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THE SUDAN  
EXAMINATIONS SYSTEM

A Historical and Analytical Study

By

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A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfilment for the  
requirements of the degree of Master  
of Arts in the Department of  
Education at the American  
University of Beirut,

Beirut, Lebanon,

July, 1968

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

Thesis Title:

The Sudan Examinations System

(A Historical & Analytical Study)

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## A B S T R A C T

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the possibility of improving the present examinations system in the Sudan, with a view of making it more positive and educative to Sudanese students, in terms of their present abilities and future careers. It is also to find out better examining techniques to render the system more efficient and to bring fairness to the candidates.

The main body of this paper will include the grade examinations, with special emphasis on the School Certificate Examination. The Public Examinations are dealt with in brief, only as far as they reflect on the volume of work carried out every year by the Examinations Section.

Educational examinations in the Sudan are of three types:

(1) School Examinations. These are the internal examinations which are conducted internally in all Sudanese schools, by the Headmaster and the teaching staff. They include frequent tests, term examinations, and promotion examinations.

(2) Grade Examinations: These are held at the end of the school year, for all pupils in their final classes, at all educational levels. They include the Elementary Schools Final Examination, the Intermediate Schools Final Examination, and the Secondary Schools Final Examination which is known as the Sudan School Certificate Examination.

(3) Public Examinations: These are conducted by the Sudan Examinations Section when requested by Governmental Departments, and other educational institutions and colleges in the Sudan, or by foreign examining bodies.

To achieve the purposes of the study, some proposals are made:

(1) If the examinations system is to be maintained, it should be strengthened and improved. Suggestions for improvement are included covering those principles that should be considered when preparing the examinations and when scoring the answers and awarding the results.

(2) Preliminary steps should be taken for using schools estimates to form a substantial part of the examiners' assessment of the work of candidates.

(3) As a 'group' examination, the present Sudan School Certificate Examination should be replaced

by a 'subject' examination, where candidates can have wider freedom of choice in the examination subjects.

(4) For the purpose of securing international recognition of the Sudan School Certificate by foreign universities and examining bodies, the Sudan Examinations Section should be re-established as an independent examining body, with all the powers and responsibilities necessary for the proper conduct of its functions.

The study includes four chapters, with an introductory statement. In the introduction, the statement of the problem, purpose and significance of the study, methodology of the study, and definitions and delimitations are clarified.

Chapter I deals with the historical set<sup>up</sup> of the early Sudan Examinations Council, and the factors that have led to its substitution by the present Sudan Examinations Committee. The structure of the Sudan examining body - the Council, the Committee, and the Examinations Office - is explained and discussed, showing the responsibilities and powers of each.

Chapter II deals with the preparation and administration of the different examinations. In each case the types of examinations and of candidates taking

each examination will be shown. Employment of examiners, and the system of results and awards fall within the scope of this chapter too. Some statistics concerning entries for the different examinations, and their results, are tabulated and commented upon.

Chapter III deals with the evaluation of the present examinations system. The evaluation will be in terms of: (1) its adaptation to the local conditions of the country, e.g. the place of the Arabic Language in the School Certificate Examination, and the employment of local examiners, (2) the standards and recognition of the Sudan School Certificate, (3) the grouping of subjects of the School Certificate Examination, and (4) the effect of this examination on the school system and on education in general.

Chapter IV draws out conclusions and includes some recommendations for improving the examinations system. This chapter is mainly concerned with: (1) some principles and practices of examinations - dealing with moderation, marking and assessment, instructions to candidates, and schools estimates, (2) the possibility of replacing the present Sudan School Certificate Examination by a General Certificate of Education (G.C.E.) Examination, and (3) the responsibilities and powers of the present Sudan Examinations Committee.

E R R A T A

Pages 77 and 104 are missing due to misnumbering of pages.

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

### A. Statement of the Problem:

The Cambridge School Certificate Examination, operating in the Sudan until 1953, has been modified to render it more applicable to the requirements of the national system of education of independent Sudan. Nevertheless, with the rapid changes which are taking place in the system of education in the Sudan, leading educators in the country believe that further modifications in the system of examinations are still called for.

### B. Purpose and Significance of the Study:

To state the purpose and significance of this study, we will start by raising the following questions:

How has the system of examinations in the Sudan evolved?

What is its present organization?

What are some of its weak points and points of strength?

What are some of the major issues involved?

What improvements might be suggested and why? These and other related issues form the subject of this thesis.

The aim of this paper is therefore: (1) To explain the reasons for the establishment of the early Sudan Examinations Council and the forces that led to its substitution by the Sudan Examinations Committee. (2) To explain how this shift was accomplished? What connections remained with the Cambridge Syndicate, and what international procedures are still in effect? The extent of adaptation of this organization to the local conditions of the country will be considered and commented upon. (3) To make some proposals for further improvements.

While developing this paper, the writer will express his considered judgment about the existing examinations system in the Sudan. The study will be concluded by a discussion of new examining techniques, giving practical recommendations rendering the system more efficient, and bringing about fruitful cooperation between the examiners and the subject matter teachers.

To the best of the writer's knowledge, there has been no study dealing with proposals for reforming the existing examinations system in the Sudan. There-

fore, from this standpoint, the study is significant in that it initiates serious consideration of this important aspect of education in the Sudan.

C. Methodology of the Study:

The method of the study will be:

(1) Historical: To give a short account of the history of the Sudan Examinations system and its gradual development.

(2) Descriptive: To survey the existing structure and reflect on the system of examinations, mainly on the technical and administrative aspects of the system.

(3) Analytical: To analyse the factors and forces that have led to the formation of the present examinations system, as an outcome of the old establishment.

(4) Evaluative: To evaluate the existing system and to seek new ways to move towards examining techniques which seem more likely to contribute to the fairness and efficiency of the examinations. The methods of evaluation will utilize philosophical and logical analysis. This evaluation will be followed by suggesting a new organizational structure for the local examin-



ing body in order to enable it to function in a healthy atmosphere, unaffected by external pressures.

The methods used are based upon reading in the field of comparative education, study of the official records, a survey of the opinions of leading Sudanese educators, and the writer's previous services in the Sudan Examinations Section.

D. Definitions and Delimitations:

The present educational ladder in the Sudan is as follows: four years elementary education, where children enter the school at the age of 7; four years intermediate education, taking pupils at the age of 11; and four years secondary education, starting at the age of 15. At the end of each of these educational levels an examination is taken for passing that stage, and/or for selecting students to the next stage. At the secondary level, students will sit for the Sudan School Certificate Examination, which qualifies them for entrance to the universities and higher institutions, or for government and non-government services.

The study will deal with all levels and types of educational examinations that fall within ~~the~~ scope of the Sudan Examinations Section. The main body of

the thesis will include the following types of examination: The Elementary Schools Final and Intermediate Schools Entrance Examination, for all pupils in their final elementary classes (age 11); the Intermediate Schools Final and Secondary Schools Entrance Examination, for all pupils in their final intermediate classes (age 15); the School Certificate Examination, for all pupils in their final grades of the Sudanese secondary schools; and other public examinations.

## CHAPTER I

### ESTABLISHMENT AND FUNCTION OF THE EXAMINING BODY

#### A. Background Statement:

In 1902 a primary school was opened in the Sudan; and by 1913 the school was raised to a vocational secondary school called the Gordon Memorial College. Higher schools, giving post-secondary courses, were started in 1936, comprising the Faculties of Agriculture, Arts, Engineering, Law, Public Administration, Science and Veterinary Science. These faculties were later grouped together, to comprise the Gordon Memorial College, while the secondary school was moved elsewhere. The Kitchener School of Medicine, comprising the Faculty of Medicine, was founded in 1924.<sup>1</sup> The Students of the Secondary School were required to take the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate Examination, and this examination is still taken by both internal and external (Overseas) candidates. "This examination may also be held at a center in a foreign country upon

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<sup>1</sup>The Central Office of Information, Sudan Almanac 1963, Government Printing Press, Khartoum, 1963, p. 160.

application by Her Majesty's Representative in the country concerned."<sup>1</sup> In December 1938 twenty Sudanese students sat for this examination;<sup>2</sup> they were followed by others every year; and this procedure continued until 1953, when the Sudan Examinations Council was set up. In 1951 the University College of Khartoum was established, by the fusion of the Gordon Memorial College and the Kitchener School of Medicine;<sup>3</sup> and the examination served as an entrance examination to the University College of Khartoum.

In view of the fact that the Cambridge examination was administered only in December, and that the academic year in the Sudan ends in March, the situation was unfavourable for the Sudanese students. To continue the Cambridge examination in December, would have meant to require the Sudanese students to take the School Certificate Examination after completing only a part of the secondary program. A March examination was found to be more appropriate. Thus it was decided to shift from the Cambridge School Certificate Examina-

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<sup>1</sup>University of London, Regulations and Syllabuses for the General Certificate of Education Examination Held Overseas, June 1964 and January 1965, 1962, p.1.

<sup>2</sup>The Central Office of Information, Sudan Almanac 1956, Government Printing Press, Khartoum, 1956, p. 141.

<sup>3</sup>Sudan Almanac 1963, op.cit.

tion to a national examination, administered in March. Such a step would accomplish two objectives: (1) It would coincide with the end of secondary school year program and the time of admission to the University College of Khartoum; and (2) the content of the examination would be better adapted to the syllabuses of the Sudanese secondary schools.

The problem was discussed with the General Secretary of the Cambridge Syndicate during his visit to the Sudan in 1953.<sup>1</sup> It was then recommended, by Cambridge, to set up a Sudan Examinations Council to conduct the School Certificate Examination. The recommendation was accepted by the Sudanese Minister of Education and the principal of the University College of Khartoum.<sup>2</sup> The matter received careful and thorough consideration by the Council itself, which had its first meeting on the 26th of October, 1953.<sup>3</sup> It was immediately realized, however, that to secure the establishment of an independent and impar-

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<sup>1</sup>The Sudan Examinations Council Bill; Explanatory Note, No. MJ/LEGIS/246, Khartoum, 2nd December, 1954.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

tial examining body, it should be created by law. Because the Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate would be associated with the Sudan Examinations Council in this new undertaking, it was emphasised that the Council must be an independent statutory body; because, in the absence of such legislation, it would be difficult to secure recognition of the Sudan School Certificate by other universities. A bill was then drawn up which was designed to achieve such recognition. The provisions of the bill were related to the establishment of the Council, defining its functions, composition, powers, and all other necessary requirements.<sup>1</sup> The Sudan Examinations Council was thus established. It held its first School Certificate Examination in March 1955.<sup>1</sup> The new certificate which was granted was called 'The University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate - Sudan School Certificate.'<sup>1</sup>

B. Structure of the Examining Body.

(1) The Council:

The Sudan Examinations Council was set up as a statutory body. Its composition was as follows:<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Sudan Examinations Council in Collaboration with the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, Regulations: Joint Examination for the Sudan School Certificate and General Certificate of Education, March 1961, The University Press, Oxford, 1960, p. 3.

a) Ex Officio Members:

The Director of Education, chairman.  
Principal of the University College of Khartoum.  
Principal of the Institute of Education - Bakht  
er Ruda.  
Principal of Khartoum Technical Institute.  
Examinations Officer, Ministry of Education.

b) Appointed Members:

Three representatives of the University College  
of Khartoum, nominated by its Council.  
Three Headmasters of Government Boys' Secondary  
Schools;  
One Headmaster of a non-Government Boys'  
Secondary School; and  
One Headmistress of a Girls' Secondary School,  
all nominated by the Director of Education.  
One member nominated by the Sudan Chamber of  
Commerce.  
One member nominated by the Public Service  
Commission.

The Council also had power to co-opt one or  
more members who would act in a purely advisory capa-  
city, with no right to vote. The members of category  
(b) were appointed by the Council of Ministers, for a  
period of three years, after which they could be re-  
appointed for further period or periods as the Council  
of Ministers might think fit.

The Council might appoint, from amongst its members, committees and panels to perform any of its functions.<sup>1</sup> According to this rule there were three standing committees under the old Sudan Examinations Council:<sup>2</sup>

(a) The Executive Standing Committee. Its function was to deal with all matters delegated to it by the Council. It would act for the Council in the intervals between its meetings; and it was empowered to make decisions on all matters that could not be deferred to the next meeting of the Council. This committee was to report all its decisions and recommendations to the Examinations Council for confirmation at the earliest opportunity. It was made of the following members:<sup>3</sup>

The Director of Education, Chairman.

Vice-Chancellor of University of Khartoum.

One member from the University of Khartoum.

Secretary, Sudan Examinations Council.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>3</sup>Agenda of the First Meeting, November 27, 1962, Examinations Section, Khartoum, (in the files of the Examinations Section).



Representative of a Government Secondary School.

Representative of a non-Government Secondary School.

(b) The Public Service Examination Committee.

The Public Service Examination is an examination of a lower standard than that of the School Certificate. Its main purpose is to examine candidates seeking to qualify for government or other services. This committee had the following members:<sup>1</sup>

The Director of Education.

Public Service Commission.

Principal, Khartoum Technical Institute.

A Headmaster of a Government Secondary School.

A Headmaster of a Government Commercial Secondary School.

Representative of the Ministry of Interior.

Director of Accounts.

Asst. Director of Education For Cultural Relations.

Secretary of the Examinations Council.

(c) The third of the standing committees was the Intermediate Schools Final Examination Committee. This committee was responsible for supervising and conducting the Intermediate Schools Final Examination. It was also responsible for the marking of the papers,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

as well as the preparation of the final results. It was composed of the following members:<sup>1</sup>

Principal, Institute of Education - Bakht er Ruda.

Supervisor, Intermediate Teachers Training College.

Chief Inspector, Bakht er Ruda.

Chief Examiner of the Previous Examination.

Chief Inspector, Government Intermediate Schools.

Chief Inspector, non-Government Intermediate Schools.

Headmaster, Government Intermediate School.

Headmaster, non-Government Intermediate School.

Secretary, Sudan Examinations Council.

Asst. Secretary (Administration), Sudan Examinations Council.

At the School Certificate level, there were nine subject panels. The main task of these panels was to advise the examining body on their respective subjects, to offer criticisms and suggestions to the examiners, and to recommend syllabuses. They would also propose suitable books, where necessary, for the forthcoming examinations. Each of these panels was composed of representatives of schools preparing candidates for the examination, the University of Khartoum, some examiners, and any other members nominated by the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

Examinations Council. The Secretary of the Sudan Examinations Council (or his assistant) would attend all panel meetings as secretary.<sup>1</sup>

The assessment of the results and the award of certificates fell within the responsibilities of the Awarding Committee of the Sudan School Certificate Examination. This committee was also responsible for the general control of marking and the fixing of standards in subjects, as well as the award of certificates to successful candidates according to the examinations regulations and the conditions for the award of certificates. It was a joint Committee consisting of representatives of the Sudan Examinations Council and the Syndicate of Cambridge.<sup>2</sup>

Functions of the Council:

The main function of the Sudan Examinations Council was to conduct and administer the School Certificate Examination, in collaboration with the University of Cambridge Local examinations Syndicate. This collaboration was to be worked out by conducting and administering the examination in the Sudan. But the answers were to be sent to Cambridge where they

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<sup>1</sup>Sudan Examinations Council..., op.cit., p.8.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

would be remarked, or marked and assessed. The final results were to be worked out in Cambridge also. A subsidiary function was also stated, namely that "the Council also administers the Sudan Public Service examination, the Intermediate Schools Final Examination, and other Sudan and foreign examinations."<sup>1</sup> Although responsibility for other examinations was included in the functions of the Council, this did not change the fact that the Council was initially created for administering the School Certificate Examination only. It was only for convenience, and as a logical development, that examinations, such as the Public Service and the Intermediate Schools Final Examinations, were added. The Ordinance, by which the Council was created, stated that it was "An Ordinance to provide for the creation of an independent Examinations Council for the purpose of controlling and conducting a School Certificate Examination in the Sudan."<sup>2</sup>

Despite its initial purpose, however, the collaboration with Cambridge was a necessary step as a means for securing international recognition of the Sudanese School Certificate. This recognition was

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

thought necessary from the start, and it was stated in the functions of the Council that "The certificates awarded on the results of this examination are recognized by Universities and professional bodies in the United Kingdom as being equivalent to the Cambridge School Certificate."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the creation of a local examining body would assist students to take the examination at the end of the final year, rather than in December. The school year had been already changed in 1951. Before 1951 it was from January to December; and since then it has begun in July and ended in March, with the holidays in April, May and June. Another advantage was that the employment of examiners with local knowledge and experience would result in having the examination questions more relevant to the students, as they were based on the syllabus of the Sudanese schools.

But inspite of the benefits resulting from the establishment of a local examining body, the Sudan Examinations Council was not fully Sudanese in character. Its initial purpose was to conduct the School Certificate Examination. Its activities were directed by a foreign body. The whole process of the examina-

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

tion was not left to the Council to work it out independently. Some of the answer papers could be marked in the Sudan. But the whole lot had to be sent to England every year for remarking and preparing the final results by the Cambridge Syndicate. Some of the Council's committees included members from the Cambridge Syndicate; and some of the subjects of the examination were not taught in the Sudanese public schools. If the council was to remain so, it would have meant that the Sudanese schools syllabuses would have to continue under the control of Cambridge Syndicate. This would raise the problem of satisfying the national needs through a syllabus that is affected by an external certificate; for this was the only examination to be taken by Sudanese students in their final secondary classes. And as it was tied up with Cambridge Syndicate, and conducted and administered in accordance with its regulations and syllabuses, the Sudanese educators had insufficient scope for making or recommending modifications in the curriculum and examinations. They had no freedom to innovate or to adapt the examining method to their educational aims. Therefore, efforts have been made to bring this examining body within the national context.

2. The Committee:

"The Sudan Examinations Council was dissolved in the autumn of 1962 and replaced by an Examinations Committee of the Sudan Ministry of Education which as from 1963 would be solely responsible for the award of the Sudan School Certificate. Formal collaboration by the Cambridge Syndicate in the award of this certificate has therefore come to an end."<sup>1</sup> In spite of the termination of this collaboration, however, the Syndicate has continued to assist in the awards by making the services of its senior personnel available to the Sudan Examinations Committee for a period of time. In 1962 a representative of the Syndicate attended the first meeting of the new Committee by invitation. Indeed the Syndicate agreed to assist in the awards of 1963 and after, in Khartoum, by nominating assessors of some subjects and one member of their clerical staff to help in the machinery of results.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of this continued assistance was to help the Sudanese staff of the Examinations Section to carry out the

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<sup>1</sup>University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, One Hundred and Fifth Annual Report to the University, Cambridge, 1963, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

technical work of the award of certificates, and to enable them to stand on their own feet in the future. Until 1962, the year in which the collaboration was dissolved, all the answer papers of the School Certificate Examination used to be sent, accompanied by the Examinations Officers, to Cambridge for marking and award. Since then this process is done in the Sudan, with the help of some people from Cambridge.

By the Sudan Examinations Act of 1962 the new Committee was established. According to this Act "The Minister (of Education) shall establish a committee to be known as the Examinations Committee which shall be directly responsible to him."<sup>1</sup> This Committee shall consist of the following members:<sup>2</sup>

a) Ex Officio Members:

Under Secretary<sup>\*</sup>, Ministry of Education -  
Chairman.

Vice-Chancellor, University of Khartoum.

Principal, Institute of Education, Bakht er  
Ruda.

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<sup>1</sup>Sudan Examinations Committee, Regulations: Joint Examination For The Sudan School Certificate And General Certificate of Education March 1968, Khartoum University Press, 1967, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>\*</sup>Already referred to as Director of Education.



Principal, Khartoum Technical Institute.

Principal, Higher Institute of Teachers.

Asst. Under Secretary For Examinations.

In 1968 this category of members included also:

Asst. Under Secretary For Secondary Education.

Vice-Chancellor, Islamic University.

Director of Religious Affairs Department.

b) Appointed Members:

Three members of the Senate, University of Khartoum, nominated by the University Council.

Three Headmasters of Government Boys' Secondary Schools;

One Headmaster of a non-Government Boys' Secondary School; and

One Headmistress of a Girls' Secondary School, all nominated by the Under Secretary.

One member nominated by the public Service Commission.

In addition to these members the Minister of Education can add to the membership of the Committee any interested persons who have experience in educational matters, and who shall act in a purely advisory capacity, with no right to vote. Inclusion of the appointed members shall continue for a period of three years, at the termination of which they may be reappointed for any other period.

Functions of the Committee:

As stated in the Sudan Examinations Act of 1962, the functions of the Sudan Examinations Committee were defined as follows:

(a) "to lay down the procedure that shall be followed in the conduct of the Sudan Secondary School Certificate including fixing of subjects of examinations, setting of examination papers, appointment of persons to be in charge of marking examination papers and supervising examinations, fixing the minimum standard for passes, fixing the dates of examinations and approval of examinations results;

(b) to conduct any other examination referred to it by the Minister;

(c) to appoint sub-committees for the conduct of any examinations under its control;

(d) to make rules not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act for the regulation of its functions and the procedure to be followed in relation thereto."<sup>1</sup>

According to item (b) above, the committee actually conducts, in addition to the Secondary School

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

Certificate Examination, the Elementary Schools Final and Intermediate Entrance Examination (Boys & Girls), the Intermediate Schools Final and Secondary Schools Entrance Examination (boys & girls), and other internal and external Public Examinations.

Under the Sudan Examinations Committee there are four standing sub-committees, constituted in accordance with the provisions of the Act (item (c) above). The formation and functions of these sub-committees are as follows:<sup>1</sup>

a) The Executive Standing Sub-Committee.

The Chairman of the Examinations Committee.

Vice-Chancellor, University of Khartoum, or his representative.

One other member from the University of Khartoum.

Asst. Director of Education For Examinations.

Headmaster of a Government Secondary School.

Headmaster of a non-Government Secondary School.

Secretary of Examinations (non-voting) as a secretary.

Only the members of the Sudan Examinations Committee are eligible for membership in this sub-committee.

This committee will meet whenever needs arise, or as

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes of the First Meeting, November 27, 1962, Examinations Section, Khartoum, (in the files of the Examinations Section).

directed by the Examinations Committee, and will be convened under its chairman. Its function is to deal with all matters referred to it by the Examinations Committee. It will act on behalf of the Examinations Committee and decide on all matters that can not be delayed for the next meeting of the Committee. Decisions of the sub-committee will have to be confirmed by the Examinations Committee at its earliest meeting.

- b) The Public Service Examination sub-Committee.

The functions and composition of this sub-committee are the same as those of the old Public Service Examination Committee under the Sudan Examinations Council,<sup>1</sup> except that the Assistant Director of Education for Cultural Relations is now replaced by the Assistant Director of Education for Examinations. It also included, in addition to its old members, the chief Inspector for Arabic Language, and a representative of the Labour Office.<sup>2</sup>

- c) The Intermediate Schools Final Examination Sub-Committee.

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<sup>1</sup>Supra, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>Minutes of the First Meeting, op.cit.

This has also been continued with the same composition as the old one under the Council.<sup>1</sup> Only one member, the Senior Inspector of Secondary Schools, was added to it.<sup>2</sup>

d) The Awarding Sub-Committee.

While the old Awarding Committee consisted of representatives of the Council and the Syndicate, the present one consists mainly of representatives from the Examinations Section, The University of Khartoum, and other experienced members from the Ministry of Education,<sup>3</sup> or other Educational Institutions. Although it is stated in the regulations that the functions of this sub-committee will be "the general control of marking, fixing of standards in subjects, and the award of certificates . . .,"<sup>4</sup> it actually neither controls the marking nor fixes the standards in subjects. In fact, it starts its work, which is the award of certificates, after the marking has finished and after the standards

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<sup>1</sup>Supra, pp. 12-13.

<sup>2</sup>Minutes of the First Meeting, op.cit.

<sup>3</sup>Sudan Examinations Committee, op.cit., p. 7.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

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<sup>1</sup>Supra, pp. 12-13.

<sup>2</sup>Minutes of the First Meeting, op.cit.

<sup>3</sup>Sudan Examinations Committee, op.cit., p. 7.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

have been fixed for all the subjects of the examination. This is usually the case because the control of marking and fixing of standards are too hard and complicated that they have to be done by experts, especially employed by the Ministry for this purpose.

The subject panels have continued with the same functions and the same representation as they were during the Council's period.<sup>1</sup> While there were nine subject panels, there are now twelve of them.<sup>2</sup> This is because the examinable subjects have increased in number, as the Religious secondary Ma'ahads have already started to prepare candidates, offering special subjects, for the School Certificate Examination.<sup>3</sup>

### 3. The Examinations Office:

During the Council's period the Examinations Office was composed of the Secretary of the Sudan Examinations Council and his assistant, two staff clerks, and one clerk. As the members of the Sudan Examinations Council were appointed by the Council of Ministers, the Secretary of the Sudan Examinations Council assumed

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<sup>1</sup>Supra, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Sudan Examinations Committee, op.cit.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

independence from the hierarchy of the Ministry of Education, as a corollary to the Council's independence. Therefore, the Minister of Education had no direct authority to rule over the Council or to impose any decisions upon the Examinations Section itself. The Secretary of Examinations was directly responsible to the Director of Education as ex officio chairman of the Examinations Council.

At present, the Examinations Office is a special section established within the Ministry by the Minister of Education. In this new venture the Examinations Section will not be an independent body, as its policy and functions may be affected by ministerial pressures. As the volume of work has increased tremendously, the number of persons working in the Examinations Section was increased slightly. With the Secretary there are now three assistants, two staff clerks, and three clerks. A higher post was also included in the hierarchy of its personnel, namely that of the Assistant Under Secretary for Examinations.

Functions of the Examinations Section:

The Examinations Section deals with the performance of examination matters. It is particularly responsible for awarding and keeping of result and



certificates of school, grade and public examinations, and the keeping of necessary records therefor. It also deals with the comparative assessment of certificates and of their educational grades. It prepares the statistics and reports in various examination results for submission to the Minister. In this respect the Examinations Section shall take all the necessary measures to ensure the integrity and secrecy of the different examinations. This Section has a special chapter in the Ministry of Education's budget. "The Ministry of Education shall include under a separate heading in its budget revenue and expenditure in respect of examinations, and remuneration for the supervision and marking of examination papers and other matters shall be in accordance with rules made by the Minister with the consent of the Minister of Finance and Economics."<sup>1</sup>

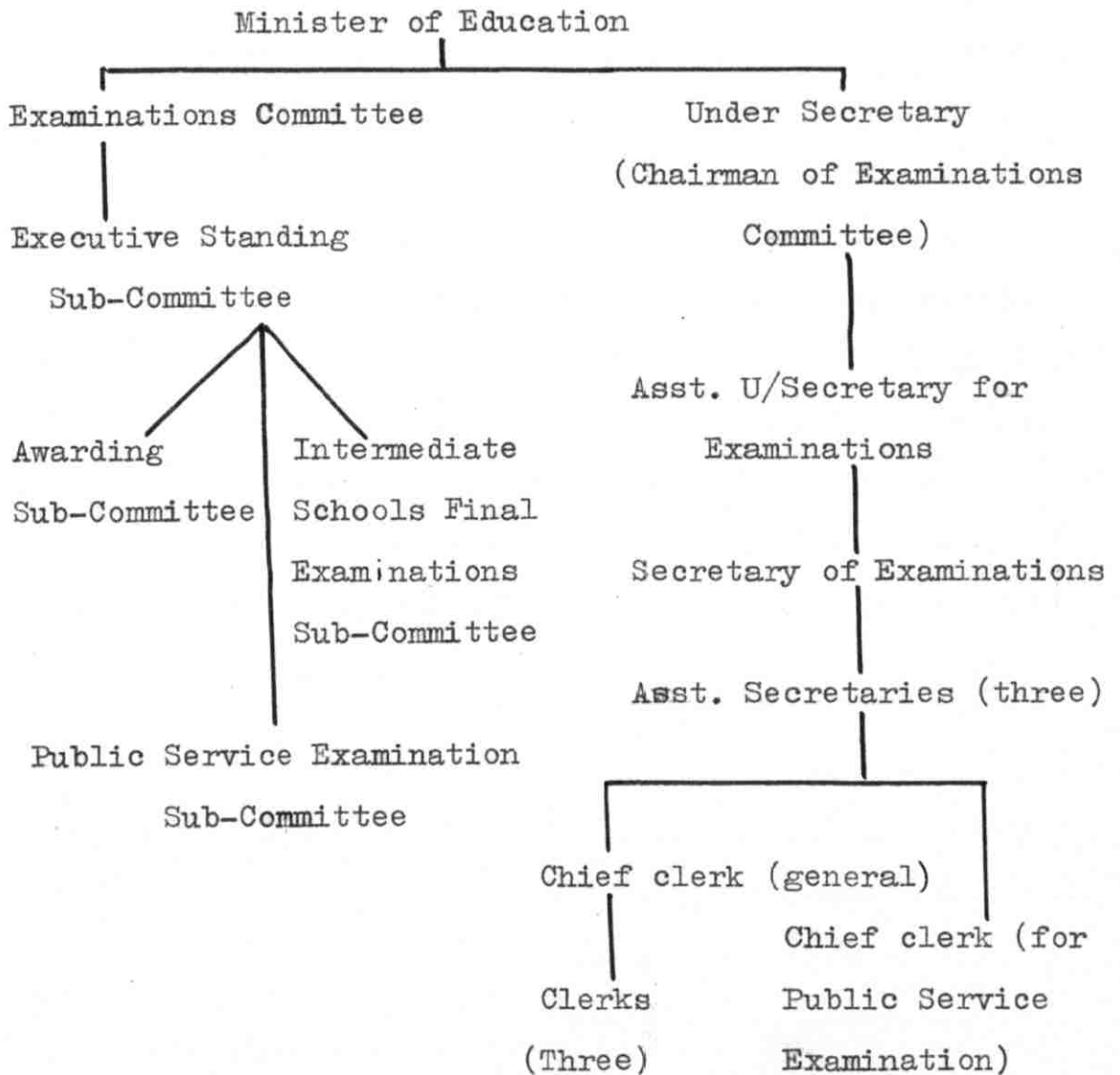
The chart on the next page shows the present organization and structure of the Sudan examining body.

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<sup>1</sup>"The Sudan Examinations Act, 1962" - (mimeographed)

FIGURE I

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE  
SUDAN EXAMINING BODY



It will be noticed, from this chart, that there is a hierarchical organization, with the Minister of Education at the top. This means that the examining body is no longer independent as it used to be until 1962.

Another thing to notice is that the Awarding Sub-Committee is now added to the other three sub-committees appointed directly by the Sudan Examinations Committee. Previously, it was not appointed by the Sudan Examinations Council, as its membership included some Sudanese members and members from the Cambridge Syndicate. This is why the results of the Sudan School Certificate Examination, and the issue of certificates, were worked out in Cambridge, during the Council's period, and not in the Sudan.

CHAPTER II  
MACHINERY AND PROCESS  
OF THE  
EXAMINATIONS

A. Preparation and Administration of the Examinations:

Examinations in the Sudan usually undergo a series of steps before their results are out. The first of these steps is that of setting or constructing the examinations; and this is followed by a number of intermediate steps, until the examination is finally taken by the candidates. The whole process can be divided into two stages: (1) That of preparation, which starts with the setting of the examination and ends with examination papers ready for the print; and (2) that of administration, which includes their printing, despatch, conduct and supervision. The Examinations Section, while supervising the preparation of examinations, also shares in their administration. After the examinations are taken by candidates, the machinery of result, or result finding, will start. This also goes through a number of stages.

In this chapter, we will consider the process

of the examinations, their preparation and administration, and finally their results and certificates.

While doing this, we will take each type of examination alone, with the types of candidates for that examination.

Setters of the examinations are appointed from amongst those who have the experience and qualifications necessary for the task. An important qualification is a university degree. In addition to this, the setter is expected to have had a considerable educational background, and to be well acquainted with the syllabus and teaching of the subject concerned. A setter will have to review the syllabus of the subject, in which the paper is to be set, before he starts to construct it. And, where available, some previous examination papers will have to be reviewed also. Except at the school certificate level, the examination papers are set by single persons. In this case any question paper will represent the opinion and experience of one person only. This is a dangerous undertaking, and the paper must be passed to other person or persons, of equal or higher educational qualifications, for moderation or assessment. Further elaboration of this point is made in chapter IV.

1. The School Examinations:

For the School Examinations, the Headmaster and the teaching staff in any school are responsible for conducting such examinations, including their setting, holding, organizing and management, according to instructions issued by the Minister of Education.<sup>1</sup> The School Examinations include tests, term examinations, and promotion examination. The "tests" are carried out by the teachers at the end of each of the major studies in the syllabus.<sup>2</sup> The "term examinations" are required of all classes. They are held twice during the school year, at the end of each of the first and second terms.<sup>3</sup> The "promotion examinations" are the final examinations. They are required of all classes, except the final class. These examinations serve as a criterion for promoting students to the next class. For the final result, each student will be credited with 60% of his marks in each subject of this examination. This 60% will

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<sup>1</sup>"The Examinations Regulations 1962". (Mimeographed).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

then be added to 40% of the students average marks in each subject in the two terms examinations. A student will therefore get a 'pass' in a subject if the average of his total in the two terms examinations, plus his total in the promotion examination, is equivalent to 50% of the grand total which is 100%.<sup>1</sup>

2. Grade Examinations:

The Final Examinations, for each level, are held at the end of every school year. This applies to Elementary Schools, Intermediate Schools, Secondary Schools, and other Educational or Technical Institutions. The Secondary School Final Examination is officially known as the Sudan School Certificate Examination. This Sudan School Certificate Examination has recently replaced the Cambridge Overseas Examination, which the Sudanese Secondary School students used to take until 1953. The Sudan Examinations Section of the Ministry of Education is now completely responsible for the administration and conduct of this examination, including the preparation of question papers, organization and management of the examination, marking and result, and the issuing of certificates. The Examina-

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

tions Section also helps in preparing the question papers for the other examinations. The responsibility for controlling and conducting these examinations and their results is shared by Bakht er Ruda, the Province Education Officers, and the Headmasters of Secondary Schools. The Examinations Section fixes the dates for the different examinations, according to the time required for printing the questions at Oxford, their arrival at Khartoum, and their dispatch to the different parts of the country. It is also important for the Examinations Section to see to it that all the examinations are held on their appropriate dates according to the school calendar at each educational level.

a) The Elementary Final Examination:

The Elementary Final Examination is held at the end of every school year on the date fixed by the Sudan Examinations Section. This examination is for all pupils in their final classes in the government elementary schools. Pupils from private elementary schools are admitted to take this examination, if such schools are recognized by the government.<sup>1</sup> As directed by the Under Secretary of the Ministry of Education, the Province Education Officer divides his

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.



province into examination centers. Each of these centers is supervised by a headmaster of a government intermediate school, appointed by the Province Education Officer for this purpose.<sup>1</sup> The appointed headmaster then sets up a committee under his chairmanship, which is responsible for supervising, marking, preparing and announcing of the results of this examination, according to the regulations issued by the Ministry.<sup>2</sup>

The Principal of the Institute of Education at Bakht er Ruda is responsible for setting the question papers of the Elementary Schools Final Examination, and for drawing up their marking schemes.<sup>3</sup> The Examinations Section then arranges for the printing of these papers, and refers them back to Bakht er Ruda so that their setters are satisfied that the questions are correct and ready for final printing before the required number of copies is printed. After receiving the printed number of copies from the Oxford Printing Press, the Examinations Section will send them, with the time-table and the necessary instructions, to the heads of the examination centers.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>For further elaboration about Bakht er Ruda, see appendix.

While this examination is set at Bakht er Ruda and prepared by the Examinations Section, it is administered and marked by local committees formed by the intermediate schools headmasters. Therefore we can hardly expect any uniformity in the marking system or in the standard of this examination, except through careful adherence to the marking instructions prepared by the setters. This examination serves as an entrance examination to the intermediate schools. Although it is the same examination for all pupils in their final elementary classes, and it is taken at one and the same time throughout the country, the selection system is not uniform in the sense that all pupils do not have equal chances for selection. The system is so localized that each region selects only its own pupils for the intermediate schools of that same region. Thus one would expect regional inequalities in such a situation. A pupil may show a good aptitude for intermediate education, but he may not be able enough to compete with the others where the vacancies are limited; and he has no chance of going to another school outside his region. The following quotation may help to explain the nature of this examination, as far as entrance to the intermediate schools is concerned.

"The pass mark is usually placed at about 50% . To pass the Examination is easy. A pass only means that a boy has satisfactorily completed his Elementary Course. It does not mean that he is suitable for Intermediate Education. Only about the top 25% of Elementary School children are mentally suited for the academic course of Intermediate Schools. A further 25% are probably well suited to technical education. But about 80% of Elementary School boys should pass the Examination. The number of places in Intermediate Schools varies from region to region. Entry can only be competitive. But if there were a pass mark to qualify boys for a place in Intermediate Schools it would be about 75% for the present type of Paper."<sup>1</sup>

b) The Intermediate Final Examination:

The Intermediate Schools Final Examination is conducted by such persons as may be appointed by the Under Secretary of the Ministry of Education, in consultation with the Secretary of the Sudan Examinations Section.<sup>2</sup> The persons responsible for the conduct of

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<sup>1</sup>Ministry of Education - Sudan, Province Education Officers Handbook, (n.d.), p. 22.

<sup>2</sup>"The Examinations Regulations", op.cit.

this examination are usually selected from these teachers who are engaged in post - intermediate education. The headmaster of a government secondary school is appointed as chief examiner. This examination is also held on the dates fixed by the Examinations Section, at the end of the school year. It is for all pupils in their final classes in the government and non-government intermediate schools. The Examinations Section allows outside (non-school) candidates to sit for this examination, if they satisfy the prescribed conditions. Of these conditions, any outside candidate must have completed the intermediate schools course, and must submit a certificate from a responsible official to the effect that he or she is up to the standard to take the examination. This examination is usually held in the secondary schools, institutes of education, or in intermediate schools, as may be specified by the Under Secretary of the Ministry of Education. The procedure for setting, printing, and despatch of the question papers of this examination is the same as that for the Elementary Schools Final Examination.<sup>1</sup> After receiving the question papers from the press, the Examination Section sends them to the headmasters of the Secondary Schools, or to the prin-

<sup>1</sup>Supra, p. 35.

cipals of the institutes of education, who are responsible for supervising and conducting the examination on the dates fixed therefor.<sup>1</sup> The marking of the answers usually takes place in a government secondary school specified by the Examinations Section for this purpose. It has become a common practice for this marking to take place every year in one of three of the major government secondary schools. These are Wadi Seidna Secondary School (Khartoum Province), Hantoub Secondary School (Blue Nile Province), and Khor-Taqqat Secondary School (Kordofan Province). At the end of the examination period each head of a center will send the answer scripts to the chief examiner at the place specified for the marking. A report in respect of the examination is also sent by each head of a center to the chief examiner, with a copy to the Examination Section. The marking and the results are carried out by teachers from the secondary schools and institutes of education. The subject - heads of the Intermediate Teachers Training College at Bakht er Ruda will lead the marking teams of their respective subjects. The chief examiner, as head of all the marking teams, is responsible for the administration and supervision of

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<sup>1</sup>Op.cit.

the marking. He prepares the results and sends them to the Secretary of the Examinations Committee who will then submit them to the Under Secretary for announcement in the appropriate manner. The chief examiner prepares a report, supported by statistical data, on the examination, and submits it with the results to the Examinations Section.<sup>1</sup> At the end of the process the Examinations Section issues the Intermediate Schools Final Examination Certificates to all successful pupils.

Officially there is an age limit for this examination. The child enters the elementary schools at the age of 7. After completing the required course of four years, he takes the Elementary Schools Final Examination; then he enters the intermediate school at the age of 11. Therefore, after completing the intermediate course of four years, every pupil (supposedly 15 years of age) will be allowed to sit for the Intermediate Schools Final Examination. Some pupils, specially those coming from private schools, claim that they have lost their original birth certificates, and submit new 'assessment' certificates. This is done by parents whose children are usually above the required age for secondary education. Therefore, they try to cheat so

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

that their children may be assessed at a reasonable age for entrance to the Intermediate or Secondary schools. At the end of the Elementary Schools Final Examination the pupils are interviewed and their birth certificates are checked to be sure that each pupil is within the required age limit. The same procedure is followed during the Intermediate Schools Final Examination. Special attention is directed to those who have assessment certificates, and those who look older than what their certificates indicate. This age requirement is adhered to as a necessary condition for those who wish to pass to secondary schools. But some pupils sit for the examination for the purpose of obtaining certificates to qualify them for immediate work. So they may not be hindered from the examination; and their selection for secondary education is left for their interview committee to decide according to the regulations. For this reason outside candidates are admitted to this examination even if they do not satisfy the age requirement.

c) The Secondary Final Examination:

The Secondary Schools Final Examination, known as the School Certificate Examination, is conducted according to decisions made by the Examinations Com-

mittee within the limits of the approved syllabuses, taking into consideration the maintenance of educational standards for this certificate.<sup>1</sup> The examination takes place in all government secondary schools which prepare for it. Non-government secondary schools may also be centers for this examination if they satisfy the necessary conditions for the conduct of a center. Private (non-school) candidates may sit for the examination at any recognized center, depending on the approval of the head of that center and the Secretary of the Sudan Examinations Section. Headmasters of secondary schools are appointed by the Examinations Committee, as heads of the examination centers, to administer and supervise the examinations according to instructions and directions issued by the Examinations Section. In this respect they are working on behalf of the Sudan Examinations Section. There is no age limit for this examination; but all private candidates are required to complete the Sudanese Secondary Schools course, and to submit certificates showing that they are qualified for the examination.

At the elementary and intermediate schools level there is a close relationship between the exami-

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.



nations and the curriculum of the schools. The students are examined in all the academic subjects taught in the schools. The situation is different for the School Certificate Examination. As this examination serves mainly as entrance to the University and higher institutions, students are allowed to choose from among many subjects, provided that they satisfy certain group requirements.<sup>1</sup>

The preparation of the questions for this examination goes through a number of stages. To ensure that a question paper is of a reasonable standard, constructed within the prescribed syllabus, and in line with standards adopted by other examining bodies, more than one opinion is involved in the preparation of the paper. First, some qualified and experienced person is invited to construct the examination for the subject or paper. His questions will then be passed to another person (preferably of a higher educational standard) to moderate them. Where available, a third person is also involved for the assessment of the questions. The main idea behind all this is to ensure the suitability of the paper, regarding its standard and its reflection on the syllabus. Each person in-

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<sup>1</sup>Sudan Examinations Committee, Regulations, op.cit., p. 10.

involved in setting a question paper shall be given a copy of the syllabus and regulations of that paper, with samples of the previous questions set for the same subject. Where necessary, some criticisms or suggestions raised by the subject panel of the paper or subject will also be given. The two or three persons preparing the question paper may finally agree upon it. But when disagreement happens, the final say will be with the setter, the first person who made the questions, provided that the Secretary of the Examinations Section is convinced that the paper is set according to the regulations and the syllabus. The questions are then sent to the printer, and referred back to the setter for correction, and the process goes on until they are finally printed.

A team of markers for each subject or paper is nominated by the Examinations Section and approved by the Examinations Committee. One person is chosen as a senior marker or team leader, whose task is to mark a certain portion of the scripts and to supervise the work of his assistants. Before the marking begins all markers of a certain paper or subject will hold a coordination meeting in which they review their marking scheme, decide upon the marking procedure, and

exchange a few marked scripts to be remarked by each of them. The senior marker shall see to it that each member of his team marks with strict adherence to the marking scheme; and he will remark about 10% of each of his assistants portion. In the end every assistant marker will submit a report on the questions he marked to his team leader, who will include it in his general report to the Secretary of the Examinations Section. This report is expected to include their opinion about each item of the questions, the difficulty or easiness of the questions in general as compared with the previous questions, and the attainment of the candidates. Accordingly, this report will also include suggestions about the standards to be fixed for the subject at the 'pass' level, 'credit' level, and 'distinction' level.

There are two systems or procedures for marking. One is the 'horizontal' system where the paper is divided into sections or questions, each being assigned to a marker. An example of this is to give one section or question from the answer paper to a certain person to continue to mark it throughout the whole number of scripts. The other is the 'vertical' system in which the answer scripts will be divided among the markers, each to mark all the answers in

every paper of his portion.

The assessment of the candidates' work starts as soon as the marking finishes. An assessor is appointed to review as many of the marked scripts as possible. Ideally this person is expected to check on the marking of at least 10% of the whole number of scripts, taking samples from each marker's work. While doing this work the assessor will be guided by the marking scheme and the markers' report. He gives special attention to borderline cases. According to the general work of the candidates and the suitability of the question paper, he will give his opinion about the marking in general, and about each marker's work. He will, in particular, report on the consistency of the marking and on whether some markers were too stiff or too lenient compared with others. Accordingly, he may recommend an adjustment or scaling of the marking of any person, giving clear instructions on the action to be taken by the office. After the marking is assessed statistics are worked out to show the general attainment of candidates in each paper, which will guide the standards committee in fixing the different standards for each subject. The assessor of each subject or paper attends the standards meeting with the

Secretary of the Examinations Section and his assistants. In the light of his knowledge and experience, the assessor normally gives the final decision about the standards for each level of his paper. The senior marker or team leader attends this meeting also; and if an assessor is not appointed the team leader will alone represent the markers in this meeting. Assessors are usually appointed for the major subjects of the examination.

For the purpose of securing recognition of the Sudan School Certificate by foreign universities and examining bodies, the Examinations Section has continued to take the necessary steps and measures to conform with the requirements of such recognition. In this respect, some of the question papers of the School Certificate Examination are frequently assessed or moderated by experts from the Cambridge Syndicate. Among the many assessors appointed every year to review the marking, five or six persons are invited from Cambridge to come to the Sudan in May to do this job. One member of the Cambridge Syndicate's clerical staff is also invited to help in preparing the result of this examination.

After fixing the standards for all subjects,

each candidate will be given a grade symbolizing his numerical mark in every subject. The subject grades will be shown from Grade 1 to Grade 8. Grades 1 and 2 represent the 'Very Good' standard,<sup>1</sup> Grades 3 to 6 represent the 'Credit' standard, and Grades 7 and 8 the 'pass' standard. Grade 9 indicates a 'Failure'. If a candidate fails in a subject, it will not be shown in his certificate, but it will appear in the statement of his result, and be kept in the records of the general result.

During the final stage of the process the Awarding Committee will hold two meetings, one for the Preliminary Award and the other for the Final Award. The grades of each candidate are totalled, counting only his best six subjects - i.e. the best six grades obtained by him in six subjects. The minimum number of subjects to be offered by each candidate for the School Certificate is six, and the maximum is nine. Each candidate wishing to obtain a 'School Certificate' must satisfy this requirement, together with the 'group requirement'. The subjects for the examination are nineteen in number; and they are listed under seven groups, with the compulsory subjects (English,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

Religion, and Arabic - or its alternative) shown in the first group. "All candidates for the School Certificate must enter and sit for six, seven, eight, or nine subjects. These must include English Language, Religious Knowledge, and Arabic (or an acceptable alternative) and at least one subject from each of three of the groups II, III, IV, V, and VI."<sup>1</sup> Certificates granted at an earlier examination will not be amended or improved in parts by partial requirement satisfied at a latter examination. "All the requirements for the Certificate must be satisfied at one and the same examination."<sup>2</sup> The School Certificate is granted in three Divisions, starting with Division One which is the best. To qualify for it, candidates will have to reach a satisfactory general standard as judged by their performance in their best six subjects.<sup>3</sup> The Awarding Committee will place candidates in one of these Divisions, after totalling up their best six subjects. Division One requires an aggregate of 6-23,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Division Two 24-33, and Division Three 34-45.<sup>1</sup> In its first meeting the Awarding Committee will consider borderline cases. Scripts will be re-marked whenever necessary and the work of candidates concerned will subsequently be reconsidered by the Committee at its final meeting.<sup>2</sup> Some candidates do not attempt to obtain a School Certificate. They may wish to be examined in one or two subjects only, or in any number of subjects less than six. In this case they will receive what is known as the General Certificate of Education (G.C.E.) if they reach the credit standard of the School Certificate in at least one subject. Other candidates who enter and sit for the School Certificate, but who do not obtain it, will also be considered for the award of a G.C.E.<sup>3</sup>

B. Statistics: Entries and Results:

It is important to note that acceptance in government intermediate and secondary schools in the Sudan is based on the order of merit of the students

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<sup>1</sup>"Award Rules For Sudan School Certificate 1966"

<sup>2</sup>Op.cit.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 4.



in the examination. This means that not all the students who pass the Intermediate Entrance Examination will be accepted in the intermediate schools. When government schools take their fixed number of students, the other unaccepted students will apply for private schools. Because government education is free, the first choice of any student is to enter a government school. The intake of intermediate schools in each province is from among pupils of the elementary schools in that same province. The following table shows the results of the Intermediate Schools Entrance Examination (boys and girls) for all the country in the years 1957-1962:

TABLE 1

ENTRIES AND RESULTS OF THE INTERMEDIATE  
SCHOOLS ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS, FOR THE  
YEARS 1957-1962, INCLUSIVE<sup>a</sup>

Year	No. of Candidates	No. of Successful Candidates	%age of Success
1957	21,256	10,592	49.8
1958	24,505	12,420	50.7
1959	29,645	17,063	57.6
1960	33,662	18,481	54.9
1961	39,641	18,944	47.8
1962	42,849	20,879	48.7

<sup>a</sup>Ministry of Education, The Bureau of Educational Statistics, Educational Statistics-Academic year 1961/62, Publications Bureau, Khartoum, (n.d.), p. 76.

The following examples illustrate how the chances of government education are limited. In the year 1961, out of the total of 15,227 boys who passed the Intermediate Entrance Examination, 10,905 were enrolled in academic, technical, and Religious intermediate government and 'Ahlia' schools. And out of the 3,717 girls, 1,978 entered government and 'Ahlia' intermediate schools. This gives the percentage of 71.6% for boys, and 53.2% for girls.<sup>1</sup> The table below shows the ratios of boys and girls who passed the examination and were accepted at each level, in the academic year 1962/1963.

TABLE 2  
STUDENTS ACCEPTED AT VARIOUS GOVERNMENT  
SCHOOLS OUT OF THOSE WHO PASSED  
1962/63<sup>a</sup>

	Boys	Girls
Accepted in Elementary Schools out of a thousand who passed (age 7)	404	195
Accepted in Intermediate Schools out of a thousand who passed (age 11)	220	105
Accepted in Secondary and post-Inter. Schools out of a thousand who passed (age 15)	671	630

<sup>a</sup>Ministry of Education, The Bureau of Educational Statistics, Educational Statistics - Academic year 1962/63, Publications Bureau, Khartoum, (n.d.), p. 37.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

Entrance to secondary schools is not based on the localities of schools. But the possibilities for secondary education are almost the same. Not all the students who pass the Secondary Entrance Examination will enter the secondary schools or other post-intermediate institutes. Although the secondary schools are growing in number every year, yet they can not absorb all the students who qualify for them. There is a continuous and increasing demand for education at all levels; and the numbers of children have already grown beyond the present capacity of the public schools. The table given below shows the results of Secondary Schools Entrance Examination (boys and girls) for all the country in the academic years 1957 - 1962.

TABLE 3  
ENTRIES AND RESULTS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS  
ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS, FOR THE  
YEARS 1957-1962 INCLUSIVE<sup>a</sup>

Year	No. of Candidates	No. of Successful Candidates	%age of Success
1957	3,429	2,689	78.4
1958	4,159	2,617	62.9
1959	5,729	3,464	60.5
1960	6,720	4,133	61.5
1961	7,903	5,792	73.5
1962	8,948	5,371	60.0

<sup>a</sup>Ministry of Education, The Bureau of Educational Statistics, Educational Statistics - Academic year 1961/62, Publications Bureau, Khartoum, (n.d.), p. 76.

In the year 1961, 4,958 boys passed the Secondary Schools Entrance Examination. Of these, only 2,498 entered government and 'Ahlia' (Private) secondary schools and teacher training institutes. Out of 834 girls who passed this examination in the same year, 567 girls were admitted to secondary schools and teacher training centers. This makes a percentage of 50.4% for boys, and 68% for girls.<sup>1</sup> Private schools, namely mis-

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

sions and foreign communities, may however provide opportunities for secondary and intermediate education.

The entries for the School Certificate Examination indicate the growth in the number of candidates, which reflects the volume of work done every year by the Examinations Section. The table below gives the entries and results (by Divisions) of the Sudan School Certificate Examination for six years, 1957 to 1962: Since the year 1962 is the year in which the collabora-

TABLE 4

ENTRIES AND RESULTS OF THE SUDAN SCHOOL  
CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, FOR THE YEARS  
1957-1962, INCLUSIVE<sup>a</sup>

Year	No. of Cands.	Successful Candidates			Total	%age of Success
		Div. I	Div. II	Div. III		
1957	937	68	187	229	484	51.7
1958	1,120	103	224	316	643	57.4
1959	1,594	121	361	459	941	59.0
1960	1,885	229	368	542	1,137	60.3
1961	1,986	174	404	473	1,051	52.9
1962	2,155	233	479	601	1,313	60.9

<sup>a</sup>Ministry of Education, The Bureau of Educational Statistics, Educational Statistics - Academic year 1961/62, Publications Bureau, Khartoum, (n.d.), p. 76.

tion with Cambridge was dissolved, to complete the picture therefore a table representing the entries and results of this examination under the present Examinations Committee will also be shown. It is important to notice in this respect the percentages of results obtained by candidates when the system was taken over by the Examinations Committee; and to compare these with the results obtained under the old system. The following table shows the entries and results for the years 1963 to 1966. The original source includes the year 1962; but it will be omitted here because it is shown in the previous table. Looking at the two tables we find that the percentages of the results for the

TABLE 5  
ENTRIES AND RESULTS OF THE SUDAN SCHOOL  
CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, FOR THE YEARS  
1963-1966, INCLUSIVE<sup>a</sup>

Year	No. of Cands.	Successful Candidates			Total	%age of Success
		Div.I	Div.II	Div.III		
1963	2,395	248	490	628	1,366	57.8
1964	2,704	251	557	717	1,525	56.4
1965	3,319	202	653	759	1,614	48.6
1966	4,482	328	867	1,068	2,263	50.5

<sup>a</sup>Ministry of Education, The Bureau of Educational Statistics, Educational Statistics - Academic Year 1965/66, Publications Bureau, Survey Department Press, Khartoum, 1967, p. 48.

years 1957 - 1966 range between 51.7% and 60.9%, with the exception of the year 1965. The percentages of results obtained at present do not differ greatly from those obtained during the old system. In the year 1965 the percentage fell to 48.6%. This was however attributed to the political situation of the country at the time. All the students joined the political demonstrations and strikes which resulted in the downfall of the military regime after the October Revolution of 1964. The previous procedures which were used for preparing the School Certificate Examination are still in effect; and the proper standards adopted for each subject are more or less maintained. Therefore, we can conclude that the general standard of the Sudan School Certificate is still kept the same, and possibly in line with the standards adopted by the Cambridge Syndicate.

The above tables show a continuous increase in the number of candidates taking the School Certificate Examination every year. In the year 1965 the increase was about 600. Since then the number started to increase by a thousand or more. For the year 1967 (not included in the table) the number was calculated and found to be slightly more than six thousands. For the

present year, it is expected to reach seven thousands. If the increase in the number of candidates continues at the same rate, important consideration must be given to the present composition and organization of the Examinations Section.

Examinations of the educational and technical institutes and colleges are managed completely by those institutes and colleges, including preparation of their examinations, supervision, marking, and preparing the results for announcement, according to instructions issued by the Minister of Education.<sup>1</sup>

The "Public Examinations" are those examinations which may be conducted by the Examinations Section if requested by the body or bodies concerned.<sup>2</sup> Such examinations fall into two categories:

(a) Internal Public Examinations, for which the question papers, their supervision and marking, and preparation of the result, take place in the Sudan. They are the following:<sup>3</sup>

(1) The Public Service Examination.

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<sup>1</sup>"The Examinations Regulations", op.cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



- (2) The Arabic Examination for expatriates and southern officials.
- (3) The Military College Entrance Examination.
- (4) The Police College Entrance Examination.
- (5) The Posts & Telegraphs School Entrance Examination.
- (6) English Language Examination, etc., for officials going on study courses abroad.

(b) External Public Examinations. The question papers of these examinations are set abroad and sent to the Examinations Section to administer their conduct and supervision, and send them back to the body concerned for marking and announcing the results. These examinations are listed hereunder:<sup>1</sup>

- (1) London General Certificate of Education Examination, both at the Ordinary and the Advanced levels, twice a year in January and June.
  - (2) London University External various degrees examinations for individuals.
  - (3) The Association of Certified and Corporate Accountants Examinations for Sudanese
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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

Accountants in their various stages, twice a year in June and December.

- (4) London Chamber of Commerce Examination, three times a year.
- (5) The Association of Corporate Secretaries Examinations (London).
- (6) The Association of Incorporated Statisticians Examinations (London).
- (7) The Institute of Radio Engineering Examinations (London).
- (8) The Institute of Cost & Works Accountants Examinations (London).
- (9) The British Institute for Management Examinations (London).

Although the Sudan Examinations Section is responsible only for the proper conduct and supervision of the external examinations, they form a major part of its responsibilities, as they are scheduled by the examining bodies concerned, and care must be taken to see that each is administered in accordance with the regulations set by the external examining body. The internal public examinations also require a great deal of work. The Public Service Examination, for example, is completely prepared and administered by the Examinations Section. Bearing in mind that the

Examinations Section deals also with examinations other than these, and in particular with the Sudan School Certificate Examination, the reader may notice that the present composition of this Section can hardly enable it to face the continuous pressure of its annual work.

C. Further Developments Related to the Examinations System:

It is now evident that Cambridge is prepared to conduct an examination in the Sudan only in December every year; and then only at the School Certificate level. This time does not coincide with the Sudanese schools calendar. It is also evident that some subjects, like Latin, which were included in the examination program, are not taught in Sudanese schools. These and other reasons have led to the establishment of the Sudan Examinations Council as a local examining body, which in turn was superseded by the present Examinations Committee. This further step was meant to indigenize the examinations system and to render it more applicable to the needs of the country. The Sudan Examinations Committee is now completely responsible for the preparation, administration, and conduct of all the examinations. Therefore there is sufficient

scope for Sudanese educators to change and modify the examinations system for the purpose of making it more in conformity with the educational program of the country.

1. The School Certificate Examination:

The Sudan School Certificate Examination is primarily for students of the Secondary Schools, who, if successful, will receive certificates on which the names of their schools are recorded. Other residents in the Sudan can take the examination as private candidates.<sup>1</sup> This measure is designed to provide an opportunity for those candidates who prepare themselves for this examination while they are not enrolled in any Secondary School. They usually do so by joining Further Education Departments or other institutions which help to prepare candidates for this examination. Consideration is also given to students from neighbouring countries who are able to qualify themselves for the examination. Hadramout is the only country so far from which candidates have applied to take this examination. Al-Mukalla Secondary School in Hadramout started to prepare students for the Sudan School Certificate Examination, first in March 1966; and they sat for it

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<sup>1</sup>Regulations - 1968, op.cit., p. 8.

at Al-Mukalla and not in the Sudan.

Although the Examinations Committee has the right not to accept candidates who do not complete the prescribed course in a recognized secondary school in the Sudan or elsewhere, sympathetic consideration is however given to prospective candidates who fall short of this requirement. But they must submit certificates to the effect that they are of a sufficient educational standard to take the examination.<sup>1</sup> This procedure is adopted so as to keep up the School Certificate standard; and it is also in line with procedures adopted by major examining bodies, like the University of London which demands that the course of instruction given in the schools and the curriculum pursued by the pupils be submitted to the University, through the appropriate overseas authorities, for approval.<sup>2</sup>

a) The Growth of Religious Institutions:

The teaching of Islamic Religion is an important feature of the Sudanese Schools. The Department of Religious Affairs was established in 1955 to pro-

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>University of London, Regulations And Syllabuses . . ., op.cit, p. 13.

mote religious teaching throughout the country. It is an essential institution for supervising and organizing other Islamic institutions, and for coordinating Islamic and other academic studies. Its curriculum observes the Sudanese national heritage and attempts to harmonize it with modern sciences. This would enable students to gain practical religious knowledge while studying modern sciences. The studies offered by these institutions include psychology, philosophy, or other sciences.<sup>1</sup> A Religious Maahad Ilmi was started in 1901 as an indigenous Islamic Institution where religious subjects were taught in the Omdurman Mosque. It has been managed by the Department of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Education, since this Department was established in 1955. The Higher section of this Maahad grew into an Islamic College; and in 1965 it became a university with its separate budget and administration.<sup>2</sup> It has thus become an institution of considerable size attended by more than 1400 students from all parts of the Sudan. There are

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<sup>1</sup>The Central Office of Information, Sudan Almanac 1965-1966, Government Printing Press, Khartoum, 1965-1966, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

two colleges, one for Islamic studies and the other for Arabic studies. The main objectives of establishing the Maahad were "to give lectures in Islamic Religion, its principles and laws, in a way suitable to the needs of the people, and also to graduate Ulema who would guide the people to the path of true happiness and welfare, and to mitigate conditions of ignorance and purify people from false beliefs.<sup>1</sup> To accomplish this objective and maintain adequate standards, the Sudan Examinations Section has provided special papers to be taken by the graduates of the maahads in the School Certificate Examination.

b) Arabization of Syllabi:

Arabization of the syllabi was started in secondary schools, and then adopted by the Examinations Section in certain subjects where possible. It was first started as an experiment in the History question paper.<sup>2</sup> It proved quite practical and successful. Over ninety percent of the students who take this subject would answer it in Arabic. In order to provide facilities both for the Maahads students and for students of the Southern Provinces whose mother tongue is not Arabic, it has now become more important to

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>This is guessed to be in 1961.

set as many question papers as possible in both English and Arabic. A good number of this examination papers can now be answered in Arabic, viz. History, Geography, Elementary Mathematics, Art, Cookery and Needlework.

c) Girls' Practical Education:

No facilities were provided to prepare girls for home activities other than academic training. The Cambridge Regulations and Syllabi used to include (in the groups of subjects) topics like Technical Drawing, Metal Work, Woodwork, and Buildingcraft (Brickwork).<sup>1</sup> But these courses were not offered in the Sudanese schools. According to the Sudanese curriculum, these courses were later replaced by other Housecraft subjects.<sup>2</sup> The purpose was to adapt the examination subjects to the needs of the people as much as possible, and to provide for girls' practical education. In 1960 this group was further amended to include two home-life subjects, namely Cookery and Needlework.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sudan Examinations Council in Collaboration with the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, Regulations For the Sudan School Certificate Examination - March 1958, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1957, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ do. Regulations, Joint Examination For the Sudan School Certificate & General Certificate of Education - March 1959, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1958, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Regulations - 1961, op.cit., p. 12.



The Ahfad Girls Secondary School (a private school) started to prepare girls for the examination, in these subjects; and nineteen girls took the two subjects in the School Certificate Examination first in 1960. Other government girls Secondary Schools followed recently.

d) The Arabic Language:

The Arabic language has followed a long course of development in order to become a compulsory subject in the School Certificate Examination. It was first included in the examination as a language only, to be taken by candidates wishing to elect it.<sup>1</sup> In 1959 Arabic was added to the English Language as a compulsory subject. But even then Arabic was not strictly compulsory, because the regulations provided for a "classical or modern European language other than English" as an alternative to Arabic.<sup>2</sup> It was recommended early, however, that the Arabic language be compulsory in the School Certificate Examination starting in 1960. However, due to some difficulties faced by some foreign private schools in providing proper instruction for their students in Arabic, the

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<sup>1</sup>Regulations - 1958, op.cit.

<sup>2</sup>Regulations - 1959, op.cit.

recommendation was not put into effect until in 1966.<sup>1</sup> A special Arabic Language Syllabus was thus introduced for citizens of the Southern Provinces in 1961. This special subject is also frequently offered by other candidates from the foreign communities schools. Because these foreign community schools admit Sudanese students, the Government has arranged for them to provide adequate teaching in the Arabic language, so that, after a certain period of time, the Special Arabic paper will be taken only by the students of the south.

e) Recruitment of Local Examiners:

Local examiners are appointed every year by the Sudan Examinations Committee to set or mark all types of examinations, and in particular the School Certificate Examination. These local examiners are now appointed from among the academic staff of the University of Khartoum, the Islamic University, and other educational Institutions. The subject-heads at Bakht er Ruda are also appointed as markers for the School Certificate Examination, specially those

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<sup>1</sup>Sudan Examinations Committee, Regulations, Joint Examination For the Sudan School Certificate & General Certificate of Education - March 1966, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1965, p. 12.

degree-holders who teach in the Intermediate Teachers Training College. The Higher Teachers Training Institute was established to prepare Secondary School teachers. Its staff is therefore well acquainted with the curriculum and syllabus of the Sudanese Secondary schools. Teachers are selected from the different departments of this institution and appointed as setters or markers for the School Certificate Examination, and other internal examinations. They are also represented in the different subject panels and in the awarding sub-committees.

The School Certificate Examination is the only local examination which qualifies students for university education. Therefore the University of Khartoum is more affected by its results than any other institution. The University academic staff usually participate in all activities of the Examinations Section. From them members are appointed to the Examinations Committee. For all the examination work (that of setting and moderating of question papers, marking and assessment, award and result finding), the Examinations Section depends largely on the services of the University of Khartoum. The standard of the papers, the suitability of the syllabi, the form and content of the question papers, their standards and adequacy, all

depend on the judgement of the University staff. The University staff also attend and participate in the conferences of subject-committees, so as to coordinate between the secondary schools curriculum and the university career.

CHAPTER III  
EVALUATION OF  
THE SYSTEM

In the previous chapters we gave the historical outline leading to the growth of the early Sudan Examinations Council and its substitute, the present Sudan Examinations Committee. We also discussed the functions of the two examining bodies. Then we explained the process of the examinations, i.e. their preparation, administration, results and awards.

In this chapter, an attempt will be made to evaluate the present examination system in the Sudan. Our criteria for commenting on and evaluating the system are those of efficiency, adaptability to local needs and the ability of the examination system to enhance the development and progress of the students and the educational system. More specifically, questions like the following will guide us: how far is the new system adapted to the local needs of the country, how well are the subjects of examinations organized, and, further, what is the effect of the examination system on the school system as a whole?

A. Adaptation to Local Conditions:

The idea of adaptation, however, does not necessarily mean that everything concerning the examinations work will have to be done in the Sudan or by Sudanese people, without due regard to what may be taking place elsewhere. Experiences of other countries are useful in this respect; and they can be adapted and utilized. This is specially important in matters concerning candidates' behavior during the examination, and in matters concerning the preparation and printing of examination papers.

Although the association with Cambridge was ended in 1962, the Examinations Section still seeks help and advice from the Syndicate and other examining bodies in Africa (Such as the West African Examinations Council), particularly in controversial matters. There are situations which arise from hardship cases faced by candidates during the examination, or from dishonesty during the examination. There are no set rules that can be applied to all cases equally, and no two cases are alike; but usually common sense and experience are the best guide. The Ministry of Educa-

tion sends members of the Examinations Section to Cambridge to join the Statistics Department during July - August every year, to get acquainted with the examinations work and to be trained in the award and result machinery. This training is very essential and it will be of more use if the Ministry sends setters and moderators for the purpose of training them in their respective fields.

The question papers of all the examinations are printed in Oxford at the University Press. An attempt was made in 1963 to have them printed in the Sudan, to complete the steps for independence and to save thousands of pounds paid yearly in foreign currency to the Oxford Printing press. The attempt was not successful, however, due to the lack of security of the work. The Ministry was then quite convinced that such idea was impractical, at least for the near future, that it would endanger the security of the examinations to have the questions printed in the Sudan, thus affecting the reputation of the certificates granted. Having the question papers printed abroad, in itself, is an important factor for their security.

The examinations system is now better adapted

to the local conditions of the country. Every examination is set and conducted in accordance with the Sudanese requirements. For example, in the past some examinations were held in Fridays. This measure was protested against in a Friday prayer meeting at the Khartoum Mosque. Now there are no examinations on Fridays, because Friday is an official religious holiday.

B. The School Certificate Examination:

1. Standard and Recognition:

The international recognition of the Sudan School Certificate had been maintained through its association with the Cambridge Syndicate. The provision for such recognition was included in the old Council's regulations, but was omitted from the present regulations of the Sudan Examinations Committee. Another provision, included in the Council's regulations, does not appear in the Committee's present regulations: "The Council may, with the object of securing recognition of the Sudan School Certificate by foreign universities and examining bodies, take all the necessary steps and measures to conform with the requirements for such recognition and may in par-



ticular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, associate such universities and bodies with matters affecting the appointment of examiners, the approval of examination papers, the checking of marking of examination papers, and the award of certificates."<sup>1</sup> While this recognition is not granted officially at present, the moderation of some of the questions and the checking of marking by the Cambridge people may guarantee the required standard and therefore help to bring about this recognition again in the future. Another means for securing recognition is realized through the University of Khartoum which accepts candidates obtaining the Sudan School Certificate. The academic standard of the University of Khartoum was recognized in 1945 by the University of London which admitted the former institution to special relationship whereby courses for London degrees were instituted in certain faculties in Khartoum.<sup>2</sup>

An important question may now be asked:  
What is the role to be played by the Sudan

<sup>1</sup>Regulations 1961, op.cit., pp. 4-5.

<sup>2</sup>The Central Office of Information, Sudan Almanac, 1963, Government Printing Press, Khartoum, 1963, p. 160.

Examinations Section itself in order to secure and maintain such recognition? In the past, this recognition was guaranteed for the Council when it was established as an independent statutory body. Now that the situation has changed, it is difficult to predict any success in this respect.

2. Subjects of the Examination:

The subjects of the School Certificate Examination are arranged in the following groups:<sup>1</sup>

Group I. Compulsory Subjects for entry for the School Certificate.

1. English Language.
2. Arabic, or Arabic Special, or French
3. a) Religious Knowledge (Islamic),  
Religious Knowledge Islamic Special.  
b) Religious Knowledge (Christian)

Group II. General Subjects

4. English Literature
5. Arabic Grammar

Group III. Social Subjects

6. History
7. Geography
8. Islamic History

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<sup>1</sup>Regulations 1968, op.cit., p. 10.

Group IV. Mathematical Subjects

9. Elementary Mathematics
10. Additional Mathematics
11. Islamic Thought —

Group V. (a) Science Subjects

12. General Science
13. General Science (Second Subject)
14. Biology

(b) Commercial Subjects

15. Accounting
16. Commercial Subjects

Group VI. 17. Art

18. Cookery
19. Needlework

The examination subjects are not grouped logically. The Arabic Grammar is grouped with the General Subjects while it is a language subject. Islamic Thought is included in the mathematical subjects group, which it is not. The list contains five special subjects. Three of these (Nos. 5, 8, 11) are "open only to secondary Maahads". The other two, Arabic Special and Islamic Special, are for candidates from the Southern provinces. Other candidates will choose from among the remaining subjects. This arrangement gives the

impression that there are three categories of candidates for the examinations, and that there are three types of examinations within the same examination.

Religion was moved from the optional group No. II and included in the compulsory group No. I. This makes the compulsory subjects three (English, Arabic, and Religion). To cope with this new arrangement, the conditions for the award of the certificate have been modified. A candidate for the School Certificate must now pass in at least two of the compulsory subjects, and not in the three of them. Therefore the addition of a third subject to the two compulsory subjects may endanger the standards and result of the two languages, since a pass in only one of them (with Religion), is enough for a certificate. It may also affect the total entry for the optional subjects like additional mathematics and sciences. Instead of two required subjects for a certificate, the candidate is now faced with three required subjects. This third compulsory subject must be taken instead of another subject, which may be more important for a candidate's academic or vocational career. It is most probable that the standard and recognition of the Sudan School Certificate will be affected by those changes which

are frequently made in the examinations subjects.

3. The Present G.C.E. in the Sudan:

The present secondary schools final examination in the Sudan is called The Joint Examination for the Sudan School Certificate and General Certificate of Education. At the end of the examination two different certificates can be granted to candidates. Most important of these is the Sudan School Certificate, which is issued to candidates after passing in certain subjects, from designated groups. The minimum number of subjects to be taken for the School Certificate is six, and the maximum is nine.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, the only requirement for the issue of the General Certificate of Education is that a candidate must attain a pass-with-credit (judged by the School Certificate standard) in ANY one or more subjects.<sup>2</sup> Therefore a candidate may sit for any one or more subjects, for the purpose of obtaining a General Certificate of Education (G.C.E.) only. Candidates who enter and sit for the Sudan School Certificate, but do not qualify for it, may be considered for the award of a G.C.E. also.

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<sup>1</sup>Regulations, 1966, op.cit., p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

Therefore, the G.C.E., at present, is awarded either to those candidates who are unable to obtain the Sudan School Certificate, or to those who enter only for one or more subjects and are not seeking to attain the School Certificate anyhow. Thus the G.C.E. does not provide information about the extent or level of a candidate's course of study, or any evidence about his suitability for university or higher education. It certifies his attainment only in the particular subject or subjects named on it.

This General Certificate of Education was first introduced in the Sudan School Certificate Examination in 1959. It was probably intended for those pupils who are only capable of showing below average attainment. It is not even recognized for employment purposes; because the Public Service Examination normally qualifies candidates for official employment. It seems as if the G.C.E. was copied from the British system of examination. But while the G.C.E. in England has replaced the School Certificate, in the Sudan it has been introduced in the School Certificate Examination, without replacing it. Therefore, we might conclude that the present G.C.E. in the Sudan, as attached to the School Certificate Examination, and as a lower

certificate, has no meaning to the users of the examinations results (educational institutions and employers). It may be best to replace it by a certificate awarded by the individual school from which the candidate has graduated.

The introduction of the General Certificate of Education, as a new examination replacing the present School Certificate Examination, will be dealt with in the next chapter. In Section 'C' below, it will be sufficient to discuss the effect of the present School Certificate Examination on the schools and on the pupils.

C. The Effect of the School Certificate Examination  
On the School System:

In many schools, the examinations exert a powerful control over the administration and the work of teachers. This control is clearly observed when such examinations are written by university authorities or by education departments, and not by the teacher of the class. "They become an important part of the school program. They determine whether or not a pupil may proceed on to secondary or higher education and whether he may enter certain professions;

they tend to fix, at an early age, the entire social and vocational future of the pupil. In some cases they determine minutely the content of every course taught in the school; they affect classroom procedure and methods; and they set limits on the amount of professional freedom allowed to every teacher in the system."<sup>1</sup> In fact many subject teachers consider examinations to be the real object of their teaching.

"How could it be otherwise, when the percentage of passes at examinations is generally taken as the public yardstick of the educator's professional success."<sup>2</sup> The pupils, on the other hand, tend to view examinations as a competition, or an obstacle to be cleared in order to get a certificate. This certificate is considered as the key which opens the doors of higher education to its holder.

To many educators in the Sudan, the present system of examinations dictates the syllabuses and controls the school procedure and teaching methods.

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<sup>1</sup>Cramer, J.F. and Browne, G.S., Contemporary Education: A Comparative Study of National Systems, (2nd ed.), Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., New York, 1965, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup>Valin, E., The Value of Examinations: A technical study carried out in the Lebanon. UNESCO, Educational studies and Documents No. 40, (1961), p.7.



Teachers have insufficient scope for making modifications in their teaching methods or in the examinations. If teachers are to respond to the needs of their individual pupils and to the changing social and economic needs of their communities, they require freedom to adapt their teaching methods to such needs. But now teachers concentrate on what matters most, i.e. the work and progress of their individual pupils toward passing the examinations. Thus the examinations tend to inhibit original and creative teaching. Furthermore the grouping of subjects in the School Certificate Examination increases the rigidity of the school programs. It does not allow freedom of choice by the candidates according to their abilities or their chosen careers. There are already three compulsory subjects which every candidate must enter and sit for. Moreover, every candidate must select subjects from at least three of the remaining groups, even though they may not be related to his future education. This present group requirement is not suitable to most candidates. If a candidate, for example, selects four subjects from two groups, he will be offering seven subjects (four plus three compulsory subjects). And in order to satisfy the general group requirement he

will have to choose also from another third group. The addition of any eighth subject from another (third) group will most likely affect his level of attainment in the examination.

CHAPTER IV  
CONCLUSIONS AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to draw certain conclusions from what has been explained and discussed in the previous chapters. Three main areas will be considered: (1) Some principles and practices of examinations - dealing with moderation, marking and assessment, instructions to candidates, and teachers' estimates; (2) The possibility of introducing the GCE as a new examination replacing the present School Certificate Examination in the Sudan; and (3) the responsibilities and powers of the examining body. In each case, the situation will be stated or restated, analysed, and commented upon. At the end the writer will conclude his judgment by some suggestions or recommendations for improving the present examinations system in the Sudan.

A. General Principles and Practices About Examinations:

According to Valin the examinations which are used to evaluate students' school life are of consider-

able importance both to individuals and to peoples elsewhere, but more particularly in countries in the process of development.<sup>1</sup> Such examinations are instituted to measure what has been accomplished during a course of study, to weigh each candidate's knowledge, and to appraise his ability. They are therefore instruments of measurement and evaluation to which the teaching methods and techniques of preparation are subjected.<sup>2</sup> Examinations are also a stimulus, as they supply the necessary motivation for the teachers and the pupils. They do not only set the standard to be attained by candidates, but success in them is an external stimulus having economic and social value.<sup>3</sup> There are numerous examples, in many countries, of examinations which are mere competitions designed to eliminate the majority of candidates, and to prepare those who pass them for certain known vacancies in educational institutions or civil service. Such examinations are selective in nature. They are neither quali-

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<sup>1</sup>Valin, op.cit., p. 36.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>Wiseman, Stephen, ed., Examinations and English Education, Butler and Tanner Ltd., Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1961, p. 15.

ifying nor descriptive. Results of such selective examinations are therefore governed not by an absolute standard of performance, but by the level of attainment of the competitors and, in the last resort, by the number of posts to be filled. This is a characteristic feature of all such selective examinations.<sup>1</sup>

In the Sudan, both the Elementary and Intermediate Final Examinations are selective, rather than qualifying, in nature, Table 1 on page 51, and Table 3 on page 54 indicate that not all the students who qualify for intermediate or secondary education will find chances to move to higher stages. This is mainly due to the limited number of places in the intermediate and secondary schools.

1. Moderation:

The development of examining techniques is a recent discipline. The need to select students for secondary and higher education has sharpened the interest in the methods that are used to evaluate students.<sup>2</sup> "Examinations are tools, designed for various

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 2-3.

<sup>2</sup>Valin, op.cit., p. 3.

purposes and various operations. No tool can be perfect but some can be made more precise than others. But even a good instrument can be mishandled. The application of a tool is an event and all events have consequences, perhaps desirable, perhaps not. Some faults may be rectified by modification of the tool. On the other hand, the skill and knowledge of the craftsman is also important; he must understand what he is handling and what his tool can do."<sup>1</sup> Moderation is therefore the best known means for modification or adjustment of the tool and for testing the skill and knowledge of the examiner. In the field of examining, moderation is conceived as a process of adjusting the written examination to fit the requirements of the subject and the candidates. Thus the process can range from the modification of the form of the questions before the examination is set, to adjustments in the marking/<sup>scheme</sup>after the examination has been taken. The questions may be modified because some of them appear too difficult or too easy, ambiguous, irrelevant, or because, for some reason, they are thought likely to produce inadequate responses from the candidates. The

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<sup>1</sup>Wiseman, op.cit., p. 1.

marking scheme may be adjusted after a sample of the scripts has been marked, and some idea of the probable distribution of marks is available.<sup>1</sup>

The Intermediate and Secondary Schools Entrance Examinations in the Sudan may be criticized for lack of the application of the moderation procedure to them. The questions of each of these two examinations are set by a single person. There is no co-ordination between the setters, and there is no moderation of either the questions or the marking schemes. If there is any fault it remains there, with all its possible consequences, until the examination is taken. Each examiner has certain favourite questions which he tends to include in every examination. Setting the questions and constructing the marking schemes require the thinking and effort of more than one person. It is more useful therefore to have a number of independent judgments about a question paper than to rely completely on one highly qualified examiner (provided of course the independent judgments are made by competent examiners).

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<sup>1</sup>Secondary School Examinations Council, The Certificate of Secondary Education: An introduction to some techniques of examining, "Examinations Bulletin No. 3", H.M.S.O. London, 1964, pp. 26-27.

The Intermediate Schools Entrance Examination is usually set and prepared before the previous examination (of the preceding year) has been taken by the schools. This increases the rigidity of such examinations. The usual practice should be to postpone the setting of the coming examination until the previous one is over. It is important to await the response of the schools to the previous examination and to evaluate the work of their students on it, so that certain items can be amended or avoided in the forthcoming examination. This is essential if the examination is to be the servant of the schools. The purpose of moderation is to produce an instrument suitable for measuring the candidates' performance. It is important to undertake the moderation after the examination has been set; and to make further adjustment, if necessary, before the candidates sit for the examination. As a matter of fact, the moderator is making judgments both about the quality of the examination and about the quality of the candidates' performance. In this respect the process of moderation is a continuous process. It starts as soon as the questions are set; and goes on till the work of the candidates in the examination is assessed. Questions of a future examination will be determined by their setters' opinions or judgments about the previous questions and the



work of the candidates on them. It is therefore safer not to construct a future examination until the results of the previous one have been evaluated.

The process of moderation is usually entrusted to one person. He may be chosen because of his experience in examining particular subject, or because he is gifted in predicting the candidates' responses. He is therefore capable of selecting questions and drawing marking schemes which will require little modification, and will produce the range of marks and the level of discrimination between the candidates, which the examination requires.<sup>1</sup> Moderation, whether it is dealing with questions, with marking schemes, or with the candidates' work in the examination, is not the kind of job that any person can do. It is easy to find somebody to set a question paper; but it may be difficult to find another person who can moderate it afterwards. Therefore the long range problem of the Sudan Examinations Section is the selection and training of moderators. In the field of moderation and assessing, the Sudan still depends mainly on the help given by the Cambridge Syndicate. It is not reasonable to depend on Cambridge to do the job every year, with-

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

out thinking of replacing external moderators and assessors by local officials who can perform these tasks. The Ministry of Education can send promising teachers or examiners, to be nominated by the Examinations Section, to Cambridge to be trained in the fields of moderation and assessment. "The single most important quality in a moderator is the ability to make judgments about the relative quality of candidates' performance in a subject. It would be of little use to have a moderator who, for example, could distinguish only two categories of performance, high and low, and not a number of categories in between".<sup>1</sup> Similarly, a moderator whose judgments are influenced less by the quality of the work as it is, and more by the presence (or absence) of certain characteristics which he alone may consider important, is likely to reveal himself as a poor moderator. His grading will be at variance with his colleagues grading. To avoid this situation some training should be given to moderators, in order to improve the efficiency of their work. All examiners should be given some kind of training in the different examining techniques which are likely to contribute to the fairness and efficiency of the examinations.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

It is necessary for an examiner to judge which aspect of a course of study on which the examination should be set, and by what methods. It is necessary for him to make judgments about the standards of performance which are to be expected, and about the assessment to be attached to different levels of performance. Responsibility for making these and other judgments will rest with the different examiners. What should be examined in an attainment or achievement examination? What should the student be able to do at the end of a course of study, in terms of both remembering, thinking and understanding, and of subject matter? The examiner of any particular subject should familiarize himself with such questions and their answers, before he can start to set a paper or to mark an examination. The need to identify the goals or outcomes of a course of study is an important prelude to the construction of an examination. Training in moderation will therefore improve the efficiency of the examinations, and adapt the examining techniques to educational aims.

## 2. Marking Technique And Assessment.

In the majority of cases, examiners, specially markers, are appointed from among those who have been engaged in teaching the particular subjects in the

schools. It is therefore necessary for such examiners to distinguish between two kinds of marking, i.e. marking for the examination and marking for the purpose of instruction. They serve two quite different ends. Marking for the purpose of instruction aims at providing a pupil with the kind of knowledge about his performance in a field of study which will enable him to improve his grasp of the subject and to make progress. But for examination purposes the aim will be to produce a stable and valid order of merit.<sup>1</sup> No more work is therefore needed in the scripts than is required to achieve this end. Markers are therefore expected to follow the marking instructions closely and not to deviate from the general procedure agreed upon by the whole team. Where possible, marking as a team is more useful than marking carried out individually by individual persons each doing the same job but at different times and places. The idea behind team work is that all markers will be working in close cooperation and they can exchange any number of scripts and can easily share different opinions, specially when the marking scheme is still in the process of moderation.

Awarding and totalling of marks is another

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

practice which calls for a team work. The marking of objective examinations is a relatively simple matter. Marks can be awarded on a right-wrong basis. But care should be taken both in marking and in totalling the marks. Simple mistakes can easily happen; and it is advisable to have the marking and totalling checked by another person. Essay type examinations may also be marked on a similar right-wrong basis, for the presence or absence of a specific element. But here, the elements for which a mark is or is not given should be stated precisely beforehand. The marks need not be awarded only for evidence of the candidate's knowledge of facts, or for evidence of his ability to draw relevant conclusions. They can also be awarded for the presence or absence of a specific quality in the answer, such as the 'organization' or the 'precision' of the answer.<sup>1</sup>

Little is known, however, about the effect which marking instructions have on markers' efficiency. It is wrong to expect that every marker will interpret the marking scheme in precisely the same manner except where the answer to be marked is very clearly right or wrong. But where there is any scope for discretion, some will mark leniently, and some severely; and when the marker is instructed to mark in detail some mark-

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

ers may be more precise than others. Thus it will be necessary to check the variations in the marking behaviour by re-marking at least some of the scripts.<sup>1</sup> This procedure is usually known as assessment of marking. When such procedure is adopted, the marks awarded should be recorded on an accompanying 'mark sheet'. If this is not possible, however, the grading system may be shown on the answer scripts, by using different colours.

### 3. Instructions to Candidates:

The candidates, on the other hand, need to know what the examiners expect from them. All candidates are aware of the fact that the examination is based on the syllabus and that it covers the whole course of study taken in the school. In spite of that, most candidates need clear directions or instructions as to what questions or sections of a paper they are required to attempt, and if possible the distribution of marks on the different parts of the paper. "It is often supposed that to give detailed instructions on an examination paper is to give the candidates too much help. But failure to do so may produce a measurement of performance badly distorted by the candidates' need to

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

guess what the examiner had in mind."<sup>1</sup> Instructions to candidates are therefore necessary and should be given in sufficient detail to ensure that every candidate knows what is wanted and that he is attending to the area of performance which the particular question or section in the paper is intended to measure.

#### 4. Teachers' Assessments:

It is surprising to find that in evaluating a student's standing on the examinations no use of teachers' assessments is made. It is a fact that the teacher knows more about his pupils than an external examiner, and that the teacher can provide more information about them than any examination can hope to do. He can also classify his students according to ability and achievement more accurately than any short examination.<sup>2</sup> The first report of the Secondary School Examinations Council in England, published in 1947, recommended that in order to allow more freedom to their schools, more attention should be paid to the schools reports

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Secondary School Examinations Council, The Certificate of Secondary Education: Some suggestions for teachers and examiners, "Exam. Bulletin No. 1", HMSO, London, 1963, p. 25.

and to internal examinations.<sup>1</sup> In the Sudan such school estimates were given due consideration in the collaboration period. According to the old School Certificate regulations, principals of secondary schools in the Sudan were asked to submit statements giving estimates of the merits of their candidates. This estimate was to be based on the candidates records throughout their last year of school. They were taken into account by the Awarding Committee, together with reports received from invigilators or principals, concerning illness or other special difficulties faced by candidates, when marginal cases were considered at the Award.<sup>2</sup> At present such school estimates are not encouraged; and the provision concerning this was amended, in the School Certificate regulations, to read only that "principals of schools may submit school estimates for any candidate for whom special consideration is asked because of illness or other difficulty".<sup>3</sup> No school estimates or teacher's assessments are submitted now to examiners to help them decide on marginal

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<sup>1</sup>'Examining At 16 +'. Report of the Joint GCE/CSE Committee of the Schools Council, HMSO, London, 1966, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Regulations, 1961, op.cit., p. 14.

<sup>3</sup>Regulations, 1966, op.cit., p. 14.



cases, or to the Awarding Committee at the final award. "Both experience and research tell us that, in selecting for specialized training or education, we ignored at our peril evidence of progress and achievement in previous courses."<sup>1</sup> We need reliable sources by which we can evaluate or measure candidates standards. One of these sources is undoubtedly the teacher's opinion. It has been built up over a long period of time, and is in many ways likely to be a more accurate reflection of the candidate's true academic worth than the results of any written and short examination.<sup>2</sup>

"It is however, important not to push the argument too far. With the best will in the world, some teachers and some schools are bound to develop fixed ideas about particular pupils, who may, as a result, be over-or under-estimated."<sup>3</sup> Under such circumstances, an external assessment will provide a healthy contrast. But inspite of that, "the practice of asking teachers to estimate the performance of their School Certificate

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<sup>1</sup>Wiseman, op.cit., p. 151.

<sup>2</sup>The Certificate of Secondary Education, 1963,  
op.cit.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

candidates was found to be a useful aid to examining during World War II."<sup>1</sup> The proper use of such estimates could vary, according to the exact weight given to them. They might be combined with marks obtained from an examination; they could be used in making borderline decisions; or they could be used only to raise marks, "but never to lower them".<sup>2</sup> Opinions may differ on the respective merits of these and other possible uses of teachers' assessments. But it is recommended that the examining body will not ignore them as a source of useful information about candidates, and will seek, in this and other ways, to move towards an integration of the roles of the teacher and the examiner.<sup>3</sup>

B. The Need for a GCE Examination:

Examinations have been criticized in many countries. Reforms and modifications have been frequently suggested, and sometimes accepted.<sup>4</sup> The present Sudan School Certificate Examination exerts heavy pressure

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 25-26.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>4</sup>Cramer and Browne, op.cit., p. 35.

on the schools, so that subject teachers try to select the particular series of required courses which will prepare their students to pass the examination. The history syllabus gives a good illustration in this respect. The history question paper is made up of three sections: Section A is about European history; Section B is about the history of the Sudan; and Section C is about the history of the Middle East. Candidates are required to answer five questions, chosen from at least two of the three sections.<sup>1</sup> To prepare their students for the history paper, most secondary schools concentrate only on the first two sections and neglect section C. They do this because, they think, it will be a waste of time to teach the whole syllabus when only parts of it are enough for passing the examination. Although the Middle East history is no less important as an area to be studied, its omission from the course of study is thought to give students more time to prepare for the history paper. Therefore this part of the history syllabus is omitted only for examination purposes. Under such a system, the examination determines teaching procedures, courses of study, and

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<sup>1</sup>Regulations, 1966, op.cit., p. 22.

the future of pupils.

1. The G.C.E. in England:

This system of examinations has existed in England for years; but it has undergone some liberalization. In 1951 the British Ministry of Education, believing that such examinations were pressing too heavily on the schools, made some radical changes, by which the former School Certificate and Higher Certificate Examinations were abolished and the General Certificate of Education took their place.<sup>1</sup> "As early as 1941, the Norwood Report had recommended the replacement of the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate examinations on the grounds that they were causing a rigidity in the curricula of the schools which prepared students to take them. This rigidity was increased by the nature of the examinations, particularly the School Certificate which was a 'group' examination requiring passes in certain subjects and in a certain number of subjects before a certificate could be granted."<sup>2</sup> As a result the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate examinations were

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 291.

<sup>2</sup>'Examining at 16+', op.cit.

replaced in 1951 by a 'Subject' examination in which candidates are free to take any combination of subjects and as many or as few subjects as they wished. According to the new system a certificate can be given for only one subject passed, although most candidates receive certificates showing four or more subjects.

"The (G.C.E.) examinations are set at two levels, Ordinary ('O') and Advanced ('A'). The 'O' level papers are most usually taken at the end of a five-year course in a secondary school, and the 'A' level papers after a further two years' study in the sixth form, although many boys and girls now remain for three years in the sixth form before taking all their Advanced subjects.<sup>1</sup> The ordinary level papers which replaced the former School Certificate, are designed to provide a reasonable test in the subject for those who take it as part of a general secondary course up to the age of at least 16, or for pupils who take the subject in a non-specialist way in the sixth form. The advanced level papers, which replaced the Higher School Certificate, are intended to provide a reasonable test in the subject for pupils who will

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<sup>1</sup>Department of Education and Science, The General Certificate of Education, H.M.S.O., London, 1964, p. 3.

take it in a specialist manner for two years study in the sixth form.<sup>1</sup> There are no compulsory subjects at either level; and candidates can offer as many or as few subjects as they wish in different examinations. There is complete freedom of choice on the part of candidates in the GCE. They can take different subjects at the same level in different years, or they may take some subjects at the ordinary level and some at the advanced level in the same year. Furthermore, a candidate does not have to take the same subject at both the ordinary and advanced levels. If he takes a subject at the 'A' level he may bypass the 'O' level examination. And if he fails to get a pass at the 'A' level he may be awarded an 'O' level pass on his 'A' level papers, provided that his work shows evidence that he would have been able to pass the same subject in the 'O' level examination.<sup>2</sup>

The GCE ordinary level examinations are officially not graded. But the examining boards have unofficial grading systems, by which they give additional information to candidates and their schools. These

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<sup>1</sup>Op.cit., p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Op.cit., p. 4.

grading systems vary, but the most common is a nine grade system, of which the first six grades are passes. Such grades do not appear on certificates; and the ordinary level examinations officially remain as pass/fail examinations.<sup>1</sup> The advanced level certificates are graded. "There are five grades of pass - A, B, C, D, and E - awarded at 'A' level."<sup>2</sup>

2. The Introduction of a G.C.E. Examination in Sudan:

The present Sudan School Certificate Examination is of the same nature as the British School Certificate which was abolished and replaced by the General Certificate of Education. It is a 'group' examination where pupils offer certain subjects from certain groups of subjects in order to qualify for a certificate. This requirement limits the freedom of the teacher in choosing the way by which he can treat his subject. Every teacher will be interested to excel only in the purely examinable side of his professional work; and his attention will be directed from those parts of education which can not be tested by the process of examination.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>'Examining at 16 + ', op.cit., p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Op.cit.

<sup>3</sup>Wiseman, op.cit., p. 161.

Many educators in the Sudan are aware of the rigidity of the School Certificate Examination and to many of them a 'subject' examination like the G.C.E. will be the best possible replacement for it. The G.C.E. can provide different subjects for different types of students, and include a variety of subjects suitable for many more courses than those in the present School Certificate Examination.

Therefore it will be to the candidates' advantage if the present grouping is modified or abolished in order to allow for wider choice on the part of candidates. This is one essential step which must be taken, if the examinations are to become flexible instruments for assessing the work of the schools, rather than a means of stereotyping the course of instruction and the teaching methods. The School Certificate and Higher School Certificate Examinations in England have been deplored because of their heavy pressure on the schools.<sup>1</sup> The examinations should provide opportunities for pupils to choose subjects as they wish, as far as possible, without imposing much restriction on their freedom of choice. Instead of always specifying what the pupil

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<sup>1</sup>Cramer & Browne, op.cit., p. 291.



should take in an examination, we must provide for him with what he may be able to do, in terms of both his abilities and the subject matter. The introduction of this new examination will allow teachers more freedom to adapt and innovate. It will also leave them more freedom to respond to the needs of their individual pupils. The pupils, on the other hand, will have more freedom of choice in the examination. This freedom will be directed by their own abilities and desires.

Those whose philosophy of education is that there must be essential and required subjects in an examination, may feel insecure to allow freedom of choice on the part of candidates. To them the subjects of the examination must include specific requirements, such as language, religion, and history. The writer is of the opinion that if such requirements are inevitable they should not be imposed by the examining bodies. They can be dictated as entry requirements or job criteria by the users of the examinations results. Every candidate will then choose his examination subjects according to the requirements demanded by the institution or the establishment which he will enter. The difference here is that not every student will be 'required' to sit for three compulsory subjects, or to sit for a certain number of subjects, and to choose from certain groups. In

other words, a student's choice of subjects for the examination will be determined by his vocational or educational career, and not by the examining body. This is not to be taken, however, as an argument against the inclusion of some essentials in the school curriculum. On the contrary, subjects like language and religion are important ingredients of the curriculum, and the students must learn them in the secondary schools or elsewhere.

In England the G.C.E. examinations are the usual means for entering upon University education. In the Sudan they can be introduced similarly to serve the same purpose. Because entrance requirements for University and other institutions are varied and complex, candidates seeking admission will discover from the institutions of their choice what may be expected from them. In England, for purpose of entrance standards, universities require passes in five subjects, two of which at least must be at the advanced level.<sup>1</sup> But educational institutions and employers who are interested in the results of the new examinations need to be assured that the new examinations results convey meaningful information about candidates achievements so far, as well as

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<sup>1</sup>Cramer & Browne, Op.cit., p. 292.

about their future potentialities. The academic standards of the new certificates is an essential factor for their success and reputation; and it should be guaranteed without damage to the confidence which should attach to the honesty and fairness of the new examinations. The examinations work in the Sudan is done by the University staff and other educational institutions. Because of this fact assurance about the integrity of the results can easily be granted.

C. Responsibilities and Powers of the Sudan Examinations Committee.

The "Sudan Examinations Section" is a branch in the Ministry of Education, having its offices and stores, personnel and clerical staff, all separate from those of the other sections of the Ministry. Though it is affiliated to the Ministry of Education, and its activities are subject to decisions made by the Minister and Director of Education, in fact it functions with complete autonomy as far as its direct responsibilities are concerned. In this respect it is a unique organization in the Sudan, and has the greatest name among all other government sections. In the past this section was established independently from Ministerial influence. As

soon as the old collaboration with Cambridge had been dissolved, it was reestablished as a branch of the Ministry and was placed under the authority of the Minister of Education. In line with the feeling of nationality and independence, it was thought desirable to reestablish the new local examining body, and to change the first examinations law which was signed by the British Governor General of the Sudan before independence. It was also meant to bring the appointment of its members under the authority of the Minister of Education, instead of being appointed by the Council of Ministers, and to have this enacted as a law in the new Examinations Act. There was also the long-standing power conflict between the assistant directors of education and the Secretary of the Sudan Examinations Council and his assistants. The latter assumed independence from the hierarchy of the Ministry, as a corollary of the Council's independence.

This conflict over powers has not been resolved completely. The administrative structure of the Ministry is such that the Secretary of Examinations has no absolute authority in all matters concerning the examinations. The principals of secondary schools receive their instructions directly from the Director of Education or his assistants. Any instructions issued by the Secretary of the Examinations or his assistants will be in conflict with this

arrangement. Recently a higher post was created in the Examinations Section, i.e. the Assistant Under Secretary for Examinations, to cope with this new arrangement. But since the Assistant Under Secretary is directly responsible to the Under Secretary and through him to the Minister of Education, the Examinations Section is not as independent as it was or as it should now be. A very recent case may explain how the functions of the Examinations Committee are influenced by external authorities. Some cases of dishonesty were detected by the examiners and reported to the Secretary of Examinations. Disciplinary measures were taken by the Awarding-Committee and the candidates concerned were disqualified throughout the whole examination. The results were finally approved by the Examinations Committee and published. The Minister of Education then asked the Committee to reconsider the case in favour of the candidates, and the previous decisions were soon changed. Accordingly the candidates were only disqualified in the particular subjects in which they cheated. The incident, in itself, may not affect the reputation of the Sudan Examinations since it was a mere punishment procedure and does not endanger the confidence attached to the honesty and fairness of the examining body. But it shows that the exam-

ining body is not free to deal with all examination matters independently, and leaves the way open for further interference in the examinations work by political figures. This incident, and others which may happen in future, necessitate the establishment of a new examining body, independent from the hierarchy of the Ministry, and responsible only to the head of the state or to the Council of Ministers. This is essential if the examining body is to carry out its functions in a healthy atmosphere, unaffected by external or Ministerial pressures.

This new set up can also be followed by new arrangements in the internal structure of the Examinations Section. As the work of examinations develops, both in volume and method, there is a demand for increasing the number of administrative and technical staff. There will have to be, for example, one assistant Secretary (or examination officer) for each type of examination.

It is time now for the Examinations Section to be completely responsible for all types of educational examinations, including their setting, preparation and results. The responsibility of Bakht er Ruda should be taken over by the Examinations Section. The current practice is to have the Intermediate Entrance and

Secondary Entrance Examinations set by the subject heads at Bakht er Ruda. They are setters only by virtue of their positions as subject heads; and they are not responsible for such a task if they are transferred elsewhere. And when the head of a particular subject is transferred to another institute or school, his successor will automatically be entitled to do the same job, irrespective of his experience or educational background. Such transfers sometimes take place in critical moments when the question papers are still being printed, or revised. Therefore the setter will not be in a position to follow up the process of preparing his question paper. The process will then have to be followed and completed by his successor. There is no coordination at present between the Ministry on the one hand, and the Examinations Section and Bakht er Ruda on the other, to see that such transfers take place in such times as to avoid conflicts in the setting and preparation of the question papers. It is important therefore to add this task to the responsibilities and functions of the Examinations Section who can then appoint such setters, according to their experience and qualifications, from Bakht er Ruda or elsewhere. The Examinations Section will also be asked to appoint moderators for all the question papers

of these examinations. As already explained, the process of moderation is very essential for the adjustment of any question paper, as it involves more than one opinion or judgment about the suitability and standard of the questions.

D. Summary of Recommendations:

For easy reference, the recommendations that were mentioned throughout the discussion in this paper will be summarized as follows:

1. That the questionpapers of each examination should be moderated, to ensure that they are of the required standard and fall within the prescribed syllabus. This is specially important for the Intermediate and Secondary Entrance Examinations.

2. That moderators for the School Certificate Examination be given proper training in this field. This training can either be conducted locally, or by sending some of them abroad (to Cambridge for example) to be trained in the moderation of their respective subjects.

3. That the Intermediate Entrance Examination be constructed after the previous one (of the preceding year) has been taken by the schools.

4. That markers, in general, be given special



training in the marking techniques; and whenever possible, team-marking should be encouraged and facilitated.

5. That instructions to candidates taking each examination should be given clearly, and in sufficient detail, in the rubric of the examination paper.

6. That school estimates, concerning the work and progress of the students in their final classes, should be recognized as useful sources of information about the candidates; and the examiners should be asked to give such estimates their proper weight in judging the work of candidates in an examination.

7. That a new examination, namely the General Certificate of Education (G.C.E.) Examination, be introduced to replace the present School Certificate Examination. If this is not possible, however, the present grouping of subjects should be modified to cut down on the number of required subjects and allow the candidates more freedom of choice.

8. That the Sudan Examinations Section to be re-established as an independent statutory body, as the old Examinations Council was.

9. That the Sudan Examining body should take over the responsibility of preparing and administering all examinations, including the Intermediate and Secondary Entrance Examinations, which have up till now been

left to Bakht er Ruda.

E. Concluding Statement:

Developing countries usually inherit their system of education from the advanced countries, and in particular from those countries which had ruled them for a period of time. The Sudan was a British colony; and therefore the system of examinations was imposed or suggested to the Sudan with the idea of re-establishing the Sudanese schools along lines acceptable to the rulers. Educational examinations are of considerable importance in the Sudan, as they are undergoing considerable changes and modifications to suit the local environments of the country. There are no permanently right systems of education or examination that can be adopted by a country. Teachers and school administrators are aware of the fact that they have much to learn from the practices of other people. And there needs to be constant re-appraisal of a system of examinations with a view to its improvement and attainment of a greater degree of effectiveness.

While the problems or limitations to any aspect of educational practice appear to be much the same in many countries, the solutions that can be worked out in

response to such problems differ widely. But they are of great interest to other nations. Each country, of course, develops the system that will best meet its needs as it sees them. Because of differences in historical background, in economic or social conditions, and in points of view, no country may adopt the school system of any other without adaptation. Nevertheless, the experiences and developments of other educational systems can teach educators much that can be helpful in the solution of their own educational problems.<sup>1</sup> From this standpoint, Sudanese educators are earnestly urged to consider the present examinations system and to engage in working out a new or modified system which might better reflect the work of the schools. The changes and modifications recommended in this paper are meant to help in this respect.

A new plan for education has recently been recommended, leading to important changes in the present educational ladder. When this plan is implemented, similar changes in the nature of examinations will have to follow.

The principle of allowing students wider free-

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<sup>1</sup>Cramer & Browne, op.cit., p. ix.

dom to choose from the examination subjects has many educational implications. It recognizes the importance of interest for learning and tends to broaden the scope of the student's secondary education. It places on his shoulder the responsibility for determining the direction which he wants to follow ultimately. Nevertheless, some limitations must be placed on the student's freedom of choice. For there are certain areas of culture which are essential to be learned if society is to share common ideals and ideas. It is these which provide the cohesive force of any group and blend them onto a harmoniously integrated society.

Furthermore, freedom to make choices implies the responsibility by the chooser for the consequences of his choice. Examining these responsibilities constitutes one of the bases for making such choices.

Another principle which should be recognized in preparing the examination questions is that there should be close coordination between the examination paper and the syllabus of the course. It is the content of the course which should determine the nature of the questions asked, and not vice versa. Thus instead of clinging desperately to the official rigid text-books, teachers will have the opportunity to adapt their teach-

ing methods to the needs of their pupils and their community. The gap between the life of the school and that of the community is thereby reduced. Meaning and understanding will play an increasingly important role in the pupils' life; and memorizing and drill, while still remaining, tend to become subservient to them. In other words, the pupils are taught to think and be creative, rather than to become passive recipients of subject matter.

Many teachers now perceive their roles as teachers of "subject matter", rather than as people who work with students so that they can learn not only the content but also the many other fundamentals necessary for life in their society. The emotional, social, and aesthetic values of the students can not be measured by the written examination. This is where the teacher's role becomes as important as the written examination. Good citizenship can not take place until there is a recognition that education is a process not of covering a special field, but of providing students with challenging situations and problems and helping them to develop the understandings and skills necessary for solving their problems. Teaching with meaningfulness and understanding can only result when originality and creativity on the

part of students are encouraged by the teachers, and when the latter do not adhere closely to the official rigid syllabus and the restricted number of text-books.

Finally, no examination, no matter how carefully drawn up and accurately evaluated, can be expected to measure all the values which a student derives from his education. In the last analysis, the ultimate test of an education is the ability of the student to utilize the product of his education in solving his problems, and to contribute his share to the welfare of his community. Obviously, under the circumstances, these values cannot be tested by an examination which is administered at the end of a course of study. For this reason, a teacher's evaluation of his pupils should be taken into consideration in evaluating the student's paper.

This will have its advantages both to teachers and students.

## APPENDIX

### BAKHT-ER-RUDA: INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

#### A. Establishment:

In the early thirties, literary bias dominated the curriculum of the elementary schools and tended to overshadow the essential aims of elementary education which were: (1) to provide a type of education suited to the needs of the village and town boys, whose life would be spent in ordinary native occupations, and (2) to provide education of sufficiently high standard, to supply candidates for the higher primary schools and the training school for elementary teachers.

The Education Department was then trying to remedy the situation by giving a rural bias to the village schools and reduce rote, bookish, learning as far as possible. Thus a new rural Teachers Training College was established in rural surroundings to replace the small Teacher Training College of Khartoum. Eventually, the site of Bakht er Ruda, two kilometers to the north of Dueim, a market town and a Province Headquarters (at the time) on the white Nile, was chosen. It is about 120 miles south of Khartoum. The College moved to the new site in September, 1934.

This small village has now grown into a small town, and the small training college into the Bakht er Ruda Institute of Education, one of the major training centers in the Sudan.

The aims of the rural bias of the College were: (1) to divert the interest of the pupils from academic learning to practical affairs of rural life, and (2) to give them some knowledge and skill in rural pursuits and inspire them with a spirit of service to the village community.

B. Branch Institutes:

In 1937 a visiting educational commission to the Sudan recommended that each Province should establish its own training college. Other branches were then established in different parts of the country. There are now six centers for training elementary school masters, and four centers for training elementary school mistresses. Each institute was located in a different region specially in the rural areas, so as to provide that region with a sufficient number of teachers. Each institute has an elementary school where prospective teachers do the practical part of the training course. The biggest of these schools is at Bakht er Ruda; and it holds 1600 students, including



160 girls.

C. Functions:

Bakht er Ruda started (in 1934) as a training center for elementary teachers; but it soon became involved in other activities. At present it performs three main functions: (1) it trains teachers; (2) it helps to keep up the standards of schools by providing two key examinations, writing textbooks and teachers handbooks; and (3) it helps the teacher to develop in his job by technical inspection, by refresher courses, and by services such as the Postal Library and the Bakht er Ruda Magazine. These three functions may be called Training, Content, and Follow-up.

From time to time, special courses are held for headmasters, Boys Club teachers, Adult Education officers, and for Technical Inspectors of the Province Education Offices.

The branch institutes confine their work to elementary teacher training and technical inspection. The other functions, including the teacher training for intermediate schools are assumed by Bakht er Ruda itself.

The Institute, with its branches, trains annually over 700 elementary school teachers, and

about 200 teachers for the intermediate schools. These numbers are subject to constant increase due to educational expansion. Up to the year 1963, more than 200 textbooks and teachers' handbooks have been produced.

The Institute of Education has a fully organized system of technical inspection of schools. It is arranged for by the Central Inspection Office, in the form of inspection tours during vacations. The inspectors are usually the teachers trainers themselves. They manage to visit annually over 250 elementary schools, and about sixty-five intermediate schools.

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