

## General Union of the Nuba Mountains (GUN)

► p 78 Democracy was restored in 1964. In the same year, several Nuba intellectuals formed the General Union of the Nuba Mountains (GUN), and participated in the parliamentary elections of 1965. One of the party members was Yousif Kuwa, who campaigned with Atroun Attia, a prominent Nuba politician of those days.<sup>36</sup> Headed by Philip Abbas Ghaboush, GUN entered Parliament with eight seats. Expectations were high but the new government did very little for the country. The problems in the South were not resolved. The peripheral areas of the North, like the Nuba Mountains, the Ingassana Hills, Darfur and the Beja country, were left without resources. Disappointed leaders from these areas, who had already worked together in various political alliances, secretly started to consider a military take-over.

## VIII. Nimeiri's regime (1969-1985)

In 1969, the army again took power. Colonel Jafaar Mohamed an-Nimeiri became President of the Sudan. Realising that the civil war would not be resolved by force, Nimeiri opened negotiations with the Southerners. In 1972, the Addis Ababa Agreement was signed, giving the South considerable autonomy. Since the Nuba are living in the North, they did not benefit from the Agreement.

### Labour Migration

To establish a family, to have some luxury, to buy commodities and clothes: there were many reasons why the Nuba wanted to earn money. They found employment with the railway, the army, and the police service; in shops, clinics, and schools; or on the large agricultural schemes that were being established. Lack of local development drove many uneducated Nuba to the cities of the North, where they performed jobs of low esteem. Labour migration had a profound impact on economic and social relations in the Nuba Mountains. Women worked the farms alone. Large herds became a rare sight because there were no young men to guard the cattle. Rituals would no longer be held at the appropriate time. Village life became less attractive for the girls<sup>37</sup>, who started dreaming of escape with a man who had made it in the city. (Baumann)

### Land

In 1968, the Government began to encourage mechanised farming in South Kordofan. ► p 102 Under the Mechanised Farming Corporation Act, 60% of land designed for mechanised farming was to be allocated to local people,

and no one was to have more than one farm. In practice the Nuba had great difficulty obtaining credit to obtain any land at all, while some *Jallaba* (Arab merchants) owned more than 20 farms. As most *Jallaba* had no farming experience, soil depletion soon led to diminishing yields. Much land was brought under cultivation outside the official schemes. Under the 1970 Unregistered Land Act all land not registered prior to 1970, fell to the State. The Government assumed broad powers of eviction in order to clear land for schemes. The regulations were complicated and there was no recognition of the rights of the Nuba who, although not having legal title, had been using the land for generations.<sup>38</sup>

The agricultural schemes attracted many Arab Sudanese, both *Jallaba* and *Baggara*, who started to settle near the mountains. By 1974, Leni Riefenstahl remarked that the exposure to the Arab culture and the money economy had changed 'her' Nuba (the *Masakin Qisar*) beyond recognition.<sup>39</sup> However, traditional beliefs and customs remained a vital part of Nuba life. Even strongly arabised communities like, for example, the *Miri*, would keep their tribal identity and continue to observe many of their traditional practices. (Baumann)

### Nuba politicians

The parties that represented the interest of the Nuba achieved little. Shortly after the 1965 elections, the General Union of the Nuba Mountains split into two factions. Philip Abbas Ghaboush was stressing Nuba identity and cooperation with other Africans, while Mahmoud Hasseib wanted to cooperate with the *Baggara* and *Jallaba* in South Kordofan.<sup>40</sup> In 1969, Philip Abbas Ghaboush was forced to leave the country. He was sentenced to death *in absentia* for his involvement in an attempted coup.<sup>41</sup> The faction of Mahmoud Hasseib allied itself to Nimeiri's regime. In 1977, serving as Governor of Kordofan, Hasseib demanded more regional autonomy, but to no avail.<sup>42</sup>

### Komolo

In 1972, the *Ittijaha al-Islami*, [Islamic Direction, linked to Hassan al-Turabi], tried to take over the student bodies at Tilo Secondary School in Kadugli. In reaction a group of Nuba students formed a secret political society called *Rabita al-Abna Jibal al-Nuba* (the Nuba League). Abdel Aziz al-Hilu and Daniel Kodi were among the League's members. Its first president was Kamil Kuwa Mekki, a younger brother to Yousif Kuwa. In 1976, many members went to Khartoum University, where they met other politically engaged Nuba students. Together they formed the