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# SUDAN STUDIES

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## EDITORIAL

Welcome to issue 23 of *Sudan Studies*. Firstly, a correction and apology relating to the previous issue. Because of a mistake in layout, part of the article by H.R.J. Davies on Bishop Comboni appeared in the wrong order. Therefore in this issue we have reprinted the article in full, in its corrected form.

The two articles by R.S. O'Fahey, and R.S. O'Fahey and John Hunwick, that appear in this issue have been printed without the various diacritical marks in the English transliteration of the Arabic. This is because of the limitations of our computer and printer, for which I hope we may be forgiven.

Otherwise, I believe we have a varied and well-rounded issue covering a variety of themes, of both historical and contemporary significance.

As usual I would welcome contributions to future issues, on whatever subject relevant to the Sudan. Correspondence relating to articles in this or previous issues is equally welcome, as are book reviews (an area in which we have been deficient in recent years.)

Paul Wilson

Editor, *Sudan Studies*.



# ON THE PROMOTION OF SUDANESE<sup>1</sup> CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL STUDIES: A NOTE AND A PROPOSAL

R.S. O'Fahey

UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

## Introduction

Academic studies on the Sudan are in crisis; the universities in the Sudan are so underfunded and ill-staffed that they can scarcely sustain any kind of doctoral studies programmes in the humanities and social sciences. In countries outside the Sudan that have traditionally had a scholarly interest in the Sudan, for example Britain and the USA, there is little current interest or research on the Sudan. Before coming to a concrete but modest proposal about how to remedy the situation, it is worthwhile examining how we have reached the present situation.

## The Background

The Sudan's tradition of local scholarship is perhaps best enshrined in the two classic works, the so-called "Funj Chronicle" and the *Tabaqat* of Muhammad wad Dayf Allah. These two works of the nineteenth century represent the peak of a northern Sudanese Muslim culture that, while influenced by Egypt and elsewhere, had its own unique and distinctive characteristics.

Because of the Turco-Egyptian occupation from 1820 onwards, the northern Sudan was "opened up" to European travellers and travelling scholars much earlier than most of the rest of Africa. Consequently, the travel literature on the Sudan by Europeans and others has a depth and variety unmatched for any other part of Africa save Southern Africa. A problem for scholars of the Sudan with this literature is that it is written in a variety of European languages.

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<sup>1</sup> By "Sudanese" in this context I mean the northern, western and eastern Sudan. I have no competence to discuss the southern Sudan.



With the British occupation in 1898 a colonial tradition of scholarship was implanted in the Sudan, its main expression being *Sudan Notes and Records* (1918 onwards), where British officials published articles on almost all aspects of Sudanese culture. While much that was published was amateurish, much was recorded that would otherwise have been lost. Complementing *Sudan Notes and Records*, such works as Sir Harold MacMichael's *History of the Arabs in the Sudan* (Cambridge 1922, 2 vols.) attempted to provide an overview of Sudanese history. Although there is much in these writings that could and should be criticised, they did lay important foundations, not least in situating the Sudan within a wider regional framework (the work of A.J. Arkell, al-Shatir Busayli, <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Jalil, <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Majid <sup>c</sup>Abdin and Richard Hill was notable in this regard).

An indirect Sudanese response was not long in coming; the first generation of graduates from the Gordon Memorial College (established 1900) found their own voices in journals such as *al-Fajr* (established 1934) and *al-Nahda* (established 1930) – both are seminal works in the study of the emergence of a modern Sudanese culture and need to be republished. From the 1930s onwards there is a considerable and continuous production of literature, especially poetry, memoirs, biographies and histories; for example the work of Muhammad <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Rahim is noteworthy here, but many of his more important writings remain unpublished (their manuscripts are in the National Records Office). Also this period saw the beginnings of modern Sudanese music, again a much understudied field.

From the 1950s, especially with the emergence of the University of Khartoum, the more academic study of the Sudan's past and cultures through doctoral programmes developed at Khartoum and elsewhere. The key figures here were Professors Makki Shibayka, G.N. Sanderson and P.M. Holt. A little later came Professor Yusuf Fadl Hasan, who established the Sudan Research Unit (later the Institute of African and Asian Studies) at the University, and Dr. Muhammad Ibrahim Abu Salim, the first Sudanese director of the National Records Office in succession to Professor Holt.

The 1960s and 70s may be described as the heyday of Sudanese academic studies. Numerous monographs in fields such as history, archaeology, social anthropology, geography,



sociology, linguistics, folklore etc. were written by Sudanese and non-Sudanese researchers. Most were written as doctorates either at Khartoum or British or American universities. Apart from the general climate of optimism of the time, there were several specific factors that facilitated these developments; one was the coming to Khartoum of young foreigners not only to teach but also to research (the present writer, who arrived at the Department of History in 1967, was one of these); secondly, the encouragement Professor Yusuf Fadl Hasan at the Afro-Asian Institute gave to all, irrespective of nationality, who were seriously concerned with the Sudan, and, thirdly, the liberal access policy adopted by Dr. Abu Salim at the National Records Office and his tireless work in publishing primary sources.

Here I have mainly been concerned with historical studies, but it is important to note the work of a group of gifted young Sudanese folklorists, such as Sayyid Hamid Hurrayz, al-Tayyib Muhammad al-Tayyib, <sup>c</sup>Abdullahi <sup>c</sup>Ali Ibrahim and <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Rahim Nasr, at the Afro-Asian Institute. The series, *Silsilat al-turath al-sha<sup>c</sup>bi al-Sudani*, in some thirty volumes, is a tribute to this group and an outstanding record of Sudanese local cultures and, again, should be more widely known (I know of nothing comparable elsewhere in Muslim Africa). At the same time, the Department of Social Anthropology under the leadership of Professor Ian Cunnison, saw a lively interaction between young expatriate and Sudanese scholars. The same interaction characterised archaeology, although, given the links between Sudanese archaeology and Egyptology and the role of foreign archaeological expeditions, the form it took was somewhat different.

By the early 1980s the heyday was coming to an end. There were a number of factors; economic decline in the Sudan made the maintenance of doctoral programmes at Khartoum increasingly difficult. The same economic difficulties made the continuing development of the Sudan Collection at the Khartoum University Library harder and harder, especially with the astronomical increase in the price of Western books and journals. It was increasingly difficult for young Sudanese to study abroad and when they did, with a view to the future job market, they increasingly studied more "utilitarian" topics. Even if they could go abroad, there were few institutions that had an ongoing interest in Sudanese studies, symbolized best perhaps by the retirement in the mid-1980s of Professor Holt, who had trained several



generations of Sudanese and expatriate researchers, from the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. Upon his retirement, his position was frozen.

Among expatriate researchers (now increasingly from Germany and France) a pattern developed whereby the researcher would conduct research in the Sudan with little contact with the University of Khartoum, return to his or her university, and later publish a monograph at a price few Sudanese could afford and, often, in a language that few could read.

By the early 1990s the situation was much worse. The principal new factor was the mass exodus of Sudanese scholars, both established teachers and younger researchers, from the Sudan to the Gulf, southeast Asia and later, to Europe and America. Departments such as Archaeology, History, Social Anthropology, Political Science and the Afro-Asian Institute were virtually denuded of teachers. At the same time, co-operative programmes with overseas institutions such as the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague (Holland) and the University of Bergen (Norway) came to an end as funding was increasingly withdrawn.

### **The Prognosis for the Future**

It is very hard to be optimistic. The exodus continues, funding has virtually disappeared, and the proliferation of new universities in the Sudan diminishes the resources of each. Much is still being published in the Sudan; some, especially memoirs and autobiographies, is of the greatest interest, but there is little new academic research. Younger Sudanese researchers find little institutional or financial support either in the Sudan or elsewhere, while expatriate researchers for political and other reasons no longer find the Sudan an attractive country in which to do research.

As of today, the only university outside the Sudan that still has a major commitment in more than one discipline to Sudanese studies is the University of Bergen in Norway. Sudanese studies at Bergen go back to the mid-1960s, when the then professor of social anthropology at Bergen, Fredrik Barth, both conducted research in the Sudan and taught at the Department of Social Anthropology there. Barth both encouraged his Norwegian students to work in the Sudan (including Gunnar Haaland, Leif Manger and many others) and brought O'Fahey to



Bergen. Soon Sudanese studies spread to archaeology, classics, geography, history and other disciplines (seven Sudanese have taken their doctorates in Bergen). These developments were strengthened by various co-operative programmes, funded by the Norwegian Aid Agency, between the two universities, Khartoum and Bergen, and the National Records Office. By the mid-1990s such funding was no longer available, although through its collection of Arabic and other materials and the commitment of various researchers there, Bergen still tries to maintain a profile in Sudanese studies.

To this end, my colleague, Dr. Anders Bjørkelo, a specialist in Sudanese economic history, and I have embarked on a catalogue of all the Sudanese literary and legal materials deposited. Since these number over 5,000 items, this will be a work of several years. Bjørkelo is also preparing a two volume history of a Sudanese trading family in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries based on family records. Moreover, the Departments of Social Anthropology and Geography are continuing research in connection with the Red Sea Hills Project (RESAP):

In a wider context, tribute here should also be paid to the work of Dr. Haydar <sup>c</sup>Ali Ibrahim and his *Markaz al-Dirasat al-Sudaniyya* in Cairo. The *markaz* has concentrated its activities on the publication of original works and some reprints in Arabic on all aspects of Sudanese culture.

I entitled this section "the prognosis for the future". As the situation currently stands, that prognosis must be negative. It is hard to see how in the absence of senior staff, lack of funding etc., publicly-funded institutions in the Sudan can turn the situation around. The lack of resources in the Sudan makes it in turn harder for outside institutions to develop Sudanese interests and links, especially in the present political climate. To reiterate, the prognosis as of today must be regarded as very poor.

### **Can Anything Be Done? – A Proposal**

So far this note has had a very negative tone, but is it possible to consider ways of mobilizing private resources both in the Sudan and from within the large Sudanese diaspora to try and turn the situation around? It seems to the present writer that in the present climate this is



likely to be the only way forward.

I am not qualified to express an opinion on the reality of this possibility; I simply raise it as a question for consideration by concerned Sudanese. I would, however, add that in my various encounters in Europe and America with Sudanese of the diaspora, there seems to be a considerable awareness and discussion of these issues.

In a later note, if it is thought desirable, I will willingly lay out some ideas for the general promotion of Sudanese cultural and historical studies, for publication programmes and for research priorities. Here, for the moment, I would like simply to confine myself to one concrete proposal, namely the funding of two doctoral scholarships at the Department of History, University of Bergen. On a practical level, the funding need not be more than that necessary to maintain the students at Bergen, with some extra for books and travel, since there are no tuition fees in Norway. In this present note, I shall not propose a concrete figure, but can do so if requested.

There are various ways such doctoral scholarships could be organised. A co-operative programme between Bergen and either the Department of History or the Afro-Asian Institute could be established, whereby the doctoral candidates would be chosen jointly. The successful candidates could (and indeed necessarily should) spend part of their time in Khartoum and part in Bergen.

To the present proposal the objection may be raised that in the current climate it is somewhat elitist. That given today's realities, a proposal to train two Sudanese as academic historians by writing monographs on some aspect of the Sudan's history is both elitist and idealistic. Perhaps it is, but to this I would make two points; first, in the next few years a number of serious and original monographs on Sudanese history will be published either in Europe or America. To the best of my knowledge, virtually all of them have been written by non-Sudanese. However competent these works are, this is not a healthy situation. The dialogue between Sudanese and non-Sudanese researchers that characterized the 1960s and 70s has virtually disappeared, as has the complex interplay between Sudanese scholarship directed to the home market and scholarship on the Sudan that contributes to the wider historiography of Africa and the Muslim world.



Secondly, there is a question of continuity; there is a scholarly chain or *silsila* within Sudanese historiography, going back to such figures as Shibayka, Sanderson and Holt, through Yusuf Fadl Hasan and Abu Salim, to such figures as Martin Daly (A student of Holt) and myself (likewise a student of Holt, but also taught by Yusuf as an undergraduate in London), to such as Dr. Ali Salih Karrar (presently director of the National Records Office, who took his doctorate with me at Bergen). This has been a very fruitful scholarly chain; it is in serious danger of being broken. This, I believe, would be a great pity.

To conclude; I propose that funding be sought for two doctoral scholarships at Bergen. It goes without saying that both my colleague in Bergen, Bjørkelo, and myself would be more than willing to act as supervisors to such students if the financing can be found.

Furthermore, I am sure that Professor John Hunwick of Northwestern University would want to participate in whatever way would be appropriate, especially given the close ties between Bergen and Northwestern. Finally, I have little doubt that such a proposal would receive the positive support of the authorities at the University of Bergen.



# THE CAMEL POSTMAN AND OTHER SUDAN POSTAGE STAMPS

By H.R.J. Davies

1998 marked the centenary of the issue of one of the world's most famous postage stamps - the Camel Postman stamps of the Sudan. Over the whole of the period from 1898 to the present day every definitive issue of stamps by the Sudan, apart from a short period during the Second World War, has had at least one stamp depicting the Camel Postman.

## **Before the Camel Postman:**

However, 1898 was not the start of postal services in the Sudan. Sudan's first post office was opened in Suakin in 1867. Khartoum's post office opened on 1st October 1873 and other towns opened Post Offices soon after. All used Egyptian stamps which at that time depicted the pyramids and sphinx. Much official mail passed from one post office to another in large envelopes. These were sealed with inter-postal seals (circular seals inscribed in various ways in roman letters and Arabic). The earliest ones in the Sudan were used at Suakin from 1868. They were blue and inscribed in the top half 'POST VICE REALI EGIZIANE' and in the bottom half with the name of the Post Office. Before 1873 mail from Egypt to Khartoum and elsewhere in the Sudan was carried by government couriers, usually supplied from the Ababda tribe. During the Mahdiya a rudimentary postal system operated for official mail only.

The first stamps issued specifically for use in the Sudan date from 1 March 1897 and were Egyptian stamps of the period (sphinx and pyramid) overprinted in French (Soudan) and Arabic. Their life was, however, shortlived - being replaced by the Camel Postman stamps from 1 March 1898.

## **The Origin of the Camel Postman:**

The origin of this design has been shrouded in myth, except that they were designed by Captain (later Colonel) Edward Alexander Stanton on Kitchener's instructions. Stanton later became Governor of Khartoum. In 1932 there was some possibility of the withdrawal of the



Camel Stamp issue. This encouraged Stanton to write to a friend of his, Colonel Atkinson, who was himself a stamp designer for the Sudan, the following transcribed letter:

*Army and Navy Club,*

*Pall Mall, S.W.1.*

*9th June 1932.*

*My Dear Atkinson,*

*Yes, some time ago I heard that the Camel stamp was to be superceded and, as it has had a longish innings, I was not surprised.*

*Its birth was in this wise. Kitchener, fretting at the control from Egypt placed upon him when he had recovered Dongola Province, determined to have a new stamp to take the place of the Egyptian surcharged one.*

*He communicated with an English artist, then on the Nile, to submit a drawing and an exceedingly attractive picture of Abu Simbel Temple was submitted with the remark that, if accepted, his terms would be twenty-five guineas. Whether it was the twenty-five guineas or the fact that Abu Simbel was actually to be outside the boundary not then fixed, Kitchener turned it down and sent for me. He told me to design a stamp and go on designing till I produced something he liked. He gave me a week in which to produce the first effort, to be ready on his return to Korti. Four days had passed and I had not hit on a subject, when the English mail arrived at Korti on a camel instead of the usual steamer, which had broken down at Dongola, and I also noticed in one of the illustrated papers, a picture of camels carrying carpets as an advert. I at once sent for the Sheikh of the local Arab camels, with whom I had been out on several occasions, to occupy wells in the Bayuda desert. Got him to put on his war kit and gallop and trot past me five or six times. The tribe were the Howawir but I forget the Sheikh's name.*

*I could only raise a sheet of white office paper to paint on and I only had one largish paint brush.*

*I did the drawing in sepia and to heighten it up a bit I painted in, as small as the brush would allow, a row of combinations of suitable coloured stamps below it.*

*To my surprise, Kitchener took it straight away and said I need do no more as he thought it would do.*



*Some six months later when we were at Berber, before the Battle of Atbara, the stamps appeared somewhat about the size of the coloured stamps I had put in the large drawing.*

*I wrote to Jimmy Watson, K's A.D.C. and told him, as my design had been accepted, I should like a set of the stamps signed by Kitchener, to the effect that I had designed them. The answer made me smile, for J. Watson replied - 'K' says certainly old boy, provided you pay for the stamps!*

*The set I have got and much prize, though so far as I am aware, I was never charged the few shillings of their value. That is the story. All yarns I have heard about it being Slatin on the stamps are untrue.*

I might add that, as a bit of bravado, I printed in small letters, which the printers faithfully reproduced, the words Khartoum and Berber on the mail bags being carried though neither of these places at the time had been reconquered.

*Let me know, if you may, when the change is to take place, as I shall send the story I have told you to one of the Philatelic papers on the change taking place.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*(signed) E.A. Stanton*

### **Sudan Stamps during the Condominium:**

The first issue of the Camel Postman stamps had a rosette type of watermark to the paper. On reflection, this was thought to be too close to a cross for a Moslem northern Sudan and so was progressively changed to stars and crescents as new printings were required from 1902 onwards. In turn from 1927 this watermark was similarly progressively superceded by an 'S G' watermark. The original stamps were quite large with frames of 25mm by 30mm. Accordingly, from 1921 the lower values up to 15 milliemes were progressively replaced by smaller stamps of 13mm by 22mm. The authorities were not always efficient in maintaining the stamp supply. In 1903 they ran out of 5 millieme stamps and had to overprint some 5pt stamps in Khartoum for '5 Milliemes'.

In 1931 regular scheduled Air Mail services began from the Sudan, and it was decided to have special Air Mail stamps. The Camel Postman was not considered suitable(!), and a



design showing Gordon's statue in Khartoum with an aeroplane was chosen. However, the special order from De La Rue in London, who throughout the whole of the Condominium supplied Sudan's postage stamps, except during the Second World War, did not arrive in time and so from February to September 1931 various Camel Postman stamps were overprinted 'Air Mail'. Again, supplies ran short of certain values and in 1935 various stamps of the Air Mail issue had to be overprinted with new values.

It is not surprising that certain values of the Camel Postman ran short during the Second World War and overprints had to be resorted to by the postal administration. Furthermore, De La Rue's works in Britain were bombed during the war and Sudan turned to Indian printers for assistance and the opportunity was taken to have a new stamp design, the 'Palms' issue which depicted Tuti Island with palm trees. The design was by Miss Hebbert, sister of the Director of Sudan Posts and Telegraphs at that time.

But the Camel Postman was not forgotten and he came back again with modified Arabic from 1 January 1948. This issue was replaced in 1951 by a pictorial issue depicting various scenes from life in the Sudan, but the top value (50pt) was still Stanton's Camel Postman. Parallel with this main issue, a new set of Air Mail stamps appeared from 1 July 1950, again depicting life in the Sudan, but concentrating rather on buildings and such like, including Gordon Memorial College and the G.P.O. in Khartoum. For the same reason as before the Camel Postman was omitted.

The Sudan authorities during the Condominium were very reluctant to have commemorative issues. They did relent in 1935 when they produced a set of 8 stamps to mark the 50th anniversary of Gordon's death. Later, three other commemorative issues appeared and, though the Camel Postman did not appear on the Gordon issue, he formed the design for each of the others, namely, 1 October 1948 to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the Camel Postman, 23 December 1948 to celebrate the opening of the Legislative Assembly and 9 January 1954 to celebrate the granting of Self-Government. Here again, a problem arose as the original stamps for this issue had on them the wrong date (1953) and had to be replaced by stamps with the correct date of 1954.

During the Condominium stamps for official Government correspondence existed. They were the same as the regular issues already referred to, overprinted OSGS or SG or, until 1936, some were punctured 'SG'. Sometimes, official correspondence had no stamps on it, being stamped 'Postage Paid'. Similarly, the military had their own stamps with the Camel



Postman overprinted 'Army Service' in various ways or punctured 'A S'. These military stamps were phased out after 1924. During the 19th century campaigns and both world wars mail from soldiers can be found without stamps or with a range of non-Sudanese stamps which were officially accepted for postage.

Mail which arrived in Sudan with insufficient postage paid on dispatch was liable to Sudan Government tax. These Postage Due stamps depicted one of the famous 19th century gunboats, *Zafir*.

During the Condominium Sudan postage stamps were used for revenue purposes, sometimes with an overprint. They were also used in Darfur during the Second World War to overcome a temporary shortage of small coin.

### **Sudan Stamps since Independence:**

The first definitive issue after Independence appeared in 1962. Again, this depicted scenes from life in the Sudan and the Camel Postman survived as the top value stamp (£S1). This issue survived with value alterations, different watermarks, type of paper and perforations and with a series of overprints and changed value handstamps due to inflation until 1991, when it was replaced by the current definitive issue depicting various aspects of Sudanese life with the Camel Postman still holding his place on the top value stamp (£S20). Again this series has had to have overprints and handstamps to change values to cope with Sudan's inflationary situation. As before, all these stamps can be found with overprints for official government correspondence, and official correspondence can be found franked 'Postage Paid'. Mail from soldiers in the civil war frequently has no stamps. On occasion postage stamps have simply not been available and Revenue stamps can be found used for postage purposes on both internal and external correspondence.

Since Independence the Sudan has been much more willing to have special commemorative issues. Between 1956 and 1998 97 such appeared compared with the four between 1898 and 1955. However, the Sudan has been relatively frugal with such issues compared with many other countries in the Middle East. The 10 most notable of its commemorative issues up to 1996 have been:

- Independence issue (1956)
- Nubian monuments (1964)



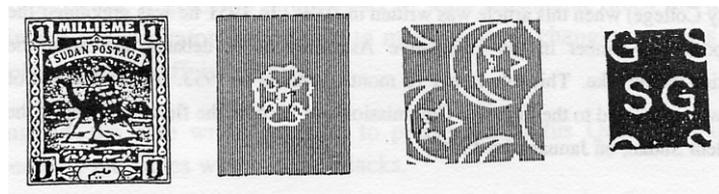
- 20th Anniversary of Sudan Airways (1968)
- First Anniversary of the May Revolution (1970)
- 50th Anniversary of the Faculty of Medicine (formerly Kitchener School of Medicine), University of Khartoum
- Desertification (1978)
- 25th Anniversary of Independence (1982)
- 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Shaykan (1984)
- First Anniversary of the National Salvation Revolution (1991)
- 500th Anniversary of the Fung Sultanate and Abdalab Islamic Sheikdom (1993)

The most striking omission is that there was no commemorative issue to celebrate the centenary of the Fall of Khartoum (1885–1985).

Things have not always gone to plan with all of Sudan's commemorative issues. Many have come out much later than was intended, and indeed the original issue for the 'First Anniversary of the May Revolution' was only on sale for about half an hour before it was withdrawn on Nimeiri's orders. The reason for its withdrawal, so far as I know, has never been made public. In due course it was replaced by a second issue.

On 1 March 1998 the Sudan celebrated the Centenary of the Camel Postman by a special stamp issue. The 150 dinar stamp depicts the Camel Postman and Berber Post Office.

### **The original Camel Postman design and watermarks used during the Condominium**



For anyone interested in learning more about the Sudan's postal services the following main sources can be indicated:

STAGG, E.C.W. (1977) *Sudan: the stamps and postal stationery, 1867 to 1970*. Harry Hayes, Batley, Yorks.

This edition of *Sudan Studies* was originally distributed in hard copy to members of the Sudan Studies Society of the United Kingdom. SSSUK now makes it freely available subject to licence and cordially invites readers to join the Society (see [www.sssuk.org](http://www.sssuk.org)).

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STAGG, E.C.W. (1974) *Sudan: the postal markings, 1867-1970*. Royal Philatelic Society, London.

**Camel Post: Journal of the Sudan Study Group.** Published twice a year: issue 57 appeared in November 1998.

Anyone wishing to join or obtain more information about the SSG which devotes its study to all aspects of Sudan philately and associated matters should write to:

Mr. N. Collier

Hon. Secretary, SSG

34 Padleys Lane

Burton Joyce

Nottingham, NG14 5BZ

U.K.

The author of this article is the current editor of **Camel Post**.



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE *SUDAN STAR*

October 1st 1949

Abdelfattah el Maghrabi

### Introduction

Abdelfattah el Maghrabi was a Senior Lecturer in Mathematics at Gordon College (later University College) when this article was written in 1949. In 1951 he was appointed the sole Opposition Member in the Legislative Assembly as it debated the form the Constitution would take. This role lasted 18 months, ending in 1953. At the tail end of 1955 he was appointed to the Supreme Commission and became the first President of the independent Sudan, on January 1st 1956.

Sir,

A series of articles about the Sudan has been published recently, with plan and purpose, by the well known Oxford reader Miss Margery Perham.

I should be much obliged if you would kindly allow me space in your columns to make the following observations on one of her articles, entitled "The Sudan Emerges into Nationhood" and published in the July issue of the American Journal "Foreign Affairs".<sup>2</sup>

Miss Perham visited the Sudan several times in a semi-official capacity, and as a private tourist; she made contacts with a few Sudanese of various political parties, chiefly Government officials.

These contacts were naturally in the form of officially conducted tours and the Senior Sudanese officials she was asked to meet are men who can always make the right post at the right moment and praise in great eloquence any existing regime – a type common to all countries under foreign rule and well known to Miss Perham and other experts.

A large proportion of the educated Sudanese who had previsionsed in Miss Perham an eminent

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<sup>2</sup> *Foreign Affairs*, 27, 1947 pp. 665-677. (ed.)



scholar and a scrupulous truth finder, were very disappointed when they saw her latest revelations about the Sudan in the British and American press.

Her articles only gave them the impression that she had been inspired more by the crafty propaganda of the British Political Service in the Sudan, than by the unbiased spirit of honesty and faithfulness characteristic of the modern historian.

The theme permeating "The Sudan Emerges into Nationhood" contains no criticism of, or advice to modify, the old Gladstonian methods of colonisation; it gives no direction as to what reasonable steps the modern British administrator should take to meet the ever changing aspects of the colonial world affairs of to-day.

Instead, the able writer goes on to praise the Status Quo and exalt the deeds of the Blues who run the Blacks.

She makes no attempt to probe deeply into the real feelings of the Sudanese and allows no provision for the fact that the Sudan will, one day, make its voice heard in international circles, when the methods used by the 'Blues' to prejudice the right of the Sudanese for self-determination will be exposed to view.

The historical and geographical introduction to the article is mainly true; the writer, however, tried to portray the picture of Egypt and the Sudan of the mid-nineteenth century and judge it by present day standards, denouncing the scandalous slave trade and alienating Mohamed Ali Pasha who "won an easy victory over the disunited princedoms of the Sudan".

But in the East, nationalism was not so sharply significant in the past; it and Islam were synonyms; passport barriers are the innovations of more recent times. Egypt herself was at one time governed by an African negro whose authority had never been challenged.

Slave trade was a good excuse for the fervent rivalry for imperial expansion, and was not really viewed with such horror, as the author tried to depict.

The crazy race for the partition of Africa in the last century was little better than slavery. Representatives of European nations carrying many flags, uniforms and blank treaty forms,



claimed vast territories and forced black men into army uniforms to fight other blacks and conquer more territory; the Fashoda incident is a vivid example.

Acquiring territory in this manner was so simple that whole countries and inhabitants were given over into the hands of individuals, like Luderitz, Leopold and Cecil Rhodes.

In the eighteenth century one European power alone exported as many as five million slaves for servile labour abroad, and Great Britain herself was the leading slave trading nation in the world. Not until the year 1850 had the "raiding of the helpless tribes" by Europeans been practically stopped.

It is therefore a historical fact that while Egypt and other Arab countries permitted slave trading, European countries sponsored the infamous wholesale shipping of slaves from Africa.

British interest in the Sudan was neither philanthropic nor altruistic; it was simply the natural outcome of the competition in Empire building that prevailed among all European nations of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There is neither harm nor shame in this history; the law of the Struggle for Existence and Survival of the Fittest had been operating on nations then as it is now.

Napoleon's ill-starred expedition against Egypt (1798) and the discovery and opening up of the sources of the Nile by British officials in the service of the Egyptian Government and by others, stimulated this interest – a colossal slice of Africa for Britain was to be the Nile valley, and successive British governments had to find ways and means to annex the important territory.

In 1830, Egypt was a vast empire, extending from the upper reaches of the Nile to Aleppo and Adana; she had a splendid army and a good navy; she could have stormed Constantinople were it not for the combined intervention of Russia, Britain and France.

Mohamed Ali's successors were neither shrewd nor bold. Gradually Anglo-French influence began to extend to the internal affairs of the country in the form of a "dual control" of the



Egyptian treasury, following the purchase by to plan.

The 1898 Agreement, after the battle of Omdurman, was, as suggested by Miss Perham, more between Kitchener & Cromer than between Britain and Egypt, although the name of the Egyptian signatory appears in the important document above that of Lord Cromer.

Great Britain has been, since, the de facto ruler of the country, and Egyptian partnership was symbolised only by a flag and some junior officials who were, at that time, indispensable for the administration of the country.

The unfortunate murder of Sir Lee Stack in 1924 in the streets of Cairo, furnished a pretext for the immediate expulsion, lock stock and barrel, of all Egyptian officials and soldiers stationed in the Sudan and, with them, all that had remained of Egyptian influence in the country.

The movement in the Sudan for the unity of the Nile valley was temporarily suppressed, the military school in Khartoum was closed indefinitely and Sudanese officers of the Egyptian Army swore allegiance to the British Governor General of the Sudan.

To take down the Egyptian flag as well would have been blatantly incompatible with Britain's post-war claim for the championship of international justice; so it was allowed to fly side by side with the British flag on public buildings all over the country.

But the restrictions imposed by the Sudan Government after the armed mutiny of 1924, and the policy of suppression, rigorously pursued by the British 'man on the spot' defeated its own ends and aroused the national feelings of the Sudanese, strengthening their natural desire for closer union with Egypt, not only among the educated classes but also among farmers, traders and artisans all over the country.

These people have now definite political ideas; some are literate and most of them have common sense; they know that the proportion of literacy in their country is less than one per cent and that there is only one doctor for every seventy thousand Sudanese; they grudge the British officials their high salaries, unlimited authority and luxurious river bank houses; the



cry for self government or union with Egypt gets louder and more persistent.

The driving force behind the scene was the Graduates' General Congress which, though it fluctuates in membership and influence, is on the whole gathering an ever increasing momentum. It can rightly claim to its credit the political awakening of the Sudan, a literary renaissance and several national schools.

The Northern Sudan Advisory Council, the Legislative Assembly and the Executive Council were created, after several rebuffs, in response to its unceasing demands for a share in the government. The arguments its members put forth, their peaceful methods of approach to the authorities and their tempered discussions in their meetings show that the educated Sudanese has gained quite a lot under British tutelage. They really wanted self government for their country but knowing the history of British Imperialism, of which they themselves had suffered experience, they turned to Egypt and adopted the formula of one crown, one army, and identical foreign policies with Egypt.

Here was a golden opportunity for Britain to prove its good will and sincerity to the Sudanese by taking genuine steps to train them in true self government.

But the local British administrator, jealous to hand over his authority and prestige to the people who have, so far, been subservient to himself, fortified his position still further by creating titular posts for Sudanese noted more for their stature, superficiality and beaming smiles of approval than for knowledge or nationalistic endeavours. Some of them were hurriedly lifted from obscurity to posts of Assistant Directorships in anticipation of the fictitious appointments that were to come.

These men, to say the least of them, are reactionary and sterile; most of them have neither the qualifications for the high offices that have been bestowed upon them nor the capacity or initiative to keep pace with the advancing times and the growing national awakening of their fellow countrymen.

Their greatest concern is to be installed in positions of authority in order to carry out the policy of their British masters and gain material benefits for themselves in return.



Although Miss Perham claims to have known these men intimately, the writer is convinced that, owing to her short stay in the country, her knowledge of them, and of other Sudanese for that matter, cannot be more than meagre and superficial.

There is a limit to the duty of reticence owed to men in public affairs; if their dignity is being touched by too candid a recital of facts, my excuses for this are their own lack of candour and generosity, Miss Perham's lack of tact in bringing their persons to the limelight, and the fact that national interests should supersede personal or friendly relations. I shall, in any case, abstain from further elaboration on this point which is incidentally out of the beaten track.

There is, however, one important fact that Miss Perham and, perhaps, the local authorities in the Sudan might have overlooked, which goes a long way to prove the homogeneous racial character of the people who live in the coveted Valley of the Nile.

About seventy per cent of the Sudanese Ministers and Undersecretaries, in spite of a carefully selected chromatic range of dark colour, have Egyptian blood running in their veins.

Both the leader of the Assembly and the Minister without Portfolio come from a country which has remained throughout history, without even the break of the Mahdia, thoroughly Egyptian; their relatives or kinsmen now cast their votes in the Egyptian parliamentary elections; the Undersecretaries for Economics and Trade, Communications, Justice, Public Works and Irrigation are the sons or grandsons of pure Egyptian male parents; the children of the Minister of Health are seventy five per cent Egyptian and the Deputy Speaker's brothers are Egyptian citizens permanently living in Egypt.

In the Advisory Council's debate on the constitution of the Assembly, attended by Miss Perham, one of these men made a motion to accept it in total without any discussion; it could have been unanimously carried had it not been for the efforts of the British chairman himself and one or two Sudanese members who made a gallant stand against it; the motion was narrowly defeated.

Even after discussion and a few minor amendments the constitution, which was only passed by the Advisory Council in broad principle and subject to further consideration, was, when



proclaimed to the public, boycotted by the majority of the intelligencia of the country, supported by the Khatmia sect who claim most of the inhabitants of the Sudan as followers.

The leader of this sect wisely maintained guarded silence but the Umma leaders and their papers applauded it. Now, after the lapse of only a few months, the inadequacy of the constitution as an instrument of government has become apparent and the British authorities themselves are for drastic amendment soon.

I am not going to enumerate the defects of the constitution here; Miss Perham may be advised to consult the archives of the Sudan Public Relations Office for that.

Suffice it to say here that the majority of the deputies to the Assembly, who do not even know the geography of their country, draw two distinct salaries from the tax payers' funds and profess two irreconcilable loyalties; that the Legislative Assembly, which sits for a few months in the year, has not the power for legislation; that Sudanese Ministers and Undersecretaries are, in fact, appointed by the British Directors of Departments, who can carefully weed out the stronger elements; and that the power of the Governor General is almost all-omnipotent.

When lively subjects about Finance, individual liberty or foreign capital are debated in the Assembly, some Sudanese Ministers and Undersecretaries either sit obdurate or find their way surreptitiously to the refreshments room one by one, and the two deputies who constitute the opposition in the chamber are left with an audience who can hardly understand what they are talking about; the fate of the debate is sealed.

But let us get down to brass tacks and be practical, or even fatalist.

We Sudanese, of all colour and origin, know fully well that our future is bound with that of the British Empire; Egypt is not strong enough to force an equitable solution, and the Security Council is that Bench of gangsters who drove away a million unarmed Arabs to death and misery out of the land they have tilled for the last two thousand years. To turn Communist is against the tenets of Islam and to sit idle is boring and leads nowhere.



We are poor, ignorant and unarmed; the swords that our fathers used in the past will be futile in an age of radioactivity and speed greater than that of sound.

Pressure is being brought to bear upon all the smaller nations of the earth to join one or the other of the monstrous ideologies of the age; our path is clear.

We cannot forcibly eject the British out of our country; nor is it in our interest to do so now; their position will, of course, be untenable if every tongue in the land says to them "Get out of here" but they will see to it that this will never happen.

That we have gained many things by being under their patronage is an indisputable fact: we are more educated, more healthy, more prosperous and more tranquil than we were before; we have tidier minds and tidier homes than our fathers, and the very fact that we are demanding our liberty in this manner is a great credit to them.

But they themselves admit that the tempo of the pace at which we are being led along the path of civilization is lamentably slow, and that the tasty morsels of progress we are being given are far less than we can chew and swallow.

A country, the battle for the capital of which cost only twenty seven British lives, should not take so long to bring to law and order. About two million inhabitants of the Southern Sudan still live in the Palaeolithic age and roam the forest wastes of the country in their primitive nakedness, apparently proud and unconcerned.

There are only two government Secondary Schools in the country; a third one is just being started. The Kitchener School of Medicine has turned out only about one hundred doctors in a quarter of a century; the Gordon University College, which started as an institution for higher education as early as 1938, can only boast a student population of less than three hundred.

There are some thirty students taking regular courses abroad, most of whom are studying subjects which the country is not in urgent need for.

Compulsory education is a dream for a hundred years hence; communications are barely



enough to reach the far flung corners of the country and metalled roads are practically non-existent.

The Gezira scheme, however, stands out as a glaring example of what the British can do with the dormant potentialities of the country when they have the incentive and the genuine desire to do it. The Sudan now can compete with Egypt as a cotton growing country.

Whether we like it or not we are led in the present circumstances to join forces with Britain and to tie ourselves to her imperial chariot. Should this be our voluntary choice, we would rather see the knot done with our own hands or out of our free will than by the British or their puppet agents.

This can only be accomplished through a proper representation and with a good constitution. Our constitution as it stands is like a slow motion picture presenting to the eye the unnecessary details and hiding away the capacity for general performance; it removes to infinity the date for real self-government and self-determination.

Miss Perham argues that the Sudan Government, through the Governor General, had stoutly upheld to the British Foreign Office the Sudan's right for self-determination, when the time came, but Egypt refused to support the demand.

I shall be very surprised if many of the British people have taken this statement for its face value, unless everybody in England is Tory.

There is not a single director, governor, head of department or even district commissioner or *mamur* in the Sudan today who is Egyptian; how can Egypt be expected to know the answer for the diabolical phrase "When the time came".

In fact Egypt thought that the time had already come; she expressed the opinion that both Britain and Egypt should haul down their flags and leave the country to its own people.

This declaration, or the gist thereof, was made by the Egyptian Premier in November 1947.

Can such a statement be interpreted as denying the Sudanese the right to self-determination? Egypt afterwards insisted upon sharing in the task of preparing the Sudanese for self-



government 'when the time came' on the same footing with Britain; but no local British administrator will entertain the idea of working at the same level with an Egyptian in the Sudan.

The writer of this article believes that the next few years may see the taking down of the Egyptian flag and perhaps the British flag in sympathy, and the hoisting up of a new Sudan flag to harbour paramount British influence by a resolution of a faked Assembly – a resolution which may bring in its trail bloodshed and turmoil. An iron curtain will then drop over the Sudan isolating it, at least for some considerable time, from the rest of the world.

He believes that such action may prove injurious to the interests not only of Egypt and the Sudan but of the British Empire as well. Great Britain will ultimately lose the Sudan in the same unfriendly manner as she did Egypt, for the Sudanese, having been initiated in self-government of some sort, will never cease to demand full independence for their country.

The British government and public should go warily about the segregation policy pursued by their local administrators and advocated by their well wishing imported advisers.

In an era of urgency, rapid communications and collective security, a policy aiming at collective mobilisation and collective action should be the one that ultimately wins. What use to Britain is a discordant Arab East, a disgruntled Egypt and an incredulous Sudan?

The Arab East, including Egypt and the Sudan, should be regarded as one united front in the coming struggle of giants, sharing and cherishing the same ideas and ideals with Britain. Britain has grown greater and stronger with a Commonwealth of Nations and once cannot see why it should not do so with a friendly and united Nile Valley, more guided by British culture and intellect than repelled by British bayonets.

British philologists, known for their fecundity in coining new words, cannot fail to find a name for the new hybrid within the framework of an entente cordiale or a Nile Dominion.

Miss Perham's last paragraph, which is in curious contrast with the general tone of her article, is worth reproducing here. She said:



*"If, however, ultimate strife between Egypt and the Sudan and between the main parties in the Sudan is to be avoided, Britain must use all her influence to achieve reconciliation in those two interdependent spheres. To crown the success of her past work in the Sudan she must not only protect the right of the Sudanese to attain full self-government, and make that self-government a constructive and unifying reality, but also endeavour to understand the legitimate interests and natural fears of Egypt. By thus pursuing a policy of harmonisation it may be hoped that Britain can, in time, transform the now unworkable condominium into a triple alliance, freely accepted by three nations."*



# ISLAM IN AFRICA

## THE INTELLECTUAL TRADITION

### A PROPOSAL

J.O. Hunwick and R.S. O'Fahey

The present paper describes a five-year project with various components devoted to research on the intellectual traditions of Muslim Africa. It would be administered through the Centre of Development Studies, University of Bergen, and the Program of African Studies, Northwestern University.

#### **Introduction**

Islam is grounded in a sacred text, the Quran. Muslims, therefore, have always placed a high premium on the production of texts of Quranic hermeneutics, and texts that elaborate theological doctrines, expound the holy law, uncover the secrets of the mystical way, express devotion for the Prophet Muhammad and praise God. More mundanely they have used literacy in Arabic for recording local and regional histories, composing biographies of holy men and scholars, praising heroes and vilifying enemies in verse, and in countless other ways serving the spiritual and secular needs of their communities. Sub-Saharan Africa has participated in this literary and scholarly tradition since the establishment of Muslim communities in the region, some of which date from as early as the tenth or eleventh centuries. By the fifteenth century we have evidence of the local production of scholarly texts in Arabic. Later African Muslims began to write in their own languages, in particular Swahili, Fulfulde and Hausa, a process that took place well before the introduction of the Roman script by European missionaries and colonial administrators.

Arabic became an ever more widely used vehicle of literacy in the nineteenth century, in West Africa due to the reformist movements from Senegal to Nigeria, and in East Africa due to the influence of Arabic speakers from Oman who enjoyed wide political hegemony on the Swahili coast. Two other areas of our concern, the Sudan and Mauritania, have long since been predominantly Arabic-speaking lands, and both have developed extensive scholarly and



literary traditions in Arabic. Despite colonial hegemony in sub-Saharan Africa from the late nineteenth century to the 1960s, and the increasingly widespread use of European languages as vehicles of self-expression, Arabic did not lose its popularity among Muslims during the colonial period, nor has it done so in the post-independence era. Arabic has remained the preferred language of religious discourse, and in the Islamic tradition religious discourse embraces both social and political discourse. Over the past thirty years many Muslims from sub-Saharan African countries (including those that are Arabic-speaking) have been educated in various countries of the Arab world from Morocco to Iraq, returning home fully literate in Arabic and often maintaining ties with colleagues in the countries of their education. Many opened up Arabic schools in their home countries and have dedicated themselves to educating a new generation through the medium of Arabic. Although, as a result of the colonial legacy, many African Muslims continue to express their ideas in English or French, the deep-rooted tradition of Arabic survives and flourishes (very obviously so in the Sudan and Mauritania), and comes to the fore in an important way in international Muslim dialog—in correspondence, in conferences, in the writing of books and the publication of journals.

We cannot understand the present trends and currents of Muslim discourse in Africa, its relationship to wider Islamic discourses, and its local shaping by historical and cultural factors unless we are in a position to see the broader history of Islamic scholarship in the region. For this we need to know not only who the scholars were and what they wrote, but how the scholars related to one another intellectually, and how learning was nurtured, transmitted, explicated, revived, revised, and contested. Saharan and sub-Saharan Africa have long and extensive traditions of literacy, education and authorship in Arabic, that predate, often by several centuries, the introduction of European languages and systems of education. African Muslims draw on these traditions, and on the intellectual traditions of the wider Islamic world in attempts to confront modernity within a familiar cultural framework, and indeed, to create their own modernity informed by their religious beliefs.

The present proposal takes as its starting point the proposition that it is as important to the



historian, the anthropologist, the sociologist, and the student of religion, to understand what African Muslims think and thought, as it is to understand what they do and did. A further presumption is that African Islam cannot be studied in isolation. African Islamic thought can only be understood within the wider Islamic framework to which it is ultimately linked. Thus, when the nineteenth-century Tukukor scholar and state-builder *al-hajj* <sup>Umar</sup> b. Sa<sup>id</sup> wrote a treatise on Sufism, the *Kitab al-rimah*, he cited no less than 123 works by a wide range of authors from many different parts of the Muslim world. A late eighteenth-century Fulani scholar from Guinea became part of a school of *Hadith* scholars in Medina (present-day Saudi Arabia), and his writings were first published in India. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century Sudanese scholars were influential in places as far apart of Indonesia and the United States. In short, while we study the particular and the local, we insist that this must be linked to the general and the global.

Relevant to this latter notion is the study of Islam in the African diaspora. Some of the African slaves who were taken across the Atlantic in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century were Muslims, and among them were some who were the product of Muslim systems of education, and who retained some literacy in Arabic. Some even used their literacy as a tool to negotiate their way out of slavery. In the late 20th century a reverse movement is taking place as African-Americans who have converted to Islam return to study in Islamic centres in Africa such as Touba and Kaolack in Senegal. There is, in fact, a growing interest in the African-American community at large in the historical legacy of Islam in literacy and education in Africa.

The study of the intellectual traditions of Muslim Africa has lagged far behind the study of the area's political and social formations. There are a number of reasons for this. First, in a general sense, the study of the religious life of Muslims in Africa (if, indeed, that can be divorced from their social and political lives) has been seen by Africanists as belonging essentially to another field of study—that of the Middle East. On the other hand, with few exceptions, scholars whose field of study is the "Middle East" have seen sub-Saharan Africa



as extraneous to their concerns. The old area studies boundaries, ultimately grounded in assumptions about cultural difference and hierarchies of cultural value, remain strong, and there are few scholars who cross them, and very few institutions that offer programs that would help scholars to research across the boundaries. A second reason for the neglect is related to this: the study of the intellectual traditions of African Muslims requires the researcher to be fully conversant with the wider intellectual traditions of the Muslim world over both time and space, and to have an advanced knowledge of Arabic. Few scholars are prepared to make such an investment, while at the same time acquiring professional knowledge of areas of sub-Saharan history. A third reason, arising from the two reasons stated above, is that there is an acute shortage of the necessary research tools, i.e. bibliographies, biographies, analyses, editions, and translations of works of the tradition, such as would provide a solid basis of research.

## **The Present Proposal**

### ***a) The Broad Picture***

The present proposal seeks to open up the study of Islamic thought in sub-Saharan Africa by (a) helping to discover and make known to the scholarly world the products of this tradition; (b) creating a dialog between scholars working on this tradition; (c) training a new generation of scholars to conduct research on this tradition, including those who originate from the areas where the tradition has flourished; (d) publishing fundamental works relating to this tradition, including biographical and bibliographical works, editions and translations of works within the tradition, and studies in the intellectual traditions of Muslim Africa, including revised doctoral theses.

### ***b) Personnel***

The directors of this project would be the two authors of the present proposal: Professor John Hunwick of Northwestern University (U.S.A.), and Professor R. Sean O'Fahey of the University of Bergen (Norway). They have devoted most of their academic careers to the study of Islam in Africa, and to the promotion of the field, through the training of graduate



students and the publication of monographs, journals, and journal articles. Hunwick founded the Centre of Arabic Documentation and its *Research Bulletin* at the University of Ibadan in 1964. More recently he and O'Fahey were founding editors of *Sudanic Africa. A Journal of Historical Sources*, which has published many articles on the Muslim intellectual tradition (many with Arabic texts included) over its eight issues to date. Hunwick is also one of the general editors of a monograph series entitled *Islam and Society in Africa*, published by Northwestern University Press. As regards the training of younger scholars, Hunwick has supervised fourteen doctorates, O'Fahey, seven, as well as numerous M.A. theses. Both have been consultants to the Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, and Hunwick has edited two volumes of Arabic manuscript catalogs for them. Their most ambitious joint project is *Arabic Literature of Africa*, which provides a bio-bibliographical overview of the writings of Muslim Africa in Arabic and a variety of African languages. So far two volumes out of a projected eight have been published, while two others are in active preparation.

Hunwick and O'Fahey have been collaborating closely for over twenty years. Hunwick has visited the University of Bergen on many occasions, and in 1994–5 was a fellow at the Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies for the entire year. O'Fahey, who has been a visitor at Northwestern University on many occasions, is now an Adjunct Professor in the Department of History. Together, they have an extensive network of research collaborators and correspondents in Europe, North America, and Africa. In Europe and North America these include Berndt Radtke (University of Utrecht), Stefan Reichmuth (University of Bochum), Jean-Louis Triaud (University of Aix), Alessandro Triulzi (University of Naples), Louis Brenner (S.O.A.S., University of London), Murray Last (University College, London), Philip Sadgrove (University of Manchester), Paulo de Moraes Farias (University of Birmingham), Rüdiger Seesemann (University of Bayreuth), Ottavia Schmidt (University of Trieste), Ahmad Abu Shouk (University of Bergen), Valerie Hoffman (University of Illinois), Muhammad Sani Umar (Arizona State University). In Africa, they include Abdul Sheriff (Zanzibar), Ousmane Kane (Senegal), Hamidu Bobboyi (Nigeria), Ebrahim Musa (South Africa), Haider Ali Ibrahim (Sudan/Egypt), Ibrahim Saghayyirun (Sudan/Oman), Fatima



Harrak (Morocco), Dedoud Ould Abdalla (Mauritania), Abdel Wedoud Ould Cheikh (Mauritania), Ibrahim Abu Salim (Sudan), Yusuf Fadl Hassan (Sudan), Ali Karrar (Sudan).

### *c) Components of the Project*

The project has the following components:

1. Training of doctoral candidates.
2. Workshops and conferences.
3. Publication.
4. Continuation and expansion of Arabic Literature of Africa.

#### 1. Training of Doctoral Candidates

This component would provide five doctoral fellowships to be held at either the University of Bergen or Northwestern University. Qualified graduate fellows would be recruited from Africa and elsewhere, and would be supervised by Hunwick or O'Fahey, or in some cases both of them, depending on the student's regional specialization.

This aspect of the proposal is particularly important, given the need to train younger scholars—and especially African scholars—and given that some "traditional" African Islamic intellectual traditions are in danger of dying out without ever being properly studied. For example, there are few, if any, younger scholars, in Africa or elsewhere, who can read classical Swahili literature written in the Arabic script. This means that Africa's oldest literary tradition (going back at least to the seventeenth century) is virtually a closed book to eighty million or so modern Swahili-speakers. There is a similar lacuna in regard to the Hausa and Fulfulde traditions.

We would seek to encourage younger scholars to focus their research on such topics as scholarly networks, both traditional and contemporary, educational systems and the challenge of secularism, Africa and trans-regional Islam, the impact of colonial rule on African Islam and African responses, contemporary reformulations of Islamic thought, and the interface of Islam in Africa and in the African diaspora. These are, of course, only a small sample of the



possible topics within the broader field of the Islamic intellectual tradition in Africa.

## 2. Workshops and Conferences

We propose to organise a series of workshops, to be held in Africa, Europe and the U.S.A. on specific themes. Among such themes would be Islamic education, both traditional and modern (with the collapse of the postcolonial education systems there has been an exponential growth in the Islamic educational sector); Islamic medicine (where the same phenomenon can be seen); local literary and scholarly traditions; judicial systems and the interface between Islamic law and national legal systems, etc.

The workshops would be organised in such a way as to bring together African and non-African researchers, and especially to try and overcome the isolation of younger African researchers in African universities. At the end of the project we would propose holding a major international conference to bring together African and non-African scholars to assess progress in the field and to map out areas of cooperation in research and training for the future.

## 3. Publications

There are several areas in which we believe publication should be promoted. Firstly, there are texts and translations of some of the notable Islamic literature from Africa. This might include biographies of scholars, works of a doctrinal nature (including doctrinal disputes), chronicles of Islamic kingdoms, collections of *fatwas* and other legal documents relevant to the social history of Muslims, etc. Secondly, monographs relating to Muslim communities, Islamic movements, Muslim states etc., as well as bibliographies and research tools. Some of these might be materials originally presented as M.A. or Ph.D. theses, especially at African universities, since much of this material is never able to enter the wider community of scholarship due to depressed economies and small reading publics in their places of origin. Thirdly, papers of conferences held under the auspices of the project. The funding we would seek would be for editorial assistance and the preparation of camera-ready copy. While some products might be then sent to commercial publishers, others could be economically produced



through the existing program of publication associated with *Sudanic Africa*.

#### 4. Arabic Literature of Africa

Hunwick and O'Fahey have embarked upon a joint project in collaboration with a number of other scholars, for the publication of an eight-volume work under the general title *Arabic Literature of Africa*, although it will also contain material on some Islamic literature in African languages. The work is being published by E.J. Brill of Leiden and the first two volumes of the series have already appeared (1994 and 1995). The series is under the joint general editorship of Hunwick and O'Fahey and each of them will be the principal compiler of specific volumes. Albrecht Hofheinz is editorial consultant to the series.

The aim of the series is to produce a guide to the Islamic literature and scholarly production of sub-Saharan Africa written in Arabic and in certain African languages. The general paradigm for the series is the pioneering work of Carl Brockelmann in his *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* (2 vols. & 3 vols. supplement, Leiden, 1937–49) and Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (Leiden, 1967–in progress). However, *Arabic Literature of Africa* is somewhat more ambitious. It goes beyond a mere enumeration of scholars and their writings, and aims to provide an outline intellectual history of Islam in the region, and to relate this to the intellectual history of the larger world of Islam.

Volume I, compiled by R.S. O'Fahey is sub-titled *The Writings of Eastern Sudanic Africa down to c.1900*, and it was prepared with the collaboration of Muhammad Ibrahim Abu Salim, Albrecht Hofheinz, Yahya Muhammad Ibrahim, Berndt Radtke and Knut Vikør. It deals with authors living in the area of the present Republic of the Sudan and their writings, as well as the writings of the Idrisiyya tradition both within the Sudan and outside it (chapter 6), and the Sanusiyya tradition (chapter 7), which belongs wholly outside the Sudan. O'Fahey is now preparing Volume III on Ethiopia, the Horn of Africa and Eastern Africa, and this includes an extensive account of Islamic literature in Swahili. He will also edit volume V, which will cover the Sudan in the twentieth century.

Volume II is subtitled *The Writings of Central Sudanic Africa* (i.e. Nigeria, Chad, Niger,



Cameroun). It was compiled by John Hunwick with the collaboration of Razaq D. Abubakre, Hamidu Bobboyi, Roman Loimeier, Stefan Reichmuth and Muhammad Sani Umar, and consists of fourteen chapters. Within each chapter (except for Chapter 1) writers are grouped according to their family, *tariqa*, or teaching affiliation and also (so far as is possible) chronologically. Hunwick is currently preparing Volume IV on the Arabic writings of scholars in Ghana, Mali, Senegal and Niger, while Volume VI will deal with Mauritania under his editorship. A supplementary volume, to be numbered IIA is planned. This will deal with Fulfulde and Hausa writings of Nigeria and the Cameroon, and will be prepared by Nigerian scholars in collaboration with Hunwick.

While funding is essentially in place for volumes II and IV, the remaining volumes–IIA, V, VI and VII, are as yet without funding. Both Hunwick and O'Fahey are confident the project can be completed within the coming five years if adequate funding is available. They would also like to have the entire work translated into Arabic.

November 4, 1998



## BISHOP COMBONI WRITES TO GIEGLER PASHA IN 1881

H.R.J. Davies

### **Note from the Editor:**

Because of a mistake in layout, part of the article by H.R.J. Davies on Bishop Comboni (*Sudan Studies* Number 22) appeared in the wrong order. Therefore in this issue we have reprinted the article in full, in its corrected form.

It was reported in *Sudan Studies* 19 (1997) that Daniel Comboni had received 'Beatification' from the Roman Catholic Church in 1995 for his Mission work in the Sudan and for his other contributions to the Church. One of his key ideas was that Africa could only be evangelised by Africans. He believed that Africans were quite capable of high intellectual achievement and would in due course become Bishops. Comboni first came to the Sudan in 1857, and was sent to the Holy Cross Mission Station in Dinka country in the Sudd. He was invalided out from here in 1859, and because of the high mortality among missionaries there, this Mission Station was closed down in 1862. Comboni developed his ideas in 1864 in a project he drew up entitled, *Plan for the Regeneration of Africa by means of Africans* (Vantini, 1981: 241). His experience at Holy Cross had convinced him that there was really no other way. Comboni returned to the Sudan, this time to Kordofan, and opened up a Mission Station at El Obeid in 1872. He was made a Bishop in 1877. He was to die of fever and exhaustion in Khartoum on 10 October 1881, aged 50.

Comboni wrote very many letters, mainly to raise funds and recruits for his Mission, but one of the interesting ones that he wrote within the Sudan, near the end of his life, was to Carl Giegler Pasha, Deputy Governor-General of the Sudan. The background to this letter is that in 1879 Comboni had gone to Italy to rally support and returned to Sudan accompanied by several other priests and sisters, including Father Ohrwalder, reaching Khartoum on 28 January 1881. Father Ohrwalder tells us that Bishop Comboni's 50th birthday was celebrated on 15 March 1881 with a party at the Roman Catholic Mission in Khartoum and that all the



notables were there including Giegler (Ohrwalder, 1892: 2). Slatin had been appointed Governor of Darfur by Mohammed Raouf Pasha, Governor-General of the Sudan, and it was decided that Slatin and the Bishop's party should travel together as far as El Obeid. The party left Khartoum on 29 March 1881. Five days later they reached El Obeid. According to Slatin, Bishop Comboni went off almost immediately to visit the Nuba Mountains, whilst Father Ohrwalder stayed in El Obeid (Slatin, 1897: 36). From the letter it would appear that Comboni went to Malbes.

Giegler had written to Bishop Comboni to complain about an article that had appeared in the German *Kölnische Zeitung*, the source for which article was one of Comboni's priest, Don Leon Henriot. The substance of the article was that slave raiding and slave trading were rife in the Nuba Mountains and that in spite of protestations to the contrary the government was doing little, if anything to stop it. Giegler and Governor General Mohammed Raouf [Hoccomdar in the letter] were irritated by such, as they saw it, uninformed criticism – as they believed they were doing their best under very difficult circumstances. Both Slatin and Ohrwalder believed that the control of slave raiding in Kordofan was much more efficiently organised in 1881 than it had been previously, much to the frustration of many merchants in El Obeid!

Bishop Comboni's letter in reply to Giegler is transcribed without alteration:

*VICARIATUS APOSTOLICUS*

*Africae Centralis*

*El Obeid, 5 May 1881*

*My Dear Pacha,*

*I received in Malbes, where I have been for my health, your honorable letter with the Article of the Kölnische Zeitung: Slavensjagd und Slavenhandel in Ägyptischen Sudan, in which I found with my great surprise the name of one of my missionaries of Nuba, Don Leon Henriot. I say with my great surprise, because from the year 1873 I have settled a law to all my missionaries of the Central Afrika, according to which every member of my Society is forbidden to relate and to send reports upon*



*our missions in order to be published in the newspapers; but I ordered to all the members of my missions that they send only to me, or to my general Vicar the relations of every thing that regards our missions. My orders and my law upon this subject have been till now performed always and perfectly executed.*

*I have read and perused the above-mentioned Article, and I have long spoken with the same Don Leon, who was here with me for his health, and I discovered all the truth upon this business; and I make haste to relate with confidence, and communicate openly to your kindness the truly history of this business.*

*Don Leon Henriot in the passed year wrote to Don Luis Superior of Khartum upon the business of the slavery of Nuba, and Don John Losi Superior of Nuba wrote to me in Europe upon the same subject.*

*Don Luis with the letter of Don Leon went to visit the Hoccomdar, and spoke long with him and with Mr. Marcopulos Secretary upon the same subject; and after he wrote to me in Europe that he was very satisfied and very content, because His Excellency promised to give the order to the Mudir of Cordofan to repair and remedy to the disorders of Gebel Nuba. I was very satisfied of this effect, and I have never spoken upon the relations of Don Losi nither in Cairo nor in Khartum. I was even informed that the orders of the Hoccomdar for Nuba have been executed.*

*But Don Leon in the same time that has ritten the paper above-mentioned to D. Luigi in Khartoum, he wrote even another Letter to the Consul Hansal begging of him the favour to addres himself to the Government upon this business to the end that the remedy be taken to the slavery of Nuba. Mr. Hansal answered to Don Leon that he is very glad to satisfy to his desires; and he praid and ordered to him to write always to him in Khartum upon the slavery of Nuba, and he will send his communications to Dr. Schweinfurth (who is the Author of the above-mentioned Article of the *Kölnische Zeitung* etc. etc.) in Cairo, who will speak with the General Consul of England, who will confer about this interest argument with the Khedive etc. etc.*



*In this intervening time D. Leon very satisfied of the answer of Mr. Hansal wrote another letter upon new adventures of the trade of the slaves in Nuba, with the promise to send always to him in future the relations upon this infamous trade. This letter was sent from Nuba in the end of the last February; and I believe that it will arrive in the hands of Dr. Schweinfurth, and perhaps it will be published in the Kölnische Zeitung, with the comments, of the same Dr. Traveler, as he made in the above-published communication.*

*I reproached and reprimanded Don Leon for his disobedience to my orders of 1873, but he was ignorant of my decree, because he came in the Missions only in 1879, as you know: and because he is very good and obbedient, he begged my pardon assuring me that in future he will communicate only to me, and never to the others, the relations of Gebel Nuba, and he will never write to the Consul Hansal upon this argument.*

*Therefore you will be persuaded, my dear Pacha, that the members of the catholic Mission are quite stranger to the publication of the Kölnische Zeitung; and Don Leon Henriot addressed himself not to Cairo, but in Khartum to our ordinary Authority the Austrian Consul in order that he provide by the local Authority the Governement of Sudan that is necessary and sufficient for the Gebel Nuba.*

*But you will be likewise persuaded that the Merchant of Khartoum to whom Don Leon has written from Delen, is the Consul Hansal, and the Letter that arrived from the Heart of the Mountains of Nuba, was sent from Consul Hansal to Dr. Schweinfurth in Cairo, who addressed himself to the English general Consul in Ägypt, and published the Article in the Kölnische Zeitung etc. etc. etc (So ist heute nach monatelanger Reise ein Brief aus dem Herzen der Mubarberge nach Cairo gelangt, den ein dort stationierter Missionar Leon Henriot an einen Chartumer Kaufmann geschrieben hat etc. etc.) [*'So to-day came a letter, after a month-long journey from the Heart of the Nuba Mountains to Cairo, that was written by a missionary Leon Henriot stationed there to a Khartoum merchant, etc., etc.'*]*

*But in the next week I shall go to Gebel Nuba to visite this Station and all those*



*Mountains; and after having examined every thing, I shall write to you a good relation upon the business of the trade of the slaves; and I hope that I shall may assure you for the suppression of the trade of the slaves in Nuba obtained by the strong and rigorous orders of H. Exc. Raouf Pacha; and my Relation you will may communicate to H. Exc. Blum Pacha in Cairo, and it will be published in the Kölnische Zeitung etc. etc. to the end of destroyiing and killing all affirmations of Dr. Schweinfurth.*

*The affirmation of Don Leon are truthful in every thing. But it is also true that the Hoccomdar by his orders to the Mudir of Cordofan has provided to the remedy of this disorder in Gebel Nuba.*

*I have the entire confidence in the Governement of the Khedive, and in the energy of our esteemed General Governor of Sudan, Raouf Pacha; therefore I shall always communicate my relations and observations upon the business of the slavery to the Governement and to the Hoccomdar. That is for me a duty of justice, gratitude and thankfulness; and I am profoundly convinced and persuaded that the Khedive's Governement has the good will and all the power to destroy with the God's help the infamous trade of the slaves, and to contribute powerfully to the civilisation of the Central Africa.*

*I pray your kindness to present my duty to H. Exc. Blum Pacha in Cairo and to Raouf Pacha in Chartum; and I am very glad to be always*

*Your affectioned friend*

*+ Daniel Comboni*

*Bishop and Apostolical Vicar*

*of the Central Africa*

### **Comment upon the letter:**

The letter is that of a sick man, but still full of determination.



Malbes: Part of Bishop Comboni's policy was to run protected agricultural communities of Africans demonstrating Christian virtues. Malbes was one such - located 9 miles south-east of El Obeid.

Delen: The modern Dilling in the northern Nuba Mountains. Ohrwalder says that it took him five days to get there from El Obeid in 1881 (Ohrwalder, 1892: 3). The Mission Station here was run on similar lines to Malbes. Not long before Ohrwalder's arrival at Delen in December 1881, the government had established a small garrison of Sudanese soldiers to counteract slave raiding and to protect the Mission (Ohrwalder, 1892: 4). The garrison was composed of 80 men of the 'slave guard' (Slatin, 1897: 79).

The Governor-General, Mohammed Raouf, whom Bishop Comboni claimed as a friend, seems to have replied to Comboni's letter to Giegler. With reference to the Bishop's forthcoming tour of the Nuba Mountains mentioned in the letter, Mohammed Raouf wrote:

I beg you to examine the country and its administration that we may take the necessary measures for the welfare of those people. The question of slavery should be the object of close study. Being on the spot you will be able to discover the errors committed there and propose the remedy to be applied. You will receive from me the strongest support in the execution of H.H. the Khedive's orders'. (Hill, 1959: 151)

According to Vantini (1981: 243) the Khedive Ismail had given Comboni permission to release all the slaves that he wanted to. Comboni set off for his tour of the Nuba Mountains on 24 June 1881.

Giegler says he left Khartoum for El Obeid on 27 June 1881 to investigate complaints against Mohammed Said [Mudir of Cordofan in the letter], Governor of Kordofan. According to Giegler, Mohammed Raouf had particular personal reasons for not wanting to go himself to reprimand Mohammed Said (Hill, 1984: 165). Giegler does not say what the complaints were against the Governor. Were they about slave trading? Certainly this would have been one of the topics in Giegler's mind, because he had been up the White Nile to Fashoda investigating complaints of slave raiding there earlier in 1881 (Hill, 1984: 161-165). He does not appear to have met Comboni in El Obeid but he did have conversations with Father



Ohrwalder as attested by both parties but neither mentions the topics they discussed.

Some indication of the slave raiding/trading situation on occasion in the Nuba Mountains is given by Father Ohrwalder. He describes a raid made by Baggara tribesmen against Ghulfan in April 1882. Captain Mohammed Suleiman in charge of the garrison at Delen was reluctant to turn out his men to deal with the raiders. Eventually, Roversi, Inspector of Slaves, at Delen, managed to muster 80 men who successfully caught up with the raiders and released the captured slaves (Ohrwalder, 1892: 22).

Slatin discusses the whole question of slaves and argues that life in northern Sudan could not be sustained in its existing form without slavery. The Egyptian government in the Sudan had found that slaves were its only really reliable soldiers. He tells us that Mohammed Raouf had authorised him to do a certain amount of slave taking in order to build up his garrisons in Darfur. Slatin points out that suppression of the slave trade in the Nuba Mountains had a profound impact elsewhere in the country, away from such centres as El Obeid. Those involved with caravans, those living along the Nile in northern Sudan who needed their labour, and on northwards to Egypt: all these folk stood to lose by a cessation of slave raiding (Slatin, 1897: 33 and elsewhere).

That the campaign against the slave trade undertaken by Bishop Comboni and his fellow missionaries was not universally welcomed in the Sudan is demonstrated by Licurgo Santoni who, as Director of Posts, visited the Sudan in 1877. He records some of the criticisms made of the missionaries and includes some observations of his own. He writes in his journal:

*'The missionaries' aim is to draw these Africans to the faith but I do not think they will succeed, at any rate they do not bother themselves much about it. What I do know is that these worthy priests, true disciples of Rome, eat and drink very lavishly'.*

He goes on to report doubts about the chastity of some of the priests and nuns, though he does dissociate himself from this view. Later on he writes of Comboni:

*'This prelate has lately been elevated to the episcopate, but his 'civilising mission' (as the newspapers put it): leaves much to be desired. Perhaps he himself has the*



*resolve and capacity to do his duty but his priests certainly do not support him as they care for nothing except eating and courting the devout ladies who come to pray and confess'.*

### **Some individuals referred to in the letter:**

#### Missionaries:

Don Leon Henriot: Unlike many of the missionaries at El Obeid and Delen, he avoided capture when El Obeid fell to the Mahdists in 1882. In November 1885 he opened a Mission Station at Suakin and in 1891 a shortlived one at Tokar (Toniolo and Hill, 1974: 28).

Don John Losi was captured by the Mahdist forces at Delen and taken by them to El Obeid where he died of dysentery during the siege (Toniolo and Hill, 1974: 27).

Don Luis [of paras. 3 and 4 of the letter] seems to be Don Luigi Bonomi

who was in charge of the Mission in Khartoum until Comboni arrived in 1881. He was captured, along with Ohrwalder, at Delen and taken to El Obeid. Ohrwalder tells us how intensely disappointed he was when the message reached Bonomi in El Obeid that arrangements had been made for his escape, but not for Ohrwalder. Ohrwalder was to find out, after his escape from Omdurman, that the rescuers had no idea that Ohrwalder was in El Obeid. Santoni who wrote in not altogether flattering terms about the missionaries redeemed himself in arranging Bonomi's escape (Ohrwalder, 1892: 178-193).

#### Government Officials:

Carl Christian Giegler first came to the Sudan in 1873 in charge of the telegraph system. He was responsible, under Gordon, for the substantial development of this and the postal service. Later, he was appointed Deputy Governor General of the Sudan. He says he was not appointed Governor General because the Khedive Ismail had decided that he wanted to appoint an Egyptian. In 1881 he was created a Pasha. He left the Sudan finally in 1883 (Hill, 1984: 151).

Marcopulos [Marcopoli Bey], a Greek, was Private Secretary to the Governor General. He



had taken part in expeditions to the southern Sudan. Giegler had reservations about him (Hill, 1984: 46).

Mohammed Raouf was appointed Governor General of the Sudan in March 1880, and was the first native Egyptian to hold the position. He was relieved of his post in February 1882 when the system of Egyptian rule of the Sudan was re-organised.

Mohammed Said [Mudir of Cordofan] Governor of Kordofan had served for many years in western Sudan. Giegler considered him to be rather too easy going and certainly he seems to have made some serious errors. He eventually surrendered El Obeid to the Mahdi after a spirited defence. He pretended to the Mahdi that he had no wealth, but the Mahdi found a fortune belonging to him sealed in a wall of his house in El Obeid. Later, he was executed in El Obeid (Slatin, 1897: 84).

Blum Pasha, an Austrian, was Financial Secretary in Egypt. The Austrians seem to have looked after the 'diplomatic' affairs of the Comboni Mission. Slatin (1897: 1) describes it as the 'Austrian Roman Catholic Mission'.

#### Others:

Hansal [Martin Ludwig] was the Austrian Vice-Consul in Khartoum. He was organist at the Catholic church there. He wrote to the Mahdi in an unsuccessful attempt to ransom the Christian priests and nuns. He was murdered when the Mahdist forces captured Khartoum.

Dr. Schweinfurth [Georg] had visited the Sudan earlier in the century, and an account of his travels had been published in English in 1873.



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## **Fundraising Evening in the British Residence Garden on 25 May 1998 Lillian Craig Harris**

### **Befrienders Khartoum**

Started in March 1997, the Befrienders are an officially registered Sudanese charity with membership in Befrienders International. The Khartoum Two centre, staffed by volunteers and now open four hours daily (except on Friday), provides free, confidential "listening therapy" to those who are emotionally distressed or in despair. Demands on the service continue to grow and now total over 50 callers contacts a month. We expect that when we are able to begin befriending by telephone, the number of callers will increase dramatically. Funds are needed to pay operating costs for this valuable community service and, hopefully, during the coming year to move into a larger centre and to purchase telephone lines.

### **Teaching the Powerless in Sudan. May 1998**

When Nuba women, among the most marginalised Sudanese, are offered their first opportunity to learn to read, they don't hang about! At Salama South, an area for displaced persons on the outskirts of Khartoum, Nuba women couldn't wait when they heard that funds were available for a literacy teacher. Ignoring a request to begin new classes in July, the women set up two classes in April despite heat of near 50 degrees centigrade.

The same thing has happened in New Halfa in the far eastern part of Sudan and elsewhere. There are now 11 literacy classes in summer recess, eight ongoing classes and other scheduled to begin in July. More than 600 women are presently attending literacy classes or impatiently waiting to get back to work. Around 250 of these women have completed half of an 18 month course after which they will be given certificates which confer on them the coveted title "literate".

What makes diligent scholars out of women forced out of the Nuba Mountains by war or born in shanty towns to displaced parents? Mainly their desire to built a better life for themselves and their children. Many displaced Nuba women hope that through education they can escape from "brewing", often the only way they have to earn a living but an occupation which frequently results in beating, imprisonment and other abuse.

A recent random sample study of 50 Nuba women in two settlements near Khartoum showed



that 39 of them had been arrested and many had spent weeks in prison. More than half of the 50 women had lost children through death, flight or mishap and 13 of the 50 had lost three or more children. The foremost reason for loss of children was listed as hunger, followed by illness and "looting" by armed persons.

The Bishop Mubarak Fund was set up in late 1996 to offer assistance to basic, secondary and university education for Nuba women and girls inside the Sudan. Although organised in honour of the late Bishop Kurkiel Mubarak Khamis of El Obeid Diocese, The Fund provides, in accordance with the Nuba tradition of tolerance, an opportunity for Christians and Muslims to work together in social service. Sudanese of both faiths have contributed to The Fund and three of the first five young women sponsored for university are Muslims. We hope to send at least 15 girls to university in this second year of service.

Our work is expanding rapidly thanks to fundraising efforts by Bishop David and Mary Smith and to generous and sometimes sacrificial contributions from the U.K. and the United States. Educational assistance is a very efficient way to help – and to honour – women who long to save themselves and their children and are willing, even in middle life, to spend several hours a week in school. Often the first lesson is how to hold a pencil in a hand hardened by years of manual labour.

### **Facts about The Bishop Mubarak Scholarship Fund for Nuba Women**

- \* Set up in late 1996 to honour the memory of an Episcopal Bishop from the Nuba Mountains.
- \* The purpose of the Fund is to raise the level of education among women from the Nuba Mountains, probably the most under educated women in Sudan.
- \* Beneficiaries of The Fund may be Christians, Muslims or followers of any other religion.
- \* The Fund is supported by small donations from friends in the U.K. and by both Muslims and Christians in Sudan. It is directed by Dr. Lillian Craig Harris and supervised by Sudanese and British committee members.
- \* Despite limited funds, during the first year The Bishop Mubarak Fund:
  - sent five young women to Ahfad University



- provided scholarships for 15 girls in primary and secondary schools in Khartoum, Dilling and El Obeid;
- set up literacy classes, attended by over 300 women.

At present there are nine literacy classes meeting in Dilling, El Obeid and the Khartoum area (Omdurman, Um Bedda and Soba Aradi).

- \* During our second year of operation, we hope to triple the number of scholarships we provide for women in university, secondary and basic school and to set up literacy classes (Arabic and arithmetic) for women in Jebel Aulia, Gedaref, Port Sudan and Renk.

EDUCATION IS NOT A LUXURY: IT IS A HUMAN RIGHT. Even an elementary education can empower a woman to retrieve her dignity and respond positively to her opportunities. With simple reading and maths skills women and girls are able not only to protect themselves in the market, but to feel empowered to try to find work, motivated to send their children to school and encouraged to continue to hope for the future.

Lillian Craig Harris, Khartoum

Facilitator to The Bishop Mubarak Fund

### **The English Language Foundation**

Established in late 1996, the ELF is now registered as a non-profit-making company to promote the teaching and use of the English language in Sudan. ELF's Board of Directors is comprised of distinguished Sudanese and expatriate academics and educationalists. This past year's achievements include sponsorship of English-speaking volunteers to teach in Sudan for several weeks, classes in special English, and operation of a mobile library which now has 20 "stops". Funds are needed to expand projects, to employ a Project Manager and to pay rent for a centre into which we hope soon to move.



### **The Women's Action Group for Peace and Development**

During the past two years the WAG has attracted international attention for its unique method of promoting national reconciliations through dialogue between Sudanese women from different regions, tribes and religions. Important activities have included major workshops on conflict resolution and women and violence, circulation of “packages” of information on WAG meetings, and outreach dialogue efforts to displaced women. WAG has applied to become an officially registered NGO and has just moved into “a home of our own” on Catarina Street in Khartoum Two. Funds are urgently needed to continue WAG outreach and training programmes and to set up the new centre, including establishment of a women's library.

Lillian Craig Harris, Khartoum

Facilitator to The Bishop Mubarak Fund



### **STOP PRESS:**

As this issue was going to the printers we received the following communication relating to the charities listed above.

#### **Together for Peace and Together for Sudan**

TOGETHER FOR PEACE office opened in Khartoum in late 1998 under the auspices of The Women's Action Group for Peace and Development to coordinate the charities started by Dr. Lillian Craig Harris. Together for Peace is dedicated to promotion of civil society, local leadership and initiative, volunteerism and the empowerment of women. Under the management of Ms. Sarra Akrat and with the continued direction of Dr. Harris, Together for Peace facilitates funding, supplies, management and volunteer action in support of:

**The Women's Action Group for Peace** and Development began in 1996 to promote peace and reconciliation between Sudanese women of different regions and religions. Committed to non-violent social change, WAG promotes contact between northern and displaced women and opportunities for social service which include a mobile children's library and the Together for Peace office. The WAG women's centre, which opened in Khartoum in June 1998, offers workshops, lectures and social events as well as a tea shop, a women's library and a Second Chance clothing shop. WAG has achieved international recognition for its unique "listening to loss" dialogue which brings together Muslim and Christian women in discovery of common sisterhood. It is a registered Sudanese charity.

**Befrienders Khartoum**, a member branch of Befrienders International, uses carefully selected and trained volunteers to provide free and confidential "listening therapy" to the despairing and suicidal. Patterned on the methods pioneered by the Samaritans UK, befriending is a vital community service which, by providing psychological support, assists those at risk to hold on to life. Befrienders Khartoum was registered as a Sudanese charity in 1997 and is supported by an Executive Committee of Sudanese citizens headed by a prominent doctor. It receives approximately 100 visits per month at its drop-in centre in Khartoum Two. The Befrienders hope to move soon to a new centre where the availability of telephone lines should greatly increase demands on the service.



**The Bishop Mubarak Scholarship Fund for Nuba Women** began in 1996 as an effort to raise the level of a group of women who are among the most disadvantaged and undereducated in Sudan. At the end of its second year of service, it was providing 21 scholarships to Sudanese universities; 47 basic and secondary school scholarships and 28 women's literacy classes enrolling nearly 900 women in towns as far apart as Port Sudan and Dilling in the Nuba Mountains. Planning is underway to open a basic school for displaced Nuba children in the eastern city of Gedaref. Inspired by the Nuba spirit of tolerance, the BMF has caught the imagination of Muslims and Christians as a vehicle through which to work for national reconciliation as well as the advancement of women.

The BMF is being registered as a British charity and is directed by Lillian Craig Harris with the support of Sudanese and British committees. Among its patrons are the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lady Greenbury, Oona King MP, American publisher Lynne Rienner, Dr. Gasim Badri, President of Ahfad University for Women in Omdurman and Ian Mackie, former agriculturalist in the Nuba Mountains. BMF trustees are Ms. Heather Barker, Mr. Alan F. Goultly CMG, Dr. Lillian Craig Harris, Rear Admiral Robin Musson CB (rtd), and Mrs. Mary Smith JP.

**The English Language Foundation** began in late 1996 as "The English Language Rescue Project". ELF is dedicated to the promotion, teaching and use of the English language and operates as a Sudan-registered non-profit company under the direction of a distinguished board of Sudanese and expatriate academics and educationalists. Early projects included a 30-stop mobile children's library and teaching English for special purposes. An ELF centre opened in Khartoum in early 1999 under the direction of a British Projects Director, Ms. Hilda Reilly.

**Other small projects coordinated or planned by Together for Peace** include the **Friends of Soad** which provides medical assistance to the poorest of the poor, **The Solar Project** which grants solar panels to schools and centres off the electricity grid and **The Women's Income Generation Project** which will work to help displaced and other marginalised women find safe means of supporting themselves and their children.

This edition of *Sudan Studies* was originally distributed in hard copy to members of the Sudan Studies Society of the United Kingdom. SSSUK now makes it freely available subject to licence and cordially invites readers to join the Society (see [www.sssuk.org](http://www.sssuk.org)).

SUDAN STUDIES: Number 23 (March 1999)

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**TOGETHER FOR SUDAN** was started in London in early 1999 to facilitate the efforts of the Together for Peace office in Khartoum through fundraising, fiscal management and expert and material supply. It has applied for registration as a British charity and is supported by volunteers in Britain and the United States. Trustees are Dr. Jacqueline Davis, Ms. Dina Gillespie, Mr. Alan F. Goulty CMG, Mr. Anis Haggar, Dr. Lillian Craig Harris and Mr. Julian Lush. Dr. Harris coordinates the work of Together for Sudan and the Together for Peace office in Khartoum.

If you wish to offer assistance or to receive periodic information, please write to:

D. Gillespie  
Together for Sudan  
45 Paramount Court, 41 University Street  
London WC1E 6JP.



## THE NILE IN DARKNESS

By John O. Udal

Michael Russell, £55.

Academics concerned with African or Islamic studies will fall on this book like gannets. But the easy narrative makes three centuries of history accessible to everyone.

John Udal followed his father into the Sudan Political Service and brings much sympathy to his subject. This first (subtitled 'Conquest and Exploration 1504-1862') of a proposed two-volume work illuminates the 'darkness' over the equatorial African lakelands and western Ethiopia—always an area of rivalry and intrigue.

The Jesuits and Franciscans studied the 16th-century chronicles of the 'adventurer and imposter' David Reubeni before setting out in jealous contention to explore the region 200 years later. Others penetrated the heartland of Sennar, Darfur, Kordofan and the uncharted southlands of the Shilluk, Dinka and the Nuer. The natives were friendly but the fever-carrying insects of 'the Sudd' inflicted a heavy toll on men, horses and camels. Arab attempts to govern the Sudan finally settled for merely extracting taxes and slaves. The Ottoman conquest of 1820-21 imposed stability of a kind until the 1840s, when the British and French began their courteous but bitter dispute for control.

The final section deals with the discovery of the source of the Nile. The heroic efforts of Burton and Speke and their fateful dispute are described in detail, as are the shenanigans of those anxious to gain fame or reward by catching onto their coat-tails.

This is history with all the excitement and drama of the moment. The illustrations are evocative of the Victorian period, the sketch maps good and the layout excellent. Try to look beyond the daunting, but fair, price. Anyway, unless you discipline yourself to complete comprehension of each phase of history, exploration and cat's-cradle of intrigue as you go along, you will want to read it at least twice.

Michael Tillotson

This article is taken from **COUNTRY LIFE** issue 68, January 28 1999.



# SUDAN STUDIES SOCIETY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

## MINUTES OF THE 12<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 26 SEPTEMBER 1998

Professor Woodward called the meeting to order at 12:05 and welcomed members to the 12th Annual General Meeting of the Sudan Studies Society of the United Kingdom.

### 1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr. J.N. Lawrence, Mr. John Udal, Mr. Simon Bush and Dr. David Lindley (Treasurer).

### 2. Minutes of the AGM of 27 September 1997

The minutes of the 11th Annual General Meeting of 27 September 1997 were read. There being no corrections the Chairman signed a copy as a true record of the 1997 AGM.

### 3. Matters Arising from the AGM of 27 September 1997

Professor Woodward enquired about the Anglo-Sudanese Association. No members present could offer any information on its revival.

### 4. Chairman's report

The Executive Committee had met twice since the 1997 AGM. A major development for the Society had been the convening of a joint meeting with the Campus Scholarship Unit of World University Service on 18 April, in Manchester. Professor Woodward voiced his thanks to Dr. Anisa Dani for making the arrangements locally for what was a very successful meeting.

The Chair sought guidance from members on a suggestion by the Sudan Studies Association of America that the International SSA Conference cycle be moved from three to five years. Mr. Adrian Thomas suggested momentum would be lost if the gap between international meetings were so long. This view was supported by Miss Lesley Forbes. The AGM voted in favour of maintaining the three year cycle with the option of four years as a possible



compromise.

The venue of the 2000 International conference had not been decided though Bergen had been suggested.

## 5. Secretary's report

On the retirement of the Membership Secretary, Alan Kunna, in January, the Secretary had taken over this function. A vote of thanks to Alan Kunna was made for his work for the Society on the committee over recent years.

Between the 1997 and 1998 AGMs membership increased from 119 to 150. Some 27 members who had not paid their 1998 subscriptions would receive a reminder with the following issue (no. 22) of *Sudan Studies*. As agreed at the 1997 AGM members who had not paid subscriptions since 1996, some 14, had been deleted from the active list of members. The Secretary was given authority by the meeting to delete those 1997 and 1998 non-payers who did not respond to the final reminder.

Some 44 members and non-members participated in the April 18<sup>th</sup> meeting in Manchester. Talks were given on psychological stresses for Sudanese living in Britain; a current affairs update; the situation of Sudanese women refugees in East Africa; the situation of Juba Hospital; and WUS (UK)'s Campus Scholarship Scheme which enables a number of Sudanese to follow post-graduate courses in the UK.

The venue for the 1998 AGM had been chosen again as it had been generally well received the previous year. However, the Secretary reported that the venue and tied catering service were quite costly and the Society usually made a loss on the meeting in spite of the substantial fee charged to participating members. He would endeavour to secure either the Institute for African Alternatives, Friends House or the Africa Centre for the 1999 meeting. A cheaper venue and catering service is felt to be important as the £14 charged to participants is likely to be a disincentive to unwaged Sudanists. Professor Richard Gray offered to see whether SOAS could accommodate the meeting in future.



## 6. Treasurer's report

Membership dues increased from £622 (1996) to £1445 (1997).

The 1997 year end balances were down somewhat on expectations because: £900 was spent by the Society in supporting three Sudanese researchers in the UK to attend the Cairo Conference; two larger than average issues of *Sudan Studies* had been published and printed in 1997 (19 and 20); committee travel expenses had included the former Treasurer's claims back to 1995; and some outstanding claims for postage expenses back to 1996 had been met.

The Treasurer had arranged for the accounts to be audited by a retired accountant who had not charged a fee.

The Society's bank balances as of the 14<sup>th</sup> September 1998 stood at £2,336.94 (Current a/c £1,101.93. Deposit a/c £1,235.01).

## 7. Editor's report

The Editor reported that two issues of *Sudan Studies* had appeared since the 1997 AGM (20 & 21) and no. 22 would be printed by the end of October. Although he was not on this occasion short of material he reminded all present that *Sudan Studies* relies on contributions from members and any material would be welcomed.

Thanks were due to Dr. Lindley and Miss Forbes for an index of articles in the first 20 issues that would appear in issue 22.

In response to a query from Mr. Wolton, the Editor confirmed that two issues a year was the target and this had been achieved except in one year. Catching up with the target depends entirely on availability of sufficient material.

## 8. Elections & Co-options to the Committee

Professor Woodward informed the meeting that the committee had at its most recent meeting in January confirmed, with her agreement, Dr. Anisa Dani, as the Society's Vice-Chair.

Miss Imogen Thurbon and Mr. Alan Kunna had resigned from the committee during the year.



The Secretary had invited nominations for replacement members and up to two places that remained vacant that could be filled by election or co-option.

Dr. John Alexander and Prof. Richard Gray nominated by Mr. John Udal and seconded by Professor Sanderson and Sid Ahmed respectively were elected. Ms. Aleia Elagib Mahmoud, nominated by Mr. Richard Brook and seconded by Mr. Mansour El Agab was also elected. Professor Woodward welcomed the new members of the committee.

#### **9. A.O.B.**

Dr. Lindley had reported that he was still working on the planned web site for the Society. Dr. Rosemary Squires suggested a link with the Institute of Development Studies 21 project for material. Miss Forbes cautioned that the amount of work involved in developing and maintaining a web site should not be under estimated and that a poorly maintained web site would be a poor advertisement for the Society.

There being no further business Professor Woodward thanked members for their participation and closed the meeting at 12:35.



## ACCOUNTS 1998

### SUDAN STUDIES SOCIETY OF THE UK

<b>INCOME</b>	1998	1997
	£	£
Membership dues 1998	1038.00	1051.00
Back Membership dues	16.00	195.00
Future Membership dues	89.00	199.00
Sale of Publications	32.00	37.17
Interest on Bank accounts	26.07	37.89
1997 AGM/Symposium	-	402.00
1998 AGM/Symposium	588.00	-
1998 Manchester meeting	192.45	
Deficit for year		828.72
	<b>1981.52</b>	<b>2750.78</b>

I have examined the accounting records kept in relation to the above period and certify that this income, expenditure and assets statement is in accordance with them

.....  
E.J.M. Inglis, F.C.C.A.



Accounts 1 January - 31 December 1998

<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	1998	1997
	£	£
Printing	368.37	534.93
Secretarial Expenses	465.16	281.31
Committee Travel	240.79	512.30
Bank charges	-	2.50
1997 AGM/Symposium	-	519.74
1998 AGM/Symposium	619.99	
1998 Manchester meeting	270.00	
Surplus for year	17.21	
Assistance for 97 Cairo Conf.	-	900.00
	<b>1981.52</b>	<b>2750.78</b>
<b>Assets</b>		
Bank balance on 1.1.98	1944.91	2773.63
Bank balance on 30.12.98	1963.11	1944.91

D.K. Lindley  
Hon. Treasurer  
14-Jan-99



**Philip Winter, Box 47796, Nairobi, Kenya**

**10<sup>th</sup> January 1999**

Dear Sir,

**An Ascent of Mt Naita**

I write to enquire if any reader is aware of any previous ascent of this mountain. It is 7,000 high and lies on the Sudan-Ethiopia border, north west of the border post of Kibish, at the far eastern border of Eastern Equatoria (Sudan Survey Sheet no. 78L).

I climbed it with two friends from the Mountain Club of Kenya on the 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1998. There was no evidence of any previous ascent and the local people, the Nyangatom, who helped us to reach the summit, said they had not been there because of the thick thorn and bush on the last, steep 700ft.

We have written to the Italian Alpine Club to find out if Italian soldiers climbed it during their occupation from 1936-41. Two former officers of the Sudan Defence Force whom I consulted a few years ago had no recollection of any ascent.

We would be interested to hear if any of your readers are aware of previous ascents.

Yours sincerely,  
P. E. Winter



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Views expressed in notes, articles and reviews published in **Sudan Studies** are not those necessarily held by the Sudan Studies Society – UK, or the Editor. They are published to promote discussion and further scholarship in Sudanist studies.

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### Notes for Contributors

The Sudan Studies Society welcomes notes and articles of any length. The normal maximum is 5,000 words including footnotes (longer articles can be accommodated usually in more than one issue). Ideally, articles should be typed in double spacing on A4 paper in Times 14pt.

Manuscripts are not normally returned to authors though original material such as photographs will be returned. The Society retains the right to edit articles for reasons of space and editorial consistency only, e.g. UK spelling. **Sudan Studies** aims to follow the editorial style of African Affairs, Journal of the Royal African Society.

It is helpful to have, very briefly (2-3 lines), any relevant details about the author - post held, time recently spent in Sudan, etc. and the history of the article or paper submitted, e.g. if prepared for presentation at a conference or seminar, please give the date, location and title of the meeting.

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<sup>3</sup> Single issues and available back numbers can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary at the rate of £8 per copy.