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The Equatorial Corps and the Torit Mutiny

No man is sure of his life, the individual is at the mercy of the state, murdering replaces justice. . . . That any force on earth can shake the foundations of this pyramid of power and corruption, of human misery and slavery, seems inconceivable. But thirty years before this day, a miracle occurred. On the Roman cross in Judea, a Man died to make men free, to spread the Gospel of love and redemption. Soon that humble cross is destined to replace the proud eagles that now top the victorious Roman standards. This is the story of that immortal conflict.
—*Quo Vadis*, 1951

Starring Robert Taylor and Deborah Kerr, the 1951 epic film *Quo Vadis* focuses on a Roman general, Marcus Vinicius, and a Christian woman, Lygia, during Nero's reign. Marcus, who embodies Roman power and paganism, falls in love with Lygia, a member of the suppressed Christian community. When Nero blames Christians for kindling the Great Fire of Rome, the matter of religious allegiance becomes an issue of the first magnitude.[1]

Although the movie had debuted more than two years earlier, *Quo Vadis* headlined the April 13, 1954, edition of the Sudanese daily newspaper *Morning View*. Despite the film's long-awaited release in the Sudan, the newspaper reported that the Ministry of the Interior had banned the film. To add insult to injury, the writer reported that to their knowledge, the film had not

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been barred anywhere else. Nevertheless, the ministry justified its prohibition amid speculation that its grisly portrayals of Christians being crucified, burned alive, and gored by ravenous lions could have a provocative influence among Sudanese audiences: "The Ministry of the Interior," the article stated, "has been advised by the censor . . . that the facts of the film are presented in such a manner as to be unacceptable . . . and may well have some inciting effects."[2]

The following year the Sudanese government had a far more serious problem on its hands—the mutiny of the Equatorial Corps at Torit. The Torit Mutiny of August 18, 1955, is the kairotic moment of South Sudanese nationalism and has been commonly used to mark the beginning of the First Sudanese Civil War.[3] While some may have considered *Quo Vadis* and its presentation of history to be insignificant in the wake of the mutiny, history's relevance to contemporary political action was undeniable. With historical narratives providing templates for action and important backdrops to the political milieu, the sociopolitical developments of the time could appear like scenes in a larger drama. As Oliver Allison stated in a 1949 edition of the *Sudan Diocesan Review*,

> All the Sudan's a stage, and all the men and women in it players. Whether we like it or not . . . we are actors and not merely passive witnesses on the Sudan stage at this particular moment in its story. The plot is developing rapidly and whether the drama that is being staged will develop into a tragedy, a comedy, or a triumph . . . is hard for us to judge.[4]

For many in the coming years, Sudan became a stage on which dramas from Sudanese and biblical history were reenacted or threatened to do so. The mutiny became one such occasion, when mutineers looked to defend themselves from another chapter of "subjugation" from the North, a history embedded in slavery.

The Torit Mutiny was more than an emancipatory action to prevent this history from repeating itself; rather, it was also a moment in which members of the Equatorial Corps—which was established amid the Egyptian Army's presence and Islamizing tendencies—refused to be transferred and replaced by northern soldiers. Although Christian sentiment was not the mutiny's main catalyst, the British who created the corps saw Christianity as an element of protecting the South from Islam. This sentiment is essential for understanding the mutiny as a moment when colonial religious visions had violent, separatist, material consequences that actualized in a widening

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chasm between North and South and a closer union between a diversity of southerners.

THE EQUATORIAL CORPS: RELIGIOUS ORIGINS

In many respects, the June 1910 transfer of the Lado Enclave spurred the formation of the Equatorial Corps. Although Charles Gordon had made Lado the capital of Equatoria, the Mahdiya effectively isolated it. Mahdists prevented steamers from reaching the town, and by the time Mahdist forces entered Lado in 1888, the town was empty. After the Congo Free State became a personal possession of Belgium's King Leopold II, he annexed almost half of the southern territory from the Western Nile bank to the Congo. In May 1890 the British recognized Leopold's authority over the enclave in exchange for certain trading rights, but in accordance with a subsequent agreement between the two countries, the Lado Enclave was set to be transferred to the Sudan government on Leopold's death. On June 10, 1910—following his death—the enclave was incorporated into the condominium.[5]

Reginald Wingate did not want to see Islam in the enclave. Wingate began his position as Sudan's governor general on December 23, 1899, and served in that capacity for over sixteen years. He enjoyed a close relationship with Catholic bishop Franz Geyer and in late 1904 urged him to begin work in Wau, a South Sudanese center for the Egyptian Army and a site with a Muslim presence.[6] H. Karl W. Kumm, who after studying Islam's spread in Nigeria played a key role in founding the Sudan United Mission, opined that the British government assisted Islam's transmission among "pagans" in Bahr el-Ghazal through the military. Though the military was recruited from non-Christian, non-Muslim communities, once the men enlisted, they were forced to swear allegiance to the Khedive, received circumcision, and were made Muslims.[7] Other Islamic elements permeated military structure: Friday was the day of rest, soldiers' children were educated by a Muslim *malam*, and the Koran was taught.[8] Rev. Archibald Shaw wrote in his diary from the CMS station at Malek, "It is sad to think that by taking the country under Anglo Egyptian rule we have already begun to force Mohammedanism on the people." Shaw cited several pieces of evidence to support his claim, including the facts that five hundred Muslim soldiers and junior officials had been brought into the country, 150 "natives" had been recruited into Sudanese battalions, and the Koran formed the basis of schooling in the Sudanese battalions. "It is time our hands were strengthened with

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recruits. . . . At present the natives can only conclude that Mohammedanism is the religion of England."[9]

On March 1, 1911, Wingate wrote a letter to Eldon Gorst, consul general of Egypt from 1907 to 1911. Writing about the Lado Enclave, Wingate shared that when the condominium had first come into possession of the region the previous June, "there was a considerable influx of recruits which we much required to make up the strength of the XIVth Sudanese." But for some unknown reason, he continued, the supply of recruits had virtually disappeared. Wingate opined,

> that the system which prevails in Sudanese Battalions, of turning all recruits into Moslems . . . has something to do with it, and this leads me to the consideration of the desirability of . . . replacing our Regular Troops by some Territorial system . . . reorganization would afford of getting rid of the Moslemizing influence in the shape of Egyptian Officers and fanatical Sudanese N.C.O.'s, and very gradually dropping the Moslem conditions which prevail in all Sudanese Battalions of the Egyptian Army.[10]

Wingate's proposal to create a non-Muslim military unit was a radical one, given Islam's centrality in military culture. Religious impulses aside, locally recruited troops offered several advantages; they would be less expensive, speak the language of their stationed district, and know the country better than outsiders. As Equatoria province bordered Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, and the Congo, it was also in the administration's interests to secure the South's borders.[11]

In three years' time the local recruitment policy had been implemented in Yambio and Tembura, where another company took over in 1915. The administration's socializing objectives were clearly reflected in the corps's cultural and linguistic makeup. The unit comprised southern troops and used English as the language of command. Christianity was encouraged, and Islam practically forbidden.[12] When the last batch of northern troops departed from Mongalla on December 7, 1917, the governor reported that he had "removed the more fanatical, super religious Muslim soldiers, jallaba (peddlers) and riff-raffs . . . hoping that the authorities . . . will see that they don't return and . . . keep any old soldiers in Omdurman and generally northern [people] from . . . settling anywhere in the province." His plea to successor C. S. Northcote included an unambiguous reminder of why it was necessary to keep northern merchants out: "if a Jehad [*sic*] is ever started in the Sudan and northern Africa, it would be a great thing if the countries

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south of the sudd were free from it and if we could link up with Uganda which is practically entirely Christian and so have an anti-Islam buffer."[13]

THE EQUATORIAL CORPS

The Equatorial Corps was initially created as part of the Egyptian Army and a process in which regular army units were replaced by locally recruited units. The Western Arab Corps replaced the Camel Corps, the mounted infantry replaced the cavalry, and the Eastern Arab Corps was recruited among Kassala's Beja. Following the White Flag Mutiny of 1924, all Sudanese units were detached from the Egyptian Army and combined in the Sudan Defence Force.

The Equatorial Corps were headquartered in Torit, in eastern Equatoria's Latuholand. While the corps was distributed throughout the South, Torit was a prudent location because of its easy accessibility to East Africa and the Lotuho reputation for their military acumen. They had resisted British rule in the early twentieth century, and after their resistance, ethnographic studies indicated their enthusiasm for joining the army. To balance the vast number of people and warrior traditions of the Nilotic Dinka, Nuer, and Shilluk, the British recruited most of the corps from the Lotuho and other small eastern Equatorian ethnic groups. The corps and police were generally recruited from the Lotuho of Equatoria, the Jur of Bahr el-Ghazal, and the Madi, Moru, and Zande.[14]

The recruitment of members from the aforementioned ethnicities points to the connection between religious and gender politics. Farther south in Uganda, military recruitment was linked to martial stereotypes about masculinity and often involved recruits from Lado. In the newly established colonial army, the British divided the Ugandan contingent into an African battalion and an Indian battalion. The African battalion initially had a Sudanese majority. Ethnicity formed the basis of recruitment, with British officers preferring soldiers from groups perceived to have "natural" military qualities. According to Timothy Parsons, a recruit's value was determined solely by his ethnic origins.[15] In Sudan during the nineteenth century, raiding patterns followed those first established by eastern kingdoms. The Ethiopian borderlands, Nuba hills, and lands along the Bahr al-Arab became the first sources for army slaves. Areas that were attacked had a long history of dependency on state peripheries, and Douglas Johnson has noted that the combination of marginality and dependency made them perfect reservoirs for "martial races."[16]

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The nineteenth-century *martial race* ideology purported that some groups of men were culturally or biologically predisposed to military prowess.[17] Within the martial race paradigm, initial dependency was used to encourage martial characteristics and fidelity to new masters. Once brought into armies, their ethnic and martial peculiarity was encouraged and emphasized, giving them a "vehicle for gaining respect, legitimacy and protection in the larger social order of which they are now, albeit reluctantly, a part." Thus, argues Johnson, peoples on the Sudanese slave frontier became part of a "martial race," which was identified and maintained by a succession of states.[18]

The British believed that developing strong ethnic imbalances in the army would encourage more politically reliable organizations, and that people would be attracted by opportunities that the army provided. In its early years the corps played an active role in subduing several ethnicities: corps artillery was credited with subduing the Lokoya and Lotuho; the corps was largely responsible for pacifying the Nuer and Dinka in Upper Nile and Bahr el-Ghazal provinces; and district commissioner Jack H. Driberg led his Equatorial Corps (which included Acholi soldiers from Uganda) against the Didinga and Toposa. In 1925, Egyptian mamurs and battalions were withdrawn, and the old Sudanese battalions disbanded, while the responsibility for South Sudan's security was given—under British directions—to the Equatorial Corps and the police. With a British recruitment policy that resulted in an ethnically and territorially divided army, Ahmed El Awad Mohammed has noted, "Each area developed its own politico-military entity."[19]

The aforementioned ethnic dimensions and martial stereotypes cannot be divorced from the religious politics at work in the corps' formation (namely, protecting the South from Islam). While the Nugent School staff may have sought to encourage among their students a martial, Christian consciousness, the Equatorial Corps was a different expression of the same project—a cadre of South Sudanese men purposed to confront the spread of Islam.

* * *

Torit County's Catholic mission was situated in a mountainous region that belonged to Chief Lotila. Fr. Fanti made the first attempt to perform mission work among Acholi soldiers stationed at Torit, and when Bro. Faustin Cosner arrived at Torit, he immediately set about the work of teaching some Sudanese government soldiers in carpentry. By the early 1920s, there were

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at least a few Catholics in the corps barracks. Protestant missions also targeted southern soldiers. At around the same time the Catholic mission in Torit was getting off the ground, Rev. Archibald Shaw requested prayer for a military school in the Lotuho district and at Loka for soldiers in the new companies.[20] In his address before the Alliance Club on December 8, 1922, Shaw provided an unambiguous explanation as to why his mission was concerned with fostering a connection with the corps:

> We have been anxious to start schools for the garrison Companies of Equatorial troops which have replaced the Moslem Sudanese troops. . . . The Government . . . decided to allow Christian schools to be started for the Equatorial Companies. . . . It will be a great thing if we have a Christian soldiery in the Southern Sudan. If the soldiers are Christians it will make a great difference in the Government centres, which at present are centres of Mohammedanism.[21]

Insulating the South from the proliferation of Arabic was part of the government's stated plan in January 1930 to "build up a series of self contained racial or tribal units with structure and organisation based, to whatever extent the requirements of equity and good government permit, upon indigenous customs, traditional usage and beliefs."[22] By that point English command words had already been introduced into the Equatorial Corps and provincial police forces, but Khartoum's Civil Secretary's Office stated that more was required. More specifically, it was suggested that increased effort be made in ensuring that men used English as their primary mode of communication exclusive of Arabic, which would mean opening English-language classes—for which mission schools were cited as desired instructors—and efforts by authorities to ensure that men used English when local vernaculars could not be used.[23] As a compelling aside, southern governors were informed in 1931 that while English teachers for Equatorial troops could be recruited from mission schools, they were mandated only to teach English—evangelism would have to occur outside their linguistic duties.[24]

By 1949, Torit consistently had about nine hundred soldiers.[25] In a letter dated August 28, 1954, C. M. Lamb—the acting district commissioner and commander of the Equatorial Corps at Torit—alluded to the importance of religious life for soldiers stationed there. Lamb noted that it appeared that the soldiers did not like the new site allocated for the Protestant church because "it is too far from the lines." While he believed it unlikely that permission would be granted to build the church in the military zone, Lamb

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was shocked at how strongly the soldiers felt about the issue. They appeared to look at the church "as being provided solely for their use. I think this idea has probably grown up due to the [fact] that when it was first built the soldiers of the Equatoria[l] Corps were the only Protestants in Torit and also because they now form the bulk of the congregation."[26]

GROWING UNREST

A series of major developments had occurred since the Southern Policy was instituted in 1930. Egyptian and Sudanese nationalism claims ruled nationalist politics from the 1920s through the 1940s. Sudanese journalism emerged as a force that was free from government control; the issue of whether there was a distinct Sudanese culture (given the country's historical links to the Arab world, Islam, and equatorial African cultures) was debated; and, in North Sudan, an educated class organized for an effective nationalist movement. In 1938, graduates of Gordon College founded the Graduates General Congress (or Graduates Congress, for short). Meanwhile, British policies—particularly the 1933 Closed Districts Ordinance—isolated the South.[27]

In 1942 the Graduates Congress petitioned the British for self-government but was rejected. The rejection created a split within the congress. Activists like Ismail al-Azhari demanded a policy of noncooperation with the British and, consequently, became allied with Egyptian nationalism and Nile Valley unity. On the other side were moderates who mistrusted Egyptian aims and believed that independence might be more quickly realized by working with the British. In 1944 the British tried to control political developments by creating the North Sudan Advisory Council. Two political parties were organized to contest the first elections for the council; al-Azhari's Ashiqqa Party called for independence with close Egyptian ties, while the Umma Party supported total independence. After Egypt's 1946 effort to assert its sovereignty over Sudan, Britain reversed course and conceded Sudan's right to self-determination and government. Sudan was offered union with Egypt or national independence.[28] At the 1947 Juba Conference, northern and southern attendees agreed on the principle of national unity and southern involvement in the legislative assembly.[29]

In 1948 the legislative assembly, an elected body that included northern and southern representatives, was formed. The following year, representatives from Sudan, Egypt, and Britain drafted a new constitution that provided limited autonomy for a united Sudan. The Self-Government Statute was enacted in 1952, providing for self-government after an indefinite period.

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The following year, an Anglo-Egyptian agreement was signed that defined the steps toward self-government and self-determination. Northern parties made a deal with Egypt that removed provisions from the Self-Government Statute. The provisions removed from the 1953 agreement were those that southerners believed were necessary to protect their interests in the period leading to self-determination. Following this exclusion, the Liberal Party was formed and ran in the 1953 elections. Despite its intention to attract members from other parts of Sudan, the Liberal Party's leadership was exclusively southern.[30]

The 1954 creation of the first all-Sudanese cabinet under al-Azhari's pro-Egyptian National Union Party (NUP) accelerated southern political thinking toward self-determination and federalism. As self-government became virtually assured, federation emerged as a condition for southern participation in self-determination for a united Sudan. Northern leaders resisted any concession to southern demands. In August 1955 parliament approved a motion for self-determination, and Sudan became independent on January 1, 1956.[31]

* * *

Following World War II, southern officials and mission employees formed the Southern Intellectuals Organisation. While they initially saw an alliance with the North Sudanese–composed Graduates Congress as the best path to Sudanese independence, Leonardi writes that the almost complete exclusion of southerners during Sudanization in the 1950s fueled a growing sense of southern grievances and political identity.[32] A group of educated southerners formed the Southern Party just before the 1953 elections.[33] In 1954 the Southern Party changed its name to the Liberal Party to avoid northern suspicion that the word *Southern* implied separation. The party aimed to secure self-government for the South and fought for equal pay for equally qualified people from the North and South in similar positions. At its 1954 meeting, its delegates condemned the uneven results of Sudanization and called for national federation.[34]

As early as October 1954—the same month Sudanization results were announced—Marko Rume and Daniel Tongun began holding discussions about the possibility of organizing a widespread rebellion throughout the South. Rume was introduced to politics at the Nugent School and later worked as a secretary in the Liberal Party. Born in 1923, Daniel Tongun was a student-teacher at the Nugent School in the early 1940s and became

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politically active as a government official working in Juba. According to Tongun, there was a general consensus among Equatorial Corps troops in the South that if the region was marginalized in discussions about their political aspirations, they would refuse to be transferred up north.[35] Indeed, Lt. Col. W. B. E. Brown recalled that when the order to Sudanize all British appointments in the corps was received in the middle of June 1954, the handover generated a sense of foreboding: "The news of our impending departure and handover to Northern Sudanese officers caused great shock and dismay among the troops. When I told my Sol Talim, he at first refused to believe it. Eventually having accepted the news he said:—'there will be war down here.'"[36] Rume, assigned to the Equatorial Corps as a cashier, conceptualized the mutiny with Tongun.[37]

In 1955, Saturlino Oboyo of the corps at Torit organized an insurrectional plot. Oboyo, president of the Liberal Party's Equatorial Corps's branch, had spread rumors that northern troops were planning to come South with murderous intentions. In a preemptive move, he tried to organize a massacre of northern officers within the corps. Despite his successful recruitment of noncommissioned officers into the plot, the conspiracy was uncovered on August 6. Oboyo was arrested, and his correspondence and list of coconspirators discovered. In response to the conspiracy northern troops were quickly flown down to Juba. On August 8, amid concerns that southern soldiers were full of anti-northern enmity, the military affirmed its earlier decision to transfer some southern troops to the North and replace them with northern units. Consistent with this order, the No. 2 Company of the Equatorial Corps at Torit was ordered to move to Khartoum on Thursday, August 18. Contrary to the practice of allowing troops' families to move with them, the soldiers were ordered to move without their families or ammunition. This exceptional stipulation exacerbated concerns that the unarmed soldiers could be killed by northern troops on their arrival in Khartoum and that their families would be at the mercy of the newly transferred northern troops.[38]

MUTINY

Rev. Elizabeth Noel, who at the time of our interview was president of the Episcopal Church of Sudan Mothers' Union, had been seven or eight years old in Torit when the mutiny broke out. Her father, who served in the army for eighteen years, was taking tea that morning. According to her account, the order to leave families behind may have provided the critical spark to the

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ensuing conflagration: "The chief commander was talking that all people should get ready to go to Khartoum. And then one of the soldiers said, 'Okay, but why can we go without our family, our property, the arms?' The chief commander said, 'No, shut up' . . . then after . . . one of the captains shoot one of the soldiers. Immediately and suddenly, things bursted up."[39] The soldiers' fear of leaving their families behind may have been historically rooted. During the Turco-Egyptian period, battalions transferring from one garrison to another often left their wives and families behind. Taking over the wives of the garrison that they were relieving, marriages routinely occurred between incoming conquering Sudanese battalions and the wives of the defeated slave garrisons (or formerly enslaved women).[40] If the casus belli was indeed Torit soldiers' concern over what the incoming troops would do with their wives, the mutiny should be principally read as a masculine defense of the domestic sphere.

On the morning of August 18, troops in the No. 2 Company mutinied. Race, in addition to the possible aforementioned gender dynamic, was also at the epicenter of the violence. Engineer Alberto Marino inferred that a racial slur combined with anti-Muslim angst ignited the uproar. Marino, who was in Wau that evening, asked his substitute whether he had heard of what had taken place in Torit. The substitute shared that the tumult had begun when an Arab officer insulted an elderly black sergeant-major, Latada, by calling him a slave. According to the substitute, this was the worst insult a Muslim could hurl on a southern Negro.[41] After the aspersion, an unspecified shooter fired a pistol, and the unnamed Arab who had spoken the slur fell dead. After the killing, "Negro lieutenants, nearly all Christians, joined Latada leading the insurrection. . . . Latada was very brief in his speech, 'The hour of vengeance against the Moslems has come, do you understand? It is war to the end.'"[42] After rejecting orders to embark on trucks to Juba and be transported to Khartoum, the Torit troops attacked North Sudanese officers. Breaking into the armory to gain arms and ammunition, they killed northern officers and committed arson and looting. Shooting began in Equatoria and spread quickly, with mutinies occurring in Juba, Yei, Terrakeka, Tali Post, Rokon, Kajo Keji, and as far away as Yambio and Meridi. The first wave of violence left 361 northerners and 75 southerners dead. Order was restored by September.[43]

Anti-Arab animus was present in the maelstrom. On August 19, Ismal Gemaa of the Forestry Department drove to Tambechi and "told the villagers that the Mondokoro [Arab] Army killed their relatives in Juba [and] they should kill all the . . . Mondokoro in the area." After he conveyed this

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message, forest ranger Mohamed Abdel Karim was killed.[44] Anti-Arab sentiment was also exemplified by an episode in which a woman's husband and ten-year-old daughter were killed in her presence. After their deaths, some people directed vitriol toward the new widow by shouting, "Kill her as she would be giving birth to more Mondokoros."[45] Jonathon Glassman has noted that violence against women is a calculated trademark of racial and ethnic violence, as acts like disembowelment and rape are understood as attacks on the enemy's ability to reproduce and an assault on the enemy's manhood.[46] By targeting those capable of producing more members of the race, the aforementioned anecdote suggests an element of racial cleansing from the war's first clash.

Religious identity was also a murderous motivation in the violence. On August 20 a Lotuho man named Airo Ogwana, a muezzin at Torit mosque, speared a northerner to death near Torit's veterinary offices. He was understood as being a Muslim and thus more associated with the northerners under attack. Court documents state that when antinorthern violence commenced, Ogwana "participated by killing one to prove to his people that he was still a Southerner with no sympathy towards his [associates] . . . in the Mosque."[47] His defense was that "he was frightened by the mutineers who told him that unless he killed a Northerner his loyalty to the South would not be proved" was insufficient to prevent Chief Justice Abu Rannat and the governor general from confirming his death sentence.[48] That the Muslim Lotuho Ogwana killed to prove his southernness illustrates that, even at the war's inception, the question of just "how Southern" a Muslim was or could be was debatable and could present an identity crisis of sorts. That the court documents stated that Ogwana was ethnically Lotuho—an identity shared with many of the principal mutineers in Torit's Equatorial Corps—did not appear to prove or reinforce his southernness in the eyes of those who reportedly threatened his life. In this instance, then, Ogwana's Muslim identity superseded his Lotuho ethnicity, revealing the ethnic and religious politics at play during the mutiny. Ogwana's attempt to ensure his acceptance as a southerner by taking a northerner's life was a sanguinary rite of passage.

Alexis Mbali Yangu includes another instance of religion's role in the tumult in his book *The Nile Turns Red*. Arab troops found some Christian boys wearing crucifixes around their necks. The young men were arrested and fastened to trees for execution. One of the soldiers asked his officer why the boys were not blindfolded, to which the officer responded by taking out his pocketknife, extracting their eyes, and giving orders for their death by shooting.[49] To be sure, there is reason to question the veracity of this episode;

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how was this story transmitted to Yangu if the witnesses were blinded and subsequently executed? There is a long tradition of martyrology in Christian literature, and though his text was not evangelical, Yangu—a senior figure in the liberation movement during his exile (when he wrote the book)—would have found benefit in framing the soldiers in a persecuting light.[50]

Gabriel Dwatuka was the focus of another incident. A Zande born in the Tombura district, he was ordained a priest in 1953. Dwatuka, who had saved northern officers' lives and their families, was in Maridi during the disturbances. One day, after completing morning Mass, five soldiers arrested the priest. Wanted for routine questioning in connection with a civil disturbance, the soldiers ridiculed Dwatuka as he was led into the prison courtyard. He was stripped, spat on, and hit in the face with his own rosary with such force that the necklace broke. The officer in charge then whipped Dwatuka, and after being led to his cell, his plight went from bad to worse.[51] There a rope was tied around his neck and fixed to the window bars so that he could barely touch the ground with his toes. After the officer beat him all over his body, soldiers roped the bleeding Dwatuka to the floor. The officer continued to beat him to the point of exhaustion. "Then," as Dwatuka was quoted two years later, "they kicked me with their shoes in the mouth and on the head and told me to repeat the Mohammedan credo. . . . I didn't and only gurgled in agony." Revived with kicks, he was again lashed and dragged into a large room. Refusing to proclaim Mohammed, Dwatuka was whipped in the throat and lashed again before other prisoners. Through the intervention of the Verona Fathers' Monsignor Domenico Ferrara, he was released the following day.[52]

Presbyterian missionary Marian Farquhar, who was stationed at Nasir when the mutiny occurred, referenced a powerful sermon made amid the troubles. Born in Iowa, she had attended Missouri's Tarkio College and taken seminary courses in Connecticut and New York. In 1945 the Board of Foreign Missions of the United Presbyterian Church of North America assigned her to southern Sudan, and within four years she was headmistress of a government boarding school in Nasir (located among the Nuer, near the Ethiopian border).[53] Farquhar noted that though trouble in Malakal had only lasted a day, many Nuer fled home to Nasir, 140 miles away. "Then came word," she continued, "that two boats were coming up with northern soldiers to 'subdue' us. Specifically to disarm our unit of southerners. And our unit was going to refuse to give up their arms." The northern soldiers were set to arrive on either Sunday evening or Monday morning. A large crowd gathered at church, no doubt sensing the drama of the moment. A

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man named Rial preached that evening and borrowed from John 14:9 in addressing his audience. "Am I going to be one of those," he asked, "who says to Him, 'How can we know the way?' I have lived here for many years and heard this word many many times . . . but has it become TRUTH in my heart? Or will He say to me as He did to Philip, 'Have I been so long time with you and yet you have not known me, Rial?'" That night the first boat came in, quietly. Monday, according to Farquhar, "was one of the strangest I have ever lived." Only four out of thirty-one girls came to school, along with one teacher. "NO ONE was anywhere and you heard no noises of any kind. . . . Breathlessly the few faithful-at-work were saying, 'Wait. . . . Wait until they ask for the key to the guns and you'll hear the shooting.'" However, no shooting came. "We had a good District Commissioner, a northerner, and he handled the situation VERY well, and the people in time came to trust us."[54]

After the governor general told mutineers to surrender, terms were offered, and the army entered Torit with scant opposition. Many who surrendered were executed, and others were imprisoned despite many people's expectation that their cases would be heard. Many were packed into boats and carried to different prisons in the North.[55] "These supreme trials," wrote Yangu, "were the cause of an unprecedented unity among the Southern tribes."[56] And yet, writes Scopas Poggo, interethnic rivalries persisted because earlier officials had not attempted to encourage ethnic groups to move across territorial spaces. To this end, he posits that southern ethnicities did not have a shared position concerning an independent South by the time of the mutiny.[57]

Made over a decade after the mutiny, Yangu's comment was a romantic attempt to frame the mutiny as something that it was not: unified. Presbyterian missionary Dorothy Rankin shared her feeling in November 1955 that "the people in our area, the school boys who have been in school in the South, seemed to have a rather detached attitude toward the situation. As if they don't exactly classify themselves with those who started the trouble—one way or the other."[58] The conduct of the Torit Mutiny illustrated that there was no pervasive social or political ideology uniting southerners at the time. The plan to mutiny at Torit was conceived primarily by Latuko soldiers, and though some soldiers from ethnic groups from the Nile's East Bank participated in the operation, the Latuko were more active. Soldiers stationed at Wau and Malakal were not initially part of the plan to revolt, and though news of the mutiny quickly reached Equatorial soldiers at those two locations, it was thought to be a problem between the Latuko and Arabs. No violence was reported in Bahr el-Ghazal province,

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and in Wau the southern garrison there—along with police and prison wardens—remained loyal to the government and maintained order. Part of a local conspiracy among some soldiers, the mutiny had very little planning for a general revolt. Other mutinies that occurred in the army, police, and prison service (across the South) were made in response to news from Torit and did not comprise a single coordinated uprising. While some mutineers wanted to delay the British exit and others wanted union with Egypt, no one was calling for southern separation yet. Equatoria—where most of the mutineers were based and originated—was most devastated by the violence, while in Upper Nile and Bahr el-Ghazal, the Nilotic Dinka and Nuer did not hold Equatorian police and soldiers in warm regard.[59]

THE LEGACY OF SLAVERY

Although the mutiny entailed the aforementioned racial, religious, and ethnic elements, it also brought forward the history of Sudanese slavery. R. O. Collins once noted that the Sudanese slave trade was as ancient as recorded history. It is probable that Muhammad Ali, longtime Ottoman ruler of Egypt during the first half of the nineteenth century, wanted to add Sudan to his dominions principally because of slaves. In the early 1820s, he resorted to building a new army by gathering slaves from Sudan. During Turco-Egyptian rule (1821–85), the Turks turned to the recruitment of military slaves from South and Central Sudan. The Shilluk, Dinka, and Nuba were targeted as the three principal ethnic groups.[60] The slave trade became massive when the Egyptian government opened the Bahr el-Ghazal and Equatoria provinces. The trade was initially in ivory; traders, often in league with a local chief, raided neighboring tribes for grain and cattle to trade for tusks. Prisoners taken in these raids became enslaved to the merchants, and the traders' zaribas became staging posts for slaves bound for the North.[61]

By the mid-1840s a significant amount of ivory was flowing from South Sudan to the North, and by the following decade thousands of southerners were being transported to Khartoum and Cairo. Private slave armies led by ivory and slave merchants began to appear in the South by the 1850s, and soldiers from these armies and the Egyptian Army went on to form the nucleus of Mahdist forces in the late nineteenth century. Lacking comparable access to firearms, vulnerable southern groups were unable to provide meaningful resistance to the traders' raids. The Dinka were the most valued slaves during the Turco-Egyptian period, with constant penetration into their northwest Dinkaland villages. John Dunn once noted that the Sudan

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garrison's soldiers were among the best in the army. In 1863 they totaled seven thousand regulars and five thousand irregulars.[62]

Western nations began to apply pressure on Egyptian and Ottoman rulers to eliminate the slave trade in the Upper Nile. Under Khedive Ismail—who had a public relations campaign with western Europe—a suppression effort was made in response to British pressure. Ismail ended large government-sponsored raids and ordered selective intervention against the slave trade. Ottoman rulers sought help from Europeans like Samuel Baker and Charles Gordon to bring order and establish legitimate trade. These men had little success. In the 1860s and 1870s there were an estimated five to six thousand slave traders in the South.[63]

Upon General Kitchener's appointment as the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan's first governor general, he instructed his provincial governors to move cautiously concerning slavery:

> Slavery is not recognized in the Sudan, but as long as service is willingly rendered by servants to masters it is unnecessary to interfere in the conditions existing between them. . . . I leave it to your discretion to adopt the best methods of gradually eradicating the habit of depending upon the slave labour which has so long been part of the religious creed and customs of this country, and which it is impossible to remove at once without doing great violence to the feelings and injuring the prosperity of the inhabitants. Without proclaiming any intention of abruptly doing away with all slave-holding, much can be done in the way of discouraging it and teaching the people to get on without it.

Wingate and Cromer shared Kitchener's views. More than merely believing that the social and economic situation demanded the toleration of domestic slavery, they feared that their interference could lead to a resurgence of fanatical Islam.[64]

Slavery's enduring impact on southern Sudanese attitudes toward northerners in the years leading up to the mutiny was evidenced in several ways. Andrew Wieu, a Dinka from Upper Nile province, stated that the British "kept reminding them [southerners] of the Mahdi, the slavery, and all that. They . . . said they came to help the southerners out of slavery . . . this fanned something in the minds of southerners. Therefore, there remained some hatred."[65] In April 1947, southern staff in Aweil wrote a statement claiming that it was too early for southerners to join with northerners "in any form of Community or Parliament." Asserting that northerners would not properly look after southern matters, the staff referenced the early history of

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slavery by noting that "most Northerners . . . still have the habit of saying 'Habbid' [*abid*, or slave] to their southern employees or those who may have some contact with them."[66] An Arab soldier's use of the term *abid* toward a southern soldier was, at least according to Marino's account, the very spark that ignited the mutiny. The salience of slavery in the mutiny was inferred by another observer, who directly identified it as a primary impetus behind the maelstrom:

> It seemed as though the whole Southern Corps was on a man hunt. Their hear[t]s were so filled with bitterness and hatred toward all the northerners. Vengeance, not only for present grievances but that which has been stored up down through the past half century, was now running wild. . . . Many of the tribesmen of Central Africa have the proverbial "elephant's memory," especially when it comes to the Arab atrocities of 50 years ago. Even the youth of today know of relatives who had suffered at their hands.[67]

According to Scopas Poggo, the Kuku viewed rebellion as an attempt to wrest free of Arab subjugation.[68] One story emerged about an old woman who, when rebel escapees had come to Kajo-Kajo with news of the uprising, left her house and called together "her children." Saying that they should run for safety, she spontaneously sang the following words:

> The Turks came in my days
> The Kuturiya came in my days. Many invaders of Kuku came in my days
> And found me still alive.
> I am too tired to run.
> All the fighting has come in my days . . .
> Let my children run.[69]

The woman's mention of the "Turks," which no doubt referred to the history of external predation dating back to the nineteenth century, evinced the enduring impact of that period on southern conceptions of the North. For this Kuku woman, the mutiny was an occasion to recall past abuses by outsiders and to place the rebellion in the same genealogy.

* * *

"For a complete month," said Benjamin Odomiyanf Loful, "we were carried out from the prison every night to a foothill, some three miles outside Juba Township." At that location, said the mutiny survivor, "we were bru-

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tally beaten, abused, and humiliated. The Arab officers trod on us while we were on the ground tied up, legs and hands in heavy iron chains. There they screamed at us in order to make us say that the Northern Arabs were our masters and we Southerners were slaves." According to Loful, several died inside the cells as a result of the ever-increasing punishments.[70]

Many of those imprisoned after the mutiny were housed at locations with connections to the history of Sudanese slavery, establishing a stronger association between that legacy and the events of 1955. Situated on a coral island off the Red Sea coast, Suakin was at one point an important merchant harbor that connected the Nile region and the hinterland savannahs with neighboring Egypt, Ethiopia, and Arabia and with regions as far east as China. Beginning in the fifteenth century, it became Africa's most important Red Sea harbor. In the seventeenth century, however, it declined as a result of navigation around the African continent. Largely in ruins at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Suakin entered a new period of prosperity with the extension of Egyptian influence to the Upper Nile district. The introduction of steamers in the 1860s enhanced access to the equatorial regions, and trading in slaves and ivory became the bedrock of Suakin's success. Slave ships transported South Sudanese from Suakin to the Arabian Peninsula, and after the Egyptian slave market closed in the 1870s, Suakin became the hub of this traffic. The island's fortunes ebbed and flowed during the Mahdist and early condominium years, and after World War I, the development of Port Sudan hastened. Suakin's population declined to roughly six thousand by 1929.[71]

Emedio Tafeng—who received a ten-year sentence after the mutiny—spent seven years in the prisons off the Red Sea, in the old port of Suakin. Of Lotuho ethnicity, the Torit-born Tafeng was recruited into the army in 1930. Trained at Sudan's Military College, he served as a sergeant in the Ethiopian campaign in World War II and was known at the time as the country's best marksman. Among the first southerners to achieve the rank of second lieutenant, Tafeng was sent to Juba by senior northern officers during the disarmament of the Equatorial Corps to collect the salaries for August 1955. Believed to have been one of the ringleaders behind the plot, he was arrested in Juba and imprisoned there without charge. His time in prison not only is said to have strengthened his will to fight for South Sudan's liberation but also had a spiritual influence. It was in prison that Tafeng converted to Christianity and received the Christian name Emedio (Emilio).[72]

Tafeng's conversion, along with comments made by Allison in his memoir, suggest that prison may have been a thriving spiritual space for incarcerated

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ex-mutineers. Bishop Allison records that one of the most memorable confirmation services he could recall was held in a large Suakin prison, where men who had been confined after the mutiny and uprising were held. The commissioner of prisons granted Allison special permission to hold services there during his annual visits to Port Sudan. On one occasion, 120 men belonging to four ethnicities were baptized at Suakin's harbor entrance. On Easter Monday 1958, those who had been baptized were presented to Allison for confirmation and Holy Communion. Following the service, the prison governor remarked with astonishment that he could not "understand how these men could have committed any crime. I have never known prisoners [to] behave so well. They are always singing and often reading their Bibles and praying together." He allowed vernacular New Testaments, prayer books, hymn books, and other Christian literature to be distributed.[73]

Like Suakin sixty kilometers to the south, Port Sudan had connections to slavery. Construction of the port started in 1905, and the first ships began using it two years later. Rather than hindering the economic recovery that was largely predicated on enslaved persons, the condominium government had ignored slavery's pervasive endurance until after World War I. Red Sea province officials acknowledged that nomads who temporarily settled in Port Sudan brought their "servants" with them, and runaway enslaved persons who sought official help were typically placed in the care of sheikhs. Those without jobs resorted to crime and prostitution. Between November 1924 and May 1925, nearly 1,800 enslaved and ex-enslaved refugees from Jidda arrived in Port Sudan and Suakin as a result of the Saudi force's increasing control on the Hijaz. The League of Nations condemned the condominium's feeble position on slavery, and in response, the government ordered that an asylum for manumitted persons be built at Port Sudan.[74] Following the mutiny, Lotuho soldiers of the Equatorial Corps were among those confined in Port Sudan. Jacob Sebit translated and transcribed lyrics that the soldiers sang in prison:

Iyati hohoi Port Sudan
Laduri Lotuho odihi naye
Laduri Lotuho odihi naye
Etongo hohoi iko Arabi togele
Ettu adi edou tubana

Take us to Port Sudan
Sons of Latuka endure death
Sons of Latuka endure death

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We stay separate from the Arabs
The heavens will amalgamate us (×2)[75]

Rumbek, along with Suakin and Port Sudan, was another location with connections to slavery where South Sudanese were jailed after the mutiny. After Mehmed Said, the Ottoman ruler of Egypt from 1854 to 1863, abolished government raids, private merchants quickly assumed control of the slave trade. Slave and ivory traders established zaribas across large parts of South Sudan and fortified enclosures that were used, among other purposes, as temporary holding camps from which to launch slave raids. At least one zariba was located in Rumbek in the days of nineteenth-century Italian soldier Romolo Gessi, and in one instance, Emin Pasha released 567 slaves from Rumbek in a single day. Alexis Yangu connected the experience of his post-mutiny imprisonment at Rumbek to the history of Arab slavery. Yangu was one of three South Sudanese recruited into Juba's police force in 1946 and served in western Bahr el-Ghazal for nearly a decade. In 1955 he was dismissed from the force after being accused of involvement in political activities. Arrested in Wau, he was sentenced to five years' imprisonment there in May 1956 (this was commuted to six months).[76] According to Yangu, all prisoners in Bahr el-Ghazal who did not receive death sentences were gathered in Rumbek prison after mutiny-related trials were completed. He described his prison experience:

> In all, we were 1,114 prisoners crammed like sardines in small barracks. . . . In the dark we recalled all the horrible episodes of Arab barbarism of which we had heard or read. . . . I looked at all these tortures [in the prison] with the eyes of a 33-year-old whose father was once captured in an Arab slave raid. I was brought up in the traditional Arab slave-raid history, and I was optimistic about a better future for the Southern Sudanese people.[77]

THE COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY

On August 18—the day the mutiny began—the Sudanese Parliament voted unanimously to accelerate the independence process, and on August 30 it approved a measure mandating that Sudan should determine its political future through a plebiscite. On December 19 the legislative assembly and senate unanimously approved the resolution declaring Sudan's independence. Though southern MPs had been reluctant to vote for the Independence Resolution without the guarantee that the nation's constitution would be a federal one, the assembly resolved that federation for the southern

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provinces would receive full consideration. On January 1, 1956, the Republic of the Sudan became independent.[78]

A Commission of Enquiry was formed with the responsibility of identifying the mutiny's causes. The three-member committee was established under Judge Tawfiq Cotran, a Palestinian Christian who served as a police magistrate in Khartoum. Northern Sudanese Khalifa Mahjoub, a general manager in the Equatoria Scheme Board, also worked on the commission. The third member and sole southern representative was chief and MP Lolik Lado. Considered a model government chief, the illiterate Lado had purchased grain for the Sudan Defence Force in Juba during World War II and was recognized by private traders as a broker. He participated in the 1947 Juba Conference, where he famously opined that southerners' dilemma was akin to a girl who, being asked to marry a young man, needed to know more about her suitor before consenting.[79]

While the commission was instructed to carry out its investigation in Juba and in any areas Cotran deemed appropriate, it was restricted from looking into the mutiny's political or social aspects. Meetings and hearings were to be public or secret based on circumstance. With the defense minister's approval, the commission was authorized to appoint two advisers.[80] Southern politicians contributed little evidence to the commission, though much of it was—according to Peter Woodward—contradictory. Nevertheless, the commission gathered evidence that included letters along the lines of one written by Chief Lako Logono to the governor of Equatoria, which stated, "If the Northerners and the Egyptians want to join with the South let them bring our grandfathers and grandmothers, and all our brethren whom they carried as slaves long ago, then we can link with them."[81] The commission submitted its report on February 18, 1956, and the government published the *Report of the Commission of Enquiry* into the mutiny in October.[82] The commission concluded that five foundational elements were behind the disturbances:

1. Northerners and southerners had little in common.
2. For historical reasons, southerners regarded northerners as foes.
3. The British policy encouraging southerners to "progress on African and Negroid lines" prevented northerners and southerners from knowing each other. Missionaries favored and influenced this policy.
4. The North had progressed far ahead of the South, creating "a feeling in the underdeveloped people . . . that they are being cheated, exploited and dominated."

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5. These factors discouraged a feeling of common citizenship; "the average Southerner is becoming politically conscious, but this political consciousness . . . is regional and not national."[83]

Given the government's religious policies in the coming years, it is important to note that the report's section on "Education and Religion" stated that religious differences had not played a part in the disturbances. On the contrary, it found "that the real trouble in the South is political and not religious. . . . In the extensive disturbances that took place in Equatoria, Christians, Pagans, as well as Muslims, took part . . . some of the leaders of the anti-northern propagandists are southern moslims [*sic*]." The report also stated that the slave trade was not a contributing element: "the historical fact of the slave trade was used by different people for different purposes."[84]

Despite the commission's findings regarding slavery's relevance, Sudan ambassador E. Chapman-Andrews noted in his reflections on the commission's report that memories of the slave trade had long been a source of antinorthern resentment in the South. He hinted at the Southern Policy's necessity in a milieu where this animus was so strong: "Southerners were so suspicious of the North and had such indelible memories of the slave trade that it was essential to keep them apart. . . . The slave trade . . . must be regarded as a major cause of trouble between Arab and Negro."[85] Daniel Tongun, who was arrested and imprisoned in Juba after the mutiny, alluded to the historical roots of southern antipathy in his exhaustive testimony: "We don't like you. My plan would have been to order the Southern Sudanese soldiers to capture the airstrips . . . the steamer, and then declare our intention to secede from you [northerners] . . . we cannot forget the atrocities that you committed against our ancestors."[86]

* * *

The Equatorial Corps was a distinctly South Sudanese, multiethnic military force that was birthed out of the British concern for protecting the South from Islam. While arguably the most "southern" of condominium institutions, it was heavily and intentionally divided along ethnic lines. The religious crucible from which the Equatorial Corps emerged and the ethnic politics that drove its recruitment each manifested themselves in August 1955. Just months after the mutiny had ended, Sudan entered independence in January 1956 as a fractured nation. In one personal account of the mutiny, a missionary opined that "the Sudan is engulfed in the birth-pangs

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similar to those that have been experience[d] by other nations of the world and history is repeating itself."[87] In 1957, President Abdallah Khalil noted, "We thought we could take independence, but we discovered that we must build it."[88] In the coming years, several Sudanese regimes attempted to build the divided country under the banners of Arabism and Islam. Thousands of southerners fled, fought, protested, and died resisting Khartoum's agenda. South Sudan's labor of liberation proved difficult indeed.

More than simply representing a significant point in South Sudan's military struggle against Khartoum, the Torit Mutiny is an important moment in the genealogy of southern Christian nationalism. As mutineers looked to protect themselves from another instance of northern "subjugation," the mutiny foreshadowed the way in which history—whether Sudanese or biblical—would be used to inspire and comfort southerners during the ensuing civil wars against the government. While it would be inaccurate to claim that Christianity was the primary engine driving the violence, the religious vision that inspired the British to create the corps in the early twentieth century should not be ignored when assessing the mutiny. Created as an element of protecting the South from Islam, the Equatorial Corps and CMS Nugent School were two elements of the same anti-Islamic vision. Thus, the mutiny was a moment when earlier religious visions had violent, material consequences.

* * *

In a *Le Figaro* piece published in 1966, three Christian guerrillas informed correspondent Jean-Marie Garraud that "our struggle is not a religious one. . . . Although it is for the Arabs, who have raised the banner of a Holy War against us and want to convert us to Islamism. . . . We are nationalists, we don't want to become Arabs. For centuries they have hunted us down in order to make slaves of us."[89] Despite their sentiment that this was not a religious war, many were indeed translating the events of the First Sudanese Civil War in theological terms. Those years would see more than Sudanese state efforts to Islamize the new nation; rather, the period also saw southerners using their faith and scripture for their own designs. It is to these religious ideations that we now turn.

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