was able to annex all the territories of Sinnar. He captured Kordofan from the Fur Sultanate and established what came to be known as the Turko-Egyptian regime in Sudan (1821–85) (Sidahmed, and Alsir 08).

The Egyptian expedition army of 1820 was divided into two forces. The first army was ruled by Muhammad Ali under the command of his son, Isma'il Kamil Pasha. His forces started with the northern Sudan, they conquered Dongola in which they pushed the last of the Mamluks. After that, they moved to the south, Sinnar, where they faced a strong resistance as the Shayqiya. Badivi, the last Sultan of the Funj, surrendered to this armed invasion in June 1821.

The second army was called "the Daftardar". It was governed by Muhammad Bey Khusraw. Unlike the first army, Muhammad Bey moved south west and conquered Kordofan, but he failed to colonize Darfur. In the beginning these forces of colonialism were strongly resisted by several uprisings against the Turks as the revolt of Jalayin that was suppressed by Daftardar in 1823 (Robert S., Richard A., and Carolyn 432). He desired to set up his own army which had no connection to Egyptian society. Muhammad Ali wanted to increase not only his military but also his economy (Rossi 04). In addition, Muhammad Alis's aim was to get access to slaves for the army and gold (ElZahab wa Elrigal). Also, he wanted to take advantages of Sudan's natural resources (Elnur 06).

According to P.M. Holt and M. W. Daly stated that "Muhammad Ali's (the khedive's) primary motive in undertaking the invasion was probably political." In other words, they argued that the khedive was very much concerned by the presence of the remnants of the Mamluks near Dongola and was intent on annihilating them. Another reason suggested by the two historians was that Muhammad Ali Pasha was anxious "to revive commerce" between Sudan and Egypt. They consider the exploitation of

the gold mines and importation of slaves as additional reason for the conquest but not primary ones (qtd. in Abdelwahab 89).

The two reasons, which are stated by the two historians, are considered as the most important factors for conquest.

From 1830s onwards vast Sudanese areas became controlled by Egypt and known as the Egyptian Sudan. But Muhammad Ali did not achieve his economic goals. Few minerals were found and small amount of gold with low quality were collected. Even the majority of slaves that were brought from Sudan died on their road to Egypt and who could reach came with diseases that made them incapable to adapt to Egyptian climate (Moore – Harell10- 11).

After the control of the Turku –Egyptian soldiers on Sudan in 1821, taxes, land, minerals and slaves were captured to help the mighty Ottoman military. The latter aimed to unite the divided Sudan under the rule of Egypt which was under the rule of Ottoman Empire as well. Egypt wanted to remove the Maliki customs and impose the Hanafi School of Islamic law. However, the Turku Egyptian occupiers made a great effort to create a system depending on the Hanafi law, but most of the Sudanese remained loyal to Maliki customs. According to one British observer “during the sixty- three years of Turko- Egyptian rule over Sudan, “nothing flourished except the slave trade and disease” (Fathi Massoud 52). During that period Sudan witnessed few improving on the social and economic side and the Sudanese people remained weak (Fathi Massoud 52).

When Muhammad Ali conquered Sudan he started using the Sudanese as troops in his army and as slaves in his agricultural and industrial enterprises in Egypt. Thus, the Black Sudanese began to resist the Turku-Egyptian conquerors. This pushed Muhammad Ali to enroll the fellahin (Egyptian peasants) into the army. At that time in response to these events, some black Sudanese, who enrolled for government military service, started to show their dislike to the new government by establishing armed revolts against it. In 1844, the Medani was the interesting armed forces that could kill some Turkish army officers.

In addition to the military exploitation, Muhammad Ali used the Sudanese minerals especially gold. Besides, the system of taxation was the most offensive policy of the Turkish administration in the Sudan. The oppressive taxation, the cruel ways of collecting taxes and the maladministration of the Turkish officers disordered the economic life of the people; the government imposed that the taxes should be paid in cash. All these economic oppressions made Sudanese leaving their homes to Darfur to aid other revolts against the worse situation as the revolt of 1822. Also, in1874 Darfur witnessed a revolt against the Turku- Egyptian rule and they were able

to remove the Fur Sultans. Some Northern towns saw some military actions against the Turks as in 1865 there was a serious military revolt in Kassala (Ajayi 142).

The Turku- Egyptian reign of the Sudan set up a central administration. It was directed from Khartoum with sustain of a standing army. It was separated into provinces under the hikimdar, or Governor- General in Khartoum. Each province was managed by a provincial governor, a mudir, and subdivided into administrative divisions in settled areas. During the rule of the Turku- Egyptian, a more complex bureaucracy developed as specialized departments or divans. The latter were provided by administrative employees and Egyptian clerical in Khartoum and the provinces. Not only did the Egyptians take senior posts but also the Sudanese could participate in administration at local level. A centralized judiciary system was formed under the protection of *a qadi umum al-Sudan*, chief justice for the Sudan. This system depended on shari'a courts and dealt primarily with personal affairs.

During this period, Sudan had lived for the first time developments in the means of transportation and communication (steamships and telegraph). The Turkish rule created a successful system of agriculture in the Sudan (Sidahmed, and Alsir08-10). They developed existing crops and introduced new systems of agriculture that could increase the production. These products were exploited by Muhammad Ali's government and exported to Egypt. Sudan's Sultanates became one administration. Hence, major changes happened during this era, it witnessed new forms of political organizations and religious institutions and widespread trade. All that made the region attractive for immigrants from different regions.

In the time of the Turku- Egyptian regime, all the groups of the tribes of the Sudan unified into one political system. But some tribes rebelled against the Turku- Egyptian conquest as the Beja who organized their own tribal structures under more centralized chieftains (Sidahmed, and Alsir08-10).

Sudan became under the rule of the Turko-Egyptian by the end of the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This rule lasted for sixty years after the decline of Sennar. This period is considered as a seismic shift. The Sudanese people were abused by the Turkish governors and their Pashbuzugs (mercenary soldiers). The Turks were very cruel and severe in gathering taxes, chasing slaves, and overcoming the Sudanese's rebellions which were committed against the Turk's maltreatment. This cruelty and violence created deep anger and increased hatred in the hearts of Sudanese towards their colonizers. They became more rebellious. Sudan was prepared for rebellion at the beginning of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. A Dongolawi native, Muhammad Ahmed (Later nicknamed

Al-Mahdi), a religious follower of the Sammaniya Sufi sect, announced this revolt ( Abdelwahab 90).

### **Conclusion**

As a conclusion, Muhammad Ali Pasha s campaign in 1821 on Sudan led to the emergence of a unified political entity that has become known today as Sudan. He applied the new rule in his large country through imposing the central administration system of Egypt, which led to the spread of chaos and corruption, in Sudan. Furthermore, he deteriorated the internal resources such as gold and slaves by using them as tool to achieve their goals. In the light of this situation, the sporadic uprising that began with resentment against the new rule started until the beginning of the Mahdist Revolt, led by Muhammad Ahmed Al-Mahdi.





# Chapter Two

Chapter Two: The First  
Phase of Mahdist Revolt

1881-1885 under

Muhammad Ahmed

Mahdi

## **Introduction**

Sudan was part of the Egyptian Empire. In 1820, it was invaded by Muhammad Ali's army. During his rule Sudan became united into one political unit instead of diverse ethnic groups and political units. The Turku Egyptian government was established in 1824 at Khartoum, and the other parts of Sudan were divided into provinces in which each province has its governor. Muhammad Ali exploited Sudan and used its people as soldiers in wars against Syria, and as slaves in Egypt and other Arab countries.

After Muhammad Ali, Sudan was under the rule of Khedive Ismail who aimed to stop the slave trade. The latter wanted to apply the European regime in Sudan, aiming to develop its economy. But his projects were costing a lot to Egypt and led to the decline of Ismail. As a result to the harsh exploitation to Sudan's resources, the Sudanese people exploded in the Mahdist Revolt. The latter was led by Muhammad Ahmed Al-Mahdi (Abba Idris09). This chapter traces the first phase of the Mahdist revolution under Mohammad Ahmed Al- Mahdi. It defines the Mahdiyya movement and its leader. Additionally, it describes the foreign policy of the Mahdi. Furthermore, it goes deep in history to look for the possible motives that led the Sudanese people expressing their opposition to the Turku-Egyptian rule in revolution. It also analyses the main events of this revolution and how the Mahdist forces could overthrow the Turku- Egyptian rule and established their own state based on purer form of Islam.

### **2.1 Al -Mahdi's Biography**

Muhammad Ahmed Ibn Abdullah was well-known as the Sudanese Mahdi. According to Holt, P.M. (1989), He was born, on the 12th August, 1844 in an island named Labab, in the province of Dongola, Northern Sudan. His family stated that have ascending line of the Ashraf (descendants of the Prophet Peace Be upon Him). He claimed to be a descendent of the prophet. Muhammad Ahmad's father, Abdullah, was a boat-builder. During his childhood his family migrated to the south, exactly, at Karari, in which there was a suitable wood (qtd. in Abba Idris09). According to his presumed family tree he was:

Muhammad Ibn Abdullah, Ibn Fadl, Ibn Abdel al- Mula, Ibn Ali, Ibn Hassab al-Nabi, Ibn Sbr, Ibn Nasser, Ibn Abdal-Karim, Ibn Hassan, Ibn Own Allah, Ibn Nagim al-Dine, Ibn Osman, Ibn Musa, Ibn Abi al-Abass, Ibn Yunis, Ibn Osman, Ibn Yaqub, Ibn Abdal-Gadir, Ibn- Hassn al-

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Asskari, Ibn Olwan, Ibn Abd al-Bagi, Ibn Sakhara, Ibn Yaqub, Ibn al-Hassan (al Sabt), Ibn Imam Ali, Ibn Abi Talib. (Abdelwahab91)

He is a famous person in Sudan. He is a religious and pious man. In Khalwas, in Khartoum and al-Gezeria, he learned the Quran and religious sciences with Faki Wad Isa and then with Sheikh Muhammad a Khier near Berber. After that he studied with Sheikh Muhammad Sharif, the grandson of Sheikh al-Tayeb, leader of the Sammaniya Tariqa (sect), he became one of his students. After that he grew to the position of sheikh spreading the Tariqa's teachings.

Muhammad Ahmed went to Aba Island on the White Nile where he became a well-known person for his religiosity. In this area Muhammad Ahmed announced that he was the "Expected Mahdi", the person who would come at the end of time to purify the Islamic faith. P.M. Holt narrates the story of the appearance of al-Mahdi as follows:

In 1881, Muhammad Ahmed dispatched letters from the Island of Aba on the White Nile informing the notables of the Sudan that he was the "Expected Mahdi", the divine leader chosen by God at the end of time to fill the earth with justice and equity, ... , he was then a man of about forty years of age. Since childhood, he had been deeply religious ... he had studied at the feet of more than one Sudanese teacher and was initiated into the Sammaniya order. His rigorous asceticism had led him to quarrel with one of his teachers, but for some years past he lived in Aba gaining among the surrounding tribes an increasing reputation for holies and supernatural powers. (qtd. in Abdelwahab92)

Abba Idris Adam in his article "the Intellectual Tussle between the Sudanese Mahdi and Muslim Scholars" stated that Shibeikah, M. T. (1978), affirmed that Muhammad Ahmed centered on Sufism and self-contentment after he kept the holy Quran in memory and studying the fundamentals of Islam in the mosque. He thought that the human souls must be cleaned from the corruptness of this world. When Muhammad Ahmad moved to the island of Aba, he devoted his life to meditation and worship. In 1876, Muhammad Ahmad began apprising his family members and his partners that he had a heavenly selection to liberate his people. As a result, the Mahdist popular revolt began in 1881, and by 1885 he set up his own Islamic state named al-Dawla al-Mahdiyya (the Mahdist State) (Abba Idris 09- 10).

## Chapter Two: The First Phase of Mahdist Revolt 1881-1885 under Muhammad Ahmed Mahdi

The two historians, Ibn-Khaldun and al- Gaddal, stated that religion, particularly in the Sudan, has an essential role in the birth of al-Mahdist movement. As a result of Sufism the Sudanese people became more religious. Muhammad Ahmed al-Mahdi was as any person who grew in this religious environment; he spent most of his time in learning and instructing religion. Sudan, before the Turku Egyptian rule, was considered as an Islamic region, during the Funj sultanate. The Sudanese people had religious personality even before the coming of Islam to the Sudan. They were highly pure in their faith. In addition to that in the period of al-Mahdi Sufi leaders were given much respect and social status, for that reason most of the Sudanese wished to be in this position. So, the social and the religious environment amalgamated to produce al-Mahdist movement.

Hassan B. Abdelwahab mentioned in his book, *Influence (supremacy) of Religion on Sudan's Foreign Policy Decision-making*, that:

Al-Mahdi was considered by P.M. HOLT as "A' Mujaddid", a renewer of the Muslim faith." This Mujaddid was mentioned in one of the sayings of the prophet in which it was stated that every one hundred years, a renewer of the faith would appear, and that this Mujaddid would revitalize Islamic faith and return it to its original state of purity. Muhammad Ahmed al-Mahdi asserted in his letters, correspondence, and statements that he was sent to "establish the Faith and the custom of the Prophet". (93)

### 2.2. Proclamation of Muhammad Ahmed, the "Mahdi"

During the Turku –Egyptian rule (1821-1881) Sudan suffered from oppression. Mohammad Ahmed proclaimed himself as a Mahdi In order to fill the earth with justice. He sent a letter to the Sudanese people.

In the name of God the compassionate and merciful, praise be to God our gracious Lord; and prayer and peace upon our Prince Muhammad and his followers!

From the zealous servant of his Lord, Muhammad the Mahdi, son of Abdullah, to his friends in God to the faithful who believe in God and His book.

My beloved, it is known to you all that faith in God and peace with Him is more to man than his own soul and all he possesses , and

more than family and brethren , God hath said, " Family and children will not profit you in the day resurrection", and as for whom his relations separate from God, his love cannot last, but the anger of God is upon him, and he will then the anxious to offer up even his parents and belonging as a ransom; but his prayer shall not be heard.

For such men God hath said that they shall be enemies even of their own beloved, but the faithful will not be so; therefore he who believes in God and the prophet ought to follow the truth and consent to God's judgment, and purify his soul to prepare for the great day. Whoever is longing for bliss ought to ask the same for his own parent and brethren; for every man who is wise knoweth that the day of death is nigh, and the world to come is the world everlasting, wherein we shall behold the prophet and his followers and our beloved ones; while the disobedient will be suffering the wrath of God. He is wise who asks salvation for his own soul not looking back with regret upon earthly ties, but yielding them up for the sake of God. For Godhath said in His Book, 'No pity ought to be shown towards your relations and friends when it is question of setting up the faith, for the love of God.' Love of money and pomp and pride are the first causes falsehood in the heart of man, and falsehood flourishes therein as plants in know their future; and the liars also are aware of their fate.

... The Government now is just as it was in the days of the Prophet, and our times are as those of the Prophet, etc.

21 Regeb, 1301 (May 17, 1884). (qtd. in Fradin 165-166)

**2.3The Mahdiyya:** In order to understand and analyze a specific religious movement, many historians such as Muhammad Said al- Gaddal think that it is necessary to study the existing religious environment in a specific place or country. He proved that the Islamic religious milieu and Islamic thought were the responsible for the rise of al-Mahdist movement. He argues:

The emergence of political resistance under a religious umbrella was a common phenomenon in a number of nations at certain stages of their development. All the uprisings in the Islamic world drew their support from religion. Ibn Khaldoun asserted that the Arabs, particular, “never attained kingship except through a religious form, be it a prophecy or a great religious effect.”. (qtd. in Abdelwahab92-93)

The Mahdiyya was a revolt against the Khedive of Egypt in the Sudan. The name of the Mahdiyya refers to its name Mohammad Ahmed Ben Abdullah. It established an indigenous territorial state in the northern part of Sudan removing the Turku Egyptian administration. Holt identified the Mahdiyya:

It is the Movement of religious origin which was assisted in its development by political, social and economic stresses in Sudanese society and which accomplished a political revolution- the overthrow of Egyptian rule and the establishment of an indigenous Islamic state. Holt goes on to say that "the Mahdist movement was short-lived, and in the long run, unsuccessful, but its history of less than twenty years shows a rapid political development from the proclamation and establishment of a messianic Islamic community in the Sudan to the creation of an autocracy, based on the hegemony of one tribe and working through an administrative machine which owed much to Egyptian models". (qtd. in Hassan155-156)

AlMahdiyya movement was essentially a *djihad* that could gain the approval of all Muslims. Its main objective, and as mentioned in the Mahdi's letters and proclamations “it was to revive and return to the pure and primitive faith of Islam ... and to spread it to the whole world, by force if deemed necessary”(qtd. in Boahen 39). It has gone through two essential phases, the first one that was led by Muhammad Ahmed. It lasted from 1881 till 1885. The second phase was, from 1885 to 1889, under the rule of Abdullah.

## **2.4 Al-Mahdi's Foreign Policy**

The Mahdist foreign policy was clear. Al Mahdi in his relation with the outside world regarded the Muslim countries as lands of peace. Whereas, the non-Muslim world was considered

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as the land of war; and they should fight war (jihad) against them. The people who did not believe in Al-Mahdist faith were regarded as Kafir (infidel).

The Khalifa, the Mahdi, was a political, military and spiritual leader as well. Also, his authority was dominant in all matters either political, judiciary, financial or military. In order to run his different duties, he established a bureaucracy of civil servants. These servants were Sudanese and foreigners, prisoners of war as well. They were asked to execute the daily matters of the state. These daily matters were discussed by the Shu'ra council in the mosque. The latter included from eighty to a hundred men. The persons of the council met each day to discuss all affairs of the state. When the council wanted to discuss the important matters of the state, the judges, perfects, and governors of provinces was asked to attend the meeting. In this council policies was proposed but the Khalifa is the person who had the right to take the last decision, even the meetings of the council were done by the approval of the Khalifa. There was no power in the council over the Khalifa. Hence, the authority of the Khalifa was holy and superior as well.

During the time of Mohammad Ahmed, Al- Mahdi, the Shu'ra council included the Khalifa who was the first superior rank and the head of Al- Mahdist authority. The second rank was the prime minister; his brother Yaqub was in that position. His son Osman sheikh Addin was the third on the hierarchy of the state. He was followed by the caretaker of Bait Al-Mal (the treasury, Qadi al -Islam (the judges), military, emirs and a host of lesser bureaucratise. These ranks shaped the heart of the khalifa's Shu'ra council.

The Quran, Sunna, and the instructions of Al- Mahdi were the bases of the foreign policy. The political council played an important advisory role. This council has the same religious convictions and visions about Islam, Al-Mahdiyya, and the world with Khalifa. That's why sometimes, the council agreed on the decisions of the Khalifa. For example, all the members of the council agreed on the principle of jihad.

The idea of jihad is the heart of the Mahdist foreign policy. The Khalifa used this policy to spread the faith to all Muslim countries, starting with Egypt. The Khalifa went to use strict measures (policies) to reach the goals of Al-Mahdiyya (Abdelwahab 99-103).

### 2.5 The Reasons of Revolt

From 1821, Sudan was governed by the Ottoman government of Egypt, but by 1880 the people of Sudan like the people of Egypt engaged in war against Rauof Pasha, an alien ruling aristocracy. This war was a revolutionary movement that was led by Mohammad Ahmed Almahdi. There were many reasons for the eruption of the revolution and were the subject of many writers and historians. Hajj Hamad Muhammad Khayr and Maymuna Mirghani Hamza wrote a critical



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paper in which they evaluate the works of Peter Holt and Mekki Shibeika on the Mahdiyya (Warburg 28). The two writers criticized the view of Holt which said that the principle reason of the Mahdist revolt is the maladministration of the Turkish. Additionally, they stated that Holt ignored the transition of power from the indigenous ruling classes and their collaborators to the revolutionary class; this is considered as the important aspect of the Mahdist revolution. On the other hand, Holt focused on analyzing the local factors which played an important role in the success of Mahdist revolt, and he refused the opinion that exaggerated the Turkish maladministration reason and neglected the other ones (Warburg 28). Also, Khayr and Hamza, commented on the view of Shebeika claiming that he insisted on the religious aspects (Warburg 28). They saw that the Mahdist revolution came as a result of widespread changes that accrued at the local level and rolled into one (Warburg 28).

Other historians, particularly in Egypt, such as Ahmed Izzat ‘Abdal-karim’ rejected the maladministration of the Egyptian rule as a crucial cause that led to the Mahdist revolt. He expressed his view on his published work in 1959. He claimed that the aims of Ahmad ‘Urabi in Egypt and Muhammad Ahmad al-Mahdi in Sudan were the same, both of them aimed to drive out the foreign unbelievers (al- kufar )who were ruling them. Furthermore, according to Yahya, Egyptian historian saw the two movements of Mohammad Ahmad Al- Mahdi and Urabi are different aspects in which he proved that Urabi regarded the union of Abd al-Qadir al-Jaza’iry and Mohammad Ahmad Al- Mahdi was against the Christian invaders. In fact Urabi, in exile, expressed that he wanted to name the Mahdi as governor of Sudan, and on the other front, on the opinion of Yahya, Al-Mahdi saw the liberation of Egypt from the foreign unbelievers as a first step for a united Islamic state. Hence, Yahya saw the Mahdiyya as part of a large popular Islamic revolt against western colonialism and denied the views that said the Turku Egyptian maladministration was responsible for the revolts.

The eruption of the Mahdist revolution was due to diverse reasons as religious reasons, political, social, and economic components. However, its success was because of Egypt’s weakness and the union of the sultanates and the tribes, of the southern Nile Valley which were governed by the Funj sultans, under the Egyptian rule. Continually it was considered that Turku Egyptian Sudan as a ‘Prelude to the Mahdiya’. In another study about the northern riverain Ja‘alayyin, Anders Bjorkelo ended: “the Turkiyya struck the final blow at the political and economic vitality of the Nile Valley north of Kharthoum” (Warburg 28-29).

The causes of the Mahdist revolt remained the subject of permanent discussion. The general agreement about this issue saw that the Mahdist revolt came as reaction to Turku Egyptian

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exploitation which became worse by Sudanese opposition to the crusade against slavery. General Gordon had the same view in which he said, in his way from Cairo to Khartoum: “he was convinced that it is an entire mistake to regard the Mahdi as in any sense a religious leader: he personifies popular discontent” (Bassil 48). Noah Bassil in his book *the Post-Colonial State and Civil War in Sudan*: The origin stated that the religious dimension to the popular revolt cannot completely be denied like the strength of their faith in the Mahdi that made so many people, from Darfur and else-where in northern Sudan joining the Mahdist rebellion(48).

In addition to that, in relation to the conditions in Sudan, the religion of Islam was one of the first main religious reasons. During the period of Turku Egyptian rule many people in Sudan were not strict in their religion of Islam. There was too much laxity; even the Egyptian administrators were lacking strictness, because they were following the Hafanite sect, whose Islamic code was not strict, unlike the Sudanese Malakite sect that was not relaxed as the former. There were some Egyptian administrators who were violating and drinking alcohol. This negligence r of the rulers in the faith in Sudan led to the rise of the Mahdist movement which came to change these situations in Sudan.

The second motivation of the rebellion was the maladministration of the Turku Egyptian rulers in the Sudan. The Sudanese people were unsatisfied with the foreign rulers, because the Egyptian rulers were exploiting the Sudan’s resources for their benefits (Okoth 268- 269). In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; Britain colonized Egypt as a result of Egyptian debt to the British and French creditors. During that period Egypt was obliged to follow the policy of production and export of cotton for textile factories of Lancashire (Bassil 49). As a result of tax crisis, the Egyptian Khedive Ismail between 1863 and 1879 imposed high taxation and exploited the natural and labor resources of Sudan. In addition to that, some Egyptian administrators exploited the law of official taxes and used it for their private benefits. They were demanding more than the capacity of the Sudanese. On the other hand, the Turku Egyptian rulers stopped economic projects as the Egyptian-Sudan railway, the telegraph lines connecting Egypt with Sudan and the expansion of agricultural production.

The third one was the effort of Ismail khedive with his European administrators, Baker and Charles Gordon, to prevent the slave trade struck to become as an important source for the economy of the Sudan. Additionally, Charles Gordon, who was appointed as governor of Sudan in 1877, enforced the Sudanese to be as Europeans in their behavior. According to this behavior, Gordon, besides his policy of demolishing the economy of the Sudan imposed his culture on the Sudanese. Furthermore, the Sudanese became no longer satisfied with the Egyptian rule particularly after

## **Chapter Two: The First Phase of Mahdist Revolt 1881-1885 under Muhammad Ahmed Mahdi**

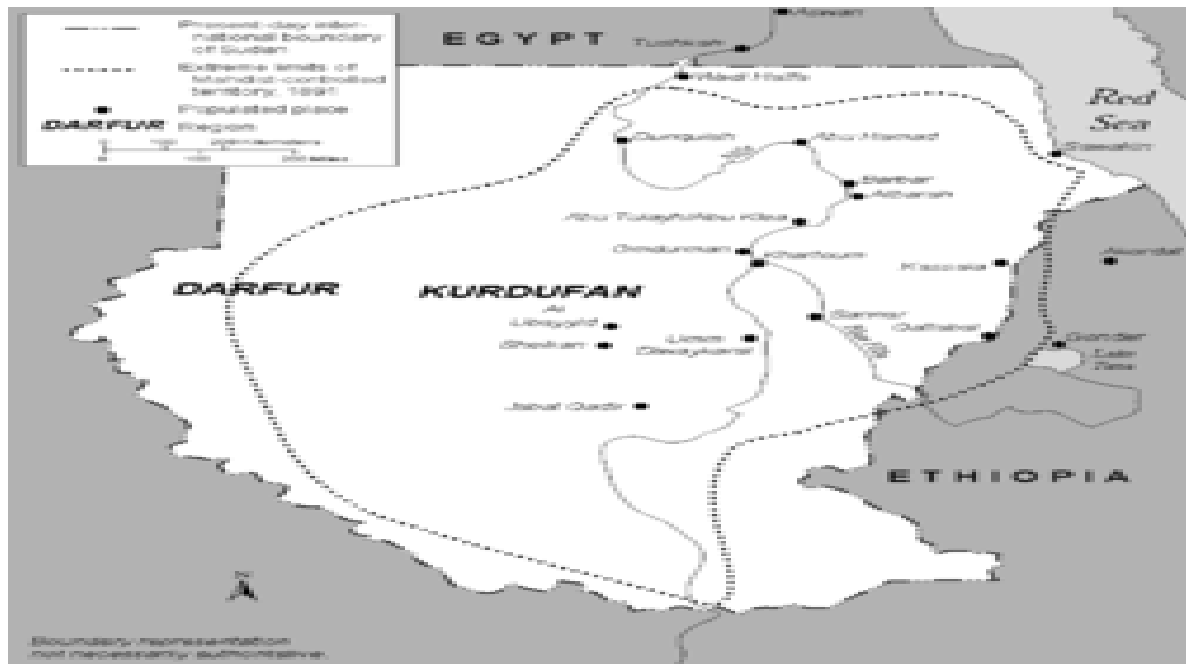
Gordon brought additional European administrators in the Sudan and allowed the punishing of slave traders. Thus, they determined to lash out in order to regain their lost rights and value.

At last, the change of rulers paved the way to the eruption of the revolution. In 1877, Ismail khedive was replaced by his son Muhammad Tawfiq. As a result of this change, the Turku Egyptian rulers lost their prestige and Egypt became weak because of the opposed forces of Colonel Urabi Pasha, who affected the revolution in the center of power. On the other hand, the Mahdi exploited the chance of the weak position of the metropolitan, who governed the Sudanese provinces. Besides that, the Gordon's declaration contributed to the rise the Mahdist rebellion (Okoth269).

### **2.6 The Main Events during the First Phase of Mahdist Revolt (1881-1885)**

The Mahdist revolution rooted to the vacuum of leadership in the Sudan which was because of the removal of Khedive Ismail in favor of his son and the governor General Gordon. The two leaders were too powerful and strong they could create some stability during their reign in Sudan. But by the end of their rule everything had changed; Gordon's successors in the Sudan lost their authority; the Sudanese were obliged to pay high taxes for the benefits of Egyptian rulers even slave trade was practiced again. In these conditions the religious leader Muhammad Ahmed appeared claiming that he is the Mahdi, "a divine leader chosen by God to fill the earth with justice and equity" (Krueger 21). The Mahdi aimed to establish a righteous theocracy regime instead of the corrupt Turku Egyptian Rule. "He had been invoked to establish the Fatimid dynasty and the Almohads in Moorish Spain" (Krueger 21). At that time Sudan was ruled by Rauof Pasha. In response to the Mahdi's rebel Rauof Pasha sent a punishing expedition to capture Muhammad Ahmed, leader of the rebel (Robert, and Michael 13). Egyptians considered Muhammad Ahmed as enemy to their authority in Sudan. However, they tried to put him down before he spread his power but they failed to capture him. In August 1881 (Krueger 21), Rauof's army forces sailed at Aba to prevent Muhammad Ahmed from spreading his authority but they were easily defeated by the Mahdi's Ansar (Robert, and Michael 13). This expedition was not the last effort to capture Muhammad Ahmed. Al-Mahdi faced a lot of attacks and Almahdi could defeat them (Krueger 21). After this confrontation the Mahdi and his followers moved and crossed the White Nile to the Qadir. The Mahdi and his Ansar were very strong, they made several victories. In December 1881, the Mahdi's forces were able to defeat Rashid Bey, Governor of Fashoba with 1400 Egyptian troops (Holt and M. W. 63-66). After this defeat it became clear for the Egyptians that the Mahdi army is well prepared. In May 1882, another serious attack was defeated by the Ansar. This expedition was led by the governor general, German telegraph official, Giegler. Despite of his great experience and strength; he could not destroy the Mahdi and his Ansar. Consequently to these victories the Mahdi gained more value (Holt and M. W. 63-66).

## Map 2 the Mahdist Sudan



<https://www.google.com/search, Mahdi revolt in Sudan, maps & source /Su. html>. (May 3, 2018).

At that time Egypt was in a bad situation. Besides to the Dual control of Britain and France, Egypt was suffering from the corrupt rule of the Turks. When the Egyptian army was busy with fighting the British army, the Mahdi seized the opportunity as much as he could (Robert and Michael 13-17). When the Mahdi was at Qadir, he had been on the defensive attack in autumn 1882; he overtook an aggressive war against Kordofan. It was depicted as a jihad. In this conflict the Mahdi could defeat all the Turko- Egyptian forces only the troops at Bara and El Obeid could endure the war. On the other side, Mohammad Sa'id, the governor at El Obeid, had taken early protections. After this battle the Mahdi's camp was separated onto two parts: one moved back to Qadir led by Abdallahi and the second part moved his camp near to Elobeid, whereas the Ansar landed to blockade the town. Simultaneously, a new Mahdist force was established. They were known as jihadiyya instead of Ansar. By the end of 1882, the situation of Bara and El Obeid dropped; the troops of Bara surrendered to the Mahdi forces in January 1883 and became loyal to the Mahdi and on 19 January El Obeid surrendered to the Mahdi (Holt, and M. W. 66- 67).

When Egyptians knew about the problem of El Obeid determined to launch their offensive attack and they appointed William Hicks or Hicks Pasha as chief of staff in the new Egyptian army. He was helped by the British Officers and moved towards Khartoum. On 26 June he was able to defeat an attack of Baggara Cavalry. Then after three days, Hicks made another attack. Colborne depicted the start of the battle "Onward they came, waving their banners ... but the Khedive's

## Chapter Two: The First Phase of Mahdist Revolt 1881-1885 under Muhammad Ahmed Mahdi

troops, encouraged by their English officers, had no fear. They had seen the charm protected enemy bite the dust under their fire ... But Nordenfeldts and Remingtons are no respecters of creeds" (qtd. in Robert, and Michael 18).

Another victory for the Mahdist revolution was the battle at Shaykan on 05 November 1883. It is regarded as another turning point in the history of the Mahdist revolution. The Ansar were able to eradicate their enemy expedition, which was organized by Tawfik and government that included the remnants of Urabi's troops and directed by a British officer, Hicks Pasha, of al-'Obeid. As a result of this victory, the Mahdi could destroy the Turko- Egyptian rule in the western Sudan totally. He also set up the Mahdist rule in the provinces of Kordofan, Darfur and Bahr al-Ghazal (Boahen 39-41). After the victory of Shaykan, the Mahdi directed Muhammad Khalid, commonly named Zaql, as ruler of Darfur and on 23 December 1883 Slatin offered to him. In 1884, the Mahdi conquered Dayem Al-Zubayr. With these victories more people and areas became followers to the Mahdi like the Beja tribe (Holt and M. W. 67-68).

After the battle of Shaykan, Britain changed its policy towards the Sudan; however, in the beginning, the British government regarded the Sudan as an Egyptian concern, but after this struggle it started to regard it as imperial interests. The British government asked Egypt to remove its forces from the Sudan and sent the General Charles Gordon to be sure that the withdrawal fulfilled (Boahen 41). Through this action, the Sudanese understood that Egypt put down its responsibility to Gordon's authority.

On 18 February 1884, Gordon was at Khartoum, after recognizing that there is no chance to associate with the Mahdi he suggested that Indian troops be sent to hit the Mahdi in the Sudan. He also wanted the British troops to be at Khartoum, but London refused his suggestion. With this situation it became impossible for the fallback of Egyptian troops (Holt, and M. W. 68-69). During that time the Mahdi moved towards Khartoum, leaving El Obeid. After a long blockade, the Mahdi troops attacked the town and captured it where they killed Gordon on January 1885. Thus, they were able to end the corrupt Turku Egyptian rule in the Sudan. When the Mahdi and his Ansars controlled Khartoum; they considered this victory as one in a series of conquests throughout the Muslim world. After a short illness the Mahdi died on 22 June 1885.

## **Conclusion**

The Mahdiyya between the years (1881-1885) developed from a movement of religious protest into powerful and aggressive state which commanded the Sudan from 1885 to 1898. It based its administrative financial and judicial institutions and its legislation on the dual foundations of the Qur'an and the Sunna. The Mahdi made his relation with the external world severely ruled by the *djihad*. He was using this policy of *djihad* against the leaders of the world, like the khedive of Egypt, the Ottoman Emperor and the emperor of Ethiopia. When the Mahdi died, he was succeeded by Khalifa'Abdullah. The latter kept the policy of the *djihad* on the two fronts against Egypt and Ethiopia (Boahen41).

# Chapter Three

The Second Phase of  
Mahdist Revolt under  
Khalifa Abdullah El-  
Ta'ayshi 1885-1899

## Introduction

In Islamic system the caliphate's institution was established after the death of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Since the Mahdiyya was a religious movement, Abdullah El-Ta'ayshi became the new head of community after the Mahdi's death.

### 3.1. Abdullah El-Ta'ayshi's life

Abdullah El-Ta'ayshi belongs to the tribe of Ta'aisha which is a sub-fraction of Baggara tribes, one of the tribes known after the Arabs entering to Darfur in the fourteenth century, the Baggara believe that their ancestors had entered Darfur from Tunisia and Fezzan Abdullah was born in South Darfur in 1864. He was the eldest son of Muhammad Ibn Ali al-Kawar and had four brothers. It seemed suitable for him to settle in the land of Ta'aisha and married from them, but soon there was an acute dispute between the grandfather of Abdullah and the leaders of Ta'aisha, and then Muhammed's father headed east and built a nook in the land of Rizeigat. (Mac Micheal 274-275).

In the midst of this religious atmosphere, Abdullah Ibn Muhammed, was known as Torshin. The word Torshin in the dialect of Baggara means the wild buffalo to indicate the stoutness and potency. Abdullah took the religious status of his father after his death. His father advised him to resort to some sheikhs on the Nile to study Quran and then migrate to Mecca. ( Ismail 96 ).

After that, the family of Abdullah decided to go to the Hajj during the period following the march of the Khedive armies to Darfur in 1875. Then, Abdullah El-Ta'ayshi met Mohammed Ahmed al-Mahdi.

Abdullah El-Ta'ayshi, came from western Sudan. In 1881 he had the first place in the heart of Mohammed Ahmed because he was the first who believed him. He was the first supporter of Mahdi. When the Mahdi appointed the caliph Abdullah El-Ta'ayshi as his first successor, El-Mahdi put the general management responsibility to him. In addition, he gave him other duties as writing letters, publications and general command of the army. Finally, Abdullah El-Ta'ayshi became El-Mahdi's right-hand man.( Holt 208-209).

### 3.2. The Caliph's Position in the Period of the Mahdiyya Revolution

Immediately after El-Mahdi death, the caliph Abdullah held a meeting with some princes and dignitaries and spoke to them saying: " Brothers, The Mahdi has died, but our prophet has died previously, and the successors continued his mission, and left them to take responsibility after him, I am his first caliph, who loved and believed him owe allegiance to me on the same path he has



drawn for us to follow his trail and complete his work" (Shuqayr - 640). But the cousin of Al-Mahdi, the caliph Sherif, and his relatives (El-Ashraf) thought: "El-Mahdi has died after he set the foundation of Al-Mahdiyya call, so why we owe our allegiance to Abdullah El-Ta'ayshi who is a foreigner" (Shuqayr - 640). They couldn't manifest these thought or act. We already mentioned that El-Mahdi appointed four caliphs and he placed an ensign at the disposal of each of them. The caliph Abdullah had the blue ensign. It was the largest and most powerful. The green one was the ensign of Caliph Ali Wad Helou. It was the smallest of the ensigns who contained the tribe of Daghim and Kanana. The yellow one was the ensign of the Caliph Sharif. It contained all the inhabitants of the Nile, the Gezira and other parts. If the men of this banner are all in Omdurman, there is likely to be a bitter war between them and the Caliph Abdullah. Abdullah's ensign was the strongest one at that meeting. Ali Wad Hilou was the first to pledge allegiance to the Caliph then Sharif who felt obliged to do that and then Mahdi's sons and his relatives and then princes and dignitaries who were in the session. (Shuqayr - 641)

When the news of the Mahdi's death spread, Abdullah El-Ta'ayshi took care of what might happen to people. So, he sent a leaflet throughout the country saying: "El-Mahdi died and I became in command after him. The death of El-Mahdi increases our contempt for this life and the love of death in the cause of God" (Shuqayr 644).

Upon the death of Mahdi, Al-Ta'ayshi took the sealing ring stamp of El-Mahdi. The Caliph Abdullah did not get the authority by direct compel but he benefited greatly from the ensign that was under his hand and preferred to take allegiance through *Shura*. (Shuqayr 646)

### **3.3. The Conflict with El-Ashraf**

After the Caliph Abdullah relied on his family in power, he had to face the hostility of the Mahdi's relatives and their allies who wanted the caliphate and power to remain in the Mahdi family. El-Ashraf placed their hopes in their close relative, Muhammad Khalid Zaql, the pan-Darfur laborer who did not respond to the orders of El-Mahdi and Caliph Abdullah to emigrate from Darfur to catch up with El-Mahdi Army and the caliph Abdullah to contribute to conquer Khartoum, he remained in Al-Fasher until after the fall of Khartoum and the death of Al-Mahdi. The Caliph continued his request to attend with his army and the reasons now became to owe his obligation and visit the shrine of the Mahdi, and Mohamed Khalid Zaql still sluggish in the implementation of immigration, so the Caliph Abdullah had fears of El-Ashraf's depending on Muhammad Khalid in their dispute with him (Mahdjoub 205).

Muhammad Ibrahim Abu Salim states that El-Ashraf began to correspondence Muhammad Khalid Zaql and prepared the area of Gezira for him and his army, but the vision did not seem clear. When the caliph knew what they intended to do, he appointed a close associate on Gezira and cut off communication between the capital and the West. He sent his amanuensis, Al-Muddathir Ibrahim, to Bara in April 1886 to plan with Hamdan, in order to get rid from the army of Mohammed Khaled Zaql.

In 1891, El-Ashraf's hatred in Omdurman came to the point where they plotted to dispose of the caliph after they lost most of the important positions in the state. The Caliph removed all their sympathizers from the positions of the exchequer and the judiciary. When the caliph Sharif was persecuted and removed from the position he believed to be his right and because of Baggara's control of the situation, the Nile tribes lost their former influence, property and lands. The arrest of Mohammed Khaled Zaql was the first direct cause of public announcement of discontent, which led the Caliph Abdullah to convene a meeting to consider the injustices of El-Ashraf. It is said that the Caliph Sharif mentioned in this meeting grievances suffered by El-Ashraf in a state of anger almost led to fisticuffs. However, the Caliph was able, with the help of Caliph Ali Wad Helou and the judge of Islam, to reach an agreement. But, there has been no change in the positions of the two conflicting parties.

As a result, El-Ashraf became impatient, and they decided to form a secret society to kill the Caliph Abdullah and take caliphate by force. Before the execution of the move, the Caliph Abdullah knew it and took the necessary precautions to secure himself and took turn in the planning processes of abuse to El-Ashraf, when they felt that their secret was revealed they rushed to carry out an armed attack on the caliph before they bullied, so they occupied the Dome of El-Mahdi and the neighboring houses and equipped their followers with weapons and ammunition, the dome of the Mahdi is very close to the house of the Caliph it is separated only by a small street about 20 meters long. The Caliph Abdullah made a counter-movement, handing out weapons and ammunition to his followers and making them fully prepared to face any attack on his life, also some of them were sent to various Omdurman districts to monitor El-Ashraf and prevent the arrival of any reinforcements to them, and ordered his family (El-Ta'aysha) to hold the occupation of the square between his house and El-Ashraf's, and ordered his brother Jacob to reside in the mosque with his army, on the western side of the house of Caliph Abdullah. All these measures were carried out on the night of Monday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November, 1891. The Caliph Abdullah did not rush to attack El-Ashraf but he took a defensive plan. Also, he did not despair of peaceful resolution of this conflict (Mahdjoub 217-218).

The Caliph Abdullah sent a delegation headed by Caliph Ali Wad al-Helou to El-Ashraf called them to conciliate and respond to their demands. El-Ashraf did not accept peace and began attacking the house of Caliph Abdullah. Supporters of the Caliph also responded. The engagement lasted for about an hour (Mahdjoub 218). But Caliph Abdullah was hopeless of reconciliation. For that reason, he had sent another delegation to El-Ashraf to offer them reconciliation and respond to their demands and this time El-Ashraf responded to the offer of the Caliph Abdullah. But first demanded to know the conditions under which the reconciliation would be done. The Caliph's concern was to achieve reconciliation. Thus, he did not set any conditions, but gave El-Ashraf the right to determine the conditions they wanted. The agreement was reached on Wednesday 20 November 1891. The caliph pledged to implement the conditions of reconciliation as requested by them, to pardon all the participants in the rebellion, to give the caliph Muhammad Sharif a worthy place, to give him a position in his council, to return his ensigns back which were taken from him in 1886, and to be allocated to him and his children and El-Mahdi's wives monthly salary from the exchequer (Mahdjoub 219). The Caliph responded to all these demands, but stipulated one condition that was important for him and necessary. This was handing over their weapons and obeying the Caliph Abdullah. El-Ashraf were hesitant to respond to this demand. Despite the reconciliation, the Caliph left the men in the mosque square armed to face any relapse by El-Ashraf.

Despite this conciliation, the Caliph was not sure of the sincerity of the intention of El-Ashraf. After twenty days of reconciliation, the caliph settled on the situation and arrested the leaders of the movement, including Ahmed Suleiman, former finance minister, Mohammad Fawzi Mahmoud, his brother Ahmadi and others. Then, he sent them to Zaki Tamal, who was considered as one of the princes of El-Ta'aysha in Fashoda and ordered him to kill them.

The Caliph Sharif expressed his anger at the killing of his supporters and refrained from praying in congregation and Friday prayer. In doing so, he gave the Caliph Abdullah the opportunity to put him in prison on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March 1892. The court was composed of forty-four judges. It is clear that the Caliph wanted to bring with him the largest number of tribesmen. And the different trends to isolate and condemn El-Ashraf on a wider scale. (Mahdjoub 219-220).

In 1886, Dervish appeared in the area of Qlabat claiming to be the Prophet Jesus, the prospective after the Mahdi. His claim was so popular that some of the early followers of al-Mahdi followed him. It was said that Yunus al-Dakim, the general agent of the same area was inclined to believe him (Abu Salim 35). The caliph was clearly disturbed of this saying. He sentenced them to death and he edited many instruments to refute this idea. In 1889, another person, known as Abu

Gemayzeh, claimed the succession of Othman Ibn Afan, and he created to the caliph many of troubles. He was about to win in Darfur but he died. (Abu Salim 35-36).

**Tribal Revolutions:** Tribal revolt that had faced the Caliph Abdullah representing traditional conflict between local forces and the central force. But, here it is in almost for two reasons, first one; Mahdiyya, by its nature, was against tribal and regional organizations. The second reason was that the tribes were against the policy of mass migrations to the capital. Tribal revolutions continued from the beginning of the Caliphate until 1888, characterized by disobedience and armed defense. These revolutions were apparently aimed at remaining away from central authority and independence from it.

Leader of the Rizeigat tribes called Madebbo was the first to rebel, and the direct motive of his revolution was his tendency to independence from the workers of the Caliph and his objection to immigration to the capital. As a result of the revolution, the devastation and chaos expanded into South Darfur. Madebbo was arrested and killed in February 1887 by Hamdan Abu Anja. In 1886, the Caliph issued an order to the leader of the Shukriya Awad Al-Karim to come and bring the dignitaries of his tribe to the capital. But they did not attend and rebelled. The Caliph arrested Awad Al-Karim. He imprisoned him until he died. Also, he launched an armed campaign to the tribes of Shukriya and scorned them (Abu Salim 34-35).

In general, these revolutions were losing the common objective, which made it easy to eliminate them one by one.

### **3.4. The Caliph Abdullah's Expansions**

Borders of Sudan during the reign of Caliph Abdullah affected with the inability of the Mahdiyya state to maintain these vast territories. It was far from the capital of the Mahdiyya state and the access to it required a power not available to the Caliph Abdullah. In addition, the internal conflicts and the conflict between the colonial powers, especially in eastern Sudan and on the southern border, influenced with the lack of ability to maintain the Mahdiyya's state territories. But the Caliph had continued to invade areas that El-Mahdi began. He sent followers to invade, as follows

The Annexation of Kassala the people of Kassala did not support the Mahdiyya revolution until after Othman Digna, Sufi leader, came to eastern Sudan carrying a letter from El-Mahdi in August 1883. One of their men who had a friendly relationship with Othman Digna went to him and pledged allegiance to him. The leaders of Al-Hadandawa, tribe in Sudan, called and gathered a large group headed towards Kassala. The manager of Kassala, Ahmed Effat, waited for the

reinforcements of the Governor of Suakin, which was subject to Egyptian rule. The secretaries who came to take the city wrote to Ahmed Effat to hand it over. but he decided not to surrender waiting for support. Especially they had only a little grain in the stores. As a result, the garrison of Kassala was handed over on Wednesday July 29, 1885. The secretaries wrote to the Caliph Abdullah in Omdurman and Othman Digna to inform them of the conquest of Kassala. Othman Digna came to Kassala and the Caliph sent him a letter telling him that Al-Mahdi died, and asked him to call his people to renew the allegiance to him (Shuqayr 651).

The annexation of Sennar before his death, Mahdi sent an army under the command of Muhammad Abdul Karim to the siege of Sennar. He arrived on April 18, 1885 and besieged Sennar from the north and sent a letter to the people calling for their extradition. However, at first they did not respond to his orders and entered into clashes with them. Abdul Karim was wounded on his thigh. Thus, he could no longer continue, ordered Mohammed Ahmed Sheikh Idris, Mahdi's soldier, to continue the siege, until they surrendered and pledged allegiance to him on 19 August 1885. Mohammed Abdul Karim wrote to the Caliph Abdullah inform him well news about the conquest of Sennar and the Caliph broadcast the news of Kassala and Sennar (Shuqayr 655).

The annexation of the northern region, the English came out of Dongola on the fifteenth of June, 1885, heading to Egypt, and the Caliph Abdullah was interested to Dongola because of the inability of the people to believe in the call of The Mahdiyya. So, he sent to Mohammed Kheir his worker on Berber to be worker on Dongola too, he advised him to instruct his workers to treat people with kindness, to encourage them to rebuild the runnels and that the Ansar would not be allowed to interfere in their affairs, and that *zakaat al-fitr* should be taken from them, as the caliph asked him personally to go to Dongola and support its people, Mohammed Al-Khair sent the forefront of his army under the leadership of his nephew Abdul Majid Muhammad Khojali to Dongola, and he controlled it on August 26, 1885 (Shuqayr 656).

The annexation of the Equator despite the revolution of The Mahdiyya, the Egyptian government maintained the Directorate of the Equator, Karamallah (one of the Mahdi's workers) crawled on its border and was sent to Amin Bey in May 1884 a letter from El-Mahdi asking him to surrender as Salatin and Lipton did, but Amin Bey refused to surrender. Karamullah conquered the city of Amadi in November 1884, managed to control it and sent again to Amin Bey demanding extradition and threatened to crawl the land. Amin Bey sent a message to the Egyptian government via Zanzibar asking for help, and while he was waiting for what he had requested in February 1886, he received a letter from Nubar Pasha hinting at the decision of the Egyptian government to evacuate Sudan and choose between leaving the Directorate or stay, Amin Bey and those with him

decided to stay in their positions. Amin's decision is bad for the English government because his loyalty to the Egyptian government prevents the implementation of its programs, which is to reduce the Egyptian authority in the Directorate of the Equator in order to control it later, the English government conducted Stanley's military campaign to oust Amin Bey from the Directorate of the Equator, at first they appeared as the person who wanted to save him and broadcast that he was in danger, and that if he was left alone, he would soon be his destiny as Gordon Pasha's, so Amin decided to withdraw in April 1888.

Ansar led by Omar Saleh resumed the crawling on the Directorate and arrived to Al-Laddo, which Amin Bey has left and then they attacked Rajjaf in November 1888 ( Abderahmane Rafia p 154-157).

Thus, the southern border fluctuated between victory and defeat because of the battles that took place in order to occupy the other centers that belonged to the Directorate of the Equator between the forces of *Ansar* and tribes spread south of Rajjaf east and west.

It can be said that the Caliph Abdullah spent the first part of his rule in securing his caliphate and subjugating internal front, by suppressing internal strife especially El-Ashraf, and the elimination of the tribes which opposed his rule, and continue the conquests that began during the reign of El-Mahdi, by annexing and subjecting them to the Mahdiyya, and once he finished of that until he faced the greatest danger, the external danger threatens the Mahdiyya state from all sides.

### **3.5. The External Wars of Caliph Abdullah**

From the outset, the Caliph took the policy of conquest and propagation of the call, in continuation of El-Mahdi's plan, Egypt was the first target as intended by El-Mahdi, and before the army walk he must warn them. He sent leaflets to the people of the countryside and all the maritime people, inviting them to submit to The Mahdiyya and to obey its orders. In 1887, Caliph Abdullah sent four messengers with three letters to the Sultan the Khedive Tawfiq, the Queen Victoria , and Abdul Hamid. In these letters the Mahdi asked them to embrace Mahdia and warned them to send his armies to annihilate them, if they would not accept. However, the response to these letters did not have written form, but it was only oral by Naum Shaqayr stating, "...those kings your master dared to address are highly prestigious to give up and reply him..." on the other hand Caliph Abdullah had boasted of these letters and printed so many copies and distributed them to his workers and princes (1011).

The Caliph Abdullah, called Tawfiq, The Khedive of Egypt, to embrace Mahdia and to follow his orders "...we felt pity for you that why we issued this letter before Mahdia's armies

reach your marine areas and Egyptian country to invite you to God and submit to be one of the most cherished cleric to help Islam and to fight its enemies disbelievers...” (Shaqayr 1013).

The Caliph Abdullah also, in his letter to the Queen Victoria, asked her to convert into Islam and to embrace Mahdia “...I invite you to convert to Islam, if you do that and believed that no God but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah and pursued the Mahdi peace be upon him and surrendered to me then I’ll welcome you and to survive form the hell and be safe and we share it all ...” (Shaqayr 1015).

The Caliph Abdullah also sent a letter to Sultan Abdul Hamid. In this letter, he spoke about the his revolution in Sudan and asked him to not follow Britain, which is against Islam, and obey his orders saying “...answer our messenger who is the messenger of Allah and his messenger and Mahdia by handing over to us and do the duty of obedience and either fight against disbelievers then drive them out of the land of Islam like Egypt and others or join us to help religion and to cut the remnant of disbelievers...” (Shaqayr 1020).

Caliph Abdullah through his letters wanted to spread his ideas by introducing and calling for Mahdia. He also addressed the tribes of Najd, Hijaz, King of Abyssinia and Muhammad Al-Sunoussi, thus by finishing the warnings, now he must direct the armies to the conquests. (Shibeika 403-404).

Caliph Abdullah waged several external wars against the people who did not believe him. He broke out war with Abyssinia, Egypt, and Italians to spread his idea of the Mahdia.

The war against Abyssinia the border between Abyssinia and Sudan was unclear and the movement between the two countries was continuous. This movement resulted in many wars between the Egyptian administration in Sudan and Abyssinia. The Abyssinians entered wars with ansar because of the territories bordering the two states (Gedaref and Qlabat), the Caliph's armies succeeded in defeating the Abyssinian forces in the battle of the Qlabat in March 1889, which ended with the death of the King of the Ethiopians John, and Menelik took his place. He signed a truce with the Caliph to devote himself to his wars against the Italians.

The war against Egypt When the Sudanese-Ethiopian war ended, the Caliph turned his attention to Egypt. In May 1889, the Sudanese forces under the leadership of Najoumi moved towards the Egyptian border, but were defeated and returned waiting for the supplies, with its arrival, the forces moved quickly towards the Egyptian border. The English government had assigned Sir Francis Gerneville as a supreme commander of the Egyptian army to start defending

the borders of southern Egypt. There were more than three thousand and five hundred soldiers of the Egyptians, Sudanese and English under his command. The battle was between Egyptian and Sudanese forces that took place at the town of Toker. Al-Ansar were defeated and the leader of the campaign (Najoumi) was killed, with about 1,200 of his soldiers and about 4,000 captives (Zanati 142).

In this crushing defeat, the caliph's forces retreated, and in the same year a great famine spread in Sudan and caliph was surrounded by enemies from all sides. So, he could not supply the country from abroad, which led to many deaths (Zanati 142).

The war against Italians after the Italians occupied Sudan with the consent of the British government; they extended their influence in Eritrea to the south and west. This conflict was between Italians and Ansar in December 1893. The Italians were able to occupy Kassala in July 1894, and it remained in their hands until they handed it over to the Egyptian government in December 1897 (Zanati 142).

These wars exhausted the forces of the Caliph Abdullah and his supporters both in internal and external wars. On the one hand, the withdrawal of the Egyptian forces from Sudan was considered a victory which was achieved by the Mahdiyya revolution in its first stage. But the colonial states considered the Sudan after the evacuation as a property available to all aspirants led by England in the looting of that wealth. Therefore, it was difficult to caliph to keep on what the Mahdi achieved.

### **3.6. British-Egyptian Invasion Campaigns against Sudan:**

An Egyptian army was formed under the command of English for the reoccupation of Sudan. The army gathered in the Halfa area. Orders were issued to move towards Sudan from the British delegate without the knowledge of the Egyptian government. When they knew the news, Khedive expressed anger not to consult him but he was forced to submit to the status show satisfaction as he had nothing to do. The Egyptian government requested half a million pounds of the general reserve for this purpose. On this basis, Egypt applied for a loan from the European Monetary Fund, the six governors of the EMF, representing England, France, Russia, Germany, Austria and Italy. The Egyptian government met EMF governors. Four of them agreed and two opposed. The loan was approved and the Egyptian government received the sum and allocated it to the war effort (Churchill 98).

The army was led by an English officer of the Engineering Corps, Kitchner. Ten thousand soldiers fully prepared, and gathered in the south of the area of Halfa. On May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1896, orders



were received for progress in the territory of Sudan. The campaign moved from Wadi Halfa to Okasha. After taking it and fortifying it. They took the desert road and the Nile road towards Ferka. (Churchill 98). A battle took place on June 7, 1896. The number of Sudanese was not more than three thousand. The result was that eight hundred Sudanese were killed, including their commander. (Churchill 99). Five hundred were wounded and six hundred were captured and the rest of the army retreated to Dongola. (Churchill 99). The governor of Dongola (Walad Bushara), found that he could not withstand the invaders, so he abandoned his city and Kitchner entered it without any resistance.

The Egyptian army extended the railway from Wadi Halfa across the desert towards Abu Hamad. After the conquest of Dongola, the expedition was resumed, but before that, in February 1897, England sent a mission to Addis Ababa, which successfully concluded a treaty that included no assistance from the Abyssinians.

After the success of the Dongola campaign, the British government ordered Kitchner to prepare for the southward advance. The Egyptian army took control of the area of Abu Hamad. The Ansar liberated Berber and was seized by the creeping army on 6 September 1897. Some of the Ja'alin tribes joined the invading army and besieged the Ansar garrison in Atbara. The attack on Atbara began and the battle ended with the defeat of the Ansar army. After the Battle of Atbara, the Caliph mobilized his forces of about 50,000 fighters armed with bayonets in the Karari plains at Omdurman (Shibeika 555). On September 2, 1898, the Battle of Omdurman took place and the Caliph's army was destroyed. More than 11000 were killed, in addition to 10000 wounded and 4000 prisoners, Kitchner arrived at Omdurman. The Caliph Abdullah with some of his army was fled to the west (Shibeika 555). After Omdurman's battle, Kitchner raised both Egyptian and British flags side by side. Britain's Foreign Minister Lord Solsbury suggested that the flags of Britain and Egypt raised together in Sudan. Lord Cromer attended the meeting of the British Council of Ministers in London on August 25, 1888, in which the policy of lifting the flags was set. On August 2, Lord Cromer sent a message to his deputy, Reneel Rudd in Cairo. A month before Kitchner entered Omdurman. Rudd informed the Egyptian government of the decision to raise the British flag next to the Egyptian flag. Otherwise the Egyptian government must abide by all the advice provided by the British government in the Sudanese affairs. This illustrates the emergence of British ambitions in Sudan. Kitchener dug the grave of the Mahdi and sent his remains to the British Museum as a revenge for the death of Gordon (Churchill 100)

After Kitchener's takeover of Omdurman and Khartoum, he ordered his immediate march to Fashoda after he received news of the arrival of white men. Kitchener knew with information

what he had that they were French. He arrived at Fashoda on September 19, 1898. He met French commander Marchand. Kitchener stressed the Egyptian rights to the lands occupied by Marchand and demanded his evacuation. While the French commander held his presence in compliance with the orders of his government. It was worth mentioning that both the English and the French exchanged positions in Fashoda. The English abandoned the principle of the permissible property on which they founded the treaty of May 14, 1892 with Leopold of Belgium. The French abandoned the theory of Egyptian sovereignty over Egypt. The situation in Fashoda worsened. It led to the threat of a war between England and France in Europe. But soon French realized that a war between France and England would have serious consequences for them and their property. The Marchand forces were weak to resist the forces of Kitchener. They negotiated with England to resolve the crisis peacefully on the basis of the call of Marchand from Fashoda. It was on December 11, 1898, this incident was known as the crisis of Fashoda (Shibeika 453-554)

## **Conclusion**

After all these events, in January 1899, Lord Cromer and the Egyptian foreign minister signed the Anglo-Egyptian agreement. This restored Egyptian rule in Sudan, but as part of a condominium, or joint authority, exercised by Britain and Egypt. Thus the Sudanese people's struggle ended.

## General Conclusion

Sudan is an African country that is rich with natural and human resources. Because of its wealth it was the target of several colonial processes. By the early sixteenth century Sudan was ruled by two Muslims; Sultanate the Funj and the Fur .The latter governed Darfour to the West till 1874.While, the Funj Sultanates was based in Sennar. In 1820, Muhammad Ali, the Pasha of Egypt conquered Sudan. During his period the Sudan was dependent province under Turko-Egyptian colony.

In 1881, Muhammad Ahmed Ibn Abdullah (later Al-Mahdi) rebelled against the Turko-Egyptian administration. This rebellion was of social, economic, religious and political dissent. The core idea was to unite the whole Muslim world emboldening a holy war and disposing Turko-Egyptian rule over Sudan. Muhammad Ahmad's aim was more than that of reform or revival. He proclaimed a unique status for himself, being the “Expected Mahdi”. He dominated Sudan from 1881 to 1885. He made several administrative reforms which were asserted to create a different Islamic state.

The unexpected death of the Mahdi in 1885 produced several changes in the core ideology of the Mahdist state. The caliph Abdullah Ta'ayshi resumed the Mahdi's regime from 1885 to 1899. He changed the character of the Mahdist state from a Muslim theocracy to a more 'worldly' one by creating a largely authoritarian state with an elaborate and centralized administration. In that time, the caliph faced internal and external conflicts. That led to the decline of the Mahdiyya state in 1898.That paved the way to the British conquest in 1899 .Thus Sudan became under condominium authority, exercised by Britain and Egypt.

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