
**Egyptian-Sudanese Relations:
The Role of Cairo University (Khartoum Branch) in the
Pivotal Transformations of the Sudanese Community**

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Introduction



Egypt played a crystal clear role in the dissemination of science in the Sudan. A role that is regarded by the Egyptian politics as a pivot to which it should abide by unreluctantly since The Sudan has been Egypt's strategic depth all over the history, in addition to a deep sense of more social communication. And thus It was no surprise that the relationship between the peoples of the two countries is characterized by being lively and honest away from any political tension arising out of the government conflicts in the two countries which are in all cases liable to resolutions.

The educational role of Egypt in The Sudan followed the same foreign policy adopted in all Africa.

In this context, Dr. Boutros Ghali, former Secretary General of the United Nations considered that the educational role of Egypt in the Sudan through the establishment of the University of Cairo Khartoum branch in October 1955 has a great undeniable impact on the political, cultural, economic and social paths in The Sudan.

The Establishment of Cairo University Khartoum Branch

In confirmation of the scientific cooperation depth between the two countries, and in response to the circumstances of students in the Sudan, whether graduates of the Egyptian secondary schools or graduates of the Sudanese secondary schools, and in accordance to the bilateral agreement between the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Government of the Sudan in 1955, the Egyptian Council of Ministers issued a decree on September 21, 1955 to establish a branch of the schools of Law, Arts, and Commerce of Cairo University in Khartoum, where the study has already begun at five o'clock sharp on Saturday evening October 15, 1955. Note to mention the short period between the issuance of the decree and the beginning of study. The number of students admitted at that time reached about 268 students, of

whom 39 students at the Faculty of Arts, 130 students at the Faculty of Law, and 99 students at the Faculty of Commerce. In 1959 a presidential decree was issued stating that these university branch schools shall become independent units.

The most important consequences of the establishment of Cairo University Khartoum branch:

- Absorb a large numbers of civil servants in the Sudan, who didn't have the opportunity to continue at the university study.
- The large diversity of curriculum compared to what is applied in the University of Khartoum.
- The positive direct impact of the movement of students including both affiliated and full-time students in the political, cultural, social and economic society movement.
- The distinguished role played by university professors in the intellectual movement through plentiful scientific contributions in all scientific fields.

In November 1973-1974, University changed into morning study system after the circumstances that forced it to adopt evening study had ended for the following advantages:

- It gives students enough time to study instead of being distracted between work and study.

- It gives students the opportunity to participation in cultural and scientific activities, and thus qualifies students to their prerequisite roles in the society.

- It fosters and enhances the talents as well as the abilities of students to interact in a positive way with the community through field trips.

The University Role in the Sudanese Political Movement:

Normally, the university is related to the society. This allows scientific, knowledge, and moral communication which naturally results in the arising out of intellectual visions or at least helps in the dissemination of ideas believed by the elite concerning the issues of national liberation, development, and democracy including the devolution of power. Consequently, this had its impact on the branch students and the need to contribute through peaceful dialogues that escalated in the corridors of Cairo University and unsurprisingly turned into bloody clashes, before and after the October 1964 Revolution, by:

- The Democratic Front which in a way or another represents the Marxist left's thought and is led by the Sudanese Communist Party that is characterized by its intellectual activity and vitality through cultural activity, wall newspapers, seminars, theater, and National Culture Association.

- **Arab Nationalists:** The beginnings of this organization are documented by Dr. Salah al-Din in his PhD thesis at the University of Khartoum in 1940-1970 entitled **THE SUDANESE STUDENT MOVEMENT** highlighting, in general, the Arabic culture of the Sudan. This organization was established in 1959 with the contribution of a number of Cairo University branch students. At the beginning, it was called the Arab Socialist Front aiming to combine between the concept of Arab nationalism from the point of view of Al-Baath Party and Abdel Nasser.

Muslim Brotherhood: Through an objective review of the political development in Sudan, the Muslim Brotherhood movement in the mid-fifties didn't have a public dimension since its leaders believed in long term education instead of political movement as a way to reach authority. Later, this flow witnessed radical changes, even though it had an ineffective existence at Cairo University.

National Unionist groups: These groups were related with the political slogans raised by The National Unionist Party, known later as The Democratic Unionist, under the leadership of Ismail al-Azhari. Although it was a little group yet it gently stood against stronger approaches of which the most promi-

nent leaders are Osman Omar Sharif, Badria Solaiman, and Muzammil Ibrahim Diab, Al-Tayeb Abdullah, Taha Hassan Taha, and Osman Mohamed al-Sayed.

These political powers had a significant impact on the political confrontations and the opposition, salient of which are:

- The demonstrations on 21/10/1958 that supported the Sudan Trade Union strike at that time.
- The demonstrations that followed the murder of Patrice Lumumba in Congo in 1961 against the military regime for refusing to allow the passage of the aircrafts seeking to provide aid.
- The demonstrations of political nature.

The University Cultural and Intellectual Features (1955 -1993)

First: The university cultural and social activities were characterized by a spirit of innovation and activeness since it extended to cover the Arab Club, the College Forums and the cultural clubs, whether by participating in seminars and workshops or by preparing for them, in addition to a kind of intellectual vitality triggered by the interviews of some of the professors of the Faculty of Arts published in the Sudanese newspapers, such as Mohammed Zaki al-Ashmawi, and Dr. Abdul Majid Abdin. Also, some of the professors

of the Faculty of Economics submitted practical proposals on the issue of transportation.

Second: The university issued The University Magazine in many semesters. Such editions were characterized by being mainly scientific. Also every faculty issued a scientific magazine.

Third: On the student level, there was the National Culture Association led by Youssef Khalil Muhammad and Al-Baath Literary Association led by Abbas Abdul Rahim, in addition to forums of other political organizations in which they discussed their thoughts and strategies. These organizations presented a quite number of figures who, later, had a significant intellectual, literary and social role.

Fourth: The art of acting was one of the activities that marked Cairo University Khartoum Branch where the Egyptian students, by virtue of their artistic efforts, boosted such activities; The idea started in 1960 and encouraged by Prof. Mohammad Ahmad El-Masri, an Art teacher at Gamal Abdel Nasser secondary School, who presented the comic character Abu Lam'aa. Then, Mr. Mahmoud Albjerimi, a French language teacher at the same school, participated in the development efforts

until the band reached the peak of success in 1965-1966.

Fifth: The acting team of Cairo University Khartoum branch achieved a great success. Not to mention that such success was both materially and morally boosted and supported by the University God Father Professor Tolba Oweida; in addition to Professor Mohammed Zaki Al-Ashmawi, Professor of Drama at the University Faculty of Arts and later the Dean of Alexandria University.

Sixth: The university holds a yearly exhibition of paintings, of which the most successful is the exhibition held in March 1965, since it displayed the works of a number of young Sudanese artists such as Mustafa Osman and Awad from the Bank of Sudan.

Seventh: The university wall newspapers had an outstanding popularity since they raised intellectual, political, social and cultural issues which the national newspapers were not able to tackle in light of intellectual repression. In this respect, these newspapers discussed democracy and freedom. It, also, discussed the issue of mixing comparing Cairo University Khartoum Branch to the National University of Khartoum. Also, some of these newspapers had a head start on the publication of a number of poems sung later, in addition to

analyses of the most important international events such as the Cuban revolution led by Castro and Guevara, as well as the revolution of September 1962 led by al-Sallal in Yemen.

The most prominent of these newspapers is Africa newspaper issued by Barakat Musa Al-Hawwati. It

was characterized by its African perspectives raising the ideas of national liberation movement in the African continent ideas led by Gamal Abdel Nasser, Kwame Nkrumah, Nyerere, Modibo Keita, Jomo Kenyatta, Patrice Lumumba, and Kaunda.