

The Identity of Akobo Land and the People in Geographical and Administrative Perspectives, South Sudan

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Abstract

This article aims to insight the readers with knowledge about the area of Akobo geographically and administratively plus its people through about 150 years. The article explains origin and the meaning of the name, the geographical location, the tribes inhabiting and area's position in the country of South Sudan.

Keywords: Akobo, Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Ciro-Anyuak, Lou-Nuer, Khartoum and Upper Nile Province.

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Original Research Article

Time and Geographical Scope: The historical scope of Akobo in this article starts from 1900. The geographical scope covers northern and western parts of the river Akobo which marks the international border of South Sudan, Jonglei State.

The Methodology: The writing uses qualitative method of social sciences studies with historical descriptive perspective. The primary references used are the administrative correspondences, reports and work plans of the Upper Nile Province during the British colonial and Sudan government before 1972, plus other scholarly works by different writers related to the area.

INTRODUCTION

This article the identity of Akobo land and the people in geographical and administrative perspectives, is answering questions examining the identity of Akobo, origin of the name and its meaning. In further, it narrates important of Akobo and the ethnic groups inhabiting when and how. The article as well discusses the role of the British

colonial administration in formation of the Akobo area and its location in the country of South Sudan and international relations. The article also describes four administrative stages the area of Akobo passed through and how it shaved its identity before, during the British colonial and after independence of Sudan up to 1975. And the role played by Akobo in liberation of South Sudan.

Akobo in the Geographical Meaning

The name 'Akobo' has no specific meaning, but was taken from the Anyuak language which could mean "I say". The history says the name was given to the eastern river that became marking the international border between the Sudan/South Sudan and Ethiopia in 1899 by Majors H.H. Austin and Charles W. Gwynn of the British Royal Engineers (Mading 2018). Akobo lies approximately 450 kilometers (280 mile), north east of Juba, the national capital, and became important as a result of conflicts between the Great Britain and France during their competition in Africa in 19th century. The Abyssinian Empire as well imposed its will and

it became among the decisive nations as the only African country survived the western world colonial domination.

Hence, source of the river Akobo is in the southwest of the Ethiopian Highland near Mizan Teferi. It's seasonally flowing northwest for a distance of 434 Kilometers (270 mi) to join the Pibor River northeast of the current town of Akobo (Bilkei). But, it's currently irregular flow because the course changed to the west at Oboth and joined the Agwei (Kong-Kong) river which eventually joins the Pibor River at Burmath about 20 Kilo meter south current Akobo town.

The British officers decided to draw the line down the middle of the river and parts of the Pibor and Baro Rivers as the international borders. This treaty was consummated in 1902 and confirmed in 1907 between the British and the Ethiopian Empire (Johnson 2010).

Akobo in the Administrative Meaning

The name Akobo became to mean administrative capital when the condominium government of the Anglo-Egyptian 1898-1956 established military post on the northwest of the river in 1911 for Pibor River Province. The tribes inhabiting the area were the Lou and Anyuak. The administrative boundaries were extended from Naser in the north to Uganda in the south, dividing the two rivers Pibor and Akobo with the Abyssinia in the east as the international border (Willis et-al 1931). Due to climatic circumstances of continued flooding in years: 1917, 1930, 1946, and in 1948 the district headquarter was relocated to Bilkei the current location in western bank of Pibor River, and the name Akobo was transferred having Akobo Gedim and Akobo Jedid "*new and old Akobo*".

The Effect of European Competition on Akobo

Having Akobo River, the international border affected the two tribes; Nuer and Anyuak inhabiting both banks included; Pibor, Akobo and Baro Rivers, (Johnson, 2010; Gebeyehu, 2014). The European competition over the region resources enabled the tribes to acquire fire arms, and the Anyuak were the pioneers who benefited and acquired quantity assumed to be between 10,000 to 25,000 rifles in the beginning of 20th century (Kelly, 1986; Gebeyehu,

2014). These caused first internal hostility between the Anyuak leaders; Odiel War Nyiya, Olimi War Aganyo and Akwai War Cham over the power. Also they became hostile to their neighboring tribes which resulted displacement of the Lou-Nuer and Jikany from Pibor and Baro areas in 1910, and the king War Cham who won the battles established Pibor for the first time (Kelly 1986).

This also affected the Anyuak relationship with the Ethiopian Empire which in turn caused their displacement to Sudan (Evans-Prichard, 1940; Flight, 1981; Johnson, 1986; Gebeyehu, 2014). The Anyuak leader Akwai War Cham who defeated the rest became the King, placed his headquarters at Otallo in Adongo to the present day. The first census conducted by the Upper Nile Province in 1930 identified the Anyuak population at 25,000. Due to flowing to Sudan, Pibor Assistant District Commissioner R. E. Lyth reported that, the Anyuak population increased to 40,000 (UNP/16. B-14 on 31/10/1936).

Akobo Named for the Lou-Nuer

The Upper Nile Province administration in 1936 decided to re-organize the districts and rename them. The Lou-Nuer from Kaibuoy four miles west of the current town of Akobo were being administrated in Abwong since 1926 as the capital, accept those living along the Pibor River. Thus, on 31/10/1936, the Governor of Upper Nile Province (GUNP) T. R. H. Owen in a letter No. UNP/16. B-14 suggested to the acting civil secretary (ACSK) in Khartoum amalgamation of: *Lou-Nuer, Anyuak and Beir (Murle)* in one district under the name Pibor District (PD) with capital at Akobo. The suggestion was forwarded to C. H. L. Skeet the financial secretary for his opinion. Skeet in 17 days responded for no objection in document no. FDK/23-15/9 on 17/11/1936. But, E. G. Carton the Pibor District Commissioner (PDC), Akobo on 27/11/1936 suggested to the governor that, the suitable name for the district is: *Lou-Pibor*. The Governor in quick response gave his approval in document No. UNP/16.B-14, Ref. 20-B-2/37 dated on 28/11/1936, and issued the decree for immediate implementation on 1/1/1937.

The serious questions are: what made the district commissioner of Pibor to suggest a name of one tribe

to dominate the region while the aim is amalgamation of three different ethnic groups in one administration? What was the motive behind this new name since the relationship between Lou and the government had not been good? Four reasons are suggested:

(1) The government wanted to please the Lou in order to be more productive in the district, and to attract them to come closer to the government as it was done for the Anuyaa through the king Akwai War Cham and his successor son Cham War Akwai. Both kings positively have organized their people of Openo under the government of Sudan. (2) Recognition for the Lou-Nuer who are identified as the majority in the annual roads clearance, government laborers and the taxes paying. (3) The Anyua population started to decrease in Sudan for reasons related to the government requirements. (4) The Murle in their remoteness environment plus the distance to the district headquarter have not been easy for the government to control them for the annual roads construction. Hence, after killing of Gwek Ngundeng by the British Government in January 1929, the Lou-Nuer experienced settlement and they accepted to construct the roads connecting Pibor District to the Upper Nile Province headquarter in Malakal (Sd. G. Kavanagh, 24/4/1930).

The First Road

The first road connects Malakal-Akobo via Waat was opened in 1930 crosses the famous seasonal rivers (Khurs) needed nine culverts in areas of: (1) Madin, (2) Fulturuk, (3) Fathai, (4) Muot-Tot, (5) Padoi, (6) Duachan (7) Puot-Puotni, (8) Thar-Wang, and (9) Kaibuoi. This road's policy from Waat was divided into two, sections with boundaries of: Gon-Muor at Koat Nyuon Tet, or between Waat town and Walgak. These boundaries are still traditionally, the permanent between Nyirol and Akobo counties. The road furthermore, divides the Muor into two sections of west and the east from Duachan valley were now the name Akobo west appeared and used for the first time officially by the government. Padoi-Duachan road was on the neck of the Muor of Akobo west chiefs as mentioned government official documents; Pan Kuach, Weituor Bei, Kuel Rue, Diu Mok, Tut Lam, Chuol Weituor, Puok Chan, Puot Chan, Pathot Jal, Riek Kerjiok, Majok Ruathdel, Guandong Thiep, Rambang

Weituor, Duop Bol, Ruot Duop plus others. The government of Sudan after independent in 1956 continued following the same policy till the annual road clearance was stopped by eruption of the second civil war in 1983. For example, in document No. LNR/58. B. 1, Michael B. Hussein local government inspector in Akobo, on 13/3/1962, asked the chief Chuol Weituor to order each of his headmen to provide 10 youth for quick finishing Waat-Akob road clearing. The letter was written both in English and Thok Nath (Nuer languages).

The same issue repeated itself in the second year where, on 31/1/1963, Birial the local government inspector in Akobo, in document No. LND/58. B.1. summoned the executive chief Puok Chan who lives in Kaikuiny to report himself immediately to the Lou-Nuer District Headquarter, Akobo to answer the question of why his people did not clear their part which in the eastern Duachan road.

Second Road

The second road aimed to connect Akobo to the Eastern-Nuer District (END) at Nasser, and was implemented in November 1929. According to Willis et-al (1931), the part which was belongs to Pibor District was a distance of 15 miles (24 km) south of Wanding. The Jikany were responsible for the rest up to Naser. Therefore, C. L. Armstrong the END commissioner said: *"Considerable part of this road can only be cleared when the Nuer has gone into their dry weather camps along the Pibor"* (Willis et-al 1931). The same area Coriat, Assistant District Commissioner of Abwong prevented the chief Weituor Bei and his people to go and stays there (Johnson 1993).

Third Road

This road was from the south connecting Akobo to Pibor for distance of 86 miles (138 kilometers). Willis et-al (1931) mentioned that, the work started in November 1930. But part of it which comes from Pibor was constructed by the Egyptian Irrigation. The road was shared by the Muor in Akobo east, along the western Pibor River from Bilkey for distance of 34 miles (54.4 km). The responsibility was fully on the neck of the Lou-Muor chiefs those of, Pech Ruach and his successor Gang Lual both living in Kaibui, Deng Rue and his

successor Yik Gatluak in Kony, Rial Yian in Burmath and Changath Kweth and they meet with the Murle in the south till the work got stopped in early 1983. To confirm this fact, on 4/11/1961, A. B. El-Wagie inspector of the Lou-Nuer Region chaired a meeting with the Lou-Nuer Chiefs concerning the Akobo-Pibor road, distance of 34 miles, (54.4 kilo meters). (1) Gang Lual, the Akobo B-Court President has to clear 12 miles (19.2 kilo meters). (2) Sub-chief Changath Kweth was responsible for 5 miles (8 kilo meter). The headman/Wakil, Ruon Nyuot Kuoth was in charge of 4 miles (6.4 kilo meters), and. (3) the headman/Wakil, Ochang Luak had a responsibility of 3 miles (4.8 kilo meters).

The same regulation was imposed on the Anyuaa for Ciban-Pocahlla, and Pochalla-Pibor road. For example, Chief Othiri Jiok was responsible for the road from: Akobo-Ciban, Ciban-Aweit, Aweit-Booda, Booda-Anyang, Anyang-Banagak, and Banagak-Ondadhi. Other part was responsibility of the chief (king) Agada War Cham as follows: Ondadhai-Ujak, Ujak-Apiong, Apiong-Adallada, Adallagada-Attalo, Attalo-Uttalo, Uttalo-Aleoto, Aleoto-Ajwara, and Ajwara-Pochalla¹.

Lou-Nuer being disconnected from Akobo partially

With no specific reasons to justify the government's behaviours and decisions with the indigenous tribes for, amalgamations, disconnecting from one another and creation of new administrative areas plus continues change of the names. These scenarios continued repeating itself for the all period of 50 years during the British era to Sudan, and particularly in the Upper Nile Province. The Lou-Nuer situation in this juncture was totally unique and surprising needing more study and analysis. For example, on 1/1/1945, F. D. the Governor of Upper Nile Province, in his document No. UNP/16- B. 22 issued decree for changing the name of the Zaraf Valley District (ZVD) into the Central-Nuer District (CND). These actions were aiming of transferring the Lou-Nuer administration again and amalgamate them with the three tribes of Zaraf Valley: Gawar, Thiang and Lak. Hence, on 1/2/1946, the Lou-Nuer administration was disconnected from the Anuak and Murle in Pibor. Thus, H. A. Nicholson acting

Governor of the Upper Nile Province amalgamated the Lou-Nuer account with the Zaraf-Valley on 25/2/1946 in document No. UNP/16-B-22. From there, sub-district was established in Waat for the first time and named Central-Lou (CL). This was in order to coordinate the Lou-Nuer affairs who are living outside the Pibor area. Therefore, a young man calls Dak Dei was a signed in charge as the head of clerk. All these were done with approval from D. M. H. Evans the Assistant Civil Secretary in Khartoum as it appeared in documents No. CSK/16. A. 8, and document No. CND/16. A. 1.

However, the Central-Nuer District (CND) became very fruitful where all the customary laws and language were developed. These activities have narrowed the traditional gaps between the east and the western Nuer. While completing the transfer process of the Lou-Nuer administration to Zaraf Valley, the two district commissioners of Pibor and Central Nuer agreed to leave the boundaries as they are. According to their justification, the tribes living along the Pibor valley: Lou-Nuer, Anyuaa and the Murle are mixed up in the grazing lands and permanent villages. Therefore, the decree indicated that, the Lou-Nuer sections in Pibor under the chief Gang Lual and his deputy Yik Gatluak should be included in where road work labour is concerned etc. And they are to deal directly with district commissioner at Akobo. The B-Court for the Lou-Nuer in Pibor was being conducted mainly in Delule, and the government's work of road at the western bank of Pibor River remained on their neck.

The effect of Anyuak desert from Sudan on Akobo management

The administrative reports from 1943 indicated that, the name Lou-Pibor was changed again to Pibor River District and the Lou-Nuer were enacted to Zaraf Valley District which became the Central Nuer. But suddenly, the Anyuak got deserted from Sudan for Ethiopia due to taxes paying and the free labourer which were being imposed by the Sudan government, while in Ethiopia were less requested. According to (Tippet, 1970) and (Gebeyehu, 2014), an Anyuak headman was quoted that, he advised his son in the early 1930s that, he

¹ Akobo here means the real Akobo Gedim not Bilkey.

should give one of his hands to Ethiopia and other hand to the Sudan government.

Thus, R. E. Lyth, the Pibor River Assistant District Commissioner mentioned in his reports that the Anyuak had sold their land to the Lou-Nuer with cattle. This information plays a role of doctrine for the Lou-Nuer elders to their children that they have bought back their land from the Anyuak after they have occupied it when they were the only well-armed. And this is for them to acquire water, fishing and grazing accessibility. The stories supported by Kelly (1986) that, the Lou-Nuer were displaced totally from Pibor by the armed Anyuak in 1910. Therefore, while establishing the military post in the area in 1911, the British government recognized only the present of Anyuak and confirmed that, the area is theirs.

The fact reveals the way entire tribes in South Sudan used to live before the law enforcements were built. The exchanges of occupations and invading each other were an obvious. Therefore, the weak have no alternative either pleasing the stronger, or quitting the area for safety, and both scenarios were applied by the Lou-Nuer in Pibor before 1910. When they were defeated, they quitted for safety, but later on they bought back their land as confirmed by Lyth. According to the Lou stories, returning to Pibor had charged the heads of clans to pay the Anyuak huge quantity of cattle, therefore, (1) Kok Diang paid some cattle for Dengjok, (2) Jany Gai paid for Burewill, (3) Nyiing Chamjok Nyakoang paid for Meer, famously one of the big bulls named the port after (*Luol Thayen*). That area is which the bridge being build, and. (4) Lual Thian did the same for Kaibuoy. These four families are the one being recognized by the Ciro-Anyuak when there is any land disputes (AACCR, 2012; Obongo 2014).

The district commissioner reporter, praised the king Agada as a hard working person who understands the government and trying to contain his people, but it is very difficult. Lyth's reports shown that there were many Anyuak (Princes) but lacking followers in the villages of Sudan. J. N. Grover the Assistant District Commissioner of Pibor in Akobo on 20/1/1946, in document No. (PD/66-A.3. 1946) wrote a report about the Anyuak around Akobo. Though he praised the chief Othiri Jiok of the Ciro-Anyuak as a good chief, but he described the Dekole clan under him as

a bad people who are uncontrollable. According to the Grover, half of the Dekole clan is living in Jior which is an Ethiopian territory and other half lives in Old Akobo partially Sudan. According to him, this caused them to commit a lot of crimes particularly killing. The ADCP, Grover said that the Dekole had killed four people in a very short time and the rest of them had deserted to Ethiopia. Hence, up to this time since 1926 conference, there was no land dispute occurred between the Lou-Nuer and the Anyuak reported. But there were two things:

Firstly: The Muor in Pibor were crossing the borders into the Ethiopian territories during the dry season for grazing of their cattle. This sometimes bothered the Pibor District Commissioner who issued a local order by requesting permissions from the Central Nuer District Commissioner. This became a compulsory for the chief Gang Lual and his sub-chiefs Rial Yian and Yik Gatluak to ask a regular permission for grazing their cattle in the Tochs (swamps) along the Gile Min-Char as it appeared in letter No. CNDL/66. B. 2 on 12/1/1948. The reality of this is that, the indigenous could not belief that, their area is divided by international regulations which needed permission from specific authority.

Secondly: the problem remained between the Lou-Nuer and the Murle in the south at Biem for the cattle grazing. As a result, a meeting was conducted in Akobo on 15-16/2/1949 to resolve the fight between the two tribes occurred in 1937. From that time, the south eastern boundaries were re-demarcated and each tribe was given a living conditions. (1) The Murle became contained in the south of Biem at the area of *Kadhaic*, and. (2) The Lou movement have to be restricted in the north of Biem at *Matyiel*. The government has to set restricted rules by leaving 17 miles (27 kilometres) between the two areas; Kadhaic and Matyiel a no man land. When the Murle violated and camped in the Lou-Nuer area at Matyiel in 1949, they were ordered to quit it within six days. Though they justified their act that, the area was empty, but the government did not accept any justification.

However, the Anyuak situation continued bothering the government. According to the reports, total population of the Ciro-Anyuak under the chief Othiri Jiok reduced to 3,846. The most difficult part was that, taxes payers among them reduced to 580 only.

Therefore, in 1952-54, the government decided to transfer the whole Anyuak and the Murle administration to Pibor town as the new headquarter for their district. This created new situation for Akobo. It's important to restate here that, the name Akobo remained to mean headquarter for the Lou-Nuer District (LND). While the name Pibor was transferred with the Anyuak and the Murle administration to mean the town and the new district headquarters.

Akobo became Headquarter of the Lou-Nuer District and Region

The administrative decisions by the government are always surprising. For example, J. Winder the Governor of Upper Nile Province wrote to the Civil Secretary in Khartoum (CSK) on 16/11/1953 in document No. UNP/16. B.22 reminding him that, in 1945/46, Lou-Nuer were moved from Akobo to Fangak. Now what remain is to amalgamate them with the Eastern-Nuer (Naser) and Bor. According to him, there are points in favour of both alternatives but, Lou-Nuer has not been adequately administered for number of years now. As most important from that, they should be much more closely administered in future. In his long letter, the governor said, I wish therefore, to cut Lou-Nuer off again from the balance of Central-Nuer District and administrator it as a one-man district of which the assistant district commissioner should live in Akobo as the nearest available site although dry weather administration would continue to be carried out at Waat. Therefore, the decision come out to administrator the Lou-Nuer alone and people of Zaraf as one-man as well.

In quick response, on 7/12/1953, the civil secretary in Khartoum (CSK) gave his approval. Therefore, on 28/12/1953, A. C. Beaton signed a document dividing again the Central-Nuer district into two. CND returned to its original name Zaraf Valley District (ZVD), where now the Lou-Nuer have returned to Akobo. The district name was changed from Pibor and became the Lou-Nuer District (LND) for them alone. Hence, the Anyuak and Murle were transferred to the new district. R. E. Lyth Pibor Assistant District Commissioner in a letter addressed to the Governor of Upper Nile by the civil secretary in Khartoum No. CSK/16. A.8, on 26/12/1953 was asked to move his headquarter to Pibor town.

The civil secretary stated three reasons for this order: (1) Assistant District Commissioner of the Central Lou-Nuer (Waat) had been operating already in Akobo. Therefore, it has not been good to have two districts in one place. (2) If necessary to have Pibor district administration in Akobo, that needs more buildings. (3) Pibor is the center for Murle and the Anyuak, therefore, it is good to have the district headquarter among the people.

The Pibor District commissioner acknowledged his readiness to move his administration in a letter No. PD/16. A. on 7th January 1954. In the same development, the permanent undersecretary, ministry of interior in Khartoum (PUMIK) confirmed, re-organization of the districts according to the Upper Nile government statement No. UNP/16/B.22, on 16th January 1954. Therefore, on 15th July 1954, F. D. McJannet the Assistant Governor of the Upper Nile wrote a letter No. UNP/16. B.22 to the Lou-Nuer District Commissioner in Akobo asking him to accommodate the Pibor District Commissioner coming from Malakal on his way to his headquarter in Pibor town.

Hence, relocation of Pibor District was implemented on 23/9/1954 as it appeared in document No. PD/66. A.1. But financial accounts of the two districts remained being managed together in Akobo till I. M. Shibeika the Lou-Nuer Assistant District Commissioner sent a report No. LND/16. A.1, on 29th November 1954 concerning fulfillment of separation of the Pibor District Account from the Lou-Nuer District.

The name Lou-Nuer District which means Akobo without the Anyuak and Murle continued after the independent of Sudan in 1956 as appeared in several administrative documents. For example, Khalid H. El-Melik the Commissioner wrote to the Upper Nile Governor in Malakal on 4/7/1957 in document No. LND/10. A. 1, requesting approval and support for establishment of social club in Akobo with total cost of sum amount of LS 400 including the building materials and furniture. El-Malik explained that, the town is expanding and advancing very quickly, and the Lou-Nuer school is going to open. Therefore, the need for social club wills integrates the government officials and merchants in the market are crucial. In this regards, El-Malik used the name Lou-Nuer as the official even for the primary school. Since 1953, each

teacher being transferred to Akobo is being locating to the Lou-Nuer school, or Lou-Nuer District School.

The name district in the government of Sudan system was changed into region when General Ibrahim Aboud took over the power in 1958. For example, Akobo administration was renamed from the Lou-Nuer District (LND) into the Lou-Nuer Region (LNR) as it appeared in reports of the Sudanese executive officers (inspectors). For example, Khalid H. El-Melik handed over to Jervase Yak Ubanyo on 25th December 1961, his documents and correspondences with the Upper Nile Province headquarters in Malakal became bearing the name Lou-Nuer Region, Akobo instead of District. Ubanyo’s term got over on 23/2/1963 as it appeared in document No. LNR/57. A. his writings carried the same name the Lou-Nuer Region, Akobo. The period from 1963 and 1964 witnessed appearance of many Sudanese assistant commissioners deployed to the same area those of: Hassan Nachigol Arut from the Murle, G. M. Himodi, Yassin Hassan Ibrahim, F. M. Manfli, M. H. El-Gamri and others who their names appeared as local government officers served in Akobo, capital of the Lou-Nuer Region. This scenario continued appearing in other documents. For example, Hashim Makawi handed over to Bedawei El-Sharif on 30/3/1971. The area remained carrying the same name the Lou-Nuer Region, Akobo with population of 103,638.

The most important point which deserves more concentration here is that, since the Lou administration was merged to Ayod in 1923, to Abwong in 1926, to Akobo in 1936, to Fangak in 1946 and again to Akobo in 1954, the government

was much interested to enforce the rule of law against the Lou-Nuer forcefully. Therefore, the lessons have been learnt which led into developing of the traditional authority or native courts which became one of the essential ways brought stability among them (Mennen 2012). The Lou-Nuer District/Region developed for enforcement of the rule of law through the customary law comprised six Native-Courts allocated in: Diror, Akobo, Walgak, Pathai, Uror and Thol. All these six N-Courts were having one president known as *Nazer* which was *Choul Weitour Bei* living in Diror, and his Deputy was Puok Chan. Both, Bei and Chan were assassinated by the Anya-Nya elements in 1964. Each N-Court has one president, one executive chief, many sub-chiefs being deputized by several headmen. Those N-Courts also had an external relationship with their neighbors like Jikany in the Eastern-Nuer District, Jieng in Duk and Bor, Gawar in Ayod, Ngok-Jieng as well on the Sobat plus the Murle and the Anyuaa of the Pibor District. Due to much connection between Lou, Anyuaa and the Murle along the rivers, the government scheduled for annual inter-tribal meetings (conferences) as follows:-

- 1. Lou-Murle meeting was being held at Lekuangole every February and in Pibor.
- 2. Akobo meeting for the Lou every July, attended by Ciro-Anyuaa chiefs.

The main Native Courts of the Lou-Nuer District/Region in Akobo according to reports:

No. UPN/57.D.7 and LND/8.B.1.5/51954 for the years 1933-1971.²

N-Court No. 1. Diror President: Chuol Weituoer Bei. Executive: Puok Chan.	Sub-Chiefs: 1/ Puot Chan Yiel. 2/ Guandong Thiep Rue. 3/ Thon Peat 4/ Pathot Jal Ruach. 5/ Majok Ruathdeal Nyiel.
N-Court No. 2. Akobo President: Gang Lual Thian	Sub-chiefs: 1/Rial Yan. 2/Luak Kok Diang.

² These names are not the only chiefs have served, but they are the few names I got in the archive for documentation. Yet other researcher should continue fill the missing gap.

Executive: Deng Rue, replaced by Yik Gatluak	
N-Court No. 3. Walgak President: Luak Tap, replaced by Riek Kerjok Executive: Luak Thony	Sub-Chiefs: 1/ Puok Tulieth. 2/ Marol Gueng. 3/ Chagor Kota. 4/ Changath Kueth.
N-Court No. 4. Pathai President: Kuek Mal Nyak Executive: Ruot Wuol Muot	Sub-Chiefs: 1/ Lony Bol. 2/ Giel Puot. 3/ Machar Darwech. 4/ Biel Rial. 5/ Puok Chuol. 6/ Yom Kuoluok 7/Guong Nyak. 8/ War Joak
N-Court No. 5 Thol President: Kwei Bol Executive: Hoth Nuar	Sub-Chiefs: 1/ Biem Lam. 2/ Char Bayak. 3/ Tung Chai. 4/ Lith Batheng. 5/ Dhuor Puoch. 6/ Kam Joar. 7/ Lel Ngundeng. 8/ Reath Dhol. 9/ Chac Bipal.
N-Court No 6. Uror President: Bipean Tiap Executive: Puot Kuil	Sub-Chiefs 1/ Bor Koroan. 2/ Gatkuoth Chan. 3/ Jany Wuor. 4/ Tap Mut 5/ Bany Kei. 6/ Duop Thiang. 7/ Bilieth Dual. 8/ Machar Kuny. 9/ Char Wan.

Figure 1. Lou Native Courts

The below table explains the whole population of the Upper Nile Province since 1930 to 1956.

S/N	Group	1930	1954	1955-56
1	Anyuak	25,000	-	8,106
2	Atuot Dinka	31,195	45,900	58,147
3	Abilang Dinka	4,496	6,300	8,846
4	Aliab Dinka	13,670	14,850	12,408
5	Bor Dinka	16,846	58,139	62,231
6	Cic Dinka	23,495	38,250	31,087
7	Dongjol Dinka	15,000	8,550	9,554
8	Hol Dinka	4,248	9,956	11,058
9	Ngok Dinka	6,949	15,300	19,943
10	Nyarweng Dinka	2,316	9,856	12,447
11	Paloic Dinka	12,279	9,000	13,124
12	RuwengI Atar Dinka	7,360	16,150	16,175
13	RuwengII Bentiu Dinka	9,000	32,399	31,641

14	Twic Dinka	17,728	45,641	43,399
15	Koma	2,000	-	6,313
	Murle	50,000	2,395	44,955
17	Bul Nuer	10,924	31,599	33,893
18	Dok Nuer	11,063	25,400	31,296
19	Gaawar Nuer	18,000	36,040	42,490
20	Jagei Nuer	5,195	13,896	20,539
21	Eastern Jikany Nuer	92,000	86,500	102,089
22	Western Jikany-Nuer	6,974	20,583	32,248
23	Lak-Nuer	18,000	36,103	31,763
24	Leek-Nuer	11,421	26,059	24,559
25	Lou-Nuer	19,825	67,275	102,982
26	Nyuong-Nuer	7,421	13,234	16,2111
27	Thiang-Nuer	7,750	12,785	16,374
28	Shiluk	11,600	120,000	90,738 ³

Fugre 2. Table on Population of the Upper Nile Province for years 1930-1956.

The 1956 of the Akobo Boundaries

All the Provinces and Districts of the South Sudan boundaries were demarked by the Anglo-Egyptian condominium rule started from 1922. Most of the internal boundaries between the districts, and with the northern Sudan were completed by the Closed District Act (CDA) of 1930. The January 1956 which was the independent of Sudan, had just adopted and confirmed those boundaries between the areas and tribes. The same regulations were the guidelines followed in the comprehensive peace agreement (CPA) between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM/A), and the Government of Sudan (GoS) in 2005, which led into independence of the South Sudan Republic on 9th July 2011. It's important to repeat it here that, the international borders with the neighboring countries to Sudan' were demarked by the same powers starting from 1902 and 1907. Importantly, the African Organization Union (AOU) turned into the African Union (AU) has adopted all the borders demarked by the colonial pre-independent of any African country including the Ethiopia which was

lucky of not being under specific colonial power for long time. Otherwise, South Sudan government would not have borders dispute with any other country in the region like Sudan, Ethiopian, Kenya Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic as well.

Based on these facts, our discussion in this article has resolved all the questions related to the ownership of the area during the British era in 1898-1956, then the northern Sudan 1956-2011. If the question is, where are the boundaries between the Lou-Muor and Ciro-Anyuaa? To repeat the fact, these boundaries are the Pibor river according to the 1929/1930 roads clearing. Responsibility in support, Evans-Prichards (1940) described that, as the Sobat separates the Gaajiok tribe from the Lou tribe, as well as the Pibor river separates the Lou tribe from the Anuaa people. Therefore, transfer of the Anyuaa from Akobo to Pibor in 1954, was the implementation of the already demarked boundaries in 1930. The real confirmation from the government was when the district was named for the Lou-Nuer in 1936. This was the cancellation of Akobo conference of 1926. To

³ This table is quoted from the Upper Province Hand Book compiled by C. A. Willis, and edited by Douglas H. Johnson in 1993.

observe the facts, when the Lou were transferred to the Central-Nuer District in Fangak in 1946, the two District commissioners of; Pibor and the Central Nuer agreed not to change the boundaries regulations for two reasons.

- (1) Annual roads clearance of the western bank of Pibor River remained belong to the Muor meeting the Jikany of Eastern Nuer-District of Nasser, and meeting the Murle in the south. Then, the eastern bank from Ciban to Pochalla and from Pochalla to Pibor town was recognized belongs to the whole Anyuaa. These facts appeared again in handing over report of the Lou-Nuer District Commissioner in Akobo on 5th May 1954, documents No. (LND/8.B. UNP/57D-7) reports of (1933-1971).
- (2) Tax collection, this came in point of explanation from PDC when he said that, Lou-Nuer are sprinkled along Pibor River from Denjok north of Akobo to Nyandit south of the Akobo town for distance of 34 miles (55 kilometers), and they are the main income for the district.

Hence the critical question is: what is the meaning of boundaries between the Lou-Nuer and Pibor in Duachan? Or what is the meaning of the boundaries between the Anyuak and Lou-Nuer in Duachan as it appeared in many complains?

Geographically, Duachan is a swamps valley of Khur Nyanding with the second largest culvert after Kai-Buoi from Biel Kei Hill/Akobo town. The Nyiya king Akwai War Cham in his victory upon Lou and Jikany had advanced in 1910s. Duachan in 1930s became to the exact distance dividing the Muor of Pibor during the annual roads clearing. The British administration kept Kai-Buoi which is distance of five Klm from Biel-Kai hill as a part of the Abwong district since 1926-1936. Based on Coriat, the chief Pey Ruach ruling Cing-Nyak of Pibor and Kaikueiny was residing in Kai-Buoi. Therefore, the main culvert was named after him, and he was the Lou-Nuer chief responsible for Akobo-Waat Road clearing. There was no change in these boundaries when the Lou-Nuer became a part of the Central-Nuer district in 1946-1953.

Therefore, Duachan-Pibor boundary is an internal line between Muor of Padoi and Muor of Pibor. The famous name of Akobo west and east has started from there, and particularly, between (Joah Joah) Joajoak. The history tells that, from Biel-Kei up to Thow in Bar before Dauchan from the east, the responsibility was on the shoulders of the head chiefs from Chieng Nyak (section of Muor Joak-Joak).

After Pey was removed, this responsibility was inherited by the chief Gang Lual. While from Thow in Bar across Duachan swamps to Padoi onward to the boundary with Gon, the road was responsibility of the head chief from Chieng Yol other sections of Joak-Joak and Jimach. The leadership under chief Pan Kuach and his deputies those of Kuel Rue, Weituor Bei, Diu Mok Tut Lam and others. During the pyramid's war against Guek Ngundeng, most of these chiefs were intercepted by Coriat of being in Gile which initially cross the borders of Sudan-Ethiopian beyond Pibor. Hence, it became a well-known culture during the era the British administration that, clearing of the road means ownership of that land.

Education and Politics

The general feelings show that, education in the Lou-Nuer area during the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium from 1898 to 1956 was totally neglected. For example, Waat which was established in 1946 and named as Central Lou-Nuer Sub-District never had a single primary school. The functions of the government focused on the taxes collection and the roads clearing. As a result of this negligence, Waat experienced establishment of the first primary school in 1970. Due to lack of facilities and human resources of teaching stuff, infrastructure of buildings, the school operated for the first time after signing of the Addis Ababa peace agreement with availability of the boarding section. Later on therefore, schools in Waat and Akobo made the learning attractive were many kids from villages were able to enroll. This in turn, increased the movement of the people from the rural areas to urban for learning pupils, intermediate students and job opportunities for uneducated persons to work in different government sectors which has its overall impact.

However, in 1976, the Akobo rural areas experienced for the first time establishment of the lower primary schools. This outreach move was targeting mostly pupils below 10 years of their age, while learning under care of their guardians. Second objective was availability of indigenous teachers willing and able to work within the environment. Therefore, the targeted centers alphabetically included; Aguei, Akobo-Gendem, Burmath, Dengjok, Muot-Tot, Kaibui, Kaikuiny, Pathai, Peiri, Pulturuk, Thol, Uror, and Walgak primaries. Conditionally, each child in these areas was enrolling up to primary three.

Secondly, most of the teachers deployed there were from the same areas. In primary four those pupils were transferred to continue their upper classes at Akobo or Waat. Hence, it's acknowledged that, the educational revival in greater Akobo got developed for the first time in middle of 1970s and the beginning of 1980s. Unfortunately, the second war broke out again in 1983, and led into total suspension of education by 1984 in the whole area. For good records, the pioneered teachers deployed in the areas were;

S/N	Name of school	Name of the teacher	Proposed Year 1976	Year of operation 1978
1	Aguei	1. Omot Ojulu Okoth. 2. Apaulo Jiok Jiok.	=	=
2	Akobo Gedim	Mohamed Dhieyier Dak	=	=
3	Burmath	1. Biel Reath Panuor 2. Gatluak Ruon Nyuot	=	=
4	Dengjok	Mabor Luak Kok	=	=
5	Kaikuiny	Lul Tut Puol	=	=
6	Kaibui	1. Lual Chuol Dol 2. Keat Monjang Goch	=	=
7	Muot-Tot	1. Both Diek Nguen 2. Ruot Chot Yen	=	=
8	Pathai	Wangbuom Ruot Bidiet	=	=
9	Pieri	Manyuon Them	=	=
10	Pulturuk	Gai Both Badeng	=	=
11	Thol	Nhial Ruot	=	=
12	Uror	1. Chot Deng Mach 2. Johnson Lok Riek	=	=
13	Walgak	Paul Pawel Luak	=	=

Figure 3 Greater Akobo Rural Schools and the first teachers assigned there in 1976.



Figure 4. Adult education class at the school compound

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5th May 1954, he stated it clearly that, the mentioned boundaries are for the Lou-Nuer District as it appeared in documents (LND/8. B. UNP/57D-7) reports of (1933-1971).