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THE HISTORY OF KASSALA AND THE PROVINCE OF TAKA  
(continued from VOLUME XX. Part I)  
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Chapter VIII

THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION OF THE SUDAN UNDER  
ISMAEL PASHA-  
THE GOVERNORS OF TAKA- MUMTAZ PASHA-  
MUNZINGER PASHA'S RE-ORGANIZATION-  
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P230 As for the Governors of the Eastern Sudan, or the Province of Red Sea Coast as it was also called, the first, Ahmed Mumtaz, made his mark in Sudan history. He arrived in the Sudan in 1865 as the first Egyptian Governor of Suakin after Ismail Pasha had leased the post from Turkey.

He was an engineer officer and he soon displayed both his remarkable capacity for thinking out impracticable schemes for public works and his malignity in the methods he used in trying to put them into practice. Imagination he had in full and although so many of his schemes failed it was Mumtaz who first grew cotton, with a view to starting an export trade, at such places as the Tokar and Gash deltas. To this day his name is sometimes used in Gedaref and the Gash to signify cotton.

Shortly after his arrival at Suakin he wrote a despatch to the Khedive about a plan for a railway which provides a good example of how his mind worked. " It appears from my own observations as well as those of Ismail Bey," he wrote, " that the construction of a railway in the vicinity of Sinkat, situated between Suakin and the hills, will be very simple and will not cost much.

The river-beds in this area are few and it will be easy to construct bridges from the Stones on the neighbouring hills. As for the country between Suakin and Kosseir, it is crossed by many impetuous torrents, that would necessitate the construction of bridges of some size and strength. For all that this work will be satisfactorily accomplished and without much cost thanks to the stone that exists in large quantities in the neighbouring mountains and which one could bring to the spot by means of narrow gauge railway (8).

Because there is stone one can build bridges and if bridges can be built the construction of the railway is easy: because the stone is near at hand the bridges will be cheap therefore the railway will be cheap. Then if there is a railway the economic resources of the country will be developed for the country can grow cotton-if there is water, suitable soil and willing labour.

But if, for various reasons, cotton could not be grown in profitable quantities then it was no benefit to have a railway even if the stone were to be picked up already squared for the

bridges.( 9) Mumtaz was right up to a point in that he knew that cotton could be grown in the Sudan and that, at the high prices then obtainable, its export would be profitable.

But he never stopped to make a proper investigation as to whether prices would hold up to a level that would allow a profit after paying for the railway, or whether in a country where public security was so poor, the government could stop the Arabs from destroying the railway or whether the people would be prepared to grow cotton. Mumtaz was essentially a fair-weather economist who was simple enough to believe that enterprise deserved and received its own reward.

While he was at Suakin he showed great activity in the construction of public works on which the Khedive was prepared to spend liberally. Some of this work was of permanent value, particularly the bank he built round the wells at Shata. He also proposed the construction of a fresh-water pipe-line from Tamanib but nothing came of this.

Close to the wells he planted some citrus trees and proposed the planting of these at Sinkat, Erkowit and Tokar also. For the beautification of Suakin he ordered from Egypt cuttings of vines, mulberry trees, sugar-cane, roses, jasmine and various flowers. And at Tokar he grew, or rather 200 of his troops grew for him, 50 feddans of cotton as an experiment.

Curiously enough his reward was a complaint from Jaafer Mazhar Pasha to Ismail Pasha that he was extravagant and idle and asked that he should be removed; but the Khedive dearly loved a man of Mumtaz's stamp and he continued in his post until 1870 when he was made the Governor of the new province of the Red Sea Coast which embraced Taka, Suakin and Massawa.(10)

In his new post Mumtaz Pasha showed enterprise in extending Egyptian influence farther down the Red Sea coast until he met with the British at Berbera. It was Mumtaz also who proposed that Munzinger should enter the Khedive's service. An important success occurred when he was supported by the Khedive in a dispute with the Governor-General, Jaafer Pasha Mazhar over a tribal matter.

Jaafer Pasha was a believer in the necessity of tribal discipline and when the Nawayma section of the Shukria crossed the Atbara to graze off land that the Hadendoa considered belonged to them, the Governor-General gave an order that they should return. But Mumtaz Pasha decided that the Nawayma represented more hands to the task of making the desert bloom.

The Khedive supported Mumtaz, recalled the relatively popular Governor-General to Cairo and never permitted him to return." Mumtaz did not actually succeed him as Governor-General but as the Governor of the central of the three provinces into which the Sudan was divided, and during the one year for which he held the post he managed to gain the enmity of the bulk of the people.

The exact reasons for his dismissal on 8th August, 1872 are not known but they are presumed to be connected with embezzlement. He died before he left Khartoum and his epitaph, which was no doubt written by one who had suffered at his hands, is eloquent : "And while they were distracted with uncertainty and conjecture (i.e., at the recall of Jaafer Pasha) and were relieving the tension by clinging to the ropes of hope, lo! they were overwhelmed with a great disaster and stricken by a terrible blow, by comparison with which their previous affliction

was of no account, for in the month of Regab, el-Khartoum and its neighbourhood suffered a calamity such as had never been known, namely the appointment of one who was in every respect the opposite of his predecessor, and whose name (viz; Mumtaz, i.e., "Distinguished") Was completely distinguished (Ar: Mumtaz) from his character; for his character was that of those men of whom God in His precious Book spoke the words "Be ye separated this day (from the righteous), O ye evil doers ! " (12)

In some respects Werner Munzinger, as an economist, had the failings of Mumtaz Pasha, but his ideas were based on more careful study and he lacked his malignancy. He is remembered in Kassala chiefly for his energy: he was continually coming and going between the various posts in his province and wherever he went he spent much of his time in writing in the little note-book he carried about in his pocket.

But Keren was the place to which he always returned, although, when he became Governor of that place, he did much to destroy its amenities by building his fort out of the stones of the ancient grave-yards and by cutting down the trees to improve the field of fire. (13)

An English visitor who met Munzinger in Kassala in 1875 gives a fairly full account both of him and the town. The description of the town would have been passably accurate fifty years later.

"He speaks English very well which is a great comfort . . . He received us in his office, a bare-looking room with a raised cushioned seat at one end and a writing table to represent the furniture . . . The town of Kassala, though the capital of the Soudan country (sic) and the great military centre of this portion of the dominions of Egyptian be described in a few words, for it almost entirely consists of low houses, made of bricks baked in the sun, or of dried mud for the richer community, and of dhurra-stalks or palm-leaves for the poorer, and is surrounded by a fortified wall made of sun-dried bricks, and outside this by a moat.

After passing through the chief gate, of entrance, which is guarded by soldiers, a wide street surrounded with Arabs buying and selling at the minute stores, consisting chiefly of grain and calico fabrics of European manufacture, one soon arrives at an open space, around which are congregated the few buildings of any importance, such as the mosque, palace, and prison, as well as two or three shops kept by Greeks for the supply of goods to the few Europeans who reside in or visit this place; and here, under the shade of a clump of trees, two oxen may be seen perpetually walking round in a circle whilst turning a wheel with buckets attached to it, which brings up from a well the chief supply of water to the inhabitants.

Beyond the main thoroughfare numerous narrow by-ways are found winding about amongst the houses, so narrow that there is barely room for a camel to pass, and so dusty that one feels almost stifled in them . . . Of all the noisy places at night Kassala would not be far from heading the list, for by no human ingenuity could it well be surpassed in this respect.

Not a moment's quiet, for innumerable dogs keep up an incessant barking to keep off the hyenas, whose cry is continuously heard in the outskirts; drums are being beaten, sometimes for a wedding, at others for a death; women are screeching, and priests are calling the faithful to prayers, or the watchers of the night are shouting in response to one another; whilst our old friends, the cocks, more cruel than ever, begin their crowing soon after sunset ....

In the evening Munzinger Pasha dined with us, and we gave him all the delicacies available from our home supplies..... Iced champagne was not forgotten to be ordered, but unfortunately the freezing machine, though it had proved a great success at Cairo in an experimental trial, refused to act ...

However, we consoled ourselves with the thought that champagne, even without ice, was not to be obtained every day in Kassala . . . He gave us much interesting information on various subjects connected with the country. Kassala he says has now a population of about 25,000 persons, excluding the villages in its neighbourhood . . .

There are a great number of men of bad character here who are sent in banishment from Cairo, and they are allowed to be at large so long as they behave themselves properly . . . The prison has generally about sixty culprits in it, almost all under punishment for theft; a surprisingly small number, considering that it is the only prison for the whole of the country over which he rules, consisting of a population calculated at 2,000,000 ....

In the open space in the centre of the town are fixed two high Poles with a cross-bar, to which men are strung up by the thumbs; as a punishment for any great crime, and this exquisite torture is sometimes continued from fifteen to twenty minutes ....

The death-rate of the army quartered in Kassala numbering 1800, averages sixty per annum, or 33.33 per 1,000 intermittent fever and dysentery being the chief causes ... The system of taxation has been much altered of late years, and the priesthood and 'nobles' who were formerly exempted, 'have now to pay their share ...

Munzinger Pasha has a great idea that the country in the neighbourhood of the river Gash might be brought under cultivation, and he has now engineers surveying one portion, eighty miles by twenty in extent, with regard to its capability of being inundated. If, as he believes this can be done, it will be covered in a short time with crops of cotton and indigo, both of which are found to thrive here, 2000 acres having been already tested with them most successfully, and specimens sent only this autumn to Cairo ...

In the afternoon we went for our promised ride with Munzinger Pasha,, who, dressed in a loose white suit, and wearing only a tarboosh on his head, was mounted on his favourite donkey, whilst two of us had horses, and two donkeys. Four soldiers marched in front and four behind, armed with Remington rifles and forming his guard, and so we went round the town ...

As we passed amongst the straw houses in the poorest districts, it was almost surprising to see with what very marked respect Munzinger Pasha was received by the various tribes, every man standing up and bowing low before him, whilst the women shouted in their own peculiar way from within their houses in order to do him honour. He first took us to a large cotton manufactory, in which he takes great interest, as he thinks it will prove a complete success.

The machinery was made in England, but the chief engineer is a Frenchman. The building is made of brick, made in a kiln close by; but many failures took place before the proper amount of sand to mix with the clay could be decided upon to ensure a good brick ...

For a time the manufactory will be worked by the government, but Munzinger Pasha hopes that it will ultimately pass into private hands .... He believes that within three years there will be a war between Egypt and Abyssinia about the Bogos country, which partly divides them, for the Abyssinians are very jealous of Egypt obtaining power in any portion of this disputed territory, and they are now only waiting until they are better prepared to wrest it from her ....

Go where we may, we can never expect to meet again a man who will take such a sincere interest in our welfare as Munzinger Pasha has done; his frank open manner has quite won our hearts, and one cannot be thrown into his society for even a short time as we have been, without feeling confident that he is thoroughly in earnest in the difficult task he has in hand in his official life, and wishing, for the future welfare of Egypt, that the Khedive could number many such men amongst his highest officers of state."

As a footnote at the end of the chapter Mr. Myers added, " Munzinger Pasha has been recently waylaid and killed when on a tour of inspection." (14)Mr. Myers and his companions were not, one imagines, very astute observers; they were one of a number of parties of wealthy British big-game hunters that visited Kassala about that time and they managed to shoot a 'maarif ' on the Settit.

The reference to the fact that Munzinger died on a tour of inspection seems particularly ingenuous when it is recalled that he was killed in carrying out a flank attack in an invasion of Abyssinia which he was largely responsible for engineering, but there is no doubt that Munzinger was well ahead of his time in his ideas of administration in the Sudan.

He had studied the short-comings of the Egyptian government for a number of years when he was a trader, explorer and consul so that when he became Governor of the Eastern Sudan he did not hesitate to make useful recommendations for its improvement. His proposals are worth recording in full. They were written in Cairo during his visit there in October 1873. (15)

" In submitting this proposal for the organisation of the Eastern Sudan, I ought to explain first of all that I do not propose that it should be adopted or put into force immediately; I wish on the contrary: first, that it should be examined; second, that it should not be put into force until after a year, but once adopted that it should be assured continuity of at least five years.

The reasons for my reserve are that any hasty reform is upsetting, that the reorganisation of a province is a great task, and that in consequence its implementation might hinder the works already taken in hand or approved; I will name only :

1. The salt-pans at Rawaya and the railway ordered for it three years ago.
2. The construction of the telegraph line from Massawa to Kassala, 300 miles.
3. The erection of ginning factories for cotton at Tokar and Taka.
4. The study of canalisation at Tokar and Taka.
5. The construction of roads from Kassala to Massawa and Suakin.
6. The construction of the buildings approved more than a year ago, namely: mosques at Suakin and Keren, three hospitals, schools etc. ; all that is enough and more than enough for one year, without mentioning ordinary administration.

"On the other hand I fear these reforms so much that I do not wish to have this new constitution adopted until after it has received mature consideration and trial in detail; I fear

them because the uncertainty produced by too many changes in the past is one of the reasons for the bad state of the Sudan; each new Governor finds fault with what his predecessor has done ; the people of the country who have seen both persons and things change have not the confidence nor the respect necessary for the execution of the reforms.

It is for this reason that I want to perfect the new system before it is adopted, so that we can make a constitution so excellent that it will be unshakable.

"My ideas for change rest chiefly on three points:

1. On the division of the districts.
2. On the method of collecting taxes.
3. On the administration of justice.

" Division of Districts

At present there are three large districts, that is to say: Massawa, Suakin and Taka formed haphazard without regard to geography. The frontier of Taka in the direction of Khartoum is six miles from Kassala the headquarters of the district; to the north it is 300 miles away. The nomads of Suakin and Taka are of the same tribe, moving about continually so that the Governor of Suakin has to search for his taxpayers in the neighbourhood of Taka and vice versa. Thus there is no natural frontier to account for these boundaries.

## 2. TAXES.

At the time of the conquest of the Sudan the government placed as large a tribute on each tribal leader as it thought he could pay without being crushed; the chief divided it among the sheikhs and they divided it among the tax-payers.

The results were disastrous both for the country and the government: the taxes, moderate in themselves, were doubled by the exactions of the sheikhs; the division was often unjust being based on old assessments which they were too idle to revise. A large part of the country had gained exemption from taxation, as for example all the aristocracy.

All this contributed to the, unhappy lot of the tax-payers, explains the arrears in taxation and gives the officials a chance to profit from the confusion." Now I assert that throughout the world honest and intelligent men are rare; this applies with even greater force in the Sudan. It is then necessary in the first place to establish a form of government in which temptations are rare, and this lies in regulating the taxes on the basis of an assessment by which each tax-payer knows what is due from him and which he can pay without the intervention of sheikhs and soldiers.

The execution of this plan will not be vexatious, because it is popular and has already begun to operate in several places. The government has only to proclaim that everyone has the same obligation to pay taxes and to invite all the tax-payers to share according to their respective fortunes under the supervision of the Governor. The result should be an increase in revenue without any disadvantage for the people, and in the regular payment of taxes without the use of soldiers or seizures.

## 3. JUSTICE.

Justice is administered by three courts at Massawa, Suakin and Taka. All sentences passed by these courts have to be sent to Cairo and it is there that everything is decided. The courts

themselves seldom have members who are lawyers and particularly who have regard to the forms of justice.

The result is that the cases sent to Cairo from the Sudan for several years have not been confirmed, a thing which, in criminal matters is a great wrong both to the accused and to the public; for in provinces deprived of civilisation and organisation, progress does not consist of the imitation of civilised methods or in the introduction of the written and complicated procedure of ancient Europe; true progress lies in the provision of prompt, firm and simple justice obtainable without expense.

"It is with this object in view that I propose to create a superior court above the existing courts, situated at the headquarters of the province, which will give a final decision on all cases without further appeal.

"In pursuance of these proposals I have the honour to propose the following :

DECREE.

" 1. Munzinger Bey is ordered to put into practice for the Muduria of Taka and the Muhafizias of Massawa and Suakin a new organisation, which should be submitted to His Highness's government for authority on February, 1874, with the exception of the new organisation of justice which shall be brought into operation at once as an experiment according to the principles laid down in the attached decree.

2. The principles that will guide Munzinger Bey in this project should be :
  - I. The Muduria called the Eastern Sudan to consist of the districts:
    - (a) Massawa (the town, Samhar, Dankali);
    - (b) The salt-pans of Jedda ;
    - (c) Suakin (the town and Sinkat)
    - (d) Tokar ;
    - (e) The Gash (Taka proper)
    - (f) Northern Hadendoa (Goz Regab)
    - (g) Amideib (Baraka, Beni Amer etc.)
    - (h) Adarti (Bogos, Marea, Habab, etc.).

The last district would be administered directly by the central government (i.e., Munzinger himself ). The Mamurs of Massawa and Suakin would retain the title of Muhafiz. Massawa District situated as it is on the frontier of Abyssinia and having many foreign contacts would be the particular concern of the Governor. The other Mamurs will be military officers.

- II. There will be only one accounts office at the central government, whose position will be central.
- III. The duties of Mamurs are to preserve public security and to collect taxes.
- IV. A complete system of reports on political, judicial, statistical matters etc., between the Mamurs and the Governor and between the latter and the government in Cairo. Proper forms will be prescribed for this purpose.
- V. The Governor will have a deputy and assistants who will share the various departments and make regular visits to all districts at not too long intervals.
- VI. There will be a new division of taxes and everyone will be under an obligation to pay them.

Before I conclude I must add that this new ' tertib ' shows an economy of between four and five thousand pounds sterling on the old; that the deficit will shortly disappear and a real surplus be produced instead, we have a force of a thousand workers and we shall feed a regiment without asking anything from Cairo at all clothes and food, the produce of the country."

There is much sound sense in these proposals, assuming that Munzinger intended them to be the framework for future administrative development. Although his ideas seem to have run in the direction of a rather bureaucratic organisation he was not unaware of the necessity of using the existing tribal system for the immediate administration of the vast majority of the inhabitants of the province.

But he seems to have based his hopes for the future of his revenue on the singularly insecure foundation of the willingness of the populace to pay their taxes simply because they had been accurately assessed. The following is the budget he drew up for the financial year of 1874-75: (16)

1. Administration of the Muduria.

REVENUE,	œE.	
Taxes	33,866	
Customs	19,49I	
Salt concessions	11,382	
Various	6,548	
TOTAL	91,287*	
EXPENDITURE.		
Administration	30,150	
Eight companies of infantry		11,632
Four battalions and artillery	34,390	
Various		15,115
TOTAL	91,287	

The cost of the provincial administration was given in greater detail:

1.	Province Headquarters Administration	œE.	
	Staff	4,044	
	Services, engineer		2,000
	Public Health, Quarantine	1,773	
	Posts and Telegraphs	2,089	
	Total	9,906	
2.	Districts		
	Massawa	1,850	
	Salt works. .	799	
	Amideib	252	
	Taka	1,385	

	Suakin	1,786	
	Tokar	624	
	Hadendoa	228	
Total		6,924	
	3. 783 Bashibazuks		13,320
TOTAL PER ANNUM			30,150

\*Douin remarks on the mistake in addition and suggests that the taxation figure should be œE 53,866-Ed.

It must be remembered that this was an independent budget and that there were no central services on which he could draw for staff or funds so that the whole of the social services took only 6% of the budget as against 33 % for administration and 67 % for the armed forces.

2.

It will be seen that the military garrison of the Sudan eat up a large proportion of the revenue, apart from causing the administration a good deal of worry and coming nearer to overthrowing it than any rising of the sorely-pressed inhabitants.

In the army as in every other branch of the government there was no continuity of policy hurried searches for recruits were followed by drastic reduction in the establishment which created large settlements of discharged soldiers in all the larger towns in the northern Sudan, men whose real homes were in the south and who were never properly assimilated in the north.

The Kassala mutiny of 1865 was not an isolated incident although it was by far the most important: there had been similar incidents in Mohammed Ali Pasha's time and within a few months of the Kassala mutiny there was another minor out-break there in spite of the terrible retribution that had fallen on the mutineers in the previous rising.

When Shahin Pasha arrived at Berber on his way to investigate the Kassala mutiny, he found that the local troops were also in revolt, and that eighty of them had tried to set fire to the powder magazine. The Khedive ordered him to shoot all the ring-leaders and one in every seven of the rest that had-been involved(17).

In fact Ismail Pasha became so alarmed at the recurrent rebellions that he decided to disband all the Sudanese regiments and replace them by Egyptian battalions, camel companies, mountain artillery on camels, and larger numbers of Bashi-Bazuks.

In total, however, the establishment of the armed forces in the Sudan was considerably reduced and with it also their fighting efficiency, for the Egyptian troops could not stand the climate.

Even in the high-lands of Keren a third of the original battalion Munzinger took there were out of action within a few months. As for the disbanded troops, Ismail Pasha decided that they and their families should be sent to Egypt and Jaafer Pasha Mazhar was told to complete this complicated manoeuvre as expeditiously as possible in 1866.

The result was chaos. Some of the troops were to go across the desert to Korosko and then to be quartered in the barracks at Kenna, Esna, and Assuan, but cholera broke out among them at Korosko and the move had to be held up.

Others were to go by sea to the garrison towns of lower Egypt but by the beginning of 1867 only 3,272 had arrived and the Governor-General was asked to report on the delay. His answer is an illuminating document. (18).

The establishment of troops to be sent to Egypt was 10,644. Out of this number 4,031 had been sent as directed, 424 discharged, 1,408 had died, 267 had been shot by order of Courts-Martial, 16 exiled to the White Nile or Fazugli, 531 sentenced to hard labour and sent to the prisons at Kassala and Suakin.

Some two thousand men had been transferred to fill vacancies in various new companies, 265 had been employed as labourers on the buildings under construction at Khartoum, 65 detailed as artizans in the tailoring and shoemaking establishments, 70 attached to the civil government, 276 appointed as warders for the imprisoned rebels of the 4th Regiment, 21 seconded to the hospitals and 48 to the arsenal.

Soon the Governor-General was asking permission to reappoint some of the discharged officers but Ismail Pasha refused: he wanted the officers and men of the Sudanese regiments to serve for a period in Egyptian units so that they could absorb some of the discipline that was such a marked feature of the Egyptian army of that period(19).

As a result of this reorganisation the establishment of the army in the Sudan in 1866 appears to have consisted of six or seven Egyptian battalions and the following irregulars; nine companies of BashiBazuks, a detachment of camelry, two Sudanese foot companies, seventeen companies of Shaigia and sixteen companies of 'muhafizin' 17,000 men in all. (20)

Each company of Bashi-Bazuks (mostly Albanians) was about 300 strong and two were stationed in the eastern Sudan, one under Orafli Mohammed Agha at Kassala and one under Ali Kashef at Gedaref.

The strength of the Shaigia companies varied widely but with the exception of two large companies of 212 and 105 respectively the strength was fixed at 26 men per company in 1866.

Of these four were stationed at Kassala, three at Koufit and five at Gedaref. In addition both Kassala and Koufit had two companies of 'muhafizin' each. On top of all these 'two regiments (the 1st and 2nd Sudanese) of four battalions each, were reformed in Egypt and sent to the Sudan at the end of 1867, and of these the 2nd Regiment was given the responsibility of garrisoning the eastern Sudan.

The 1st Battalion went to Keren, the 2nd was divided between Suakin and Massawa, the 3rd Battalion at Amideib and the 4th at Kassala.(21) Their discipline did not however appear to have benefitted from their stay in Egypt because they got out of hand as soon as they arrived at Suakin and after they had been posted to their various stations desertions became frequent.

The garrison was of course heavy but, in view of the reckless policy Munzinger was

pursuing with regard to Abyssinia, it cannot be said to have been excessive. Munzinger had also to balance the budget he had proposed when he became Governor and in order to do this he

decided to convert the battalion at Kassala and the battalion on the coast into 'muhafizin ' with a much reduced establishment. The establishment remained at this level until reinforcements began to arrive for the Abyssinian adventure of 1875.

This was the strength and distribution of the army, but what was its value as a military force? Ismail Pasha had taken over a sorry army indeed. Since the days when Colonel S,ves had trained the troops that Ibrahim Pasha lead to victory in Syria, the Hedjaz and the Sudan, the whole organisation had run down and the fighting qualities of the troops had been enervated by the long periods of inactivity under worthless officers.

The Sudan had been considered unsuitable for Egyptian troops and had been more and more left to the care of those recruited locally, but even the obvious martial qualities of the Sudanese had also been undermined. A visitor to Kordofan in 1844 described the troops he found there in the most derogatory terms.

The soldiers wear only a white cotton uniform ... The chaussure consists of shoes and sandals, but a part of them appear on parade barefooted, for they are not over-rigid disciplinarians; the covering of the head like that of all the other troops is the tarboosha red cap and the only article about them in decent preservation . . .

On meeting one of these foot-soldiers without his accoutrements a stranger is really at a loss how to classify him, and before he has thoroughly accustomed himself to the sight he would rather take him for a scare-crow than a soldier . . .

When the men mount guard the women accompany them, or, if they happen to be unmarried, some of their comrades follow carrying the straw mats and pipes of the detachment; for it is the first maxim among them to make their visit to the guard-room as pleasant and comfortable as possible.

Their drill and exercise is at the same ebb as their garrison and field ... I have seen the commanding officer on a field day not even able to bring his battalion to form a square; he had, in fact, to take each separate man by the arm, and lead him to the place where the square was to be formed, and yet this is the only manoeuvre to which they are obliged to pay attention, because frequently put in practice in skirmishes, in warfare with their neighbours or in those expeditions of slave-hunting". (22)

In the same year Lepsius drew a no less dismal picture: We then went to the barracks, in the large court yard of which the men are exercised. The commanding officer ordered out the band of music, and they played several pieces before us.

The first was the Parisienne, which sounded most strangely in this country . . . There were only twelve hundred soldiers present belonging to the regiment, which consists of four thousand men, almost all negroes, whose black faces staring out of their white linen uniform and red-tasseled caps, made them look like dressed-up monkeys, only more unhappy and oppressed.

The negroes are incapable of any military discipline or regular exertion, and generally sink below the imposed yoke. We did not, however, suspect that these same people would two days afterwards rebel in a body, and set off to their hills". (23)

If this was true as early as 1844 there was certainly nothing that happened in the ensuing twenty years to suggest that a further deterioration had not taken place. Ismail Pasha was not the man to tolerate this state of affairs and he decided in 1870 to recruit about seventy officers from America, most of them from the Confederate army, some of them graduates of West Point. General Stone the senior officer, was made chief of staff and he found that he had to begin from the bottom.

There were no maps or other essential military documents at the War Office and the only trained European officer in the army was a Frenchman who was absent buying equipment in England and who did not return to Egypt for the next ten years.

The Egyptian officers who had been trained some years previously still believed in a Headquarters organisation that Napoleon had found suitable at the beginning of the century with the difference that they had modified it to meet their own easy-going ways. Only a third of the officers were literate.

Under the circumstances no immediate improvement could be expected, not only because the most elementary training and preparation had to be undertaken but also because the American officers had none of the experience that the British officers who subsequently reorganized the Egyptian army possessed through familiarity with eastern conditions.

It was generally agreed, however, that there was an improvement in parade-ground smartness and in equipment. "We sat down in state," wrote de Cosson in an account of his visit to Gallabat in 1873, "while a regiment of soldiers, composed entirely of slaves, who had been given the Hobson's choice of serving Ismail Pasha instead of their masters, marched past to the sound of pipe and drum.

They performed their evolutions perfectly,' and were all clothed in neat cotton uniforms, that contrasted strikingly with their black faces and red caps. While we were smoking, and drinking the inevitable 'fingal' of coffee flavoured with cloves, a Nubian band played several Turkish and Arab airs, and then two new Gatling guns, or mitrailleuses, were wheeled up for my inspection.

The Egyptian troops were also provided with bronze mountain pieces and all the men were armed with breech-loading Remington rifles. Before I left I was shown all round the camp, which was well supplied with food and munitions, was very clean, and certainly in first rate order. It was evident that every preparation had been made for a war with Abyssinia, should the occasion occur." (24)

On the other hand a German who visited Keren in 1874 drew a most gloomy picture of the conditions prevailing there. " The pay of the troops has not been forthcoming for four months and, owing to this, the discipline has fallen off considerably.

Desertion does not take place at the rate of one man, but always eight or ten at a time, with arms and accoutrement, who roam about as robbers, and make the country much more unsafe than it was under Abyssinian rule.

The clanking of the chains of captured soldiers, and the native sheikhs and chiefs who have expressed discontent at the Egyptian supremacy, and have to work in chains on a ship's biscuit a day, is dreadful to hear in the camp at Keren." (25)

These are extremes and the truth must lie somewhere between them. Under Ismail Pasha the army was provided with better equipment and the American officers brought a certain amount of order into the staff and a superficial parade-ground smartness into the ranks, but fundamentally the military capacity of the Egyptian fellah was unchanged.

The fellah was not a natural fighter; more than most he needed teaching. But he received no proper instruction and, as Lord Milner observed, he was subjected to an amount of degrading ill-usage that would have knocked the manliness out of a Viking. If expenditure on the army was large, the funds devoted to the other public services-medical, education, police-was correspondingly small.

P 249 Cholera, or a disease resembling it, appears to have been almost endemic, but particularly severe outbreaks of it in the eastern Sudan were those among the Beni Amer in Khor Baraka in 1866 and among the troops in Kassala later in the same year. (26)

The army had always had medical corps attached to it and there seems to have been a hospital of sorts at Kassala since the earliest days of the administration. Jaafer Pasha took the matter up in 1870 and recommended that ten young doctors should be sent from Egypt to rejuvenate the ranks of the aging Sanitary Hakims who were presumably relics of the medical system introduced into Egypt by the able Clot Bey.

But his request was refused so the, Pasha arranged for ten primary schoolboys to receive instruction in medicine and pharmacy from Sagh. Mohd. Sukkari, the medical officer in charge of the Khartoum Hospital. In return the Governor-General asked that the Sagh. should be promoted to the rank of Bimbashi.

Again a refusal was received from Cairo because Ismail Pasha very rightly considered that a solution of this sort was basically unsound. He ordered the Minister of the Interior to send the necessary number of doctors to the Sudan. Unfortunately this gave the Conseil Sanitaire d'Egypte a chance to spread its influence over the Sudan and the first thing Jaafer Pasha knew of it was a request from the Council to furnish it with statistics of population, and of births and deaths.

Jaafer Pasha protested that such information could not be supplied but nevertheless he was set to the task of collecting them and in due course submitted figures for 1870 and 1871. They are not worth quoting and what erroneous conclusions the Conseil Sanitaire d'Egypte drew from them is not revealed. Kordofan for instance was shown as having a birth-rate of about a thousand a year. In 1871 Taka had 161 births, 199 deaths, no vaccinations and 145 persons treated either at the hospital or in their houses by government doctors. (27)

P 258 No less unpropitious for the development of trade was the collection of tribute in kind and the use of forced labour. The government paid such low prices for the grain and animals they took for taxes that they not only dissuaded the people from cultivating larger areas and increasing their herds but they also upset the prices of these commodities in the markets.

Forced labour, chiefly in the form of requisitioned transport, was another outcome of the chaotic financial system which always left the Sudan in a state of bankruptcy. "The original sin in the Sudan," wrote Munzinger, "is the corvée. The government takes camels by force from the Arabs for the transport of its troops and officials and for their provisions.

As the government officials have no interest in these animals, which do not belong to them, it is rarely that the majority return to their owners. The most exorbitant tax is preferable to this corvée ... The terrified Arabs do not approach the towns and it is the merchants who suffer for the mistakes of the government." (38)

Confusion over the currency was acute. Although all denominations of Turkish currency were used in Khartoum and Kassala, the country as a whole would only use dollars and 'mejidias.'

"Maria Theresa dollars," wrote M. Garnier, "are the only foreign coins in currency among the tribes of Taka. At Kassala a dollar is worth P.T. 18, that is to say, P.T. 2 less than in Egypt. These coins are known in the Sudan as Abu Nukta, 'the father of dots', from the dots that represent the diamonds in the jewelry on the Queen's portrait.

The crown must have nine dots, the clasp seven and the brooch five; this is the sine qua non for acceptance. It is essential also that the dollars, if they are to be accepted without difficulty, should be neither too old nor too new; old, the dots are worn; new, the brightness of the whole piece makes them difficult to count." (39)

4

So much for the administrators of the Sudan and their economic schemes but what of their administration? The main object was to preserve the authority of the government and with a few unfortunate lapses this they managed to do. The next was to collect the "taxes.

P 263 The position of the accounts in the province of the Red Sea Coast, Mumtaz Pasha's own province, was not good. Suakin was best off thanks to the salt concession at Rawaya, but Massawa was in arrears and, as usual, Taka was in an almost desperate state. The taxes had been doubled in 1866 along with those of the rest of the country, but on the complaint of the Nazir of the Hadendoa some reduction had been made.

In 1865 also the taxes had been struck off because of the effect of the military rebellion; yet for the period 1866 to 1870 the Hadendoa alone were £E. 9,520 in arrears. Again the taxes were reduced but in spite of the fact that £E. 40,000 was collected in the province it was still insufficient to balance the expenditure.

Mumtaz Pasha pointed out that Taka in particular had cost the Egyptian Government enormous sums of money. "It is therefore my duty," he wrote, "as a faithful and devoted servant of the Government, to break silence on this position and to bring forward certain suggestions in connection with it.

The receipts of this Mudiria are very small in proportion to its large area and to the large number of its inhabitants. The fact that this Mudiria has in the past been far from commercial centres and has had to limit its cultivation of durra has reduced the currency in the possession of the inhabitants. The Government has even been compelled on occasion to take from them cattle and other objects for of money.

"For the purpose of remedying these financial difficulties, increasing the national wealth and, as a result, swelling the Government revenue, 200 ardebs of cotton grain were sent last year. These were sown by the inhabitants and the cultivation has been successful. The harvest was taken in place of taxes.

The Nazirs of Qisms then realised that by increasing the cultivation, of the cotton the inhabitants and the Government would profit considerably. They therefore requested that the Mudiria should be sent 3,000 ardebs of cotton grain, to be sown that year.

This quantity was sent to the Mudiria. This was enough to sow only a quarter of the cultivable area, but nevertheless it was considered best to limit the cotton to this quantity for that year because of the lack of ginning and pressing machines. In fact, before a Mudiria can take up the cultivation of cotton it must first of all be in possession of these machines.

We consider it preferable on the other hand that the Government, instead of collecting from, the tribes taxes in proportion to the expenditure on their cultivations, should require each cultivator to hand over to its representative two kantars of cotton.

In this way the Government would be able to count on 100,000 kantars of cotton, and if we take the kantar as being œE. 2, after deduction of expenses, we receive a total of œE. 200,000. This figure could then be increased .by encouraging the inhabitants and by putting the unemployed to work in agriculture.

Moreover, if the Government undertakes the ginning and pressing of the cotton which is delivered to them by the inhabitants (working on their behalf and only until such time as the cotton trade becomes prosperous) and if it sells the cotton and hands over the price after deduction of expenses to the inhabitants, the latter would easily be able to settle their debts to the Government and then make profits out of their cultivations for themselves.

"If my proposal is carried out," added the Governor, "of course everybody will wish to take up the cultivation of cotton, and many inhabitants of whom the Mudiria is at present unaware, will appear that the increase of the population will bring about a proportionate increase of revenue." (44)

In spite of these helpful suggestions from the irrepressible Mumtaz the financial situation of Taka was again desperate in 1871, for by this time not only were the taxes œE. 40,000 in arrears but the Government staff was due another œE. 36,000.

The Governor persisted in the belief that the only hope for the future lay in the extensive cultivation of cotton yet even if the people worked their fingers to the bone they would never be able to pay off the arrears of taxation that were marked up against them. As it was, they showed a militant objection to growing cotton at all if it merely meant they worked as slaves for the government.

The Khedive finally ordered the central treasury at Khartoum to remit œE. 25,000 to Kassala to enable the Governor to give his employees something on account and the Privy Council in Cairo called for a statement of accounts.

Enough has been recorded of the short-comings of Egyptian rule in the Sudan over most

aspects of administration to show that it failed hopelessly in its main task of supplying the people of the country with peace, security and justice. The essence of the matter cannot be better described than by quoting once again from Munzinger:- "There is no other country as easy to administer as the Sudan; there is not a tribe capable of resisting half a battalion fire-arms are almost unknown. And yet there are rebels within a league of the garrisons. A third of the Beni Amer refused recently to pay their tribute.

People are killed daily in the neighbourhood of Kassala. The Baria raid the Hadendoa and sell their booty, with impunity in the Beni Amer markets and vice versa, all three tribes belonging to the same district. One cannot go from Keren to Kassala without a strong escort. If one is robbed or killed on the way no one goes in pursuit of the criminals: the tax-payers must not be upset.

" The reason for this state of affairs is that no one is sufficiently interested to give attention to it. All that the government asks, is more taxes. The Sudan ought to balance its own budget as well as help the treasury in Cairo, although the army is out of all proportion to the needs of the country. All that is required is a good Governor and nothing more.

What is the use of this activity which entails so much responsibility and so little praise? A commandant for instance, sees a tribe in danger, goes to its help, and loses one or two soldiers. He is blamed because he has lost the government two men that it must replace, because he has chastized tribes that pay taxes, because he has tried to distinguish himself. That is the cross that awaits him.

A final reason for this disorder is that the government at Cairo, that knows its servants and, without doubt, has had some unhappy experiences with them, has deprived them of all independence. The smallest detail is regulated from Cairo.

But it follows that the smallest affairs drag on, studying the for and against of every question; that, in Cairo, with the best intentions, they understand very little of the conditions in the Sudan; that the Governors lose, all self respect and they become merely reporters, interested in hiding the truth, dissembling before taking action until orders have been received from Cairo, and arising from all this is a spirit of indecision. and injustice which makes the government misunderstood in spite of the ten battalions that are in the Sudan.

A thousand times better than this state of affairs that ruins everything would be the old system under which the Governors reigned as kings and committed injustices themselves, but at least they were not without that ambition, which is the legal and honourable child of autonomy, of making themselves respected by giving the country order and security." (45)

The Egyptian administrators were simply not capable of dealing with the problems which confronted them. The problems were big enough, as well we know, if Ismail Pasha's ideas of enlightened rule were to be realized.

"The organisation of the province of Taka is defective," wrote Jaafer Mazhar Pasha on his arrival in the country. "There is not a town or village to which a muawin or mamur has been posted. Its inhabitants are organized into nomad tribes that are continually moving from one place, to another.

The distance between one tribe and another is at least seven or eight days and it takes a Governor about twelve days to get to know the piece of country covered by a tribe. Most of the sheikhs do not know the Governors and the Governors do not know them ...

They fear the government and the Governors. They do not know how to read or write and only five per cent know Arabic. The Mudir has never taken the trouble to make himself acquainted with the situation in the different parts of his Mudiria. He has never intervened in the feuds between the tribes, in spite of the fact that he was aware of them.

Actually, the three principal tribes of Taka, the Beni Amer, Shukria and Hadendoa are at war with each other, and it is impossible for the men of one to pass through the territory of the other. Moreover, we understand that the Mudir has imprisoned the sheikh of the Hadendoa, Musa, and put another in his place who is hated by the tribe.

This has given rise to an enmity, between the partisans of the two sheikhs, which continues to this day. I have written to the Mudir telling him to release Sheikh Musa, whom I have invited to come and meet me". (46)

When Jaafer Pasha arrived in Kassala his action with regard to the sheikhs was to summon them to a meeting and address them to the effect "that they should stop these acts of savagery and barbarity against each other, that they must present their complaints to the government which was alone qualified to settle their differences, that if anyone settled them by his own means, he will be severely punished together with the sheikh to whom he belongs."

At the same time, probably, a court for hearing petitions (Service des Requetes) was started in Kassala under the Mamur, Khalil Fahmy Eff., but when Mumtaz Pasha became Governor of the Red Sea Coast he was dissatisfied with its operation and took the first step towards associating the natives of the country with it.

In 1871, Hamid Musa, ex-Nazir of the Beni Amer Qism, was the President, with Mohammed Agha el Awad, ex-Nazir of the Halenga Qism as Vice-President and the Mamur Khalil Fahmy as a member. Two months later the system was extended to Suakin and Massawa, in a modified form which gave the Local Councils the powers to settle civil suits also. Khalil Eff. Haidi then became President in Kassala and Sheikh Hamid Musa and Mohammed el Awad were reinstated in their respective Qisms to supervise the cultivation of cotton (47).

When Munzinger became Governor further modifications were made. The Sudan had just been divided into three parts and the post of Governor-General suppressed, but this led to difficulties because there had previously been a 'Council of the Sudan' at Khartoum which heard cases for the whole country and from it appeal lay to Cairo.

In the meantime separate Courts had been started at Khartoum and Berber. The solution arrived at in March 1872 was that similar Courts should be started in Kordofan, Dongola, Sennar and Fazugli and that appeals from all Courts should lie to the Khartoum Court consisting of a President, Mufti, Clerk and members. Justice must have been the most laborious business for the bulk of the population although, in practice, few except the towns of the places where the courts were situated ever used them.

While all these schemes were being carelessly hatched out in the insignificant garrison towns

the bulk of the population was making the best it could of a situation which very largely left them out of account. As long as they kept out of the reach of the government their lives were disturbed only by the recurrent visitations of famine, locusts and pestilence which had been their lot since time immemorial.

Yet the government was having its effect to some extent on the organisation of the tribes by dividing them into administrative districts that were often arbitrary. It was also influencing the tribal leaders by giving them salaries, ranks and honours, and by bringing them into closer touch with "their Zaptiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis and their Yuzbashis, their Kaimakams and their Pashas," which Gladstone had once so fervently advocated should be removed from Europe "bag and baggage."

The Hadendoa were still under the great Sheikh Musa Ibrahim who was well able not only to look after the interests of his tribe, but also to extend its influence in the Gash delta. He was made a Bey by the Khedive but in 1872 Munzinger removed him temporarily to Massawa because he was not making sufficient effort to maintain public security in his area.(48)

In his absence Mohammed Billal of the Bereinab section was put in charge of the southern Hadendoa and Mohammed el Amin of the Tirik was made responsible for the northern sections which had previously been put under the Mamuria of Sinkat attached to the province of Suakin.

The Gemilab section were a thorn in the side of the Governor and were feared just as the Baza were feared in Taka. The Beni Amer also had a strong ruler in Sheikh Hamid Bey Musa although he was no more inclined to stop his tribe from attacking its neighbours than the other sheikhs.

The Halenga were already being pressed back into the neighbourhood of Kassala itself by the Hadendoa but they still had villages as far out as Mekali. It was on the Halenga that the brunt of Mumtaz Pasha's cotton schemes fell.

The first mention of the Rashaida is made by Munzinger, although he does not refer to them by name, when he visited Tokar in 1872 to investigate the question of man-power for the cultivation of cotton in the Tokar delta.

Even then these 'little-limbed and subtle-brained and supple-tongued Arabians' from across the Red Sea struck a discordant note among the more sober Beja inhabitants. Munzinger had little use for them: they were forceful colonists who showed no hesitation in the use of force if the local tribesmen interfered with them. He found them divided between Mohammed Ghul and Agig and by appointing sheikhs to collect tribute set up quarrels that have not yet ceased to rankle. (49)

(To be conlinued).

#### FOOTNOTES

7. Rassam, loc, cit. Vol.I, p. 137

8. Letter from Mumtaz Bey, 15 March, 1867, Douin, ibid. I. P.291.

9. No less typical was his letter about one of the arid islands close to Aqiq which boasted 150 inhabitants and some ancient cisterns dating from Ptolemaic times." Without doubt,"

he asserted, "by the impetus provided by his Highness and by the Grace of his solicitude the island will regain its ancient splendour." Douin *ibid.* C. VI, *passim*.

10 *ibid.* I, P. 238

11. *ibid.* II, P. 473. The trouble started by Mumtaz Pasha over the Nawayma crossing the Atbara has not yet been finally settled although it is an almost annual subject of negotiation between the Hadendoa and the Shukria.

12. MacMachael, H. A. A History of the Arabs in the Sudan, Vol. II. p. 404.

13. James, F.L. The Wild Tribes of the Soudan, London, 1883 p.240.

14. Myers B. R. Life with the Hamran Arabs. London, 1876 p. 40

15. Douin *ibid.* 11, P-. 547 Abdine Archives, a note signed by Munzinger, Cairo

16 *ibid.* II, p. 551

17. *ibid.* I, p. 229.

18. *ibid.* I, p. 298.

19. Letter from Jaafer Pasha. *Ibid.* I, p. 300.

20. *ibid.* I, P. 418.

21. *ibid.* II, p, 450.

22. Ignatius Pallme. Travells in Kordofan. London 1844. P. 200.

23 Dr, R, Lepsius. Letters from Egypt, Ethiopia etc., London, 1853 P, 185,

24. de Cosson *op. Cit.* Vol. II p. 165.

25 (not eligable)

26. Douin. *op. Cit.* I 296.

27. *ibid.* II p. 160.

38. *ibid.* I, p. 173.

39. *ibid.* P. 171.

44. *ibid.* II, p. 455.

45. *ibid.* I, p 438.

46. *ibid.* I, p. 206.

47. *ibid.* II, p. 538.

48. *ibid.* II, p. 538.

49. *ibid.* II, p. 538.

Source: Carolina Rediviva university Library, Uppsala - Sweden