



SUDAN STUDIES

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CONTENTS

SOCIETY NEWS (5) - by A Trilsbach	2
AGM MINUTES (1) - 1987	3
AGM MINUTES (2) – 1988	6
The SSSUK Constitution	9
NEW RESEARCH (4) Rural Small Industries and Crafts - by D Hansohm	11
CONFERENCE REPORT (3) The Zar Workshop - by A Hofheinz	12
The Tumbura Cult of the Sudan - by G Makris	14
Christianity in Sudan. A personal View - by E Charnley	15
Building for Life - by N MacNaughton	17
LETTER FROM AMERICA (2)	17
A Walk in Jebel Marra (Part 3) - by D Else	18
CAN YOU HELP' (5)	19
RESEARCH PROFILE (4) Ecological Studies in Cumbria - by D Lindley	20
EXHIBITION REPORT (1) Sudan Art Aid - by S Karim	21
FEATURE (7) Halting the Desert Advance: Use the Sun - by J Wright	22
ENVIRONMENT UPDATE (2) The Rain and Flood Disaster - by O M Ali	24
CURRENT AFFAIRS IN SUDAN (4) - by C Gurdon	27
FEATURE (8) Did the Kushites Flee to the West? - by P Shinnie	31
Voices from the Sudanese Past - by L Kapteijns	33
BOOK REVIEW (9) National Integration and Integrity - by J Adelberger	34
BOOK REVIEW (10) Ecology of Survival - by A Trilsbach	35
RECENT PUBLICATIONS (5)	36
Sudan Wars Study Group - by D Johnson	40
TAIL-PIECE (4) - by F W Blake	40

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SOCIETY NEWS

By Tony Trilsbach, Secretary of SSSUK and Editor of SUDAN STUDIES.

This is the first newsletter of the Society's second year. This raises two points. Firstly, many members have not yet renewed their subscriptions. If you are one you should have received a reminder with this issue, in which case can I urge you to return the form with payment urgently. The Society operates on a shoestring budget and we estimate that we have about £1000 outstanding on unrenewed subscriptions. The second point is that the SSSUK committee agreed to combine the Summer and Autumn editions of the newsletter into a single December issue. This is not necessarily a precedent, but it reduces postage and was a necessary consequence of me spending much of the Summer on my own fieldwork in Sudan. Consequently I was unable to publish much sooner, especially as the visit threw up a number of 'interesting' diversions in the way of floods and heavy rainfalls.

Since the last newsletter, the main SSSUK event has been the September AGM and One Day Symposium. May I thank the 100 plus who turned up. Those who were present I'm sure enjoyed a fascinating day of talks, discussions and practical demonstrations. We were a little uncertain of how many would attend, due to the postal strike, but we guessed about right and the Sudan Cultural Centre and Embassy once again did us proud with the refreshments, which conformed with traditional Sudanese hospitality.

On a different note, I'm getting low on articles for the April edition of SUDAN STUDIES. Please send in anything you may think suitable as soon as possible please. I'm also keen to have suggestions for new themes which could be considered. Limited illustrations are acceptable, but please correspond with me first if necessary. I'm also keen to receive items of news about conferences, visitors, recent publications and the like.

I end this short editorial by thanking everyone who has contributed to this volume. One advantage in the delay has been the ability to include information on the floods. I myself was able to witness many of the devastated areas in Central Sudan and was delighted on my return to discover that the Chairman and Treasurer had authorised a donation of £100 from the Society's funds for the Appeal. The committee hopes that this meets with general approval from all our members.

All correspondence for SSSUK and contributions to Sudan Studies should be sent to me at the following address: Dr A Trilsbach (Secretary and Editor), Sudan Studies Society of the United Kingdom, c/o Department of Geography, University of Durham, Science Laboratories, South Road, DURHAM CITY, DH1 3LE, UK. I can be contacted by telephone on (091) 374-2471 [Work] or (0911) 373-1743 [home].



SUDAN STUDIES SOCIETY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

MINUTES OF THE FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Venue

Sudan Cultural Centre - 31/2 Rutland Gate, London, SW7 1PG

Date

Saturday 26th September 1987, 12.15—13.00

Introduction

The meeting was chaired by the Chairman of the Steering Committee, Professor G N Sanderson.

Report of the Secretary and Editor- Dr A Triltsch

The membership was announced to be 275, 19 of whom had joined on the morning of the symposium/AGM. Most of the subsequent report was concerned with the newsletter *Sudan Studies*.

Sudan Studies

The Secretary/Editor commented about the lack of feedback on the newsletter, both in terms of contents and presentation. This was assumed to reflect a general satisfaction in the general layout and the material contained within, although informal comments were invited during the remainder of the day (none were subsequently forthcoming). Volunteers were called for non-historical articles and for writing book reviews. The Secretary/Editor also reported a number of successful negotiations with publishers for the provision of discount copies of Sudanese related books. General approval was received for the principle of discounts on books in exchange for 'free' advertisements, rather than an outright advertisement fee. Members were also informed of some SSSUK owned publications which had been donated from individuals and organisations and were available for consultation. These included copies of the SSA newsletter and a geological bibliography.

Before concluding, the Secretary/Editor announced a Sudan Studies conference to be held in Khartoum between 5-8 January 1988, organised jointly by the SSA and the Institute of African Asian Studies. Members of SSSUK were invited to consider participating, although the amount of available funding was unclear.

The report was adopted.

Report of the Treasurer - Miss L E Forbes

The Treasurer reported that SSSUK had more than £1000 in the bank at the time of the symposium, but that a large amount of this sum was earmarked for future newsletters and publications. The initial £500 grant from the Gordon Memorial College Trust Fund had been spent on producing and posting nearly 1200 copies of the first edition of *Sudan Studies* plus the funding of an initial meeting of the steering group. At the time of the AGM SSSUK had



23 institutional members who paid subscriptions at the 'higher' rate. It was also announced that an extra £30 had been received from extra donations and the sale of publications. The Treasurer also commented that no accounts could be effectively produced as the Society was only part way through the financial year. It was further added that the conclusion of the financial year would be an appropriate time to consider the Society's finances and budgets.

The report concluded by mentioning a dispute concerning the Society's status with the Charity Commissioners. It was added that this should be raised at the next meeting of the SSSUK committee.

The report was adopted.

Constitution

Some copies of the constitution were available for consultation. Most of the constitution was accepted without dispute, but there was some discussion about the appropriateness of having an Honorary President and also the details of 'terms of office' for committee members.

With respect to an Honorary President, the Chairman commented that it was the view of the steering group that it would be desirable to have a distinguished 'head'. After some debate the idea was accepted and it was agreed that the position would be filled for three years with a subsequent review. The Chairman proposed Sir Gawain Bell and this met with general approval. Sir Gawain Bell was present and thanked the members for their support and accepted the post willingly.

More lengthy discussion related to the length of office for committee members. Various ideas included the possibility of perpetual renewal, renewal after 'standing down' for a period of one year, and after an initial three years one third of the committee 'standing down' every year, principally to facilitate some continuity of committee membership. After some time it was agreed that the new elected committee would discuss the various options and place detailed proposals before the members at the 1988 AGM.

The constitution was then adopted with the above proviso.

Election of officers and other committee members

It was announced that there was the exact number of nominations for committee for the posts available, and that consequently there was no need for a ballot. The committee was then formally announced as follows.

Professor G. N. Sanderson	Chairman
Dr P Woodward	Deputy Chairman
Dr A Triltsbach	Secretary
Miss L E Forbes	Treasurer
Mr R Hodgkin	
Dr D Lindley	
Dr G Wickens	



Mr S Bush

Mr J Wright

Mr P Wilson

Dr Sayyid Ahmad el-Bushra Ex Officio. The Sudan Cultural Counsellor

It was further announced that Dr Trilsbach would remain Editor of *Sudan Studies* and that Miss H Wood had agreed to be appointed as Editorial Assistant.

Proposals for Honorary Sudanese and Overseas Corresponding Members

The Chairman asked for comments on the proposal that there should be a number of Honorary Sudanese and Overseas Corresponding members. The main role of such members would be to receive documents and publications of SSSUK, to promote it and, where appropriate, to keep the Society informed of relevant developments on Sudanese studies in their place of residence. The idea was accepted although there was some discussion concerning the list of names proposed.

There was no objection to the list of Sudanese members, but it was felt that there should be some representation from the South. After some discussion Francis Deng and Bona Malwal were added to the list which finally read:

Sayyid Ahmad el-Bushra

Hassan Ahmad Ibrahim

Muddathir Abd al-Rahim

Sayyid Muhammad Ibrahim Ahmad Abu Salim

Muhammed Omer Beshir

Sayyid Hurreiz

Yusuf Bedri

Yusuf Fadi Hassan

Francis Deng

Bona Malwal

The list of other overseas corresponding members generated some discussion. Following a vote the agreed list was:

R O Collins

M W Daly

A Kronenberg

R S O'Fahey

Al-Sayyid 'Ali Felafil

P L Shinnie

J Tubiana

G Warburg

K Wohlmuth



Other business

There were few extra comments. One proposal put forward however was that the Society should produce some car stickers with the motto 'I Love Sudan', with the word love being replaced by a heart. This was received in a light-hearted manner, but subsequent comments to the Secretary suggested that there might be a 'market' for such stickers amongst SSSUK members. (It was subsequently discovered that such stickers already exist and so no further action was taken).

The meeting ended at 1.00 pm.

SUDAN STUDIES SOCIETY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM MINUTES OF THE SECOND ANNUAL GENERPA MEETING

Venue

Sudan Cultural Centre - 31/2 Rutland Gate, London, SW7 1PG.

Date

Saturday 24th September 1988, 12.15-13.00

Introduction

The Chairman of SSSUK, Professor G N Sanderson, opened the proceedings with a formal welcome to participants.

Report of the Secretary and Editor - Dr A Trilsbach

The Secretary apologised to those in attendance for any possible discomfort, and commented that a post strike had made it difficult to judge the number of members likely to attend.

The Secretary went on to outline discussions held with the Sudan Studies Association and the Institute of African and Asian Studies in Khartoum in January. The details were identical to those outlined in the minutes for the committee meeting held on 18th April 1988. He also added that the questionnaire replies were now arriving regularly and that there had been a good response from members of the SSA. He also commented that the SSA had just completed a review of SSSUK's first Occasional Paper (by Richard Hill) and that this had generated a number of additional sales. The Secretary also gave advanced warning to members of the likelihood of a large international Sudan Studies Conference which was planned for Easter 1991 at Durham.

The Secretary made his apologies for a delay in the publication of *Sudan Studies* and explained that he was in Sudan for two months during the Summer and had not yet been able to catch up with the work involved. He promised to distribute number 5 during the Autumn.



He thanked members of the Society for their willingness to contribute to the newsletter and made a request that this should continue.

He concluded his report by stating that the Society had over 350 members, but that many had not renewed yet. This point was taken up by the Treasurer a few minutes later.

The report was adopted.

Report of the Treasurer - Miss L E Forbes

The Treasurer had distributed the accounts before the meeting and made some brief comments on them. She reminded members that the financing of SSSUK was based on an assumed membership of 250 and that this number had not yet renewed subscriptions. She made a plea for members who had not yet done this to do so immediately. She also added that the possibility of long-term membership and payments by covenant would be discussed at a future meeting of the committee. She also commented that the figures were interim and that the recent establishment of the Society made it difficult to see regular expenditure patterns. It was announced that the Society's financial year will run from June to June.

Miss Forbes also commented that the Society had donated £100 to the Sudan Emergency Appeal associated with the Khartoum floods of August 1988.

The Treasurer then announced that the main problems associated with the Charities Commission had been resolved by amendments to the Constitution and that Charitable Status for SSSUK was now expected to be a formality.

The report was adopted.

Adoption of the Revised Constitution

The committee had agreed to report to its members on two matters following the 1987 AGM. The first point, concerning an amendment of the Society's 'object', had already been discussed by Miss Forbes with respect to changes necessary for an approval of charitable status. The second point concerned the regulations for re-election of committee members and associated terms of office. The Committee had circulated some copies of the revised Constitution beforehand, and this was approved with one amendment. The original revised statement (Section 4) read,

“They shall be elected for an initial term of three years after which one third of the committee shall resign in each of the next three years and be ineligible for re-election.”

The amendment inserted the word 'immediate' before 're-election'. The adopted revision now read,

“They shall be elected for an initial term of three years after which one third of the committee shall resign in each of the next three years and be ineligible for immediate re-election.”

With these amendments completed, the revised Constitution was adopted.



Proposals for Honorary and Corresponding Members

Professor Sanderson commented that two respected persons in Sudanese Studies had not been invited originally to become Honorary or Corresponding members. He proposed Professor Abdullah El-Tayeb for the position of Honorary member and Professor H Törnebohm (Sweden) for the position of Corresponding member. He gave a brief outline of the contributions of both men to Sudanese Studies after which both proposals were formally seconded and approved unanimously by those present.

Other business

Three items were discussed as 'other business'.

The first concerned Sudan Notes and Records. A request was made for SSSUK to investigate the possibility of obtaining back issues and, if necessary, consider seeking funds for a number of reprints. It was agreed that the Committee would discuss this at their next meeting.

The second item concerned the financial problems facing the 'Sudan Archive' at Durham University. Miss Forbes commented that the position of the present archivist was about to be lost and that there was a serious lack of funds for the collection in general. She requested information from members of any possible sources of funding. She also requested further donations of material which could be added to the collection.

The final item was a plea for books for the library at Omdurman Ahlia University. Dr Trilsbach commented that the library there lacked textbooks in all disciplines and that Professor Beshir was requesting donations of any kind, to be coordinated in the UK by Miss Anne Riddell, a member of SSSUK.

The meeting ended at 12.55, after the Secretary announced that minutes of both the 1987 and 1988 AGMs and copies of the Constitution would be sent to members with the next issue of *Sudan Studies*.



THE SUDAN STUDIES SOCIETY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

CONSTITUTION

1: Name of the Society:

The name of the Society shall be:

Sudan Studies Society of the United Kingdom

An abbreviation of **SSSUK** will be acceptable on all correspondence and minutes associated with the Society.

2: Object:

The object of the Society is to advance the education of the public in Sudanese Studies. In furtherance of this object, but not otherwise, the Society will:

- i) Provide a forum for discussion and co-operation between groups and individuals concerned with or interested in the Republic of the Sudan, henceforth referred to as the Sudan.
- ii) Hold at least annually a seminar open to the general public.
- iii) Establish and maintain contact with related bodies overseas.
- iv) Print, publish and distribute a newsletter under the title Sudan Studies.

The Society is a non-profit making body and has no power to make any distribution of profits, bonuses, gifts, etc to its members. Its assets will be used only to further its object.

3: Membership:

Membership shall be open to:

- i) Anyone with an interest in the Sudan, whether they have relevant expertise or not.
- ii) Institutions who have, or potentially have, an interest in the Sudan.
- iii) People and institutions of all nationalities.

4: Executive Officers and committee:

The executive committee shall consist of the following executive officers:

- i) A Chairman
- ii) A Deputy Chairman
- iii) A Secretary
- iv) A Treasurer

Plus:

- i) Up to six other member.
- ii) Ex-Officio The Sudan Cultural Counsellor

With the exception of the Sudan Cultural Counsellor, members of the committee shall be elected at an AGM by the system of a one ballot, 'first-past-the-post' system. They shall be elected for an initial term of three years after which one third of the committee shall resign in each of the next three years and be ineligible for immediate re-election. One of the executive



officers should be appointed as Editor of *Sudan Studies*. The committee has the powers to co-opt members as appropriate.

A quorum shall exist when at least four members are present, including at least two officers and one non-officer.

Nominations for the executive committee must be received by the Secretary in writing at least twenty eight days before the meeting at which the elections are to be held.

In addition to the executive officers, other non-voting members may be appointed to the executive committee. These may include an Honorary President, Honorary (Sudanese) Members, and Honorary Corresponding Overseas Members, all of whom must be approved by a majority of members at an AGM. They shall be elected for a period of three years and be eligible for re-election.

5: Subscriptions:

Subscription rates shall be based on whether the member is:

- i) An individual subscriber
- ii) A non-profit making* institution
- iii) A profit making* institution

* In the event of dispute, profit making institutions shall be defined as those paying Income and/or Corporation Tax.

Changes in subscription rates can be amended by a majority of members in attendance at an AGM. Subscription charges shall be due on the first day of June each year. Members joining during the Society's financial year may have their initial charges reduced at the discretion of the Treasurer.

6: Meetings and Quorum:

There shall be one general meeting in each calendar year and other extraordinary meetings as called by the officers or twelve members of the Society. The presence of fifteen members shall constitute a quorum.

7: Amendment of the Constitution:

Amendment of the constitution shall be by a two-thirds majority of members present at an AGM or at an extraordinary meeting called for the purpose of which twenty eight days notice shall be given.

No amendment shall be made to the object clause, the dissolution clause, or this clause without the approval of the Charity Commission, and no alteration shall be made which would cause the Society to cease to be a charity at law.

8: Dissolution:

In the event of the dissolution of the Society for any reason whatsoever, any assets or property shall pass to a charitable organisation with an object similar to that of the Society.



THE POTENTIAL OF RURAL SMALL INDUSTRIES AND CRAFTS IN THE SUDAN

Dirk Hansohm summarises work which he has been completing over the past year or so whilst working as a member of the Sudan Economy Research Group at Bremen (see Sudan Studies 2, page 18).

One of the measures proposed within a programme for economic reform is the promotion of small industries (including crafts). This sector seems to have a number of advantages with regard to economic and social development, low dependence on imports and infrastructure, high labour intensity, income generation, geographical dispersion, capability to increase the savings capacity, linkages to the agricultural sector (supply of agricultural inputs and consumer goods for the agricultural population, processing of agricultural products). These points are relevant for a strategy of structural adjustment which aims to attain a viable balance of payments position and, growth.

However, the data which are necessary to identify the sector's potentials, their constraints, and appropriate measures of promotion, are largely missing. Most of the enterprises are not recorded in the statistics. Still, the existing data on the small industry sector (enterprises with less than 25 employees) testify to its importance and positive performance.

This research project plans to contribute to the knowledge of small industries and crafts in Sudan. In order to assess their actual and potential role it is necessary to analyse both internal and external factors. Thus, in addition to the analysis at the micro-level, the macro framework has to be put into perspective.

The core of the analysis are small industrial enterprises and craft activities (size and continuity of production, technological level of processes and products, production organisation, structure of labour power, working conditions, property relations, sources of finance, legal status, access to infrastructure, sources of input supply, structure of demand). Because of the interest in development of rural areas, Darfur region was selected as being the most peripheral in the north. Within the region, Nyala, as the region's major centre, and Buram, as the secondary centre, were selected.

Besides the analysis of the enterprises and activities, information on the external constraints has to be obtained from other sources. Especially important are the supply markets as well as the demand. Both are influenced by the marketing structure. The actual and potential market is, furthermore, determined by the levels of consumption and income.

Supplementary to the case studies in Darfur, the existing programmes and institutions on the national level have to be considered. Lastly, the indirect effects of policies concerning industry, income, foreign trade/foreign exchange and other fields must be taken into account.

Dirk Hansohm can be contacted at the Sudan Economy Research Group, FB7, University of Bremen, PO Box 330440, 2800 BREMEN 33, West Germany.



THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ZAR CULT IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

Albrecht Hofheinz presents some comments on the Zar workshop which was held in Khartoum in January.

The Zar workshop, organised jointly by the International African Institute (London) and the Traditional Medicine Institute (Khartoum), was part of an attempt by WHO to bring together indigenous healing traditions and orthodox medicine. Mutual understanding, it is hoped, will advance the readiness to learn from each other, and health care could benefit from this integrative effort not only in the developing world, but also in the industrialized countries.

No final recommendations were passed, but from the variety of contributions it became clear that the decolonization in medicine does not only mean to fight irresponsible marketing practices of certain pharmaceutical companies. It also requires regaining a holistic understanding of health which does not separate body and mind from their natural and social environment. During the meeting participants rather tended to argue along conventional lines. Is Zar a mental illness, an expression of protest, a product of gender discrimination or class conflict, an ancient pre-Islamic cult, or just an entertainment party. The great variety of forms was emphasized and it was described as a dynamic phenomenon. Its study requires a multidimensional approach, but many present a view which is too static.

Apparently Zar spread from Ethiopia during the second half of the nineteenth century, the original carriers being slaves. It quickly became adopted by many groups of women and when introduced to the Sudan (curiously via Egypt) it came across indigenous spirit cults from the south. In the Sudan, two distinct forms developed. Sari is the women's domain, whereas the hotter Tumbura is chiefly practiced by men, although this gender distinction is gradually becoming less clear. Tumbura also seems to be a specifically Sudanese phenomenon and Ahmad al-Safi has dated its origins back to the Funj period. Bori is undoubtedly more widespread and its clients are mainly middle-aged women, rather poor and without formal education. Sexual and social frustration seems to be the chief motive for the possession, manifested mainly in hysterical symptoms. In a 'parallel world', supported by the group and its leader, compensatory acts can be performed and (some) fantasies lived out which are normally sanctioned in everyday reality. Zar can help to prevent neuroses.

Despite the model image presented, there are many variations. Quite a few women seek entertainment and change (farah wa-tarab); they want to be told the future or try to extort a new dress from their husband. Nonetheless, even they act against a wider social background. There was general agreement during the workshop that Zar has something to do with oppression. Suhayr Mursi called for a political and economic macro-analysis to explain why, for example, the powerless brother of an established family head becomes possessed, while an influential mother of unmarried sons does not. Socio-economic variables have no influence on the choice of archetypes. Luliyya and Bashir, frivolous and emancipated, are the most popular spirits among rich and poor alike. It should be made clear that 'discrimination



against women' is to be seen in the context of 'female power versus male authority', describing the suppression of the female element in the public sphere. Interestingly, Ahmad al-Safi observed that most male Zar participants are either effeminate or homosexual.

Zar is changing. Born out of ancient African cults, it emerged during the turbulent days of the Turco—Egyptian Empire. The Bashawat and Khawajat are classes of spirits still bearing witness to the importance of new social groups of that time. In the last twenty years the Darawish representatives of Islam have gained prominence, at least nominally, since it is they who are now invoked at the beginning of a ceremony. More recently a new Khawaja has entered the stage: the mughtarib who earns plenty of money in the Gulf States.

From the beginning the ritual was influenced by patterns of the Sufi dhikr, seen by many as the male counterpart of a ceremony conducive to ecstasy. This trend has become more pronounced today in reaction to increasing pressure from Zar to prove its legitimacy within Islam and to be purified from 'excesses' like the use of alcohol and drugs. The state has also put its hand on Zar, sending it around the world on stage performed by the National Folklore Theatre. The trend from cult to club is best illustrated by the 'Association of Zar-Sheikhs in the Sudan', registered with the National Council for Arts and Letters with the aim of promoting theatrical activities. Of the 64 members 40 are men. The president of the Association, Muhammad wad Hulla, invited the members of the conference to his Zar in al-Kalakla, south of Khartoum. Violins, a synthesizer, and electric guitars were used in a spectacle best termed 'folklore disco'. This is paralleled by developments in the Sufi scene: the Burhaniyya dhikr is also referred to as 'disco' by young Sudanese. Of course, true Zar is still practiced, and we were given the opportunity to attend two more traditional sessions, but the overall trend seems to be towards an increasing desacralization.

Will Zar last as long as the situation of women does not change? -or will it disappear, leaving women to look for other ways to express themselves? Nobody knew. Its spirit, though, need not die. In a very stimulating contribution, Sulayman Ali Baldo explored the dramatic aspects of Zar. He called back to mind the links between the treatment of mania (enthusiasm for God), the cult of Dionysos and the origins of the Greek theatre. In the 1920s, Aristotle's concept of carthasis (the ecstatic encounter with the divine leading to purification and healing) was rediscovered for modern European theatre, giving it fresh inspiration and a new vigour. Baldo called upon playwrights and directors in his country to stop viewing Zar as just an element of folklore providing local colour. Instead, they should turn their attention to its performance structure and learn from its inherent dramatical experience. Therein lies hope for an organic integration of a people's heritage in the continuous movement towards modernity.

Albrecht Hofheinz can be contacted at Bertholdstrasse 53, D-7630 Lahr/Schw, West Germany.



THE TUMBURA CULT OF THE SUDAN

G. Makris introduces some aspects of spirit possession and social change associated with the Tumbura cult.

Tumbura is a special kind of the normally female spirit possession Zar cult. However, it is often associated with men of the lower social classes, ex-slaves, and members of the black tribes of the Southern Sudan. Though the cult has been mentioned by early travellers, missionaries and anthropologists it has not yet properly been studied. My research aims to show how the cult can provide religious and folk medical solutions to the tensions and contradictions of modern urban life, as well as being in certain respects a vehicle for conceptual continuity. In that context I argue that Tumbura is a quite distinct phenomenon from Zar. A close analysis of the already existing material suggests that Tumbura can be directly associated with the ancestral cults of the Azande and other related peoples of the Bahr ml Shazal.

A vast number of slaves who were imported to the North during the second part of the 19th century carried with them their religious beliefs and practices. In the new environment and under the strong influence of Islam these ideas have been transformed in various ways. It is exactly in this situation that Tumbura made its appearance as a response to the new social conditions within which these people have found themselves. On the other hand, Zar was introduced to the Sudan around the same time by female slaves from Ethiopia. As a matter of fact the two cults have common elements, since they are employed by related categories of people within the same area. This however, doesn't mean that the one can be reduced to a variety of the other.

Considering the above factors, the study of the cult will help us to understand the actual processes of Arabisation and Islamisation of the non-Muslim ethnic minorities leading to a more complete and elaborate analysis of Islam in the Sudan. In relation to both social change and politics, the study of the cult will lead us to a deeper understanding of urbanisation processes, internal migration (especially that concerning ethnic groups), new ideological tendencies, and adaptation to recurrent social changes experienced by the people, namely in the big urban centres. It will also shed light on the internal characteristics of political and ideological tendencies in the recent history of the Sudan. As a whole, I hope that my research will reveal and analyse the ways in which the internal dynamics of a multinational society are reflected on its religious institutions.

Mr Makris is conducting his research for a Ph.D. in social anthropology at the London School of Economics.



CHRISTIANITY IN SUDAN: A PERSONAL VIEW

Elizabeth Charnley gives a personal view of some of the churches and church leaders she met whilst visiting the Sudan in 1984.

In Kosti I met quite a few Christians and was able to hand over letters and exchange news. I received in return, letters and present news of the situation in the Sudan and of the Church's position there. The first person I met was Mr Edward Biar, who is a very respected man in Kosti as he is the blood bank technician in Kosti Civil Hospital. He and his wife live in Kosti with their nine children. There are six girls and three boys, all of whom are strong Christians. Although Edward was very busy as he is regarded as a very clever and reliable man in his job and was in great demand, he did manage to find time for me, quietly at his home. And he had the following to say,

“There exists a large group of Christians in Kosti and Kenana but unfortunately there exists no reverend or qualified preacher in Kosti. This is a great loss at the present time, but there is, however, a preacher in Kenana and bible readings do take place regularly.”

“Unfortunately there has never been a church built in Kosti. The building used now for the purpose of a congregation is in the old police building, which the Christians bought themselves. Obviously there are problems with this style of building - lack of room and no pictures or pulpit, but it is a place where they can all gather together in Kosti every Sunday or times in the week for evening song and prayers. The biggest problem is the shortage of books, which is great, and they really do need bibles and song books.”

At this point Mr Biar broke off to stress how unsure the future was for thme and he stressed also how important it is to keep in touch with the parishes in England.

Talking in his home and seeing his family and friends, brought Edward to talk about South Sudan. Once a month in Juba there is a very large meeting and often in school holidays there are students who come to help and teach the people English and bible readings in the evenings, but there is still a material shortage for these students.

“Before the 1980s there were large groups of young people but since then the congregation has decreased, due to present authorities.”

Edward lives near to the room or building used for the church and he and his wife attend every Sunday. The other fellow Christian who lives in the old police building and who takes care of the church is Mr Gorden, an evangelist, and his wife Priscilla. They too have a large family, all of whom believe strongly in the Christian faith.

While visiting Edward Biar's house, I met a young man called Majok Ajak and he talked about his interest in exchanges, especially youth groups visiting England and vice versa. He thought this might encourage more young people, because there was, or is, a problem with



the young people and he said the Gospel is not spreading sufficiently enough. This was due to influences at secondary school and other outside ideas.

While he was studying in Juba there was, and still is now, a large group of Christians who dance, pray and sing together and travel to Khartoum on a sort of pilgrimage going from house to house. There used to be a steamer which brought supplies - bibles, hymn books etc - but now it has stopped. There is no money for facilities and obviously it is important to keep links up with more prosperous parishes in England who may be able to help. But I stress that not once did these Christians mention financial help from Britain; they were very happy just to know we think about them and care. They did not ask for anything, but they do need everything we can give.

Finally, Edward enclosed a short prayer to the church of St Barnabas, at Heaton, and I found him and his family the nicest people one could meet. Even though I stayed with Muslims, my attitude towards the Christians in the Sudan never changed. I found them warm, patient and tolerant people. Edward ended by stressing that he would like to see Exchanges of the two parishes (Steeton and Kesti) in the near future.

WAD MEDANI:

I managed to visit St Paul's Church briefly at Wad Medani and although the Reverend Balus Idris was out, we did meet his son, Samir Bulus. He talked mainly of his father, who is the Archdeacon in the Northern Diocese. In Wad Medani there is a large congregation and also there are English lessons and frequent church meetings. The Archdeacon's son arranged to send someone to meet me in Khartoum and his father would probably have letters for parishes in England. After having a chat, and obviously the circumstances were a lot different here than in Kosti, I felt that St Paul's was surviving all right and that perhaps it was up to its congregation to help the Christian groups of Kosti.

OMDURMAN:

The church which we visited in Omdurman was called the United Church and the Bishop was Mr Butrus T. Shukai. We met him and another Christian who lived nearby. We spoke to Mr Shukai and he said he would arrange for someone to meet me and he would talk to the provost of Khartoum Cathedral and the Archdeacon, Hr Efraim and Mr Balus Idris.

The church itself was very nice inside and it hosted a large congregation. Later Mr Frederick Elvio met me in Khartoum and asked me to convey messages from Omdurman. Mr Elvio is a Catholic and works with the Catholic church and he plans to get married soon to Bishop Shukais daughter, so there will be a great ceremony between the Episcopal and the Catholic church. He went on to say that the situation regarding the Christians is not favourable and that there were threats from Nimeiri, who was President at that time. However, he was comforted that many of his Muslim friends also opposed the sharia laws.

KHARTOUM:

I attended an 11.00 service at the Cathedral on a Sunday morning. I arrived to a very full cathedral and, although I couldn't understand the sermon and the singing, I sensed a terrific



atmosphere - that of life and strong faith. There was a group of singers in the corner at the front of the cathedral all dressed in purple. They were very jolly and good singers and I enjoyed listening to them. I asked if I could take pictures and the provost (Mr Efraim) was sent the message. He answered on the microphone with warm greetings to our parishes in English!

BUILDING FOR LIFE

Building for Life is a two year project undertaken by All Saints joint Anglican/Methodist Church in Durham. It began in January 1988 as the church faced a £20,000 bill for improvements to its building. We decided to double our target, raising £20,000 too for development work in the Sudan. We are supporting the Sudan Council of Churches' projects at Raga (livestock), Atbara (forestry), and Muniki (water) through Christian Aid. An exciting programme of giving and fund-raising has already raised £9000 for the building and £9000 for the Sudan, with good TV, radio, and press coverage, drawing attention to the value of long-term planning for development in this troubled land.

Further details from, or donations to, All Saints Church (Building for Life), do Rev. Malcolm MacNaughton, 31 York Crescent, Newton Hall, Durham, DH1 5PT, UK.

LETTER FROM AMERICA

Members of the Sudan Studies Association have announced that the 1989 SSA meeting will be held at Rhode Island College (Providence) between 13th and 16th April. The theme of the meeting will be "Sudan Studies, the Role of the Intellectual: Sudanese Development". Anyone wishing to participate or present a paper should write to:

Dr Constance E. Berkley, Vassar College, Box 316, Poughkeepsie, New York 12601.

Abstracts of the 1988 meeting, held at Williamsburg (Virginia) last April, have been sent to the SSSUK Secretary. Anyone wishing to see them should write to him. The panel themes were: 'Sudan Ancient History', 'Historical Perspectives', 'Constitutional Framework: problems and possibilities', 'Dialectics of Politics', 'Agricultural Development', 'Literature and Literary Criticism', 'Identity, Law and Anthropological Studies', and 'Planning and Social Change'.

The 4th Nilo-Saharan Linguistics Colloquium will be held at Universität Bayreuth, Lehrstuhl Afrikanistik II, Postfach 101251, 8580 Bayreuth, West Germany. The meeting will be in August 1989, and anyone interested in participating should write to Drs Franz Rottland and Angelika Jakobi at the above address.



A WALK IN JEBEL MARRA (Part Three)

David Else concludes his story of a walk in Jebel Marra in December 1984.

The next morning Mohammed showed us the path out of the crater. It would have been very difficult to find without him; it was steep and rocky and very badly defined in places. We often had to use our hands and feet together as our legs were still a bit wobbly from yesterday's slog across the pumice stones. Having no breakfast didn't help! But the early start meant that we reached the rim of the crater and finished climbing before the sun got too high in the sky. The crater floor was now 500 feet below us, and towering above us was another 1000 feet of mountain -Jebel Gimballa - one of the highest peaks in the Jebel Marra massif. As active climbers we glanced wistfully towards the summit, but after one last look we set off at a comfortable pace along a well-worn path leaving the highest peaks and the crater behind us. Our spirits were high and the sacks felt light as we gradually curved round the outer edge of the crater wall, dropping all the time and getting nearer, we hoped, to the hot springs.

After walking for two sore hours the landscape became less rocky and more vegetated. There were trees again, and a few sheep on the mountain sides. Nearly there, we thought. But in the best fairy-tale tradition the path began to cross some stony ground and petered out into nothing leaving us only with the compass and the 1944 map to find our way. We followed bearings for another hour and so then came to a high ridge. As far as we could see there was no sign of habitation or water anywhere, only a series of dry gullies and small canyons running across our intended route.

Our water was low and to simply set out blindly would have been foolish. but the thought of having to climb back up to the crater, beautiful though it was, and retrace our entire route was soul-destroying. We sat under a tree, sipped some of the precious water and thought about our predicament. As we rested in the shade the faint sound of human voices drifted up towards us. There were people in the valley below, almost underneath us! Forgetting about being tired and thirsty we scampered down the mountainside towards them.

Sitting under a tree on a large blanket were three very distinguished-looking Fur gentlemen. Only just managing to conceal our impatience we greeted them cordially, going through the long rituals of salutation necessary even in these wild parts. The hot springs were less than a hundred yards away: these men and their families had come up from their village to take the waters. We left them as politely as we could and ran down to the springs. Some women and children were there, washing and drinking, and looked very surprised to see us, scantily dressed in shorts and tee-shirts, covered in smoke and dust and strangely decorated where the sweat had run down our faces. They made room for us though, and we also took the waters, but in a slightly more enthusiastic manner! After three days' hard walking on rationed water under the African sun, to have a bath, and to drink as much as we liked, was pure luxury.



We stayed at the hot springs for a few hours, resting, talking to the people and playing with their children. After that it was another eight miles down the valley to Quaila. The abundant water here meant the valley was an oasis hidden in the harsh barren landscape we'd seen earlier from the ridge, but because the water was hot an almost tropical micro-climate had been established with palm trees and cacti growing amongst the lush grass. The sulphurous chemicals in the water had covered the rocks with a white powder enhancing this exotic scene. It reminded us of the film *The Land That Time Forgot*, only this was for real and we would never forget it.

The walk down to Quaila only took a few hours (even with a stop for another swim) and we arrived just before dark. After asking the village head-man's permission, we cooked our evening meal in an unused grass hut in the centre of the village.

Then it was time to sleep again, happy in the thought of a relatively easy fifteen miles down to Neretiti the next day, but more importantly, happy in the knowledge of what we'd achieved: a long but incredibly rewarding hike through some of the most inhospitable but most magnificent landscape in this part of Africa.

David Else is a former teacher of English in the Sudan and is author of the No Frills Guide to Sudan, published by Bradt.

CAN YOU HELP?

Kurt Beck is looking for a photograph of Sheikh NIMR HASSAN KHALIFA, formerly Nazir of the Hawawir tribe in North Kordofan. If you have one which may be borrowed or consulted, could you please contact the SSSUK Secretary



ECOLOGY IN THE SUDAN

David Lindley contributes to the regular series of RESEARCH PROFILES. Here he outlines some of the work conducted by the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology (at Merlewood, Cumbria) in association with the Institute of Environmental Studies (Khartoum).

Eight years ago, the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology (ITE-Merlewood) first had contact with Sudanese ecologists when ten members of staff from the Institute of Environmental Studies (IES) of the University of Khartoum visited Grange for an intensive course on computing, biometrics and systems ecology. The following year, David Lindley and Philip Bacon visited IES under British Council sponsorship to help them set up a microcomputer unit.

Terry Callaghan joined the team two years later to review the alternative supplies of biomass in the Sudan, as fuel wood is being over-exploited at an excessive rate to provide 95% of the country's energy needs. Consequently, about 3.6% of the total forest cover is removed each year. Alternative forms of biomass, agricultural residues such as cotton stalks, natural vegetation such as water hyacinth and reeds, and new arid land-dedicated crops such as Calatropis procera could be utilized. These natural resources of the Sudan would be adequate to meet the present use of energy, but the current technology is not appropriate nor socially acceptable and implementation of alternative biomass could only make local contributions.

As a means of aiding the survival and growth of traditional fuel wood trees and other plants in the arid regions of the Sudan, a number of newly developed water-absorbing soil polymers were used under experimental conditions. A polyacrylamide and a polyvinyl-alcohol were tested on seeds and saplings of trees of economic importance experiencing water stress. Both polymers significantly increased the degree of establishment and period of tree survival, the greatest effect being a five-fold increase in survival in the most severe water stress treatment, using the polyvinyl-alcohol at only 0.05% volume/volume. The overall results indicated that water-absorbing polymers potentially have an important role to play in tree planting practices in both field and nursery in arid regions.

More recently, work has started on ways of rehabilitating degraded agricultural land in the Dali-Singa region of the Blue Nile Province. During the early 1960s, 1.5 million hectares of natural savanna and thornland were developed for agriculture by the Mechanised Farming Corporation. The traditional rotation system with nitrogen-fixing *Acacia* tree fallows was discontinued. With grain crops grown continuously for up to 17 years, soil fertility had dropped to such a low level that 11,330 hectares of land have been abandoned in one area alone. In order to investigate the processes and rates of restoration of soil fertilities by trees, and subsequent depletion of fertility by crops, a chronosequence of land management has been established from a series of sites with different histories. Soils have been sampled and it is planned to sample vegetation and to measure the biomass of the thorn trees and grain crops



at the end of the rainy season (October/November). From these observations, a nitrogen budget for the plant/soils system will be constructed throughout the different stages of the cycle in order to predict the optimum balance between the cropping and fallow periods so as to produce sustained production. Factors which would increase the efficiency of the tree fallows period, such as boosting the populations of the nitrogen-fixing bacteria, will also be investigated.

Dr David Lindley is a Principal Scientific Officer at Merlewood Research Station (Grange-over-Sands), which is one of the six research stations forming the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology. He is also a member of the SSSUK committee.

SUDAN ART AID: AN EXHIBITION BY SUDANESE ARTISTS AND THEIR FRIENDS

For two weeks in June 1988 Sudanese artists and their friends held an art exhibition in aid of Oxfam's work in the Sudan. The idea of this exhibition took shape more than two years ago when a group of artists were discussing the sad events in the Sudan as portrayed in the media. They decided to try to do something to help and at the same time to show that there is another side to the Sudan, one which rarely receives coverage in the newspapers and news bulletins of today.

There was a tremendous response to a request for donations of work both from the Sudan and from artist friends in Britain and abroad. The exhibition took two years to organise but the very hard work involved was more than worth it in the final handing over of a cheque for £10,000 to Oxfam at the beginning of July.

Those of you who were lucky enough to see the exhibition will have been delighted at the high standard of the exhibits. The exhibition was a great success financially and it certainly raised a new image of the Sudan.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the exhibition was the response of many people who had worked in the Sudan, young and old. Everyone who was asked to help gave willingly of their time and money. The atmosphere at the preview was one of happiness and pleasure as people who had lost sight of each other since their Sudan days renewed their friendship while recalling what everyone seemed to remember as their happy times in the Sudan.

Suzanne A Karim



HALTING THE DESERT ADVANCE - USE THE SUN

John Wright makes some suggestions for easing deforestation by the development of new appropriate types of solar cookers.

All along the desert fringe, men and women are cutting down trees for fuel - trees which take years to replace - instead of using the sun, which shines there every day and whose energy is free. Current thinking is that solar cookers are too expensive and that people will not use them. I believe this is out of date. It used to be said, "Don't give people fishes, give them fish hooks", but now we say "Don't give them fish hooks, show them how to make them". It is my firm belief that conditions have changed so much in the last decade that the whole question needs looking at again. The sun's energy is abundant and available; the wood is scarce and soon there will be none. What can we, in the Western World, do to help?

This is a problem involving both engineering design and social economics, and of the two the second is probably the most important and difficult to solve. Solutions to the first are well known in theory and take two forms - fixed solar panels and steerable parabolic 'dishes'. The first use the 'greenhouse effect', mainly to heat water, and require glass or plastic panels, but the second are reflectors which concentrate the sun's rays onto a black cooking pot and can, I believe, be made almost entirely from local materials.

Metal or plastic barbecues had a considerable boom when oil prices soared, but interest waned when prices fell. For serious use in a developed economy they would require expensive automatic steering like that used in astronomical telescopes, but in underdeveloped countries this is not required. Compared with many routine tasks carried out by women and children, sitting in the shade of a solar dish and moving it every quarter of an hour to keep it pointing at the sun, would seem to be an attractive alternative.

The mathematical basis of a solar cooker is the parabola, because this has the property of concentrating parallel incoming rays to a point at its focus, as in satellite receivers and radio telescopes. The cooking paraboloid only has to be accurate enough to create a 'hot spot' no larger than the cooking pot, which then absorbs through its black surface all the energy received by the dish. This must not be too concave, or the ratio of energy received to the surface area (and thus the volume and cost) of the dish becomes uneconomic. It must also not be too flat, or the cooking pot will be too high up around midday for the cook to reach. However, once these points are settled, the design is based on a parabola of the most effective shape.

Thus the basis of a parabolic solar cooker is simply a correct shape, and any suitable material can be used. I myself have made a three foot dish out of cement, sand, wire netting, and kitchen foil, the latter to provide a good reflecting surface. The total cost of materials is about £2. Even in our poor summer conditions it produces over 200 watts, which is enough to fry



eggs and meat and simmer (but not boil) potatoes and rice to normal standards - boiling is, in fact, not necessary. In a tropical sun, such as in Sudan, it should produce half a kilowatt.

Seeing the many different types of clay pots and dishes made by local craftsmen in semi-desert countries, it is clear that, given a wooden or paper pattern for the parabola, they could use this, by rotating it, to create a dish from local materials, except for the foil. These could include clay reinforced by basket work, or (for nomads) tin from four gallon petrol containers, which would not rust in the desert. Research on these points could well be carried out in famine relief camps, with their large consumptions of wood and oil for fuel.

What is now required from the developed world is a stronger drive and more research (or funds for this) by organisations already working in developing countries like Sudan, and on alternative technology to develop the most suitable design for families living on the fringes of deserts everywhere and cutting down the trees for fuel. Points to be settled are the size, the appropriate parabola and supporting structure, and the appropriate local materials.

All this of course involves the socio-economic aspect, for the design has not only to be effective and cheap, but acceptable. The sun can never replace wood completely, for it has an awkward habit of not being strong enough when it is most required - in the early morning and when it's cold - but it could greatly reduce the use of wood as fuel. Much Third World cooking is simply to preserve food, and food cooked during the day can be kept warm in a hay box for evening consumption. All this requires a basic change in the habits of those doing the cooking - the women. But it is they who, at present, have to cut and fetch the wood; they may very well see the advantages of change.

People working in countries like Sudan are finding that it is not only the governments, but also the people, who are aware of the need to conserve resources; and also that women are realising their power as the principal producers of food. It is through the international women's organisations, like the Associated Country Women of the World, that the change will probably have to come. It will not be easy or quick; but the basic facts of the sun's free supply of energy, of the saving in human effort, of the scarcity of available wood, and the harm done by using it, are so strong that they are certain eventually to demand this change.

This is the full text of an article which was published in an edited form in The Independent on Mrch 28th 1988. John Wright was formerly an eminent surveyor in the Sudan and now, in formal retirement, writes scientific articles for newspapers and periodicals. He is a member of the SSSUK committee.



SUDAN FROM DROUGHT TO DELUGE:

A PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF THE RAINS AND FLOOD DISASTER OF 1988

Dr Osman Mirghani Ali gives a personal account of Khartoum at the time of the floods in August.

The unprecedented rains that poured over Khartoum during last August must have come out of the blue! After a decade or more of below average rainfall (the average annual rainfall in Khartoum is 150mm), the least and last thing that the Capital was prepared for was a deluge. Between mid-July and early August it rained on three occasions giving a total of 290mm. This is compared with 231mm, being the highest amount of rain received in Khartoum during the period July - August 8th in the last thirty years. Seventy six per cent of that rain (221mm) came on the August 4th and in a few hours Khartoum was sitting in a huge tropical lake. In some of the University of Khartoum hostels (the Barracks) the students had to use sailing boats to move around, a scene somewhat reminiscent of Venice! What made things worse is that the Capital's drainage systems (both natural and constructed), which are inefficient had long been neglected, could not cope with such volumes of water in such a short time.

The impact of the rain was compounded with the flashfloods that followed shortly in its wake. Khors (small water courses) and wadis (seasonal stream beds), long forgotten during the drought era, suddenly sprang to life again and came rushing with tremendous vigour towards the Nile. Unfortunately, many of the new, legally established residential areas as well as the squatter houses were built in or near the natural drainage contours of these watercourses. Places like Umm Badda, Merzoug, Droshab, Haj Yousif, Meiyo and others were hard hit where hundreds of mud-built houses simply crumbled and dissolved as though their walls were made of biscuits. Many people had to swim for their lives, sacrificing their furniture and precious belongings. It is too soon to make a full assessment of the damage let alone the social and environmental consequences that would certainly result from these events. Nevertheless, it would be useful to present what the picture looked like in Khartoum Province on August 21st 1988.

- 120,740 homes destroyed
- 1,500,000 homeless
- 100 dead
- 210 injured
- 37 schools destroyed
- 139 schools about to collapse



It has been estimated that LS 75,227,000 (\$16,717,000)[before devaluation of the Sudanese pound – Ed] are needed just to rebuild the schools. In the Khartoum Polytechnic, brand new equipment and laboratory facilities worth five million dollars have been destroyed by rainwater. About 60% of the Capital's asphalt roads have been damaged resulting in traffic jams as many cars congested the remaining relatively good ones making it an ordeal driving to work. Telephones were not working, telex communications stopped and for more than a week thousands of house dwellers had to go without either electricity or water services.

The August rains were not confined to Khartoum; they also reached as far north as old Wadi Halfa. The rains of the Sudan are actually dominated by the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), which separates the dry northerly winds from the southerly moist ones. In a normal rainy season the ITCZ would only reach as far north as Atbara (300km north of Khartoum). In August this year, it was further north than Luxor in Egypt, which meant that all of Sudan and the southern parts of Egypt were actually under the influence of rain-bearing southerly winds. Reports arriving from the Northern Region claim that there were such flashfloods that people have witnessed nothing similar for half a century. Many villages and towns were threatened by the flashfloods and in Abri alone 40,000 people were rendered homeless. Kordofan and Darfur were also badly affected. In Hamrat el Wiz, in northern Kordofan, for example, more than 516 families lost their homes, three schools, nine shops and four stores (containing the Kharif sugar supply for the region) were destroyed. In Darfur a dam was breached threatening the lives of the many people and livestock that depended on it.

Before people could recover from the trauma of the rains, those living in islands or in towns and villages on the bank of the Nile were faced with another nightmare. The Nile flood was reaching the record levels of 1946. The flood of the Blue Nile is a direct response to the rains on the Ethiopian Plateau which have continued in one instance for fifty hours last August. On August 22nd flood levels exceeded the 16.73m recorded on the same day in 1946, the year of the famous flood. Abu Rouf and Beit al Mal in Omdurman, Tuti Island, and Shaggara and Lamab in Kahrtoum were under continuous threat and residents were trying desperately to stop the ever-rising water with futile means such as soil-filled sacks. One person in Lamab living near the White Nile had fishing boats actually docked inside his house!

The flood of 1988 was also characterised by the high silt content which reached levels twice as much as those usually encountered during previous seasons. This resulted in the disruption of hydroelectric power generation in Er Roseires as well as the water purification system in Khartoum to the extent that people were literally drinking muddy water through their taps.

In Kassala Province in Eastern Sudan, the seasonal River Gash burst its banks and drowned many residential areas in Kassala like El Mirghanya and Soreeba. The catastrophe was not so much that flood levels were higher than the previous years but to the fact that these levels



were maintained for 37 hours whereas they usually stay for only two hours during which the excess water could be diverged into the breathing ponds. This time the ponds were full and what was worse was that Khor Someit, the natural outlet of the Gash, had already been occupied by Saquias (the cultivation units in Kassala). Not only that, but the earth wall which was supposed to confine the young river in one course, not having been maintained for years, could not cope with such water pressure.

In the Northern Region the combined floods of the White and Blue Niles, Atbara River and many khors and wadis were having devastating effects. Deceived by an ever-receding Nile, and pressed by the ever increasing need for more houses and more farming land, the people were moving closer and closer to the banks and even went to live on the many small islands dotting the River Nile. Towns such as Karima and Merowe plus more than nine villages were flooded. Thousands of date palm, orange and lemon trees as well as many vegetable fields were damaged. The loss of the date palm trees was a real tragedy for those people who cherish these trees as a symbol of their heritage and cultural pride. Island dwellers were besieged and on one island, Badeen, 50,000 people were threatened with extermination, with no method of crossing the spating river (the wooden boats, feluccas, are just too dangerous in such circumstances).

This article is not meant to address itself to the political situation in the Sudan, nor does it attempt to analyse how the government has (or has not) coped with the situation. Nevertheless, it has been demonstrated clearly that most of the damage could have easily been averted if there had been proper planning and stronger administration. The poorly maintained sewage and drainage systems, the bumpy roads, the ill-planned residential areas that have mushroomed in khors and water courses during the last decade are but a few examples. The lesson which the Sudanese have paid heavily to learn and should not forget, is that the catastrophe that has befallen them is the outcome of short-sightedness rather than the heavy rains and above average floods. The Thames Barrier, built in 1982 at the cost of millions of pounds for the sole aim of protecting London from the Thames floods (an event that could cause real threat only every 1800 years!), could be taken as an example of be-ready-for-the-worse planning.

The story of August 1998 is not all that gloomy. In the aftermath of the rains and floods, the prospect for agriculture (despite the threat of locust invasion) is promising. There will be an immense increase in the rain fed cultivated areas. It will be expected that some of the desertified land could come to life again. Perhaps the far extreme of this could be encountered in Wadi Howar in Northern Darfur where it has been reported that the floods have washed away the accumulated sands revealing the original soil. Gerf cultivation (the practice of cultivating the highly silted, highly moistened bank soil) along all the stretches of the Nile systems could be increased tremendously as the flood gradually subsides.



After-cropping of dura might be possible if the areas receiving good rains have been cultivated just at the beginning of the season. The prospect for livestock is also promising, as more pastoral land will be expected. This could be augmented by aerial seeding. The recharging of the aquifers and the raising of the water table is yet another benefit. This could have been very much enhanced had not the soil cover been so drastically degraded. Whether the Kharif of 1988 is part of the short-term fluctuation of the semi-arid rainfall, or is a heraldic omen of the end of the Sahelian drought and the beginning of wetter climates, this is the time for the Sudan government to press on with an ambitious afforestation campaign, especially in the watershed areas.

Dr Osman Ali is on the staff at the Institute of Environmental Studies at the University of Khartoum.

CURRENT AFFAIRS IN SUDAN

Charles Gurdon continues his series on contemporary political and economic issues in the Sudan. The column is based on reports prepared for the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), but the author stresses that this column presents a personal viewpoint and does not necessarily reflect the views of the EIU, SSSUK or anyone else.

THE POLITICAL SCENE

The 1980s have been very cruel to Sudan. It suffered the increasing autocratic and despotic rule of former president Nimeiri, whose policies were partially, but not totally, responsible for the appalling debt crisis. After the revolution in April 1985 it was hoped that a new era had dawned and that Sudan's problems were over. The reality is that they have got a lot worse. The civilian coalition government seems incapable of resolving any of the country's problems and is becoming increasingly incompetent. Unfortunately there are also reports of increasing levels of corruption and nepotism amongst government ministers and officials. Many are feathering their nests and grabbing what they can while they are still in office.

The government has failed to resolve any of the Sudan's problems. Indeed the civil war in the south has become even more brutal and the government appears to believe, incorrectly, that it can win an outright military victory against the rebel Sudanese Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA). The army has been engaged in a campaign which can only be said to be verging on genocide against the Dinka of northern Bahr el Ghazal. This campaign of murder, torture and the accompanying scorched earth policy has left thousands of civilians dead and injured, and hundreds of thousands homeless and destitute. There is simply no excuse for such actions and, given the fact that the Sudanese people have overthrown semi-dictatorships and have



installed multi-party democracies in both 1964 and 1985, it is totally out of character in the normally tolerant Sudan.

The dispute over the role of Islamic Sharia law in Sudan's heterogeneous society is the principal obstacle to a peaceful resolution of the war. Unfortunately the government seems intent on introducing a new Islamic Sharia legal code which will be applied to all Muslims in northern Sudan. This is despite the growing chorus of complaints and warnings that it will be discriminatory and will only exacerbate the ethnic and religious divisions and thereby make it even more difficult to restore national unity.

THE ECONOMY

On top of the multitude of political and economic problems have come the widespread flooding which has already had a devastating effect on the country. It could not have come at a worse time and there must be serious doubts about the country's ability to recover. Certainly without massive international assistance Sudan's problems will only deteriorate and this could lead to political instability.

However, unless Sudan's crushing debt burden is significantly reduced, or preferably written off, then the country will never again be a stable and relatively prosperous democracy.

The human and economic effects of the flood are likely to be devastating during the next few months. Huge areas of the Nile flood plain have been submerged under water and this has had horrible results and the incidence of disease has increased in both the long and short term. The government has been unable to cope with this or the multitude of other problems. Although shantytowns will soon spring up, hundreds of thousands of Sudanese will remain homeless for months if not years to come. If the floods have indeed damaged the food crops then there is likely to be malnutrition and possibly famine in certain areas of the country.

Besides the human cost, the floods will also have enormous economic implications. The repair of the infrastructure alone will probably take years to complete and hundreds of millions of dollars to finance. Outside the urban areas there will be major problems in the vitally important agricultural sector which provides Sudan with over 85 per cent of its export revenues. This will affect Sudan's balance of trade, balance of payments and all the other economic indicators. It will also make the debt crisis even more impossible to resolve.

As it has been seen in other countries, as well as in Sudan during the 1984/85 drought, the poor performance of a government during an emergency can frequently result in its rapid overthrow. While people generally do not have a very high opinion or expectations of the current government, they would not tolerate a situation where the government and army were not seen to be doing their limited best to improve the situation. For civilians who are waist deep in water they are not interested in excuses and they expect government action or at least co-operation.



OUTLOOK

Sadiq el Mahdi's government could stand or fall as a result of this emergency. It is possible that it could bind the Sudanese people together in the spirit of national unity as they overcome common adversity. Unfortunately it is just as likely to exacerbate the divisions because the government has shown signs of discrimination against non-Muslims in the recovery programme. The government's ability to do its job will be largely determined by the continuing generosity of the international community. This, in turn, will be determined by the government's ability to show aid donors that it deserves the help that it is seeking.

If the government fails to cope with this latest emergency, it could be overthrown in one of two possible ways. The people could rise as they did in October 1964 and April 1985 and demand a change of government through a series of riots and demonstrations. Alternatively the army could step in and remove an incompetent and divisive civilian government as it did in May 1969. Given the fact that the Sudanese people only removed the Nimieri regime three years ago, it is unlikely that they would want another military government. In addition, Sudan is in such a mess that only a mad-man would want to take on the problems currently facing the country. It is therefore more likely that Sadiq el Mahdi will remain in office, at least until a more suitable leader emerges.

Recognising the political dangers which it is facing the government will take as few major decisions as possible. It will continue to concentrate its relief efforts on those groups which always determine who holds power in the country - the Muslim northerners who are living in the urban areas in general, and in the capital in particular, while the rest will take second place.

One of the few good things about the floods are that they will keep the army occupied and therefore it will not be able to prosecute the war in the south with the same degree of ferocity. Similarly the flooding in the south should diminish the SPLA's ability to continue to fight the war. It is therefore likely that the war will have to be scaled down until both sides either have the ability to fight again or they finally realise that it is unwinnable and they come to the negotiating table.

The government will also delay the introduction of the new Islamic sharia legal code which is supposed to replace former President Nimieri's so-called 'September Laws' which were introduced in 1983.

Since this is the single most contentious issue facing the country at the moment this should help reduce the political tension which was building up before the floods. However, until the government accepts that any religious-based legal code is simply unacceptable and unworkable in such a heterogeneous society as Sudan, national unity will continue to disintegrate. Sudan is almost reaching breaking point and unless both the government and SPLA start acting in the interests of the country it will simply break apart and it will be



impossible to stick it back together again. Although it might seem impossible, Sudan's economic problems are going to get much worse as a result of the effects of the flood. The full implications are simply impossible to calculate because of the lack of sufficient data and any figures would be little more than wild guesses. However, it is known that vast areas of prime agricultural land have been flooded. The plague of locusts which have enjoyed ideal breeding conditions in the flooded areas could take years to totally eradicate and are likely to have a devastating effect on this years crops. Together with the flood damage to the export crops this could more than halve export revenues in 1998/99. At the same time, food and other imports will probably have to be increased significantly and this will simply widen the trade gap. In 1987 this was US\$140 million and it could exceed US\$200 million this year and be much higher in 1989. This in turn will probably return the current account to a deficit of over US\$50 million.

The major economic implication for Sudan's creditors will be that its ability to repay its enormous foreign debt will be even more remote. The government is obviously in no position to implement a major economic austerity programme at a time when it is trying to cope with the worst natural disaster for more than a century. Since this is demanded by the IMF it is unlikely that any resolution of the problem of Sudan's arrears to the IMF can be achieved in the near future. Sudan, with arrears of almost US\$1,000 million, currently accounts for almost half of all the arrears owed to the IMF. These inevitable delays can only postpone the resolution of Sudan's bilateral and commercial debt crisis.

The creditors and the rest of the international financial community must be made to realise that Sudan will never be able to repay its outstanding debts. To try and force it to do so can only lead to political and economic instability for decades to come. The devastation which has and will be caused by the floods and their after-effect provide a perfect excuse for the creditors to make a special case of the country and write off its debts. Any alternative can only provide a short-term solution which will not last and it is about time the creditors realised this fact. Until Sudan's debt burden is significantly reduced or is entirely removed it will never be able to stand on its feet and it will become totally aid-dependent and politically very unstable.

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DID THE KUSHITES FLEE TO THE WEST?

Peter Shinnie offers some comments to confirm modern understanding of the debate about the possible westward movement of the Kushites.

In *Sudan Studies* (3) there was a review of the 'No Frills Guide to the Sudan' generally commending the booklet but drawing attention to some omissions and a few mistakes.

What is particularly unfortunate in a work which may well be used by many visitors to the Sudan is the misleading historical section. Here, in the second paragraph, the totally unsubstantiated statement that after the fall of Meroe to the Christian Axumites "the rulers and people fled to the west of the Sudan ... and from here Egyptian influences are thought to have spread all over Africa". It should be said straightaway that there is no shred of evidence for such a suggestion and no traces of Kushite (Meroitic) influence are to be found west of the Nile. Not a single artefact which can be identified as Meroitic has been found and no details are available as to what happened after the collapse of the Meroitic kingdom. Certainly the Meroitic state and presumably the rulers who were buried under pyramids firstly at Kurru and Nuri and later (from about 300BC) at Meroe itself ceased to exist. The evidence for this is to be seen at the site of Meroe where archaeological work suggests that occupation ceased some time after the middle of the fourth century AD and the last identifiable burial of a ruler was at that time. It seems that the Axumites were to some extent responsible, the inscription of Aezanes at Axum certainly indicates a campaign into the Butana and perhaps to Meroe and two fragmentary Axumite inscriptions have been found at the site together with one Axumite coin.

That the Meroitic state came to an end is certain, what is not certain is what happened then - the most economical explanation is to suppose that whatever the political rule may have been, and of that we know nothing, the majority of the inhabitants remained in the ruins of the town and in villages along the Nile to become at least in part the ancestors of the present day Ja'aliyin inhabitants of the area.

The suggestion that the Meroitic people trekked off to the west in the middle of the fourth century AD or thereabouts stems primarily from A J Arkell who from his earlier career as a political officer in Darfur developed a great affection for the area as well as a great deal of knowledge about it. This interest and affection however led him into exaggerated views as to the participation of the west in the history of the Sudan and to a wish to see it involved in many important historical events. The best comment on the far-fetched claim of Meroitic influence in the west is in the book by W.Y. Adams 'Nubia - Corridor to Africa', by far the fullest and most accurate history that we have of ancient Sudan. In this book (page 323), Adams says "To the west, the evidence which has been adduced for Meroitic influence in the steppelands of Kordofan and Darfur is of such a speculative nature that it probably should not be taken too seriously." I entirely concur in this and find the evidence which has been proposed, when it is not purely invented, to be either fictitious or highly imaginary. One example is the suggestion made by Arkell (1961; p.174) that the Kagiddi (or Shelkota) of



Southern Darfur all retain in a slightly altered form the name of the people of Kush. No linguistic evidence is provided for this suggestion which resembles very old fashioned attempts to link many rather, but never very, similar names and words with others which are claimed to be similar. The word for donkey in Mahas Nubian is kaj - should we suggest that those in the west with similar names were the donkey people? To draw linguistic theories from what may well be chance resemblances has led to many fantastic arguments for far ranging contacts.

The facts of the matters are that there is no concrete evidence for such a westward move by the people of Kush and those who wish to support such a view, and I wonder if any now do, will have to produce some concrete evidence.

The 'No Frills Guide' then goes on to a further geographical leap and suggests that 'from here (i.e. Darfur) Egyptian influences are thought to have spread all over Africa.' It is not said by whom it is thought - I fancy by very few. Certainly much ideas have been current; the first to express them was probably T.H. Bowdich (1821) who had the distinction of being the first Englishman to visit Kumasi, in present day Ghana in 1817, and to leave an excellent description of it (1819). Since his time there have been many publications trying on the evidence of slight resemblances to claim Pharaonic Egyptian influences in sub-Saharan Africa. None of these suggestions have stood up to firm scrutiny and even in cases where the resemblances seem close there is no way of knowing in which direction the influence went - that Egypt, in itself by definition an African state, was influenced from further south may well be so. The claim that influences always went one way is a hang over from the days when it was thought that 'black' Africa could not have had any serious cultural development of its own and that whenever high quality artistic products were found, as for example at Ife, they must be due to outside influence, either Egyptian or in some of the wilder flights of fancy Classical Greek.

It seems that these fanciful views should no longer be stated as fact, as the 'No Frills Guide' does, and that authors of general books should check their sources more carefully.

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VOICES FROM THE SUDANESE PAST

Lidwien Kapteijns offers a flavour of her new book with Jay Spaulding.

“The reason for this is in regard to my female relatives, for the complaints of their mothers give me no respite. When my letter arrives, counsel them. If they want to come to their mothers, send them to us. If they refuse, your land and mine are the same; leave them as they are, for you have been good to them. But do send my sister Zahra to her mother, who has given us no rest from her crying! As for my daughter Raqiya, her mother misses her; send her with the kamkolak, and she will assuage this yearning and return to her grandmother. This, and farewell.”

This was the content of a letter which Sultan Bakhit Abu Risha, the last sultan of independent Dar Sila, wrote to his north-eastern neighbour, Ali Dinar of Dar Fur, on January 15th 1915. The letter is one of 119 Arabic documents (with English translations) which make up a new book by Lidwien Kapteijns and Jay Spaulding, called “After the Millenium: Diplomatic Correspondence from Wadai and Dar Fur on the Eve of Colonial Conquest, 1885-1916” (East Lansing, 1989).

The period covered by the documents was a dramatic one in the history of the region, which first witnessed a general revolt against the expansionist policies of the Mahdist state (1885-1898), and then the struggle of the kingdoms against colonial conquest by the French (from the west) and the British (from the east). Eventually the fate of the kingdoms was decided on the battlefield, as row after row of noble horsemen were mowed down by European machine guns. The correspondence presented in this book offers a glimpse of the world of the kings before their demise. It shows them involved in their customary activities such as arranging diplomatic marriages, forging political alliances, administering foreign trade, demanding tribute from weaker neighbours, and quarrelling about the control of border communities. It also shows them, however, desperately struggling with the unfamiliar rules and unrealistic demands of the new European overlords.

The majority of the letters were written by the rulers of Wadai, Dar Zaghawa, Dar Teem, Dar Qimr, Dar Masalit, Dar Fur, the Bani Husayn and Bani Halba, Dar Kuti and Dar Gila to each other; seven letters were addressed to officials of the Mahdist state and twenty to representatives of the French and British colonial governments. Only two letters were written by a woman: Habboba Kubra, the queen mother of Dar Fur. Most letters are couched in colloquial Sudanese Arabic - very colloquial Arabic! This is one of the fascinating and moving aspects of this correspondence, which gives these voices of the Sudanese past a directness and a ring of authenticity equalled only by oral history and folklore.

The correspondence documents the end of an era. On the one hand it offers glimpses of an old order whose paragons confidently carry on their customary business of government. On the other hand it conveys the gradually more anxious voices of men who began to realise that the world they had known was passing away.

The book is available from the Publications Desk, African Studies Center, Michigan State University, MI 48824-1035, USA. The price is \$12.50 for Africa, \$30 for Europe, \$25 for USA; add \$2 for surface mail.



NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND LOCAL INTEGRITY

Jörg Adelberger reviews: NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND LOCAL INTEGRITY- THE MIRI OF THE NUBA MOUNTAINS IN THE SUDAN, by G Baumann, Clarendon Press, Oxford (1987), 225pp. £25.

Gerd Baumann's book is concerned with the Miri, an ethnic group in the south western Nuba Mountains of South Kordofan, and their place within, and in relation to, the wider framework of the Republic of the Sudan. It is based on a wide variety of sources: published literature, archival sources, unpublished theses and manuscripts, and his own field research among the Miri which equalled 18 months between 1976 and 1979. During this time he gained an intimate knowledge of the culture of the Miri which, combined with his access to written sources, allowed him to write this remarkable work.

In the Sudan we can observe a tendency - be it conscious or unconscious - to unify the various sub-cultures within its boundaries in its effort of nation-building. The most obvious expression of this tendency is the rapid spread of a northern Sudanese urban culture and lifestyle on local cultures. It is a process observable by anyone concerned with the Sudan and has been termed by Doornbos and Lionel Bender (1983) 'Sudanization'. It is the special relationship between the Miri as a Nuba-group and the provincial and national network within which they live, the identity they maintain and their attitudes towards this framework that are the main themes of Baumann's book. The reader can find information on the various aspects and institutions of the Miri society such as economic activities, political and ritual experts, kinship and descent. Special attention is given to music and dance, which is a vital part of the culture of the Miri and does not only symbolize or reflect other institutions, but is a social fact in its own right (p.27). Unlike in a 'traditional' ethnography the Miri culture is not treated institution by institution, but the reader is presented with a stringent and enviably structured argument which shows in detail how the Miri became integrated in the national economy and the effects this had on their culture. Was the policy during the Condominium to preserve the Nuba communities and try to prevent them from being arabicized and islamized? The developments since independence have shown that - at least in the case of the Miri - they maintained an identity of their own, despite taking over and integrating cultural institutions of Arabic or northern Sudanese origin.

This book is a remarkable piece of scholarly work and a major contribution to the social anthropology and (local) history of the Sudan. It is of interest for everyone engaged in Sudanese studies, or having a regional interest in the Sudan, in ethnic identity or the relationship between centre and periphery in the process of nation-building in general.

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ECOLOGY OF SURVIVAL

Tony Trilsbach reviews: THE ECOLOGY OF SURVIVAL: CASE STUDIES FROM NORTHEAST AFRICAN HISTORY, by Johnson, D.H. and Anderson, D. (eds.), Lester Crook Academic Publishing, London (1988), 339pp. - hardback. ISBN 1-870915-00-3 or 0-8133-0727-9 - for Westview Press, £19.95.

This is an excellent new addition to the literature on famine, ecological adjustment and social change in north east Africa.

Although the book is about north east Africa in general, it does have a major Sudanese input. Sudan features prominently in the first two chapters on ‘Human Adaptation and Long-Term Climatic Change in Northeast Africa. An Archaeological Perspective’ (by J.A. J. Gowlett) and ‘The Great Drought and Famine of 1888-92 in Northeast Africa’ (by R. Pankhurst and D.H. Johnson). Later chapters deal specifically with Sudanese case studies - ‘Primary Export Crop Production and the Origins of the Ecological Crisis in Kordofan: the case of Dar Hamar’ (by M. B. Ahmed), ‘Cultivation as a Long-Term Strategy of Survival: the Berti of Darfur’ (by L. Holy), ‘Traders, Farmers and Pastoralists: Economic Adaptions and Environmental Problems in the Southern Nuba Mountains Area of Sudan’ (by L.O. Manger), and ‘Adaptation to Floods in the Jonglei Area of the Sudan: An Historical Analysis’ (by D.H. Johnson). Other chapters deal with Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia.

In recent years many publications have appeared discussing the causes and consequences of famines, droughts and social and economic adaptations, but this book manages to find a new perspective on this by now well-worn topic. Most contributors are not specialist ecologists or environmental scientists, but historians, anthropologists and archaeologists. Their approach reminds us that recent and ongoing events are not new but part of a long-term cycle of ecological/environmental disasters, a point made with a convincingly forceful argument, particularly with reference to the ecological stresses of the 1880s and 1890s. Another important point which emerges is the cycle of response to disaster;

‘The historical experience of the more distant past illustrates the c ways in which disasters of similar magnitude have resulted in the subsequent reconstitution of rural life, new networks being gradually constructed to replace those shattered by drought, famine or epidemic.’ (p.24)

The argument is also used as a commentary on present day remedies,

“In the wake of the 1980s famine ‘crisis management’ has encouraged the quest for ‘Quick Fixes’ - immediate remedies to alleviate the ills of rural life, based upon a superficial analysis of the present ‘crisis’, and in ignorance of the complex set of responses societies have been able to invoke in past periods of ecological stress, we think it unlikely that such prescriptions will be effective. But the greater danger is that ‘crisis management’ will itself further erode the capacity of the societies of northeast Africa to rebuild their own strategies of survival.” (p.24)



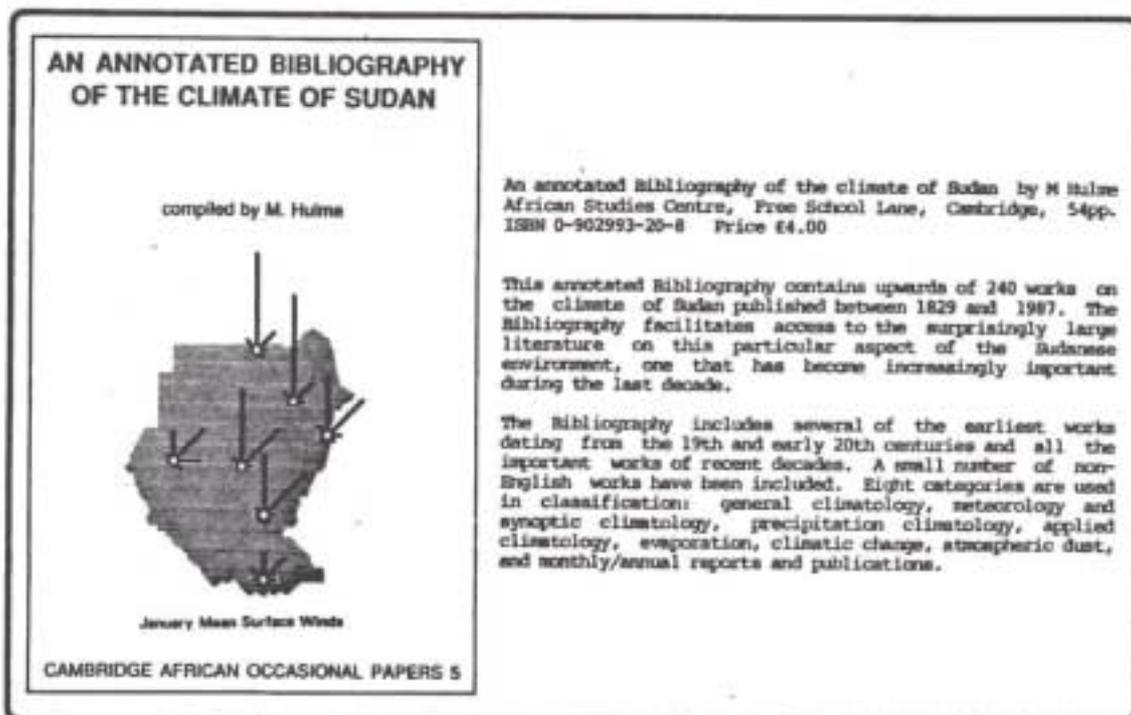
The message is clearly powerful and relevant to today's circumstances.

The case study chapters give ample supporting evidence to the general theme of the book and in most cases the reader is presented with a history of ecological change and adaptation over several decades. In general, the arguments are convincing and encourage the reader interested in this broad area of ecological change to read more widely in historical material and to see the present from afar.

Overall, the book is well written and presented in a neat and attractive form. Like all multi-authored works it has elements of disjointing, but even here the whole is more integrated than is often the case with books of this type. My one 'grouse' is that there have been occasional lapses in proof-reading, but even here the cases are few in number.

To summarise, this is an excellent book and I can strongly recommend it to ecologists, anthropologists, geographers, historians and the like. It is a valuable contribution to an important topic, and its approach is refreshingly original.

In addition to being the SSSUK Secretary and Editor of SUDAN STUDIES, Dr Tony Triltsch is Temporary Lecturer in Geography at the University of Durham.





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SUDAN WARS STUDY GROUP

The Sudan Wars Study Group of the Victorian Military Society, is open to all members of the VMS interested in studying the wars of Egyptian imperial expansion into northeast and East Africa, the Sudan wars of the 1880s and 1890s, and the campaigns of imperial expansion in Ethiopia. The study group produced a study guide listing books of essential reading, museum exhibits, archives and libraries containing manuscript collections related to the topic. The study guide is now out of print, but an expanded second edition is being considered, and it will include a more comprehensive list of manuscript materials.

Anyone with information of museum collections and archival material on Sudan/Ethiopian wars from c.1820-1914 (in European as well as British museums and libraries) is invited to contact the Sudan Wars Study Group, Dr D.H. Johnson, 1 Northmoor Road, Oxford, OX2 6UW.

The Faculty of Science at the University of Khartoum has recently launched (early 1986) a new journal called The Sudan Journal of Science. Anyone wishing to obtain further details should contact.

Dr A.E. Elshafie - (Managing Editor), Sudan Journal of Science, c/o Faculty of Science, University of Khartoum, PO Box 321, Khartoum, Sudan.

(Telex 22113 GAMA SD).

TAIL-PIECE

Mr F.W. Blake offers another interesting anecdote from the Condominium.

It was the practice of postmasters to report by telegram all cases of faults on telegraph lines to headquarters stating that a particular line was faulty, and later, the fact that the fault was cleared and cause of fault.

In the Autumn of 1952 a telegram arrived at Wad Medani from Gedaref stating that a certain fault had been cleared and cause of fault was due to "mother of all birds nesting on line". Wad Medani office then telegraphed to Gedaref "your telegram No.... not understood hereby repeated please clear". A telegram was later received from Gedaref stating "my telegram No.... correction cause of fault 'smother of small birds resting on the line'".

The latter would refer to the enormous flocks of Queleas to be found in the Gedaref area at that time of year.