Sudan Studies
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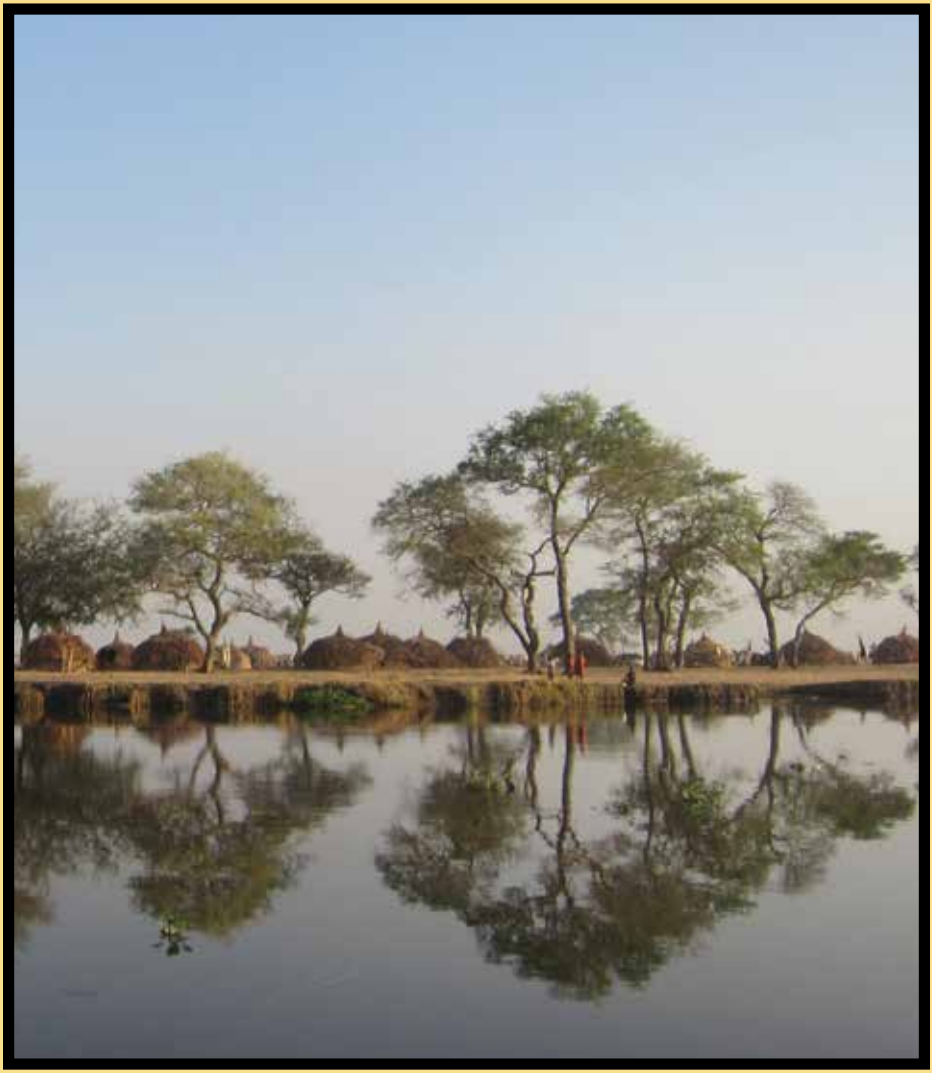

Front cover photograph: Temporary settlement along the Pow river, Bahr-el-Zeraf (Credit: Gregor Schmidt).

Contents

Editorial 1

SSSUK Seminars 4
Mawan Muortat

Editing Sudan 6
Douglas H. Johnson

A Border Too Far – the Ilemi Triangle Yesterday and Today, Part 2 23
Philip Winter

Prospects for the Political Participation of Sudanese Women in the post- December 2018 Revolution Era 41
Suad M. E. Musa

Sudan in the Mosaic Rooms 56
Aziz El Nur

Sudan's Film Industry after the Revolution: a world of opportunities 59
Ricardo Preve

Sanders of the Sudd? 70
Douglas H. Johnson

The Church's Commitment to Reconciliation in South Sudan 72
Father Gregor Schmidt

Contact Tracing in 1903: How one man turned around a potential smallpox disaster 86
Ann Crichton-Harris

Book Reviews

Lutz Oette, Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker (eds), *Constitution-Making and Human Rights in the Sudans* 91

Khalid Wad Albaih and Larissa-Diana Fuhrmann (eds), *Sudan Retold* 97

Victor Lugala, *White house* 99

Lia Paradis, *Imperial Culture and the Sudan: Authorship, identity and the British Empire* 102

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Editorial

Happy New Year and welcome to Issue 63 of *Sudan Studies*. Last year was a difficult one for us all and SSSUK was unable to hold our Symposium in London. However, in September, when we usually hold our annual gathering, instead we held our second webinar. This was a discussion about the Sudanese revolution of 2019 and the prospects for lasting democracy and it's reported on below. You can revisit our on-line meetings on our website at www.sssuk.org

We begin this issue with articles by **Douglas H. Johnson** and **Philip Winter**, who have both conducted research into the history and ethnography of Sudan and South Sudan. In his article 'Editing Sudan', our former Chairperson, Douglas, reviews his efforts over the past decades to edit and publish his source materials, while Philip, a long-standing SSSUK member, presents the second and final part of his paper about the border issues affecting the Ilemi Triangle between South Sudan and Kenya. He considers the period from the 1920s, during the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, until the present day.

The contribution from **Suad Musa**, 'Prospects for the Political Participation of Sudanese Women in the post-December 2018 Revolution Era', was written in July but we unfortunately did not have the space to publish it then. It is an important and interesting article and we are pleased to publish it here. It's followed by **Aziz El Nur Abdel Majid**'s short review of the London gallery the Mosaic Rooms and its (sadly Covid-curtailed) 2020 programme of events dedicated to Sudan.

Cultural expression is also explored by **Ricardo Preve** and **Douglas H. Johnson**, who both write about Sudanese cinema or films about Sudan. Ricardo is an Argentinian-Italian filmmaker and SSSUK member whose most recent feature film, 'Coming Home, was partly shot in Sudan and was broadcast on Sudan National TV last May. We published the story of his research in Issue 53 of *Sudan Studies*. In 'Sudan's Film Industry after the Revolution: a world of opportunities', Ricardo suggests that after nearly 30 years of cultural repression, Sudan's artists are ready to burst forth with renewed energy and show their creative talents on the international scene. This is followed by a one-pager by Douglas who asks if Zoltán Korda's 1935 film version of Edgar Wallace's novel *Sanders of the River* could rather be entitled 'Sanders of the Sudd?'

Father **Gregor Schmidt** writes about 'The Church's Commitment to Reconciliation in South Sudan'. Gregor is a Comboni priest who ministers to a Nuer parish in Old Fangak. He describes the spread of the Christian Gospel in South Sudan, especially among the Nuer; reflects on the country's violent conflicts and some of their causes; and finally discusses the reconciliation work

of the Church. His article is accompanied by some beautiful photographs that he has taken.

Our last article is by **Ann Crichton-Harris**, who writes about 'Contact Tracing in 1903: How one man turned around a potential smallpox disaster' in Sudan. She details how her uncle, Dr John B. Christopherson, acted swiftly to tackle cases of smallpox in Omdurman and averted a large-scale pandemic. Ann (who has done extensive research into her uncle's life and work in Sudan) was moved to write the article as the result of a 'light bulb moment' when she realised the parallels between what her uncle had done in Sudan more than a century before and the importance of contact tracing in tackling the current Covid-19 pandemic.

We also have four book reviews: **Ali Agab** reviews **Lutz Oette** and **Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker**'s edited volume *Constitution-Making and Human Rights in the Sudans*; **Aziz El Nur** reviews editors **Khalid Wad Albaih** and **Larissa-Diana Fuhrmann**'s *Sudan Retold*, which contains the output of a workshop for artists held by the Goethe-Institut in Sudan; **Jacob Akol** reviews **Victor Lugala**'s powerful novel about 1990s' Juba, *White house;* and finally, anthropologist **Brendan Tuttle** reviews *Imperial Culture and the Sudan: Authorship, identity and the British Empire* by **Lia Paradis**.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue and if you would like to contribute to a future issue please don't hesitate to get in touch, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Correction: Red Sea Spies Review

In my review of "Red Sea Spies: the true story of Mossad's fake holiday resort" in *Sudan Studies* No. 62 of July 2020, I wrote on p. 127, paragraph 1, that "*The book doesn't mention a meeting in that period between Nimeiri and Israeli Defence Minister (and later Premier) Gen. Ariel Sharon in Nairobi.*" The author, BBC journalist Raffi Berg, has pointed out that he did refer to the meeting in the book's Notes section, under Chapter 14, Note 5: "*It has been reported that, at a secret meeting with a delegation of Israelis, including Defence Minister Ariel Sharon, in Kenya in May 1982, Nimeiri agreed to a deal allowing Israel to evacuate Ethiopian Jews through Sudan. This is denied by a source with intimate knowledge of this meeting, who says no such deal was made. According to the source, although Nimeiri did not veto the idea, nothing came of it.*"

Amid the current controversy about Sudan opening relations with Israel, in October 2020 the Israeli newspaper Haaretz carried a story that in the 1950s, Sudan's Umma Party had sought Israeli help in rallying United States' support to stop Egypt blocking Sudan's independence. It cited Sudanese and official

Israeli sources. Much more research is clearly needed. Sadly, we can no longer ask the views of Umma leader and former Prime Minister El Sadig el Mahdi, who was politically active at that time, as he died of pneumonia while suffering from Covid-19, on 26th November in Abu Dhabi.

Gill Lusk


REVOLUTION! SUDAN'S STRUGGLE FOR LASTING DEMOCRACY
A webinar hosted by the Society for the Study of the Sudans, UK (SSSUK)
Panellists
Ali Abdel Latif
Sudanese
Educationist &
Activist
UK
Dr. Magdi Al Gizouli
Sudanese Academic
& Writer
Germany
Prof. Jok Madut Jok
South Sudanese
Academic, Activist &
Writer
USA
Dr Willow Berridge
British Academic &
Writer
UK
21:00
JUBA
20:00
KHARTOUM
19:00
LONDON
Moderator
Dr. Abdel Azim Al Hassan
Academic & Journalist
Sudanese
SATURDAY
5TH
SEPTEMBER
2020
Watch live at:
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/SSSUK
No Facebook account required unless you wish to comment or ask a question

SSSUK Seminars

The SSSUK has held two online seminars in the past year. The recent rise in online meetings has made the process easier, so we are planning to hold more.

Our first webinar took place in May. The theme was the Coronavirus Pandemic and how it affected the Sudans and their diaspora communities. The panel included two Sudanese doctors, a South Sudanese doctor and a British academic who specialises in the Sudans. Rebecca Bradshaw wrote a full report about this seminar in the last issue of *Sudan Studies* (62).

Then in September, we held a webinar on the Sudanese revolution and the prospects for lasting democracy. The speakers included a British Sudan specialist and four activists and academics from both Sudan and South Sudan.

There are a few ideas in the pipeline for more webinars in 2021; we hope for a discussion about the Wunlit Peace Conference of 1999 between Dinka and Nuer communities in South Sudan. We welcome more suggestions from members for topics and speakers.

Links

Recordings of the seminars can be found at the following locations:

Reflections on the Coronavirus Pandemic in Sudan, South Sudan and the UK

SSSUK website: https://bit.ly/343IV03
SSSUK YouTube channel: https://bit.ly/37aCdr0
SSSUK Facebook page: https://bit.ly/34b2B1U

Revolution! Sudan's Struggle for Lasting Democracy

SSSUK website: https://bit.ly/2WaLM2S
SSSUK YouTube channel: https://bit.ly/2JTgH1g
SSSUK Facebook page: https://bit.ly/2Wdn2XE

Mawan Muortat
Website Manager

Editing Sudan*

Douglas H. Johnson

Evans-Pritchard, the prolific ethnographer of the peoples of South Sudan, was critical of anthropologists who seldom made 'very serious efforts to reconstruct from historical records and verbal traditions the past of the people they studied.' He was an early advocate for recording and publishing verbal traditions as texts 'which permit the sources to speak for themselves and in their own idiom' (Evans-Pritchard 1962). During the last two decades of his active career he published several texts on Zande history and social life, and as one of the founding editors of the Oxford Library of African Literature facilitated the publication of oral and written texts from around Africa (Johnson, forthcoming).

Despite Evans-Pritchard's advocacy very few academics over the last sixty plus years have edited and published the sources they use, whether transcripts of oral texts or written documents. For one thing academics receive very little professional credit for editing source materials as opposed to writing books and articles based on their research using those sources. Second, there is very little commercial demand for volumes of edited sources, they are rarely used in teaching, so publishers are disinclined to publish them without a substantial subsidy. With these disincentives it is not surprising that relatively few documents and texts have been published about Africa, and even fewer about Sudan. The main outlets for such publications have been the Haklyut Society's long running series of exploration literature from around the world, and the British Academy's more limited *Fontes Historiae Africanae*.

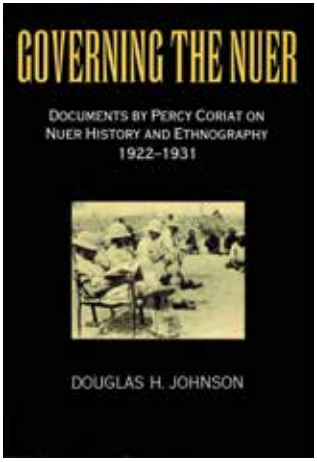
With all these reasons for **not** editing documents and texts, perhaps I would have been better advised not to spend my time transcribing and annotating my sources. However, there are definite benefits for authors as well as readers to publishing source materials. It helps authors gain command over their sources and gives readers access to primary materials that are otherwise inaccessible. Of the fourteen books I have published over a thirty-year period six are edited volumes of documents and texts drawn from nineteenth century exploration literature, early twentieth century administrative records, interviews, and mid-twentieth century diplomatic correspondence. Each have specific requirements for their genre, but there are some basic rules for editing documents of all types.

The choice of documents and the manner of their presentation depends mainly on their intended audience. British archivists often have been critical of historians' selection of records as an artificial presentation that removes

records from their archival context of surrounding and related documents. One purpose of an archive is to preserve the provenance of the records they keep, to preserve their authenticity, which can be lost or distorted if individual documents are removed. Governments, of course, have been publishing selections of records for years: think Blue Books and Parliamentary Papers. Since even in our emerging digital age it is still not possible to present the entire contents of an archive online for public access we just have to learn to live with the process of editorial selection and publication.

The editorial treatment of documents should not be intrusive. At the same time the editorial apparatus should provide the context and background information that contemporary readers would have had to understand the content. Persons and events mentioned in the texts need to be identified, a separate glossary of frequently used foreign words or technical terms is useful, and some reference should be made in notes or introductory material to the wider paper trail of which a document is a part. Too many annotations or insertions of [*sic*] and missing let[t]ers in brackets can be distracting, but 'silent editing' – corrections of typos, insertions of punctuation, modernising spelling, a general tidying up of a document to make it more presentable – can also remove important information about the author of a document or the conditions under which it was created.

Each of the volumes I edited had specific audiences in mind, but the reception was sometimes surprising. Below I explain my reasons for selecting the sources I did, and some of the reactions to their publication.



Percy Coriat, *Governing the Nuer. Documents in Nuer History and Ethnography, 1922-31*, JASO Occasional Papers No. 9 (Oxford: JASO, 1993; reprinted Wanneroo, WA: Africa World Books, 2016. ISBN 978-0-9943631-5-2).

Evans-Pritchard inspired a whole genre of secondary reinterpretations of his Nuer ethnography, primarily concerned with using his data to construct new theoretical insights. Before new fieldwork began to provide additional data these desk studies drew on published sources by administrators and missionaries who preceded and succeeded Evans-Pritchard in the field: very largely articles published in journals such as *Sudan Notes and Records* and a few book length memoirs and monographs readily available in university libraries.

Unfortunately, most of these revisionists lacked the historical knowledge and the critical skills with which to evaluate these supplementary sources, giving them primacy mainly because they were available.

During my doctoral research, and later as archivist in the Southern Regional Government transferring closed files from district and provincial offices to Juba, I was impressed by the volume of ethnographic as well as historical material contained in government records, and I was particularly intrigued by reports by Percy Coriat, the first British official to become conversant in Nuer. During my own fieldwork I had based myself in Ayod, his first district headquarters, where he was well remembered by the older generation of Gaawar Nuer. I made copies of every substantive report of his that I came across (usually typing them on my Olivetti Lettera 32 portable typewriter). I was also able to negotiate his widow's deposit of his surviving personal papers to Rhodes House, Oxford (unfortunately Richard Hill's successor and Lesley Forbes' predecessor in Durham had alienated a number of old Sudanis who then preferred to deposit their papers elsewhere). Coriat served in most of the Nuer districts in the 1920s and was a participant in the events that led to their eventual subjugation and incorporation into Sudan's system of Native Administration. His reports provided detailed sketches of aspects of Nuer societies at that time, and this was particularly interesting to me because I had visited many of the same communities some fifty years later when I learned something about Coriat's reputation as an administrator, the friendships he made among some of the Nuer chiefs, the Nuer wife he married, and the Nuer perspective on the events in which he was a major participant.

This was the first collection of source materials I edited. Unlike later volumes of administrative papers it was in effect a single author collection, and my introduction included a brief biography of Coriat and an assessment of the ethnographic and historical value of his writings. I drew on both Nuer and British assessments of Coriat's character and his style of administration. I could not verify all the stories the Nuer told me, some of which might have been embellishments of events during the punitive campaigns of the late 1920s. Coriat lost an eye during the Gallipoli campaign in the First World War, but one Nuer explanation was that it had been plucked out by a thorn branch as he chased Nuer through a forest on his horse. There was often a grudging admiration of his character. As John Wicjaal Buom, the son of one of Coriat's chiefs and later an administrator himself, explained to me, "What I know is that my father was a hard man. Coriat was a hard man. They got on well together." Contemporary British assessments were usually enthusiastic, though later generations were more reserved. John Winder, one of Coriat's successors and later the last British governor of Upper Nile Province described him as a "stark character".

Contrary to the members of the Sudan Political Service's self-image as chaste Boy Scouts when it came to native women, Coriat married a Nuer wife. This was well known among his contemporaries as well as his successors, and I recorded the details one of Coriat's chiefs' policemen gave me of the cattle they collected together for the bridewealth. I felt obliged before publishing the book to tell his English daughter that her father had married a Nuer woman. "Well, they all did," was her response. Her only quibble was my use of the term 'marry', which I altered to the more cumbersome 'exchanged full bridewealth in cattle'.

I organised the documents around four broad themes: Coriat's administration of the Gaawar and Lou Nuer, the making of a tribal boundary between the Nuer and Dinka, events during the government's punitive campaigns against the Lou and Gaawar, and Coriat's administration of the Western Nuer. The collection was bookended with an autobiographical fragment about his early posting to Ayod and comments on Evans-Pritchard's first analytical paper on the Nuer.

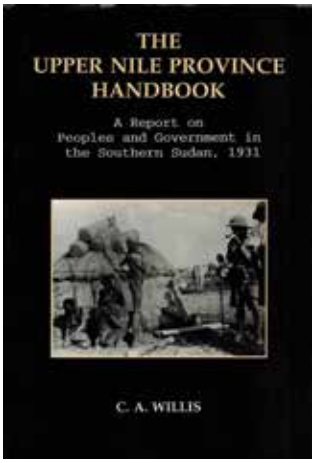
Each document was prefaced with a short introduction explaining the context of its creation. Annotations identified the persons mentioned in the documents (British, Nuer, and Dinka), or cross-referenced other publications or documents in the National Records Office in Khartoum, the Southern Regional Records Office in Juba, and Durham's Sudan Archive.

The book was published with a grant from the British Academy by JASO, an anthropology journal produced by the Institute of Social Anthropology in Oxford that had recently begun a series of occasional papers. It had a limited distribution at first and few reviews. In the United States it won the African Studies Association Text Prize (now called the Paul Hair Prize) and was commended for its 'value-added editing' (I mention this as the only comment I have received on the editing of documents, as opposed to their content).

I shared this collection with some of Coriat's surviving administrative successors. John Winder was pleasantly surprised that Coriat's handing over notes were "very good indeed, and certainly more business-like than I would have expected," given that unlike the majority of members of the Sudan Political Service (SPS) Coriat had not gone to university. Paul Howell was appalled that I claimed that Coriat's contemporaries considered him a "model DC". He was also disturbed by my documenting the harsher side of British administration among the Nuer. He and Richard Gray agreed to be referees for our application for a British Academy grant. Paul submitted a favourable report but privately urged me very strongly to make changes to the manuscript, almost as a *quid pro quo*. I was satisfied then, and still am, that I had good grounds for what I wrote so I did not make the changes he expected. A surprising endorsement

came from Robin Hodgkin who served in Sudan as an educator, but in the early years of World War Two was attached to Coriat in Nahud as a temporary assistant DC. He remembered Coriat as "extremely kind" with bookshelves of "lots of enlightened, intelligent, interesting stuff. Even poetry. Not quite what I'd been taught to expect from a bog baron...over all it was the impression of friendly, unstuffy toughness that came across most strongly."

The Nuer reaction came much later. It was only when Awak Bior, then working in the EU office in Juba, opened Leaves Bookstore, that I was able to send her all the remaining copies. They sold out very quickly. South Sudanese readers were of course interested to read first-hand accounts of this turbulent time in their modern history when the foundations of rural administration were being laid down. Many Nuer readers were particularly interested in the personality reports about this first generation of chiefs, despite (or even because) of some derogatory comments, as these were their parents, grandparents and even great-grandparents. In the absence of a Sudanese version of Ancestry.com this became one of their few tools for genealogical research.



C. A. Willis, et al., *The Upper Nile Province Handbook: A Report on Peoples and Government in the Southern Sudan, 1931*, Oriental and African Archives 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1995; paperback edition Wanneroo, WA: Africa World Books, 2015. ISBN 978-0-9943631-0-7).

The publication of *The Upper Nile Province Handbook* was a British Academy (BA) funded project in collaboration with Durham's Sudan Archive, where certain book length manuscripts were selected by a committee for editing and publication as part of an Oriental and African Archive series. One of the manuscripts chosen by the BA was a draft handbook for the Upper Nile Province compiled by the retiring governor, C. A. Willis, as his handing over notes to his successor in 1931. It contained descriptions of each of the province's districts (including Yirol, later transferred to Bahr el-Ghazal, and Gambeila, a customs post leased from Ethiopia) written by the relevant district commissioners, a general introduction by Willis himself and his proposals for future administration of the province. He had intended it for publication as a handbook by the Sudan government, but this never happened.

Prof. P. M. Holt approached me for advice about who might be recruited as an editor. I was familiar with the manuscript, having consulted copies in Durham and the National Records Office in Khartoum, along with the handing over notes by several of Willis' successors as governor. Rather selfishly I proposed myself as editor. I also suggested that two other manuscripts in Willis' papers in Durham — the handing over notes of Willis' predecessor, K.C.P. Struvé, and Willis' own report on the possible effects on the local population of the proposed Sudd diversion project — be included as appendices. Struvé had written extensive notes for Willis, who had never served in a southern province before, and Willis had brought the only copy of those handing over notes with him when he left Sudan. The Sudd diversion project was the precursor of the Jonglei Canal scheme, then halted by Sudan's civil war and a controversial element of the hydro-politics of the wider region. Prof. Holt accepted both this suggestion and my selfless offer to edit the whole.

I worked from a photocopy of Durham's copy of the manuscripts. It would have been just possible to have them scanned into a word file, but however good an optical character recognition programme might be it would still require careful monitoring during scanning as well as subsequent proof-reading. I offered to transcribe the manuscripts onto word files on my computer myself, inserting any annotations as I went, the British Academy paying me per thousand words. Since Coriat's handing-over notes for Western Nuer had already been published in full in *Governing the Nuer*, and the length of the handbook was being increased by the addition of two appendices, my introduction, a comprehensive bibliography on the Upper Nile, and other notes, Prof Holt suggested that I might legitimately reduce my work load by cutting out some parts of the Western Nuer chapter. I agreed to this with relief and excised the final eight sections of the report (buildings, forestry, sundry, district officials and employees, military and intelligence, medical, office organisation, returns, and the 1929-1930 budget). Given the reception the book later had among South Sudanese I now regret this short cut. The excisions reduced the book's overall value as a snapshot of a part of South Sudan in the immediate aftermath of pacification and at the early construction of Native Administration. At that time few readers could have access to *Governing the Nuer* to read the full document if they wanted to.

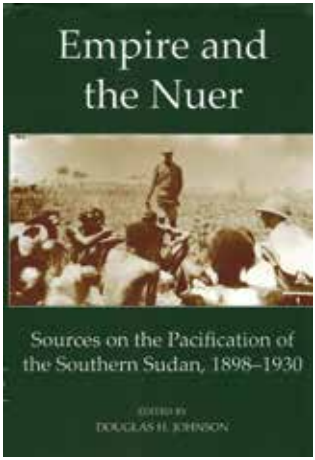
There were some lessons from editing *Governing the Nuer* that I was able to apply to the *Handbook*. As it had been intended for publication, and would have been proofread and corrected before publication, some amount of 'silent editing' was legitimate, so I made mild corrections of typos and other mistakes.

I had used footnotes to identify each person named in the *Governing the Nuer* texts. This turned out to be both intrusive and distracting, especially when there was cross-referencing between documents. By the time I started work on the *Handbook* I was also involved in the British Documents on the End of Empire Project (see below), so I adopted their formula of providing a separate section of biographical notes for all 202 persons mentioned in the manuscripts. Just for fun and completeness I also included an appendix of all the river boats mentioned, cribbed from Richard Hill's two-part register of river and marine craft published in *Sudan Notes and Records*.

The *Handbook* was published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press, priced at £40.00. It was eventually remaindered to Oxbow Books, conveniently located in Oxford, at a more reasonable price. I sent several batches of the *Handbook* to Awak Bior's Leaves Bookstore in Juba, and these, too, sold out quickly. By the time I proposed to buy up all remaining copies for Leaves I discovered that an Australian-based bookseller had beat me to it and had bought up the rest of the stock. This was Peter Lual Deng, a South Sudanese refugee resettled in Perth, Western Australia, where he had founded his own publishing company, Africa World Books. He had bought the *Handbook* because of its description of his home district and his grandfather and found that there were many other Australian South Sudanese who had a similar interest in the book. He soon sold out all the copies he had bought.

Peter's interest and the business he was building gave us the chance to keep both *Governing the Nuer* and *The Upper Nile Province Handbook* in print and available to their biggest potential market: South Sudanese. We persuaded JASO to license Africa World Books to produce their own paperback edition of *Governing the Nuer*, and I persuaded the British Academy and Oxford University Press to revert the copyright of the *Handbook* to me so that Peter could bring out a paperback edition. Using the new print-on-demand technology and online marketing Africa World Books is able to keep both books in print without having to invest heavily in large print runs and warehousing.

The *Handbook* is naturally of genealogical interest for South Sudanese from what is now called Greater Upper Nile because each chapter follows the format of standard handing over notes with lists of chiefs, minor officials, traders, and sometime even lunatics. Because it gives a description of each district as they were in 1931 it has also become a source in the current debates over historic district boundaries. One South Sudanese reader even proposed that a copy of the *Handbook* be sent to each of the newly appointed governors of the states extracted from Greater Upper Nile. I 've not heard yet whether the government has followed up on that suggestion.



Empire and the Nuer: Documents and Texts in the Pacification of the Southern Sudan, 1898-1930, Fontes Historiae Africanae New Series, Sources of African History 13 (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 2016. ISBN 978-0-19-726588-8).

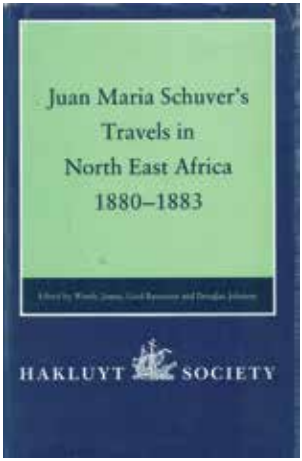
It had always been my intention to edit more than one volume of documents on Nuer history, and I planned a companion volume to *Governing the Nuer* to cover the first three decades of contact between the Nuer and the Anglo-Egyptian government. This included contemporary reports of most of the government's 'pacification' campaigns against the Nuer and was provisionally titled *Conquering the Nuer*. Although this was the first collection I planned it took the longest to put together. Since the history of the Condominium has been written very largely from government records and very few indigenous Sudanese sources of any type I chose to combine transcripts and translations from my own oral interviews with government records not only to demonstrate that there were alternative interpretations of common events, but also to show where the combination of oral and written sources also complemented and confirmed each other. All the interviews had been taped and vernacular transcriptions and English translations were provided by a number of South Sudanese colleagues acknowledged in the book. Government records came from several sources: the printed *Sudan Intelligence Reports*, the National Records Office, Khartoum, and the South Sudan National Archive in Juba. Unfortunately, among the latter a number of files I had deposited in Juba in 1981-1983 have since gone missing, due to the neglect of the archives during the twenty-two years of Sudan's second civil war. Fortunately, I had retained my typed transcripts of some of those missing records and was able to include them in the book.

Documents in *Governing the Nuer* had been arranged topically, but here I arranged the documents in strict chronological order, interspersed with interview texts dealing with the same events. Where a full text of a document already exists in print (as in *Sudan Intelligence Reports*, the governor-general's annual reports, or *Governing the Nuer*) I sometimes reprinted an extract rather than the full document. I added appendices of 174 biographical notes, river boats, and an extensive bibliography of archival records and publications on the Nuer and their neighbours, excluding secondary commentaries that were not based on primary sources and original research. As an epilogue to the doc-

uments I reprinted an abstract of Evans-Pritchard's lecture on administrative problems in the southern Sudan that he gave in Margery Perham's Oxford Summer School on Colonial Administration in 1938, where he highlighted the moral relations between southern Sudanese and government as 'the most fundamental of administrative problems'. In many ways the documents and texts in this collection illustrated that very problem.

When I was finalising the book's page proofs I informed Awak Bior that *Conquering the Nuer* was about to be published. She immediately emailed back asking if the title was a joke, as she would never stock a book with that title in Leaves. This was January 2014. Given the events that had taken place in Juba the previous month I realised that what might have seemed an appropriate historical title when the book was first planned some decades ago was now highly inappropriate, especially for potential readers in Juba. Fortunately, there was time to change the title to something more neutral but still historically appropriate.

I have transcribed a number of other administrative records about the Nuer from the 1930s and 1940s, all written by Nuer-speaking British district commissioners, and many engaging directly with Evans-Pritchard's ethnography. It would be possible to produce yet a third volume of Nuer records, an archival trilogy to match Evans-Pritchard's classic Nuer trilogy. Yet, somehow I feel that this just might be too much of a good thing.



Wendy James, Gerd Baumann, and Douglas Johnson (eds), *Juan Maria Schuver's Travels in North East Africa, 1880-1883*, Hakluyt Society Second Series, Volume 184 (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1996. ISBN 0-904180-45-X).

I had very little to do in the editing of this book, but it was a hugely collaborative effort, leading to real discoveries, and in many ways was the most fun I have ever had in editing.

The nineteenth century exploration literature of North East Africa was focused mainly on the Nile Basin and highland Ethiopia. Few travellers came to, or wrote about, the Sudan-Ethiopian borderlands or lowland Ethiopia. When Wendy switched her research focus from Sudan's southern Blue Nile region to Ethiopia's Bela Shangul and Wallegga provinces across the border her literature search uncovered a solid German tome, *Reisin im oberen Nilgebiet. Erlebnisse und beobachtungen auf der Wasserscheide*

zwischen Blauem und Weissem Nil und in den ägyptisch-abessinischen Grenzländern 1881 und 1882, written by a little-known Dutch traveller and published by *Petermanns Geogrphische Mitteilungen*. Juan Maria Schuver (Richard Hill incorrectly gives his name as Jan Maria (Hill 1967) was the son of a wealthy Amsterdam merchant family with a taste for adventure, managing to get himself captured by both sides in the Third Carlist War in Spain in the 1870s before travelling to Turkey where he hoped to become another Schliemann in an archaeological venture that never materialised. He then moved on to Egypt with the intention of becoming an African explorer. After travelling beyond Fadasi and Famaka in the Turco-Egyptian Sudan he returned to Khartoum before heading to Meshra el-Rek in Bahr el-Ghazal, just as the Dinka were rising in revolt. He was murdered in August 1883, "the victim of his own obstinacy", Emin Bey later reported.

Schuver's technical skills in determining latitude, longitude, and altitude were limited, so while he corresponded with several geographical societies he never achieved the scientific acceptance he sought. It is his observations of the countryside and peoples during the years immediately leading up to the Mahdiyya that make his writings so interesting today.

The *Reisen* is written in rather stiff German. Fortunately, Wendy's mother was fluent in German and translated relevant passages out loud while Wendy took notes. It was only when ethno-musicologist Gerd Baumann was resident in Oxford completing his book on the Nuba, (Baumann 1987) that she found a willing German-speaking academic collaborator in publishing an English language edition. Gerd began translating the German text but soon pointed out that the Petermanns' edition was itself a German translation from Schuver's English and French manuscripts. It would be far better, he proposed, to locate those manuscripts and work from the originals.

The discovery of Schuver's manuscripts involved several people and is described in the book. Professor Harrie Leyten, a Dutch colleague and former student at Oxford's Institute of Social Anthropology, managed to locate descendants of the once wealthy Schuver family. They had a vague memory of an ancestor who had gone to Africa and "had been eaten by crocodiles" (in fact Schuver describes how one of his dogs was eaten by a crocodile in the Blue Nile). One of them also had a vague idea of where a bundle of old papers had been stored. These were located and turned out to be Schuver's original manuscripts, still wrapped in the paper that Petermanns had used when returning them.

Wendy and Gerd found that Schuver's English drafts were the most straightforward and unembellished accounts of his travels, while the French drafts were written up in a more elegant and philosophical style. The Petermanns

editors had selected bits from each to translate, leaving out, for instance, Schuver's description of the journey through Nubia to Khartoum since, presumably, this provided no new geographical information. Now, of course, any description of this region on the eve of the Mahdiyya is of historical interest.

Decisions on how best to edit these manuscripts depended in part on the interest of a publisher. The Hakluyt Society had been publishing scholarly editions of exploration literature for over a century and a half. Most of their publications had been of ancient travels from the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, or the eighteenth century, but they had recently decided to include more recent travels from the nineteenth century. Their agreement to take on the volume provided the opportunity to do more than just knit together the English and French manuscripts and reinsert those passages excised by the German edition. It meant tracing Schuver's travels beyond the Sudan-Ethiopian border into the Bahr el-Ghazal where he died, and to search out his correspondence with various geographical societies published in Dutch, German, French, Italian, and English in contemporary geographical journals. In effect we were given license to produce as full a biography of the man as possible with details of all his African travels.

Wendy and Gerd collaborated on translating Schuver's French manuscripts and publications, while Gerd translated the German and Dutch. During this time he was appointed to a position in the University of Amsterdam and followed up other leads from the fragments of Schuver's autobiography found among his papers. He discovered that Schuver had sent back to Amsterdam several items of material culture, not only from his borderland travels but including plunder from Egypt's recent conquest of Darfur that showed up in Khartoum's ethnographic art market. These had originally been donated to the cultural section of the Amsterdam Zoo before being transferred to other museums and ending up in the *Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde* (Ethnographic Museum) in Leiden. Two Dutch colleagues, Harrie Leyton and Bill Nolten, worked carefully with the museum staff at Leiden to recover and re-identify the objects which were eventually put on a special display timed with the publication of the book.

Wendy was particularly interested in the vocabularies Schuver collected of several of the borderland languages along with his ethnographic notes, all of which were included in the appendices. Of Gumuz he noted "This is a beautiful language, such as one does not meet up with every day in the Sudan." He was not so sure about other languages, apologising for his Ingassana vocabulary, as "The Negro was chewing tobacco and was hard to understand."

The Italian historian Sandro Triulzi had been brought on to the project at an early stage but was unable to continue. It then fell to me as the most avail-

able historian to help in the writing of the historical sections of the book. I was also drafted in to write most of the footnotes, since whatever scholarly skills they have it is well known that anthropologists generally don't know how to write footnotes. My pedantry was allowed to flourish here and in the separate section of sixty biographical notes. The one discovery for which I can claim full credit was finding correspondence about Schuver's watch in the Cairo Intelligence files in the National Records Office in Khartoum. The Dutch government had reacted to a rumour in 1888 that Schuver was still alive as a prisoner with other Europeans in Omdurman, and that the British government was actively preventing his escape. One of Wingate's agents discovered the watch in the Mahdist *Bayt al-Mal*, retrieved it, and sent it to Cairo via Suakin; thus confirming at least British innocence, if not Schuver's death.

Holland can't claim many exemplars from the heyday of Victorian African exploration. The most famous, and most glamorous, was Alexine Tinné, whose travels and ethnographic collection, like Schuver's, have only recently been described in detail (Willink, 2011). Both Tinné and Schuver approached travel with an over-confidence born of coming from wealthy Dutch trading families. Neither made startling geographical discoveries, but of the two Schuver has left us with the most detailed and interesting account of this period in the region's history.

British Documents on the End of Empire, Series B, Volume 5 Sudan: part 1, 1942-1950; part 2, 1951-1956 (London: The Stationery Office, 1998). Both parts are available from the British Documents on the End of Empire website (https://bdeep.org/) under an Open Government License as free downloadable pdfs:
http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/6131/1/vB5_Sudan_Part_I.pdf
http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/6131/2/vB5_Sudan_Part_II.pdf

The grandly titled British Documents on the End of Empire Project (BDEEP) was a joint venture by the British Academy and the Institute of Commonwealth Studies in London, generously funded by the Leverhulme Trust. The aim of the project was to publish an edited selection of official documents "charting British withdrawal from its colonial territories." Begun in 1987 its volumes were arranged thematically and by country: thematic volumes looked at colonial policy under

the Labour and Conservative governments, and country volumes followed the thirty-year rule in the public release of documents so that only a few of Britain's African territories were covered before funding ran out. Sudan, of course, was not a 'colonial' territory, but it preceded Ghana and Nigeria as the first British-administered African territory to gain independence. I was invited by Michael Crowder, the project's first general editor, to be the Sudan editor. It was an offer I couldn't refuse.

Editors were issued with Public Records Office staff reading cards and were allowed to order as many files at a time as they wanted (rather than the three file restriction for normal readers), and access to a generous (but not unlimited) photocopying budget. In practice I used my typing skills to transcribe short records such as minutes in order to conserve the budget for longer documents (earlier experience gained on my Olivetti Lettera 32 was not wasted).

Each volume in the series follow the same format. Documents are arranged chronologically with titles identifying the type of document, its subject matter, its author and intended recipient. Documents are either reproduced in full or as relevant extracts. Some documents are preceded by an introductory linking paragraph explaining the context in which the document was created and what outcome, if any, followed. The documentary section is preceded by an introduction, a list of major office holders, a chronological table of principal events, and a chapter by chapter summary of the documents. There is a separate section of biographical notes identifying the main authors of the documents and major political and administrative figures. Annotations to the texts are limited to cross-references to other documents, identification of persons mentioned who do not appear in the main biographical apparatus, the text of marginal notes, and occasionally more detail about events mentioned in the texts. I have found this format very useful and adapted it to some of the other contemporaneous editing projects I was working on.

These government records are of a different quality from the administrative reports in the two Nuer volumes and the *Handbook*. They are documents of high policy and diplomacy, rather than the nitty-gritty of local level colonial administration. They record the internal conversations at the upper levels of the British government and between the British and Egyptian and Sudanese governments. The authors are mainly civil servants and diplomats, politicians, the occasional Egyptian and Sudanese counterpart, and even more rarely the lower level British SPS member.

The editors' brief was to select the significant documents concerning decolonisation, but there was no easy consensus around what constituted a 'significant' document. Following Michael Crowder's death as general editor the

task of overseeing the project fell to David Murray and Steven Ashton. As my fellow Ghana country editor Richard Rathbone later remarked both were primarily constitutional historians who then found themselves having to manage a group of social historians (Ronald Hyam, who edited volumes on colonial policy under Labour and Conservative governments is better known for his work on sex and the empire (Hyam 1991)). There were bound to be different ideas of what documents were 'significant', and what they signified.

The series as a whole is primarily about the inner workings of British governments. One approach to the Sudan country volume could have focused on cabinet discussions and the drafting and redrafting of memos and treaties. John Kent was the editor of the three-part volume on Egypt and the defence of the Middle East, and as Sudan was part of the treaty negotiations between Britain and Egypt I was happy for him to deal with most of the high level diplomatic correspondence. My main focus was on the political issues that informed discussions around Sudan's projected self-government and self-determination, as well as broader issues such as the Nile Waters and national borders that a newly independent Sudan would have to face. My work on BDEEP began during the early years of Sudan's second and longest civil war and was completed long before that war concluded. I did not feel justified in following a standard nationalist narrative of Sudan's independence, focusing on the politics and personalities of Sudan's leading nationalist figures of the day. Rather, I decided that it was important to give some space to those internal political issues that remained unresolved at independence, with which Sudan was still grappling.

The very first set of files I called up were the Foreign Office and Colonial Office files on the 1955 Torit Mutiny. These revealed that one effect of the mutiny and resulting disturbances was to accelerate Britain's circumvention of the self-determination process and withdrawal from Sudan. It was also the beginning of a new international approach to refugees in Africa. Before 1955 Sudan, Uganda, and Kenya had internal legislation that enabled each to extradite the other's wanted fugitives. From 1955 on they had to consider the political context of refugees fleeing their country. Harold Macmillan was foreign secretary during the 1955 disturbances and was clearly shaken by this event and its ramifications. Before he left the Foreign Office later that year he began the process that led to Britain's hasty withdrawal. One might say that Macmillan began to feel the winds of change blowing directly in his face as early as 1955, and the lesson he learned from Sudan had a lasting impact on Britain's decolonisation in Africa when he was prime minister.

There were occasional discoveries. A number of documents were held back, either retained by their department or sequestered in Kew. We were allowed to request these to be released, but in order to do so we had to know that they

were about. This required constructing a paper trail from comments in other documents. After Sayyid Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi's visit to London in 1953, for instance, a query came from Khartoum asking why 'SAR' believed that the British government supported his monarchical aspirations? This enabled me to follow back to his conversation with Selwyn Lloyd (Minister of State, deputising for Anthony Eden) and request the release of that file. I t was released, but only as a heavily redacted photocopy. Still enough remained to see how warmly Lloyd spoke about monarchies in general when asked what form of government he felt was best for Sudan (SAR was in London for Queen Elizabeth's coronation), as well as to guess that some financial arrangement was being struck about the purchase of SAR's commercial cotton crop.

Another discovery might be said to have been hiding in plain sight. In October 1954 Southern Sudanese held their own conference in Juba in which they resolved their support for independence from Egypt, a federal system for Sudan, and declared their right to self-determination if all these conditions were not met. Minutes of this Juba conference, along with their resolutions were forwarded to the Foreign Office, the governor-general, and the Egyptian government. William Luce was present in the governor-general's office when their formal resolution was presented, but in his papers now in Durham he denied that a demand for a separate self-determination for the South had been part of the outcome of the 1954 conference, and that he would have remembered it if it had been. Well, we all have lapses of memory as we age.

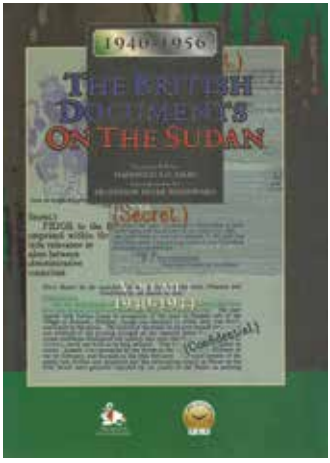
Throughout the winding road that led to British support for Sudanese independence the Colonial Office complained about precedents the Foreign Office (FO) was setting in Sudan. They objected to the FO's early acceptance for self-government and self-determination for Sudan when the Colonial Office (CO) was busy resisting both types of demands elsewhere in Africa. Later when Britain's African colonies were set on the same path they warned the FO of the repercussions for Britain if Her Majesty's Government (HMG) didn't follow through with her promises by allowing Egypt to reassert its sovereignty over Sudan. Where the FO set precedents the CO eventually had to follow.

There is now a school of thought that the real architects of Sudan's independence, the true 'nationalists', so to speak, were the British members of the SPS. This belief has been fostered by some former members of the SPS as well as some historians (Louis 1991; Hanes III 1992). My reading of events after being immersed in BDEEP is that not enough credit has been given to the Foreign Office for prodding the SPS out of the complacency of their splendid isolation, that Sudan was no longer *sui generis*, if it ever was, (Johnson, 1997) and that the post-war world in which they now lived was very different to the one in which they had previously flourished.

BDEEP was an opportunity to engage in a conversation with the larger subject area of Commonwealth History. At least that is what I thought at the time and tried to draw attention to the process of dismantling empire where Sudan was not an outlier, but an integral part of that process. In this I was too optimistic. For most commonwealth historians Sudan is still *sui generis* and few lessons can be learned from examining its history.

During the time I was engaged in research at Kew I also became involved in Operation Lifeline Sudan and periodically disappeared into East Africa and the southern Sudan. I began to get very tactfully worded enquiries from the general editors who of course admired my humanitarian commitment but wondered if my Sudan volume would ever be completed. I was able to reassure them and in December 1998 my two-part Sudan volume containing 440 documents, the text of the 1899 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, extracts from the 1953 agreement on the self-government and self-determination of Sudan, and fifty-one biographical notes was finally published, completing Stage 1 of BDEEP. I received a congratulatory email from fellow BDEEP editor Richard Rathbone, whose Ghana volume was one of the first in the series to be published as early as 1992. "Be assured," he wrote, "that there IS life after BDEEP; it is a chore which must rank high in the Sisyphean or Labours of Hercules stakes."

A Sisyphean task indeed and even now not quite finished. The Sudan Archive at Durham have agreed to receive my working papers from the project. So now I must clear my study and attic box room to sort through over 600 typescript pages of notes and correspondence, plus an as yet to be calculated number of A3 and A4 size copies of unpublished documents. They will be made available for others to enjoy. After all, why should I have all the fun?



Mahmoud S. O. Salih (ed.), *The British Documents on the Sudan, 1940-1956*, 12 volumes (Omdurman: Abdel Karim Mirghani Cultural Centre, 2002).

It is instructive to see how another editor treats the contents of the same archive, and how a different purpose guides the identification of 'significant' documents. The late Mahmoud Salih undertook and funded the publication of select British documents on Sudan's path to independence. He chose 340 documents, each reproduced in facsimile and

then translated into Arabic. Peter Woodward provided a brief outline of the historical events and personalities involved. The facsimiles are presented more or less as one would find them in an archive, with almost no annotations and no introductory passages providing the context for each. There is obviously an overlap between this collection and BDEEP in the selection of documents, but whereas BDEEP's focus was mainly on the inner workings of government departments, Mahmoud Salih's collection focuses more on events in Sudan and what the Sudanese were doing. In that way the two collections are complementary.

Old habits die hard. There are other sets of unpublished documents that are just crying out for an editor, but for the time being, at least, I think I will try to resist the siren call.

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A Border Too Far – the Ilemi Triangle Yesterday and Today, Part 2[1]

Philip Winter[2]

> The question of the maintenance, or amendment, of an administrative frontier is, we suggest, one for negotiation by the Kenya Government with the Sudanese Government of the day and so far as we can see nothing in any Instrument (*of independence*) could in fact bind a future Sudanese government to the indefinite continuance of an administrative boundary.

Sir William Luce, when Constitutional Advisor to the Governor General of the Sudan, to the Chief Secretary Kenya, 03/01/54.[3]

Introduction

In Part 1 of this paper (published in *Sudan Studies* 62 (July 2020) the author introduced the Ilemi Triangle, its geography, its disputed borders and their mapping, its ecology, the people who live there and its mineral wealth. The history of the Triangle and its status during the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium was outlined, including the work of the Boundary Commission until the point where responsibility for the Triangle passed from Uganda to Kenya.

The Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, 1898-1955

From Uganda to Kenya: The Kitgum Conference and the Battle of Kangala

The situation of the Ilemi Triangle was complicated by the cession of a large block of Ugandan territory to Kenya in 1926. This arose at the request of

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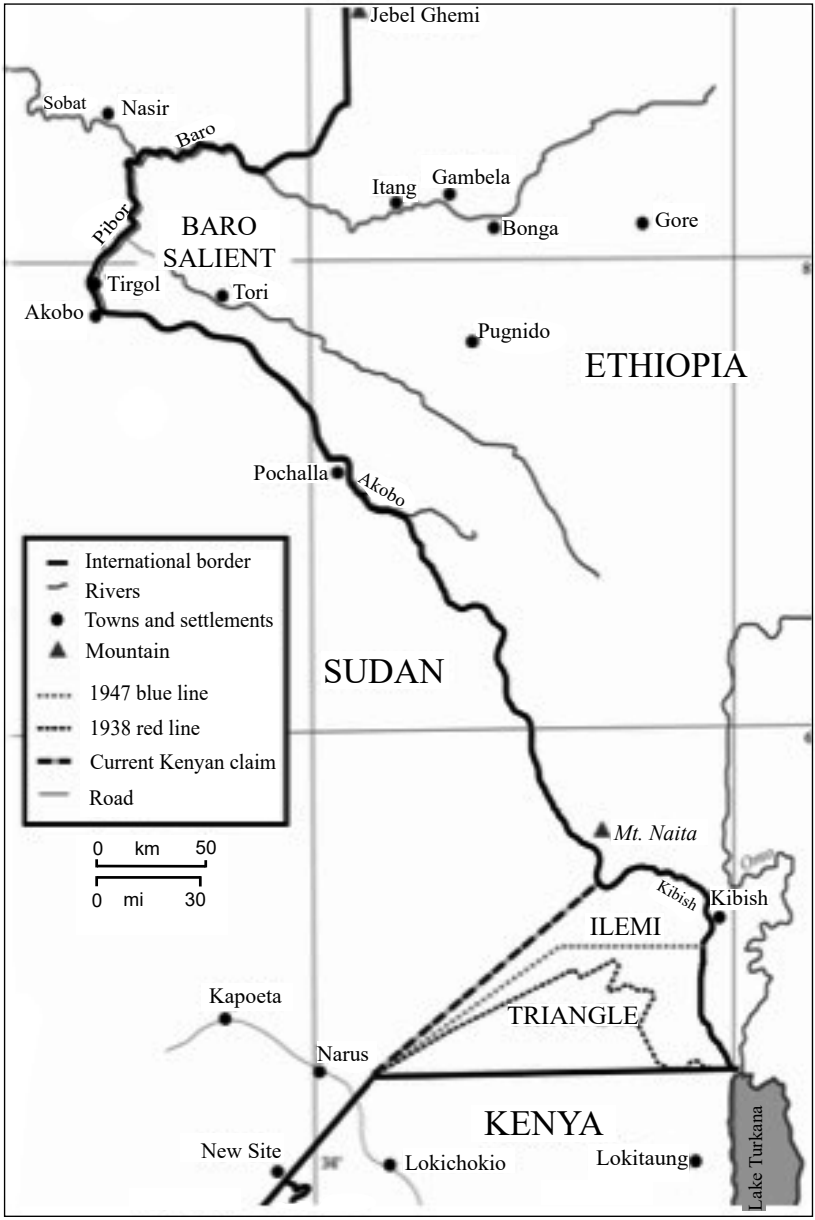
[1] This is an abbreviated version of the paper by Philip Winter (2019) 'A border too far: the Ilemi Triangle yesterday and today', *Durham Middle East Papers, Sir William Luce Fellowship Paper*, No. 20. The first part of the abbreviated paper appeared in Issue 62 of *Sudan Studies* (July 2020)

[2] Philip Winter O.B.E. was the 2019 Sir William Luce Fellow, Durham University. He wishes to express again his thanks to the Sir William Luce Fund for granting him the 2019 Luce Fellowship, which allowed him to spend a term at Durham University. He would also like to thank Francis Gotto of the Sudan Archive at Palace Green for his assistance with the fellowship and John Ryle, Douglas Johnson, Justin Willis and Cherry Leonardi for advice and support to an amateur treading on the tricky ground of historiography.

[3] From Douglas Johnson, *British Documents on the End of Empire*, Series B, Vol. 5, part II (HMSO 1994) number 328.



BARO SALIENT AND ILEMI TRIANGLE

Ethiopia/Southern Sudan boundary, from Douglas Johnson, When Boundaries Become Borders, *Rift Valley Institute, 2010 (Credit: Rift Valley Institute).*

British officials in Kenya, who convened a conference at Kitgum in northern Uganda in 1924 to discuss with their counterparts from Uganda and Sudan "the safety of the North Turkana", presumably meaning their protection from raids by their neighbours. In his report on the conference Major Brock, the Deputy Governor of Mongalla Province (as it was at the time) suggested that the solution to the issue was to control the area north of the 1914 line. The question was – who would control it and who would pay for that control? The Kenyan representative suggested an area be ceded to Kenya while Sudan should administer the Toposa to the west of that area and contribute to the extra expense that would be incurred by Kenya.

The Sudan officials at the time were reluctant to accept new expenses and had been struggling to avoid taking on the Toposa.[4] They also pointed out that relations with the Egyptian Co-dominus were particularly bad in the aftermath of the Stack assassination and the withdrawal of Egyptian troops and they could hardly unilaterally cede what had been designated by the Order in Council as Sudan territory to a British Colony – Kenya. On these grounds, the Kitgum conclusions were not put into force. Later that year and in the following year, the Toposa raided the Turkana and the Merille did too. On 1 February 1926, the Rudolf Province was transferred to Kenya Colony, by an Order in Council. The Governor General of Sudan, Sir Geoffrey Archer, wrote subsequently to the Governor of Kenya, Robert Coryndon, to tell him that the Turkana should stay on their side of the border, not a very helpful admonition in the circumstances, adding he could not afford to administer the Triangle or supply it.

Their masters in London then reviewed the issue again, taking into account the sporadic struggles the British had also waged in the area for the last ten years against Abyssinian ivory poachers and Swahili slavers.[5] Consequently Sir Geoffrey Archer had to change his mind and accept the expense of taking over Toposa territory with a company of Equatorial troops and setting up a base at Lolimi. This was later moved to Kapoeta, which is further to the west and closer to Torit, the base of the Equatorial Corps.

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[4] See Collins, *Shadows in the Grass* (Yale University Press 1983) pp. 85-112. The DC Didinga in South Sudan, Jack Driberg, famously invented fights with the Toposa so that he could secure troops from Torit to fight the Toposa and protect "his" beloved Didinga. When he was found out, he was obliged to resign. See J. H. Driberg, *The People of the Small Arrow*, London 1930.

[5] See for example H. Darley, *Slaves and Ivory* (London, 1926); J Yardley, *Parergon or Eddies in Equatoria* (London, 1931); A. Hodson, *Where Lion Reign* (London, 1928); Garretson in Donham and James, *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia*, Cambridge University Press, 1986, Chapter 8.

In conversation many years later with a Toposa elder, I was told "We decided not to fight the British, since they had lots of guns, but rather to watch them and wait and see what they did." By 1928, the Toposa found they were being administered by two British civilian officials. By 1931, they had a District Commissioner, Captain King, based at an administrative centre, Kapoeta. King was to stay with them, with a year away as a soldier to assist with the campaign against the Italians, until he retired in 1952.[6]

To the east of Sudan, the Ethiopians had defeated an Italian army at the Battle of Adowa in 1896. They regarded the area around Lake Turkana as within their sphere of influence, whether for slaving, ivory, taxation or trade. While senior British officials in Sudan were dithering over their frontier responsibilities, their counterparts in Kenya sent a battalion of the King's African Rifles, in a joint operation with troops from the Sudan, to fight and drive away Turkana and Ethiopian forces at a place called Kangala, just south of the area that became the Ilemi Triangle. They succeeded in driving the Ethiopians off and back towards their base at Maji, but the Turkana suffered heavy losses in cattle from British retribution, which then caused a famine.[7] This in turn led to the opening of a famine relief camp at Kalokol in 1924.[8] The British officials in Uganda and those involved later, after the transfer of Rudolph Province in 1926 in Kenya, did not have the resources to follow up their military success and administer the Turkana to the north. They contented themselves with a base in Lodwar and were only able to bring in a civilian administration in 1928.

Sudan Draws a Red Line and Pays for Patrols.

With a District Commissioner established at Kapoeta in the Eastern District of what was then Mongalla Province of the Sudan, who reported to the Governor General in Khartoum, and a Provincial Commissioner for Turkana at Lodwar, who reported to the Governor in Nairobi, the two British administrations were able to discuss the border, raids on the Turkana and the northern limits of Turkana grazing. Inevitably the two administrations had different interests. The years after the Great Depression had seen cuts in the personnel of the Sudan Political Service. The Sudan Government was not only short of administrators, it could not afford to police the area east of Kapoeta in order to curb raids on the Turkana by Nyangatom and Merille. The Kenya Govern-

[6] He was well remembered more than forty years after his departure, when I was asked if he was still alive by an ageing chief at his house on the Loyoro River, in 1994. He added hopefully that King always used to give him a bottle of whisky.

[7] See Lamphear, *The Scattering Time* (Oxford University Press, 1992).

[8] James Good, *Mission to Turkana* (Diocese of Lodwar, 1988). Famine relief has been a feature of life in Turkana ever since, sadly.

ment on the other hand was willing to find the resources to establish police posts and to patrol the area from the Kings African Rifles base at Lokitaung because officials did not want turbulent northern tribes disturbing the land given to settlers further south, around Kitale and Eldoret. For this they felt that the Sudan Government should pay. After a certain amount of haggling, this was agreed and the Sudan Government took the extraordinary step of paying the Kenya Government £10,000 in 1931 and the same again in 1932 towards the cost of the additional troops it felt necessary to keep in Turkana, with another £5,500 to pay for new roads in the area. This is the origin of the administrative presence of the Kenyan Government in the south of the Triangle today, of which more below.

The two administrations also agreed informally on the area of "the customary grazing grounds of the Turkana tribe" in the Triangle and drew a line north of the 1914 line which took in the hills of Lorienatom and Lokwanamur, with the valley in between them, along with some land to the east and to the west, calling it the "Red Line". This came to be described on later maps as the Provisional Administrative Boundary (PAB). The heights that lay within this new boundary are set well above the flat, seasonally-flooded plains of Lotakippi and Alabilab, hold some springs of water and give good views to the north. In the same year, Captain King, travelled from Kapoeta to Lokitaung in Kenya to see where administrative posts might be established. He found sufficient water to the north only at the foot of Moru Akippi (the hill of water in Ateker languages), near where the Sudan Government later put a Sudan Defence Force base, at Loelli, and at Kaimothia (variously also Kamathia, Kaimosia etc) where there is to this day a Kenyan police post, inside the PAB. He did not think these were sufficient for administration of the area, being too far west of the border with Abyssinia and too far from Kapoeta, respectively.

Empires in Abyssinia – The Italians Come and Go.

The Italian invasion and occupation of Abyssinia in 1935-6 gave the British administrators some new counterparts on the borders of Kenya and Sudan. It also introduced a new complication. There is a salient of Nuer and Anuak speakers protruding into Sudan territory from Gambela in Ethiopia. Or looked at from the Sudan side, the Nuer and to some extent the Anuak people found themselves on both sides of a protrusion in an imperial border. The country is low-lying and swampy. The British and Italians considered swapping this salient for a large area of the Ilemi Triangle. Such a move would have brought all the Nuer and Anuak under British administration in the Sudan and put the Ilemi area under Italian rule, as part of Abyssinia. It would thus have more or less straightened the border, giving the Sudan an area of seasonal swamps in

exchange for the highlands of Boma and the more arid land in the Triangle, and bringing the two peoples under one administration, that of the Condominium. It would also have ceded part of the Triangle to Kenya, to help the Turkana with what was by this time a recognized need for grazing. In 1939 the British Government submitted a memorandum to the Italian Government proposing the change. It needed, in principle, the assent of the Egyptian Government, still nominally a partner in the Condominium, but it was not to be. The rise of fascism in Europe, the gathering storm which was about to engulf the world, meant that the negotiations were never pursued and the border was never so straightened.[9]

Instead, the Red Line became the Provisional Administrative Boundary and was accepted by the Governments of Kenya and of Sudan at the time as an informal administrative measure to allow Kenya access to Sudan in order to protect its subjects from raids by the neighbours, if need be. Today this might be called the right of hot pursuit. Collins also reports the Governor of Kenya at the time, Sir Joseph Byrne, as saying that the administrative boundary was "a purely temporary expedient"[10].

In Kenya Colony the British and their allies prepared for war. One baleful effect of the campaign which drove the Italians out of Abyssinia was the large number of weapons left in the hands of the Merille, amongst others, adding to the arms they already held which they had acquired previously both from the Italians and before that by a flourishing arms trade in old European rifles. This presented a real danger to the Turkana, to the south and thus a real concern to the Kenya Government, which held that the Merille tended to come through the Triangle on their raids and it was the responsibility of the Sudan Government to do something to check this.

Colonial Administration – the Worlds of Whitehouse and King, Zaphiro and de Robeck

From 1928 to 1963, British officials in Kenya wrestled with the neglect of the Ilemi Triangle by their counterparts in Sudan. Ilemi remained an area inhabited around the edges but largely empty in its centre, traversed by raiding parties from all sides, beyond the rule of law, undeveloped, with a surfeit of firearms and no obvious economic value to any central government. Just before the

[9] A similar swap was proposed again in 1947, but was rejected by the British officials in the Sudan in part because by that time officials there were very nervous again of upsetting their Co-dominus, Egypt, but also because they did not want a new boundary to cut through the ethnic groups around Boma or to upset the arrangements for Kenya to patrol into the territory when necessary. See Tungo, p. 97.

[10] Collins, *Shadows in the Grass*, pp. 110 and 111.

start of World War II, the Sudan Defence Force (SDF) had erected a fort, the ruins of which still stand today at Loelli. From here, the Force did patrol eastwards into the Triangle, just as the Kenyan police came northwards into the Triangle on patrol. The Sudan Government also put outposts further to the west, near the Lokorowa River. All this had been done with the object of discouraging any Italian invasion, rather than administering the area.

During World War II, Dick Lyth, who had come to South Sudan as a missionary, was enrolled as an officer in the Sudan Defence Force. From Torit, he raised an auxiliary force of 120 men, trained them and took them into the Triangle, leading them on raids up and down the border with Ethiopia, from Boma to Lake Rudolph, as it then was, in order to convince the Italians that the British actually had a much larger force available than they did. Lyth was a successful guerrilla leader and after the war joined the Sudan Political Service, becoming the Frontier Agent at Boma Plateau, just to the north of the Triangle, and subsequently DC Akobo, until independence.[11]

Denis Zaphiro, who had been an officer in the SDF, stationed at Loelli, told the writer in later years that he had one regret from his soldiering in Sudan, when he had come under fire from a group of Nyangatom herders and had returned fire with a Bren gun, driving the herders back across the border with Ethiopia. He sympathized with their need for pasture and water but said he had orders to keep the Nyangatom on the other side of the border, where they were Ethiopian taxpayers. In practice, border officials had allowed herders to cross borders with their cattle in times of need, but only if they did not carry weapons.[12] But the Bren gun was no substitute for government and the lack of government in Ilemi is its central problem to this day.[13]

The Sudan Political Service officials left the Sudan in 1954 and 1955. Their Sudanese successors were able to do less even than they had in relation to the border with Kenya. British administrators in Kenya fared no better. One leading administrator was Leslie Whitehouse (nicknamed Wouse by the British and Etawos by Ateker speakers), a DC in Turkana from November 1946 until his retirement in 1958. During this time, Whitehouse served as "Jomo's Jailor" when Jomo Kenyatta was imprisoned by the colonial administration in Lokitaung and later in Lodwar. Whitehouse knew well the practical problems of administering the Ilemi Triangle. After retirement, he also became a Kenya citizen, when he agreed to serve the government of independent Kenya as a member of the Kenya-Sudan Border Commission. Of this he wrote: "In the

[11] See Jon Arensen, *The Red Pelican*, (published by the author, 2013.)

[12] Denis Zaphiro, pers. comm. 1985.

[13] See for example Immo Eulenberger: https://www.academia.edu/30482525/Pastoralists_economies_and_politics_Aspects_of_South_Sudans_Kenyan_frontier

event, I never set eyes on the Sudanese Boundary Commission and the boundary remains un-demarcated to this day".[14]

A glance at the regular reports from Kenya's Turkana District during the 1940s and 1950s reveals never-ending raids, movements northwards by the Turkana to seek pasture and similar movements westwards and southwards respectively by Merille, Toposa and Nyangatom, for the same reason.[15] At a local level, the Kenyan DCs cooperated with Geoffrey King, their long-serving counterpart in Kapoeta, and with Pat de Robeck, who joined King as an Assistant DC in Kapoeta and was later recruited to serve across the border in Turkana, after the independence of Sudan. That all were military men is not a surprise since most such administrators in that era had served in the armed forces either in the First or the Second World War.

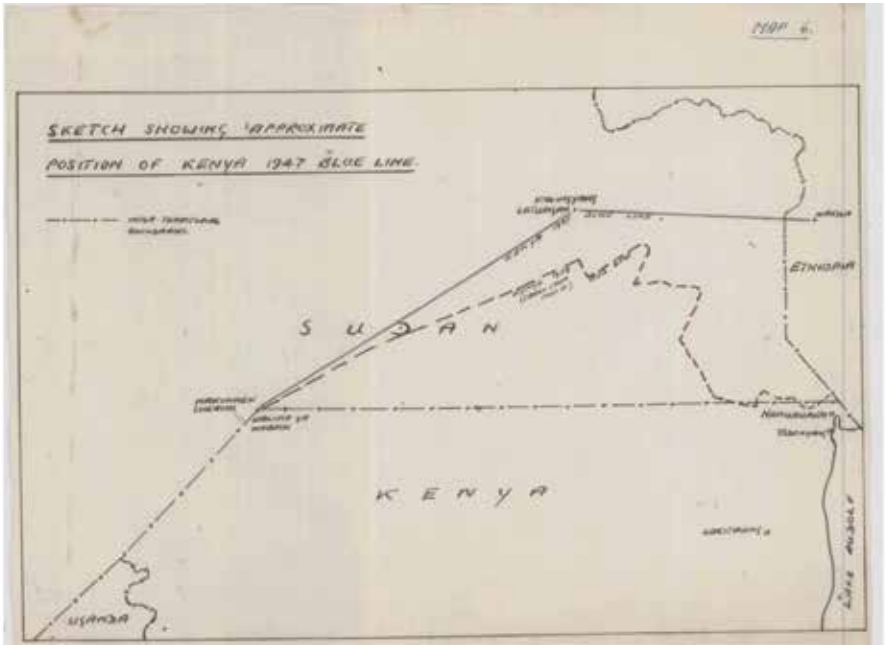
Another feature of what was becoming a flexible border is one more line added to the maps to indicate the limits up to which the Kenyan authorities could patrol. The "Red Line", or PAB, was drawn in 1938, but constant raiding meant that in 1947 the Kenyan government agreed with the Government of Sudan to adopt a new line, which they dubbed the Blue Line, sometimes known also as the Sudan Patrol Line, extending the area that Kenya could control further to the north and to the west. This was one more example of a local response to an unresolved international boundary, but it did not change the fundamental problem that the only way of setting an international boundary is by bilateral agreement, with a treaty between the two governments concerned, not by drawing new lines on an old map.

It is perfectly possible that, in any future border settlement, Kenya and South Sudan may well agree that the Red Line or the Blue Line would afford a feasible border, but these lines remain just a manifestation of local administrative arrangements necessitated by the lack of will and resources on the part of past Governments of Sudan to demarcate a border and govern whatever part of Sudan lay within the demarcation. The most important of the lines remains the Red Line, or PAB, because within that line lie Kenyan police posts and the visible and tangible evidence of Kenyan investment and Kenyan governance.

Interestingly, because of its importance, the line of the PAB was very accurately recorded and marked, with beacons, when it was surveyed in 1938, thus providing a rare section of Sudan's border both delimited, delineated and demarcated too. The work was done for Sudan by King as DC Kapoeta; by Wakefield the Director of the Sudan Survey Department; and by Whalley, the former consul at Maji, who was the first person to publish a description of

[14] See *Wouse- Jomo's Jailor* by Elizabeth Watkins, Mulberry Books, 1993, p. 235.

[15] I am indebted to Charlotte Cross for her summary of these notes.



The Blue Line, proposed in 1947 as a new limit for patrols from Kenya (Credit: Sketch in author's possession).

the Triangle. For Kenya, they were accompanied by Thompson the Provincial Commissioner, Turkana; by MacKay, as DC Lodwar; by Kean, of the 4th Kings African Rifles at Lokitaung; and one Morris, "Military Representative." They spent 18 days on the task, walking, using motor vehicles and donkeys. They also climbed the mountain Lorienatom. Each of the 21 points they fixed was recorded by latitude and longitude, height above sea level, distance from the next point and lastly bearing to the next point.[16] This, at least, was not a poorly drawn border, but one fixed and recorded by men who knew the area and had most of the responsibility for administering it at that time.

There is one more legacy of the colonial administration – the existence of a Kenyan police post and, today, administrative centre with its own District Officer, at Kibish. Kibish is about 120km north of Lokitaung and offered a source of water for the Kenyan patrols into the Triangle which started in Lokitaung. However, it lies on the very eastern edge of the Triangle, astride the Ethiopia – Sudan border, well to the north of any line, Blue Red or other. A former DC, Chenevix Trench, describes in his memoir how he took a patrol

[16] See Report of the Jan. 1938 Border Reconnaissance by King, Wakefield and Whalley in UK NA, CO/822/89/9.

there from Lokitaung, entered Sudan, reached the Tepes Hills and had to turn back with his men to his last water source in Kibish. He knew full well that he was patrolling in Sudan, but he also knew that local arrangements entitled him to be there.

As the independence of Sudan approached, a query came from the colonial government in Kenya as to whether its concerns about the status of the border at the Ilemi Triangle could somehow be set out in a "formal undertaking for the close administration of the area." In the correspondence quoted above, Sir William Luce continued thus: "We cannot but feel that, whatever undertaking might be given to this effect, it would inevitably be of little value, since the future administration of this area is likely to prove even less close than that exercised hitherto."[17] He was right.

Independence

In 1963, according to a document marked Top Secret at the time, the Council of Ministers in independent Sudan heard from Mohamed Ahmed Irwa, the Minister of the Interior, referring to the Sudan-Kenya border, that:

It has become imperative to restore the administration of this area [i.e. Ilemi] but, owing to the lack of information and the establishment of Administrative officials, security forces and other installations, it is advisable that the question be deferred for the time being until we collect the data concerning this area. The officials who will be detailed to reconnoiter this area will take the utmost care of secrecy so that none could be in position to reveal our plans to the other side.[18]

For the next ten years however, Sudan was preoccupied with a civil war, fought against the Anyanya guerillas of the South. When it ended, in 1972, the South had attained a degree of regional autonomy, and was the scene of modest outside aid and commercial investment, until the civil war re-started in 1983. In the late 1970s, during that brief interlude of regional autonomy and relative peace, I recall hearing about the Ilemi Triangle, the still little-known area near the Kenya border, and asking the then Governor of Equatoria, Peter Cirillo, what the regional government proposed to do there. As I recall, his answer was that they would bring administration and development. The civil war fought by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) against the Government of Sudan from 1983 to 2005 soon put an end to that idea. In 2013, after the secession of South Sudan, the author recalls meeting again with a senior official of the new Government of South Sudan and enquiring whether

[17] From Johnson, *British Documents on the End of Empire*, part II, number 328.

[18] Copy in author's possession of that paragraph only, from a report labeled MITSF/III/D.1. and dated 12-2-1963.

he was aware of the issue of the Ilemi Triangle. His reply recalled what I had heard nearly twenty-five years before from Peter Cirillo. The government was indeed aware of the issue, which could only be solved by administering the area, but had more pressing issues to manage before it could take on the question of the border with Kenya.

Two years later, on a visit to the area, I carried a twelve-volt battery to the hamlet of Lotimor, near the Ethiopian border, within the Ilemi Triangle, so that the handful of policemen there could at least communicate with Kapoeta, 200km away to the west on very bad roads, by radio. Government of the area was still no more established there than it had been a hundred years before, although many political leaders in South Sudan are well aware of the Ilemi anomaly.

As regards Kenya, the authorities showed little more interest in the Ilemi Triangle, until 1986 (see below.) There was nonetheless an attempt, not long after independence, to get the UK, as the departed colonial power, to help Kenya assert a claim on that part of the Ilemi Triangle within the PAB, which met with no success. A letter from Kenya to the UK government stated "We cannot wait indefinitely for a new official Kenya-Sudan Agreement; I suggest that the British official maps should follow our lead on the Red Line".

The Directorate of Overseas Surveys responded as follows:

> ……although the then Sudanese and Kenyan Governments were authorized in 1939 by His Majesty's Government to accept and refer to the Red Line as the Provisional Administrative Boundary, the line never received full recognition from all those concerned. Accordingly we feel we cannot show on our maps the Red Line as the accepted international boundary, on the information at present available to us . . . [19]

If nature abhors a vacuum, then a state which cannot patrol its borders or govern those within them risks losing its ability to govern altogether, not to speak of its credibility. The different trajectories of Sudan and Kenya since independence explain the neglect of an important border by Sudan, and later by South Sudan, and the slow but steady progress northwards of Kenyan government influence. Sudan has been beset by civil war and economic collapse while Kenya has managed to avoid civil war, develop the institutions of state and grow its per capita income more successfully.

The Ethiopian Border of the Triangle 1902-1972

The Government of Ethiopia has so far been a mostly silent player in this

[19] R. T. Porter, to Director of Surveys, Survey of Kenya, 28-08-66, in UKNA FO 371/119635, cited from Tungo, *The Ilemi Triangle*, p.168.

story, but they watched British activities in their neighbouring countries carefully. In 1902, the British Government, having access to military surveyors in the Egyptian Army, sent a certain Captain Maud to suggest the best line for the borders of Ethiopia with Sudan and Kenya. The Ethiopians were ambivalent, nervous of possible British designs on their territory, just as they were also after the liberation of Ethiopia forty years later. Subsequently, in 1907, the British sent Charles Gwynn to demarcate Maud's line on the ground.

After his trek, Gwynn proposed a number of changes to the lines Maud had suggested, largely to keep highland Ethiopians in Ethiopia and Nilotic peoples in Sudan, so that much of the border followed the base of the Ethiopian escarpment. The changes were accepted by the British, if not by the Ethiopians. Today Gwynn's line for the most part forms the border. As regards the portion setting the eastern border of the Triangle, it ended where the meridian line of 6 degrees North met the line of 35 degrees East, but this tri-junction point, where Ethiopia, Kenya and Sudan were to meet, has remained undemarcated and not properly surveyed to this day.

Eventually the Government in Sudan and that in Addis Ababa did set up a Joint Boundary Commission, the Abebe-Clifford Commission, which started work in 1951 and finished in 1955. Again the Ethiopians accepted its findings, in practice, but declined to ratify them. It was only in 1964 that Kenya and Ethiopia reaffirmed their boundary, confirming Kenyan sovereignty over the police post of Namuruputh, which is just south of the south-eastern point of the Triangle as delineated by Gwynn. Later, in 1972 they agreed a minor boundary alteration but did not involve Kenya. They did however confirm that Ethiopia had no claim to the Ilemi Triangle.[20] In this regard at least, the Ethiopians have played no further part in boundary discussions.

Kenya and the Triangle 1987-2017

Kenya's apparent lack of interest in the Triangle during the 1960s and 1970s did not last into the 1990s. During the SPLA war, Kenya had worked to maintain good relations with Khartoum whilst at the same time allowing the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement / Army (/A) to operate out of Nairobi and use Kenya, effectively, as a rear base, with even a frontier post called Keybase, just outside Lokichoggio, where SPLA soldiers could leave their weapons when they entered Kenya. Kenya also played a central role in the negotiations which culminated in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005 and were led by the Kenyan General Sumbeiywo. The CPA brought an end to the civil

[20] See Johnson, *When Boundaries Become Borders . The impact of boundary-making in southern Sudan's frontier zones 2010,* Rift Valley Institute.

war and enabled the referendum which, in 2011, produced the new state of South Sudan.

Further to the east, Kenya's approach was much less accommodating. It appears that in July 1988 a huge Nyangatom cattle raid took place against the Merille. When Kenyan police from Kibish intervened, they were outnumbered and outgunned. Fifteen Kenyan policemen were killed. For the next six weeks, Kenyan security forces are thought to have killed 200 raiders in retaliation, with a further 500 estimated civilian deaths, using jet aircraft to strafe villages.[21]

The government in Sudan is reported to have protested, but they did not control the area – once again nobody was in control. Kenya's response was to build up Kibish as the HQ of a new division of Turkana District, establishing a district officer in Kibish, bringing in the General Service Unit (GSU), administrative police and missionaries and tendering for the building of a Health Centre in Kibish.[22] "*Miskini*" (poor) Turkana were encouraged to settle around Kibish and the European Community funded the Turkana Rehabilitation Project. Today all Kenyan maps show Kibish as a part of Kenya, in Turkana County.

As explained at the beginning of the first section of this paper (see *Sudan Studies* Number 62), in 1987 maps of Kenya started to show a new border line, a line which went from the north of Mogila to somewhere around the mountains on the Ethiopia border, Tomadur and Naita. It is commonly supposed that John Garang, the leader of the SPLM/A, had privately reached an agreement with President Moi not to object to Kenya's presence in the Triangle in return for the logistical and practical facilities to which the SPLA had access in Kenya during its war against the government in Khartoum. John Garang was killed in a helicopter crash in 2005 and President Moi remained silent on the matter unto his death in February 2020.

Whether or not any agreement between John Garang and Daniel Arap Moi existed, written or otherwise, more and more Kenyan maps began to show the 45 degree line from Mt. Mogila to Mt. Naita or thereabouts, while all maps originating in Sudan showed the horizontal 1914 line. Consequently the 45 degree line spread, from Al Jazeera to the British High Commission in Kenya and to the British Embassy in Juba, as more and more maps that had not originated in Kenya also showed this line.[23] The change did not pass unnoticed by

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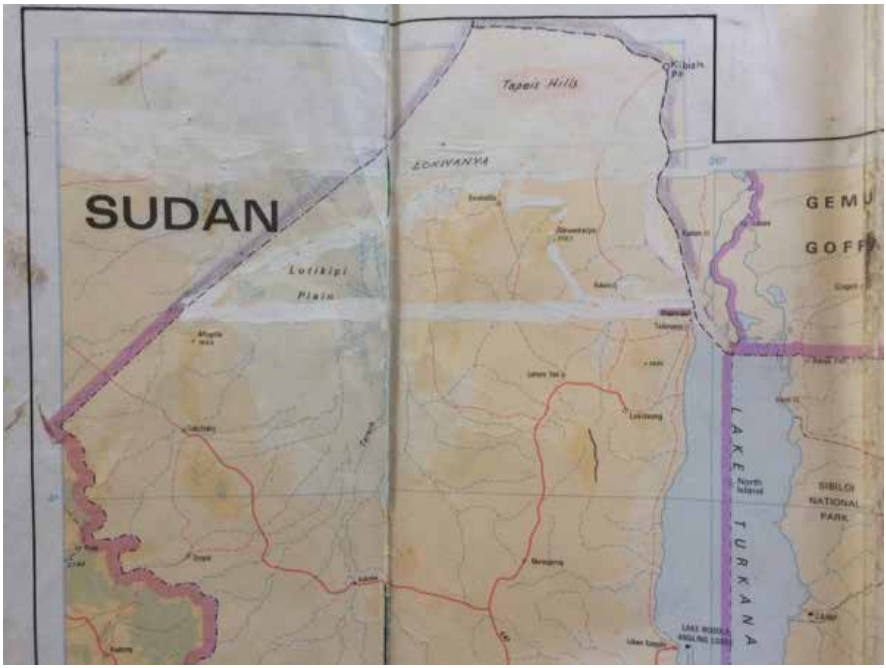
[21] See *Kenya - Taking Liberties*, (Africa Watch, 1991), pp. 334-340.

[22] See *Daily Nation* (Kenya), 20th October 1989, p. 2.

[23] See https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/south-sudan?utm_source=95c427f8-e5e5-4282-9199-185fd2f1caa8&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate, Summary Travel Advice for 10/5/19.

the Kenyan public and one or two officials. MP Paul Muite for example raised it in parliament in the 1990s. In 1992, the *Indian Ocean Newsletter* reported that Kenya had plans to annex the area and described the construction that had taken place at Kibish since 1987.[24]



Hand-drawn borders, from a map purchased by the author in Nairobi in 1987 (Credit: World Travel Map: Kenya, Copyright John Bartholomew and Son Ltd. 1986).

From 1989 to 2005, Lokichoggio, just south west of the Triangle, was the forward operating base for Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS). At the time this was the world's largest humanitarian operations. It took aid and aid workers into the SPLA-controlled areas of South Sudan under a unique agreement between the government in Khartoum and the SPLM/A to allow relief supplies to reach both government and rebel-held areas. The operation also meant that relief workers occasionally went into the western part of Ilemi Triangle and the World Food Programme encouraged the peoples of the area with food aid to rebuild the old British military access roads to Loelli, Nanyangacor and Lotimor, which sits beneath Tomadur, on the Ethiopian border. The SPLA had a garrison at Lotimor and for some time a missionary clinic operated there. The ending of OLS meant that the area was neglected once more and

[24] *Indian Ocean Newsletter*, no. 518, 14th March 1992.

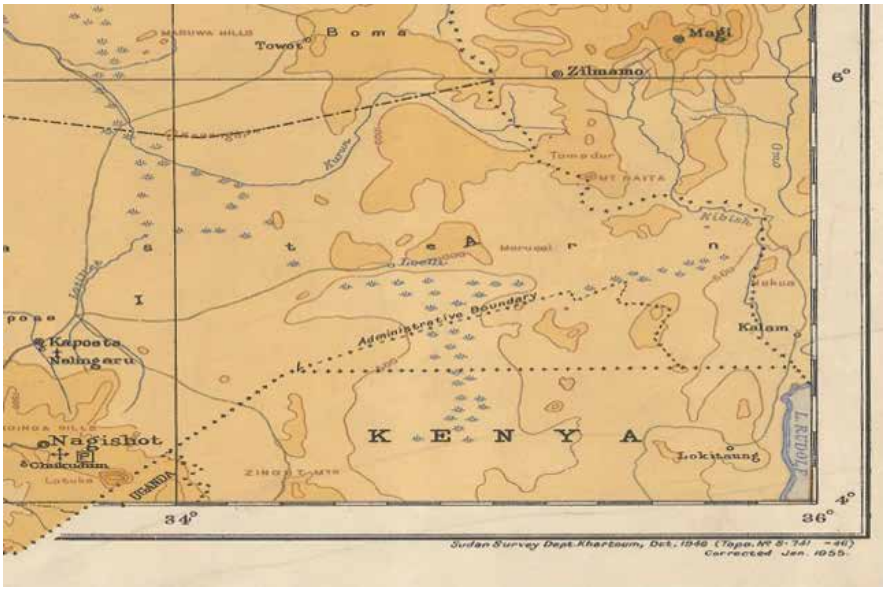
the church people moved westwards to Nanyangacor, regarding Lotimor as too remote.

Although Kenya had been involved in the peace process which ended the first civil war in Sudan, there had been little awareness in Kenya of events in their troubled northern neighbour's southern areas. This changed when many Kenyans became aid workers in South Sudan under OLS, between 1989 and 2005. They began to understand some of the dynamics of their troubled neighbour and this, along with Kenya's role in the peace negotiations meant that, almost for the first time, Kenyan officials too gained an understanding of what was going on in South Sudan.

Just before the signing of the CPA, in 2003, the Governments of Sudan and of Kenya agreed to form a joint border committee "to deal with the twin issue of cattle rustling and the proliferation of illicit weapons." They recognised that a solution to the civil war in southern Sudan was a necessary first step. However, independent Sudan's officials had never visited the Ilemi Triangle, so far as is known, let alone controlled it, and when the Comprehensive Peace was signed two years later, in 2005, Kenya had to deal more and more with the transitional government in Juba, which was concentrating on the referendum which led to the secession of the South, and not with officials in Khartoum.

Looking for rustled cattle (Credit: the author).

It is worth noting here that the CPA defined South Sudan as the area within the boundaries of southern Sudan at the time of independence. Since then, much time has been devoted to an illusory search for the "British map of 1956". No such map exists, because the British administration was winding down in 1954 and 1955 and Sudan's first day of Independence was January 1st 1956. What does exist however, is a 1940 map corrected in January 1955, at a 1:2 million scale, along with all the district maps at a scale of 1:250,000.[25] These Sudan Survey maps remain the basis for most maps produced since.



The Ilemi portion of the last British map of Southern Sudan, at a scale of 1:2,000,000 (Credit: Sudan Survey Department, Khartoum, 1946, Topo No. S-741-46, Corrected 1955).

All the while the Kenyan authorities continued their control of these colonial police posts along the line of the PAB and also of their road access from Lokitaung to their post at Kibish, on the Ethiopian border. The Kenya Defence Force (KDF) also had and still has a base in Lokichoggio, at the foot of Mt. Mogila but not within the Triangle, to secure the main border crossing with South Sudan.[26] Just up the road is the hamlet of Nadapal. This became

[25] These maps are available on compact discs from the Royal Geographical Society in London, at very high resolution, and online from the University of Durham Sudan Archive at https://www.dur.ac.uk/library/asc/sudan/maps/250000/

[26] When the present writer was robbed at gunpoint by Toposa bandits on the road to Nadapal in 1995, the KDF soldiers from this base pursued the bandits, pushed them

the scene of another violent incident in 2009, when Toposa youths attacked Kenyans who had come to build Kenyan border facilities at Nadapal, saying that the work was being done inside South Sudan and was part of a move to secure grazing for the Turkana at the expense of the Toposa. The violence was in the context of continued cross-border raiding and banditry on the Lokichoggio-Kapoeta road over many years, to the extent that the then Government of South Sudan (GoSS) Minister for Internal Affairs, Gier Chuang Aluong, "admitted that Toposa are heavily armed and outside control of Southern Sudan's government. We are really not governing the Toposa," said the minister, adding that the SPLM was not arming the Toposa. He also said the Toposa have been made to believe their land is being taken away by Kenya Government." [27]

During OLS, in 1999, the International Bureau for Animal Research began veterinary work with the Toposa and Turkana, which helped foster a period of peace. When OLS ended, in 2005, veterinary services in South Sudan lost their main source of support. The Government of South Sudan took over and proved unable to sustain the work. A series of peace conferences and meetings began, which continue to this day, in Lokichoggio, Lodwar, Kapoeta and elsewhere, with representation from governments, local government, elders, chiefs, youths, and, occasionally, women. Typically, all the Ateker speakers would send representatives, the parties would agree on what they wanted to restore calm and end raids and banditry, declarations would be signed and an uncertain peace would hold until some group of frustrated warriors appeared and restarted cattle raiding or armed robbery.

At government level, the humiliation of two Kenyan government ministers en route to Nadapal in July 2009, when they were turned back by SPLA soldiers, led to a series of inter-governmental meetings which resulted in more declarations of intent and assurances of friendship and cooperation. A joint border meeting in Nairobi in 2009 for example agreed, amongst other things, "to establish a joint technical team to demarcate the actual boundary between the two countries at an appropriate time."

The Joint Border Commission

In due course a Joint Border Commission was established and in 2016 it appointed a Joint Technical Team (JTT) to demarcate the border. Hon. David

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into South Sudan and retrieved all the stolen items, returning them later to a grateful owner.

[27] *The Standard*, Kenya, 28th October 2009. For a fuller account of reactions to the continued border conflicts, see Immo Eulenberger, REPORTToposa-TurkanaEMERGENCYDIALOGUEMEETINGLodwar1.11.20092%20(1).pdf

Mayo, an MP from South Sudan, prepared two papers summarizing the history of Ilemi, examining the legalities and suggesting ways forward.[28] The parties prepared a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and members of the South Sudan team received training in Addis Ababa at the African Union Border Programme. Since then South Sudan's own internal difficulties appear to have slowed progress as regards demarcation of a border with Kenya. The delay in settling the South Sudan's south eastern border, which has lasted now for 107 years, has of course not passed unnoticed. On 10th June 2019, Epone Emmanuel Lolimo, MP for Kapoeta State, wrote to the Speaker of the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) in Juba concerning the "recent encroachment by the Government of Kenya (GoK) into Kapoeta State, South Sudan", referring to developments in the Nadapal area and claiming that the GoK planned to put troops into the Ilemi Triangle and "to engulf the Ilemi Triangle for the purposes of drilling oil", requesting a response from ministers of the TGoNU.

Not long after, the Kenyan press reported that the Kenyan and South Sudanese Foreign Ministers, Monica Juma and Nhial Deng Nhial, had signed another Memorandum of Understanding "to fast track the territorial border reaffirmation at Ilemi Triangle as a step towards the realization of peace between the two countries", an interesting formulation which implies that the two countries might not actually be at peace.

Perhaps the Ilemi border issue will at last be settled by the two governments principally concerned. Time will tell.

A Note on Sources

A surprising amount has been written about the Ilemi Triangle in the last century. The colonial records are extensive as might be deduced from the text above. For the period since, I have had to rely on my own personal experiences, interactions with officials and others from the area and the press reports, maps and publications I have collected over the last forty years or more. For a full list of sources used please see the full version of this paper which can be accessed at https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/sgia/imeis/lucefund/Luce-Fellowship-Paper-2019_Ilemi-Winter_final.pdf

[28] See "The Question of the Ilemi Triangle" and "The Ilemi Triangle Question", both by David Nailo Mayo, a member of the JTC, in preparing for a JTC meeting in Nairobi in 2016 (papers in the author's possession).

Prospects for the Political Participation of Sudanese Women in the post-December 2018 Revolution Era[1]

Suad M. E. Musa*

Introduction

The participation of women at the scene of the uprising/revolution in Sudan in December 2018 was unprecedented. Women and young girls attended the protests and sit-ins as regularly, visibly and vocally as the male protesters. They contributed food and drinks and endured and defied humiliation and aggression by the security forces. They cemented the revolutionary efforts with diligence and commitment and enabled the revolution to progress; succeeding in toppling the 30-year dictatorship of the Muslim fundamentalists on 11th April, 2019. A transitional government was instituted on 21st August, 2019. Women were in part driven by the bitter experience they had endured under the regime, suffering systemic and institutionalised violations of their rights by the repressive, sexist and masculine Islamist regime. They chanted with the strongest and loudest voice: *tasgot, tasgot, tasgot bas* (Just Fall, That's All)" and *al-talga ma-btaktul, biktul sukat al-ẓaul*, (the bullet does not kill, the silence of a person does).

This article explores the prospects of Sudanese women achieving their legitimate aspirations for effective political participation during the transitional government and afterwards. It argues that in the period since Sudanese women launched a political movement in the 1940s, they achieved tremendous political gains but their development and the process of emancipation stalled once the Islamists dominated the political scene.[2] Women aspire to a new dawn of freedom, peace and justice in a democratic system that respects and maintains their rights, as stipulated by international human rights conventions and treaties, and promotes their effective political involvement in the state's affairs. This article highlights the situation of women living in the rural and marginalised areas of Sudan.

Women in Sudan

As is the case everywhere else, women in Sudan are not a homogeneous group; rather, there are differences of class, ethnicity, age, geographical location (rural and urban), and education. These elements play a significant role in determining women's access to livelihoods, but education is the most decisive factor. In

[1] This article was completed in July 2020 and reflects the situation at that time.

[2] The *Inghaz* (Salvation), regime ruled from 1989-2019.

urban and municipal centres, women have better access to education; almost all girls go to school and nowadays many of them complete their university education. This is in contrast to their counterparts in remote areas (Darfur, Southern Kordofan, Blue Nile, Eastern Sudan, and Nuba Mountains). In these areas, educational infrastructure is not adequate, either in its quantity or in the quality of schools, classrooms and teachers. There are villages in which the education service is totally absent and as a result people tend to send boys to study in cities, while girls stay in the village/camp to help their parents with livelihood endeavours.

In the main cities women can find jobs in the public or private (industry and business) sectors, including with international organizations and United Nations (UN) agencies or they can run their own businesses. However, due to their illiteracy or poor education, village women and girls have been absorbed into the traditional agriculture and livestock sectors, working under hard conditions and becoming important contributors to food security (Merghani et al. 2016). In many rural areas there are little or no sustainable work opportunities.

A woman in Jebel Si, Kebkabiya town, north Darfur, preparing her land for the farming season. (Credit: Suad Musa, 2016).

Rural areas also generally lack adequate social services such as health, water supply, hygiene and sanitation. Moreover, since the late 1960s, rural communities in Sudan have suffered from environmental catastrophes including drought and desertification, leading to starvation and prompting most men

to migrate, either to the irrigated agricultural schemes on the Nile River, or abroad in search of employment and better life opportunities. Women were left behind to take full responsibility for caring for the family and community. Poverty and destitution have impelled many of them to move outside their home villages seeking income opportunities and some have settled in slums on the outskirts of cities. In their new locations, they have ventured into petty trade, such as selling tea and/or food, or they work in the construction sector as unskilled labour, or as housemaids. Their inability to organise in towns has exposed them to social exploitation, gender-based violence, and grave violations of their rights. Those who remain in the villages can become vulnerable to political exploitation, especially during elections.

Sudanese women's political movement: An overview

The organised Sudanese women's political movement started when a group of women from Omdurman set up the '*Rabitat El-Fatayat El-Thaqaafiyah*' (Young Women's Cultural Association) in 1947. Since then many women's organisations have been formed, but the Sudanese Women's Union created in 1952, has taken the lead. The movement aimed at liberating women from their dual patriarchal and oppressive roles at home and in the workplace, advocating for improved conditions of care for women and girls, and the eradication of poverty and illiteracy (Mahmoud 2002, 258-261).

For more than a decade, women worked together with assiduity and led the way in the public political realm. They managed to make many gains during the process of the overthrow of the military government of General Abboud (1957-1964) through the October Revolution and the establishment of a democratic government (1964-1969), thereafter. In recognition of women's diligent presence in the revolution, and their patriotic contributions and struggles since the colonial era, some of their demands were met: suffrage for female graduates and the right to stand for elections in the graduates' constituencies. Subsequently, the late Fatima Ahmad Ibrahim became the first woman to be elected to Parliament in 1965 (ibid, 277). From then on and throughout the 1970s, the movement was able to secure tremendous gains and influence important changes in the civil service in the best interests of women. For instance, women were granted equal pay for equal work in public and private sector companies with their male counterparts, and pension rights. Women assumed positions of power in political, executive, legislative, and judicial institutions. By 1978, women had gained equal political rights to men including the right to vote and to stand for elections in the geographical constituencies.[3] The attitude of the democratic government towards women and women's suffrage

[3] There were two types of constituencies: graduates and geographical.

influenced the political parties and encouraged them to follow suit and they soon started to establish wings for women in the organisational structures of their parties (ibid, 277-278). Nonetheless, most of the gains achieved for women were not immediately relevant to the perceived needs of rural women.

It is worth mentioning that the history of Sudanese women's public protests dates to the 1950s, when the 'Women's Awakening Society of Khartoum' organized a march, "the first entirely women's political demonstration," from Khartoum to Omdurman to celebrate the Agreement of Self-Government. They chanted and shouted, 'Long live Sudan', 'Independence'; and 'Long live the Sudanese women' (Brown 2017, 128-129). This was a bold initiative that marked a turning point in the political history of Sudanese women. Since then, the voice of women in the public sphere has become an indicator of women's agency and an instrument to effect change in Sudan.

Islamists and political violence against women

The political progress of the women's movement appeared to be parked, or slowed down, when the Islamists started to engage with President Nimeiri's regime (1969-1985) through the Islamic Charter Front (*Jabhat El-Mithaaq El-Islami*) following the National Reconciliation (1977) between the president and the then opposition National Front.[4] The agreement allowed Islamists to infiltrate government civil and political institutions and guided by their ideology of political Islam, including its discourse against the emancipation of women, they started to set back the rights that had been achieved by women over the previous period. They succeeded in convincing Nimeiri to introduce *sharia* law in September 1983 and subsequently women faced extreme forms of violence e.g. flogging, beatings, as well as sexual harassment and preaching about good behaviour without due reason. Women were forced to wear the *hijab* (headscarf) or they would not be allowed to enter government offices (Mahmoud 2002, 290).

These Islamic laws were applied to both Muslim and Christian women. Women were placed under the tutelage of male guardians who were given the power to decide on their higher education, their movements and their work outside home. Female judges were dismissed on the grounds that it is unacceptable in Islam for a woman to be a judge (ibid, 290-292). Ironically, these

[4] The National Front (NF) was the opposition alliance formed by the Umma Party, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and the Muslim Brotherhood (the Islamic Charter Front) which staged a failed armed attempt to topple Nimeiri's military regime in 1976. Soon afterwards in 1977, Sadig el Mahdi, the leader of the Umma Party, signed, on behalf of the alliance, a reconciliation agreement with Nimeiri; the DUP refused to endorse it but the agreement was accepted by the other two parties.

measures were endorsed by the same president (Nimeiri) who in the early stages of his rule appeared to promote women's advancement and emancipation.

When the National Islamic Front (NIF), later renamed the National Congress Party (NCP), seized power through a coup d'état on 30th June, 1989, Islamists continued their ruthless anti-women policies. Over the course of three decades of repressive rule (1989-2019), women suffered unprecedented repression and institutional violations of their rights. In the 1983 *sharia* law, the emphasis was placed on women's dress, 'personal freedoms', employment and gender power relationships. A characteristic *hijab* was imposed on female students, government employees, and female petty traders e.g. tea sellers (Khair 2001, 102-103). The *hijab* is often used in the identity politics of political Islamic discourse as a means to reduce the value of women and their morality to the covering of their bodies and to curtail women's space and place in society. The veil also indicates a perception of women as sexually seditious objects that society needs to be protected from and serves as a "vaccine against the virus of Westoxication" (Tohidi 1994, 124-125). In the eyes of liberal Sudanese woman, the *hijab* is a measure to restrain women's freedoms and violate their rights and they hated having to comply with it (Osman 2001, 156). Women's dress thus served as a battleground for the Islamists who sought to manipulate women and build a submissive and subordinate image of them.

Most of the institutional violations of women's rights (as enshrined in international human rights treaties) were exercised through the infamous Public Order Law (POL) that was implemented in 1992 and amended in 1996. The POL prohibits all kinds of gender intermixing and imposes a one-metre distance between male and female students in classrooms and activity platforms in universities. Women were punished for such things as simply appearing to be walking in a 'provocative manner' (Verney et al. 1995, 21). Their travel especially abroad became subject to the presence of a male blood relative as a *mahram* (an escort, in Islamic culture/jurisprudence). "Women were arbitrarily arrested, beaten and deprived of their rights to freedom of association and expression" (Amnesty International, 2019). They were tried in accordance with article 152 of the 1991 Penal Code for wearing trousers that government operatives arbitrarily described as inappropriate and indecent. These demeaning measures sparked women to rise and organise mass protests.

Indeed, the POL was a formal measure to curb women's personal freedoms contrary to constitutional Code (32) and Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These restrictions also disregarded Article 15 (4) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (see OHCHR, 1979). Ironically, women affiliated with the

ruling NCP, whether intentionally or unconsciously, condoned the measures and policies that were systemically pursued by the *Ingha*ẓ regime. The regime also accused unemployed post-graduate women of contributing to what they called 'moral chaos', which they defined as inappropriate behaviour, seduction, adultery, the spread of AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, etc (Ali 2004, 100-102). Women were accused of causing all the problems that ensued from the bad policies and corruption of the regime and hence they became scapegoats for the Islamists' failure to rule the country with justice, equality, and respect for all.

The family and personal laws of 1991 added insult to injury as they adversely regulated gender power relations in the family and affirmed the subordination of wives to their husbands. Women faced the consequences of race, ethnic and class discrimination in employment, as applicants were asked to indicate their tribes and geographical region of origin on job application forms and job offers were made accordingly. The status of the family also counted when assessing the suitability of an applicant for a job.

In 1990 the NIF/NCP government imposed a policy of military conscription on women that was administered by its formal *jihadist* militia, the Popular Defence Forces (PDF). Women in the civil service were asked to attend the training and those who refused were fired from their jobs (Musa 2018, 127). Female recruits and women's organisations that were affiliated with the NCP were considered *jihadists* and their contributions to government campaigns in the civil war as a revival of the concept of *jihad* (Mahmoud 2002, 302). Tribal social organisational structures e.g. Al-Hakkamat Baggara women, were used to mobilise tribal communities to join government wars (Musa 2018, 132-139). Considerable numbers of women found themselves besieged by poverty and destitution and had no alternative way of making a living other than to join the NCP and comply with their rules.

The violence and aggression of Islamist men against women has been a well-established practice since the early days of women's political movements in the 1950s, as *imam*s in the largest mosques in Khartoum used Friday sermons to accuse women activists of violating the principles of Islam. Men beat women activists with sticks and clubs during public meetings and mocked and insulted women on the streets (Brown 2017, 140). Nonetheless, women did not surrender but defied stereotypical norms and continued their quest for freedom and emancipation.

Conflict and gender-based violence in remote regions

The rural communities of western Sudan (Darfur, Southern Kordofan - Nuba Mountains), the Blue Nile and El-Angasana, have faced a sharp decline in

livelihoods caused by drought and desertification since the late 1960s and the famine of the 1980s. The situation was aggravated not only by a combination of social and political marginalisation but also by the failure of government to provide development funds and projects aimed at lifting people out of extreme poverty and destitution. These, and other historical factors, have led activist groups from those marginalised areas to protest and revolt since the 1960s, at first peacefully,[5] and then, having received no positive response from central government, through armed struggle.[6]

In its war against 'armed struggle', the government sanctioned gender-based violence, especially rape, as a weapon of war for soldiers and paramilitary militias. Subsequently, gang-rape has become an integral part of the systematic attacks on civilian populations. For instance, since 2003, in the villages of the Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa communities in Darfur,[7] thousands of women and girls have become victims of gender-based violence committed by the *Janjaweed*[8] and soldiers (Reeves 2016). Amnesty International (in 2004) and Human Rights Watch (HRW) (in 2016) gathered evidence that showed that killings and gender-based violence occurred. Documented reports of human rights violations facilitated the indictment of President el Bashir and his aides by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity in March 2009, and genocide in July 2010. This development provoked government retaliation resulting in further violations against women and girls. Rape and abduction featured prominently in government and militia attacks in rural and urban areas and around the Internally Displaced Person's (IDP) camps, as continuously reported by 'Radio Dabanga'.[9] In an utterly shocking incident, on 30th October 2014 the Sudanese army attacked

[5] They include organisations such as the Darfur Development Front, Nuba Mountains General Union, the Beja Congress (1957) and Sudanese Rural Solidarity Forces.

[6] These armed struggle groups include Anyanya 1 and 2 and their successor the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in the then region of Southern Sudan and in the Nuba Mountains; Daoud Bolad's Campaign into Darfur in 1991/2; and since 2002, the Darfur rebels i.e. Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A), and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) (see e.g. Cockett 2010).

[7] The government considered these communities as incubators of the rebellion.

[8] Paramilitary forces formed by el Bashir's regime from mostly Darfuri Arab tribes to fight the rebel movements in Darfur and elsewhere.

[9] Radio Dabanga is a shortwave radio station that has been broadcasting since 1st December 2008. It provides daily reports about the latest political, economic and social information on Sudan. It has been monitoring and reporting the conflict in Darfur and the atrocities committed on civilian populations. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radio_Dabanga).

the village of Tabit, south of El-Fasher in North Darfur, and gang-raped more than 400 women and girls (HRW 2015). Until the last minute of the *Ingḥaẓ* regime, i.e. April 2019, rape and gender-based violence and abductions for forced labour or sexual exploitation continued unabated.

A group of village men meeting to discuss a dispute with another tribe, near Nyala. Women do not attend such meetings. (Credit: Imad A. Hannan, 5th December 2014).

Hundreds of displaced women and families settled in squatter areas around Khartoum, but their lot was no better than that of people in the conflict areas. The POL provisions were applied to them 'wholesale' and security personnel prevented them from embarking on any income-generating activities such as selling tea or food; if they tried to do so they destroyed their goods and confiscated their tools. Women were beaten and arrested for, allegedly, spreading vice in society and were charged with anti-social behaviour (Khair 2001, 102-103). Displaced women have become further victims of exploitation, including sexual harassment, rape, and sometimes murder by the security personnel

The December revolution: the power of women's agency and voice

The socio-political background outlined above indicates that Sudanese women were the group most affected by *Ingḥaẓ* Islamist ideology and system of governance. No wonder then that they became the most enthusiastic and deter-

mined group in seeking changes that could restore their rights and dignity. Women's desire for change was manifested in a stubborn presence at the forefront of the protests, which sometimes seemed to exceed that of their male counterparts; they reigned supreme on the platforms of the uprising that swept the entire society. The start of any announced demo often began with a woman's ululation. In a statement before the Security Council in October 2019, Abdal-Hafeez (2019) stated that Alaa Salah, whose image has become a symbol of the Sudanese revolution, had highlighted the leadership role of women during the stressful days of the revolution. Women took leading roles in the resistance committees, neighbourhood and sit-in committees and in planning and directing the protests. Women opposed the curfew, resisted the declared state of emergency, upheld civil disobedience and withstood the suppression of the security forces, i.e. tear gas, insults, and whipping. Many young women were arrested, had their hair cut and were imprisoned without charge or trial.

Some women have gone missing; dead women's bodies were found dumped

Wall painting at the sit-in site next to Army Headquarters.

in the River Nile with their legs tied with ropes and weighted down by bricks. Young women were raped in Khartoum when the armed forces violently dispersed the *El-Giyada* sit-in on the night of 3rd June, 2019 (Amin 2019).[10] Nevertheless, women's courage, resilience and resolve to eliminate the source of their suffering, especially the POL, were powerful assets in the revolution. Women were also driven by a moral obligation to advance society and to ensure that the rights of women and children, violated by the *Ingbaz* regime, were preserved and observed.

Women's Political Demands and Aspirations

Political participation means involvement in decision-making about the allocation of public resources and the management and organisation of public activity. Women need to be involved in this process if their needs are to be addressed. As Koch-Mehrin (2018) maintains, women tend to focus on and promote rights and equality and strive to ensure a better life for women and girls. Equality in political participation is, therefore, crucial to human rights, good governance, and democracy. The political participation of Sudanese women can enable them to influence governments and political parties so that they attend to women's needs and interests and promote and protect gender rights.

During the *Ingbaz* regime most Sudanese women were excluded from political participation unless they are affiliates or allies of the NCP/NIF. In 2009, there were four women cabinet ministers, and some were members of parliament and legislative bodies,[11] but the advancement of women was not on their agenda. They stood against women's freedom, believing that women's roles should be determined by their biological differences from men (Mahmoud 2002, 281-282). They opposed CEDAW[12] and endorsed the POL and other legislation that placed wives under their husbands' legal authority. They overlooked the concerns of women, especially in rural and war-torn areas.

Women in Sudan want a democratic system of governance that would enable them to realise their aspirations for freedom, peace, and justice. The outcomes of the revolution have so far shown that the struggle of women, their commitment and tremendous efforts have been respected, acknowledged, and celebrated. This has been demonstrated in the transitional government,

[10] El-Giyada is the headquarters of the Sudanese Armed Forces.

[11] They were the health Minister, the social affairs Minister and two advisors to the President for law and for women's and children's affairs.

[12] CEDAW aims to eliminate obstacles to the participation of women and rejects discrimination based on sex in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or any other field.

A group of women in Bahar Om Durman village, Kalamindo district, meeting to discuss how to train and encourage women to plant vegetables to generate income and combat malnutrition that affects children and pregnant and breastfeeding women in the area. (Credit: Aziza Kinain, Chairperson of Dar Essalam Women's Society, El-Fasher, 25th July 2019).

headed by Prime Minister Abdullah Hamdok that vowed to adopt the principle of achieving a balance in gender power relationships in state offices. Subsequently, for the first time in the history of independent Sudan, two women were appointed to the substantive Ministerial posts of Foreign Affairs (Mrs Asma Muhammad Abdullah), and Chief Justice (Mrs Neimat Abdullah Khair), and another woman has been appointed as an undersecretary in the Ministry of Finance; in addition three other women are Ministers of Higher Education, Youth and Sports, and Social Welfare.

While these appointments stand in stark contrast to the situation under the Islamist regime, women have not realised their demand for equal participation with men in all offices and at all levels of the transitional government. In addition, the Transitional Constitutional Charter stipulates the representation of women by at least 40% on the Legislative Council. This relatively low percentage, could be attributed to the fact that only one woman was present at the negotiations between the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC) the political

incubator of the revolution, and the Transitional Military Council,[13] that set up the structure of the transitional government. Alaa and many women see this representation as unfair, inadequate, and less than women deserve (Abdal-Hafeez 2019). Besides, women from the remote regions, including the displaced and refugees have not been represented at all.

The greatest ambition of activist women is gender equality in access to services and an end to gender-based violence e.g. female genital mutilation (FGM). True to their pledge, in November 2019, the transitional government repealed the POL, ending an era of flagrant violations of the rights and freedoms of women and girls. In May 2020, the Cabinet also approved the criminalisation of FGM and the imprisonment of perpetrators for a period of three years plus a fine. Women from civil society organisations and rights' activists are calling on the government to sign and ratify the CEDAW and put its principles into action through a national action plan.

The priorities of women in the conflict zones are livelihoods, security, protection from violence and the ending of war. Meanwhile, the entire community looks forward to the peace negotiations (in which women do not appear to have appropriate representation), that started in December 2019 between the insurgents and the government in Juba and that aim to resolve persistent armed conflict in the remote regions of Sudan. Displaced women hope for an agreement that can end conflict and for subsequent transitional justice to redress the legacy of the massive human rights abuses they have suffered. In addition, financial and technical support e.g. extension services, are of paramount importance if women are to achieve sustainable livelihoods and establish resilient mechanisms to withstand poverty and the other challenges they face.

Challenges Ahead

Despite tangible progress by the transitional government in promoting women's rights and political participation, concerns remain about the government's commitment to the values of the revolution i.e. freedom, peace and justice, and the extent to which women are integrated into governance structures.

Observations suggest that the participation of women from the IDP camps and women's civil society organisations has been limited in the on-going peace negotiations; women have discussed their concerns in separate women's

[13] This military council was formed after the dismissal of Omar al-Bashir on 11th April, 2019. It took over the administration of the country until it was formally dissolved on 20th August, 2019. A Sovereign Council was then formed on 21st August, 2019, which is working in partnership with the Cabinet of Ministers; together they form the transitional government.

groups, mapped out their needs and presented their findings to the negotiators in written documents and then left, rather than being fully involved in decision making.[14] This approach violates the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 which calls for the effective political participation of women in peace and reconciliation processes. It threatens the process of transitional justice that along with other objectives aims to encourage victims to come forward, speak up in public and reveal their bitter experiences. This process is meant to engender a new spirit that can enable healing, forgiveness and forgetfulness. Peace negotiations and agreements must therefore adopt a gender analysis approach to addressing the structural causes of conflict and a framework that promotes the effective participation of women as integral partners in peace-building and peace-making.

A new image of women must be constructed to emphasise their value and important roles. Differences in the perceived competence of male and female political leaders lead to a gender gap; building women's leadership skills and enhancing their efficiency and confidence in performing their tasks and roles is important. The political dominance of elite women from central Sudan may frustrate other women, especially those in remote regions, and reinforce their sense of 'being left behind'. Exclusion from the political process may adversely affect women and cause them to lose confidence in the transitional change-over and hence the political polity of Sudan.

The focus should be on fighting the patriarchy as the main impediment undermining women's emancipation. Effective gender mainstreaming policies and practices can be counted on to gradually erode the patriarchal underpinnings of Sudanese society.

Conclusion

Women in Sudan occupy differing positions, each with their own needs and experiences. However, all have shared the experience of suffering and the violation of their human rights, particularly under the rule of the Islamic regime. Unsurprisingly, they turned their suffering into a driving force for change when they stood steadfastly and patiently with the revolution and helped to bring down the *Inghaz* regime in April 2019.

Women aspire to equal, effective and prominent political roles in the current and future structuring of Sudan. The transitional government has launched an unprecedented process aimed at the political empowerment of women and placed them in positions that were previously the prerogative of men only. The government has also repealed the laws that fundamentally violated wom-

[14] Comments from a woman who was one of the participants in the discussions in Juba. Telephone interview on 25th May 2020.

en's and girls' rights. The structure of the transitional government has not been completed yet, but women continue to hold on to their aspirations. They look to be fully integrated as equal partners in the system of governance and in the process of structural reform that lays the foundations for a democratic age to come. Indeed, women aim to see Sudan achieving the post-millennium goals of 50/50 gender equality by 2030.

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Sudan in the Mosaic Rooms

Aziz El Nur*

The Mosaic Rooms is a not-for-profit art gallery and bookshop in London that is dedicated to supporting and promoting contemporary culture from the Arab world (www.mosaicrooms.org).

Last year it ran a long programme of events dedicated to Sudan. The first was an extensive exhibition of selected prints (1964- present) by Mohammad Omar Khalil, entitled "Homeland Under My Nails." The exhibition ran from the 22nd January until the end of August. Mohammad Omar Khalil, who was born in 1936, is a world-renowned Sudanese artist who specialises in etchings as well as being a master printer. He is based in New York and has exhibited works from across his working life in Sudan, Italy, Morocco and the United States.

Two other events were held that were connected to the exhibition: an evening of enlightening conversation between Mohammad Omar Khalil and the British broadcaster Maya Jaggi, and a linocut workshop led by the Palestinian cartoonist Mohamed Sabaaneh, who reflected on the works exhibited.

Artist Mohammed Omar Khalil in conversation with writer and critic Maya Jaggi at the Mosaic Rooms. (Credit: author).

Hassan Musa performing his artwork, "Blood is Thicker than Water" (Credit: author).

In January, there were also screenings of two movies by the late artist Hussein Shariffe, 'The Dislocation of Amber' and 'Tigers are Better Looking', followed by a talk by his daughter, psychotherapist Dr. Eiman Hussein Shariffe.

In February, multidisciplinary artist Hassan Musa performed 'Blood is Thicker than Water', a title taken from a Sudanese proverb. 'Blood is Thicker than Water' is an artistic homage to the peaceful Sudanese revolution in 2019 and is inspired by Hassan Musa's questioning of the role of art in changing society in an oil-driven geopolitical context.

An evening of three short films by contemporary female Sudanese directors shone a light on the country's experimental cinema. **'**The Bleaching Syndrome' by Eiman Mirghani, 'Hind's Dream' by Suzannah Mirghani and **'**In Search of Hip-Hop' by Issraa El-Kogali Häggström. This was followed by 'Reels of Revolt', which was another evening of discussion, led by director and writer Taghreed Elsanhouri, curator Hadeel Eltayeb and artist Alaa Satir**.** They discussed the revolution in Sudan, reflecting on the history and present of solidarity and political resistance. The conversation also explored the role

of women and art within the recent uprisings.

In early March came an evening of music by 'The Scorpios', a Sudanese band based in London. Other events due to take place that month had to be cancelled or where possible rescheduled and shown online, owing to the Coronavirus lockdown. These are listed here as it is to be hoped that some of them will take place in future. They include:

- Longing and Belonging', a short film documenting the experiences of Sudanese people seeking asylum in both London and Paris. Zeena Elhassan and the Madaniya collective aimed to discuss the meanings of longing and belonging in the increasingly hostile environment facing those who lack documentation, but the event was cancelled. When it takes place, the evening will also explore how the Sudanese diaspora can shed light upon these injustices and enact institutional change.
- 'Serotonin', a film that explores themes including solitude and memory, through the eyes of the main character as he goes about his daily life in Khartoum; this was to be followed by a discussion with its director, Shehab Satti.
- The film 'Our Beloved Sudan', followed by a conversation and questions and answers with film director Taghreed Elsanhouri.
- Sudanese Kitchen. This evening of Sudanese food was cancelled.
- Launch of the book *Sudan Retold*: the physical event was cancelled but took place online (*Sudan Retold* is reviewed in this issue of *Sudan Studies*).

The Mosaic Rooms has held a very encouraging arts programme about Sudan that will hopefully continue in the future. In any case, the venue is a worthwhile space in London that members of SSSUK should definitely check out.

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Sudan's Film Industry after the Revolution: a world of opportunities

Ricardo Preve*

Introduction

After nearly 30 years of cultural repression, Sudan's artists are ready to burst forth with renewed energy and show their creative talents on the international scene. The fall of the Omar al Bashir regime in April 2019 has opened up a whole new range of opportunities for cultural expression. The question is: will Sudan's cultural community be able to capitalise on these opportunities?

The complex interactions of the different cultural, ethnic, and social groups that are found in Sudan make it difficult to generalise about the path that Sudan's film industry should, or may, follow after the revolution.

The development of Film making in Sudan

Sudan's film history is often said to have begun in the late 19th century with short films, propaganda reels and news documentaries. I wonder, however, how much these early examples would be considered 'Sudanese' by my Sudanese colleagues and how much they reflect instead the sad legacy of colonialism, in which native societies were portrayed as amusing spectacles and films based in colonised countries were intended to provide a curious European audience with entertainment, rather than offering a serious and respectful observation of life in Sudan.

Unfortunately, this prejudiced and unfair depiction of Sudan continued into more recent times, with the British film 'Khartoum' (1966)[1] directed by Basil Dearden and starring Charlton Heston and Laurence Olivier. The film is truly a historical wrong that begs to be righted: 'Khartoum' is riddled with historical inaccuracies. It is profoundly racist and culturally biased against Africans: the film features Laurence Olivier "in blackface" as the Madhi, who is portrayed as the very personification of evil and who seeks to kill every white person he sees. This was probably the last time a major international production focused on Sudan in any detail: in addition to being partly filmed at Pinewood Studios (the emblematic location of British cinema), a final slap in the face to the Sudanese was the fact that the exteriors were shot in Egypt.

Film makers during independence

Fortunately, after Sudan's independence in 1956, Sudanese film makers were

[1] Links to many of these films can be found on the website: www.imdb.com

able to make a kind of cinema that was truly exceptional and in the forefront of African artistic expression.

First among distinguished Sudanese film makers is Gadalla Gubara (1921-2008), who in the course of a career that spanned more than 50 years, produced a wide array of documentary and fiction films. Notable among his feature fiction movies are '*Tajouj*' (1978), '*Barakat el Sheikh*' (The Sheikh's Blessing' (1998), and '*Les Misérables*' (2008). The latter was an adaptation of the novel by Victor Hugo which Gubara completed, after having lost his eyesight, with his Cairo-trained daughter, Sara Gadalla Gubara, who is considered to be the first Sudanese female film maker.

Gadalla Gubara was also the founder of Sudan's first film studio, 'Studio Gad'; many of his films were kept there safely by Sara, until a project to digitise and catalogue them was recently completed. In a recent video interview, Sara spoke about her aim in preserving her father's work: "For the new generation… for the film makers, they need to see these films to see how 50 years ago we used the camera, how we did the directing, to learn from it; I think they will learn a lot. When you know your country well, I think you will love it more."[2]

I must also mention the work of another distinguished Sudanese film maker, Hussein Shariffe, a man who possessed a vast artistic education. In England he studied modern history at the University of Cambridge, before joining the Slade School of Fine Art. His first solo painting exhibition, which opened in July 1959, included the painting 'Angel Pregnant with Moon'. There are three bromide prints of him by Ida Kar from 1960 at the National Portrait Gallery in London, which show a young man with a look of fierce determination.[3] In the 1970s, he decided to switch to film making and returned to live in Sudan, where he directed his first film, 'The Throwing of Fire', a documentary about a ritual in honour of the sun practised by a tribe in the Ingessana, in southern Blue Nile. I wish I had known, when I recently filmed in Suakin, that Hussein Shariffe had been there in 1975 shooting 'The Dislocation of Amber', a 32-minute short film about the port town. The Black Elephant award, which is given every year to the best Sudanese film at the Sudan Independent Film Festival, is dedicated to the memory of Hussein Shariffe.[4]

Political changes, starting in the 1980s and culminating with the Islamist coup of 1989, brought a halt to the opportunities available to Sudanese film-

[2] Sara Gubara's 2013 video interview can be found at: https://www.arsenal-berlin.de/en/living-archive/projects/the-film-holdings-of-gadalla-gubara-2013-2016.html

[3] There is a link to the National Portrait Gallery photos which were taken in 1960 in his atelier shortly after the exhibition referred to: https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp88859/hussein-shariffe

[4] See: https://www.siff-sd.com/en/black-elephant-award.php

makers and prevented Sudan from continuing the tradition of great cinema that had been pioneered by Gadalla Gubara and Hussein Shariffe. But perhaps things are beginning to change.

The prospects for film making in contemporary Sudan: A comparative view

There is no question that Sudan's filmmakers have recently become prominent in the international cinema scene. In 2019, the documentary 'Talking about Trees', by Suhaib Gasmelbari, won several awards at international cinema festivals, including the Original Documentary Award and the Audience Award at the 69th Berlin International Film Festival.

Other examples include 'You Will Die at 20,' directed by Amjad Abu Alala, an intriguing film that mixes traditional Sudanese folklore with a modern cinematic approach, and 'Khartoum Offside', the tale of the first female soccer team in that city. Directed by Marwa Zein, this showed that Sudanese women are also participating in the revival of Sudanese cinema.

The question is: are these examples indicative of a sustainable trend that portends the future growth of the Sudanese film industry or are they ephemeral green shoots that are destined to wither before they bear fruit? A glimpse of what the future may hold can be gained from looking at the experiences of other countries that have, like Sudan, experienced war or times of great upheaval. There are several examples of countries that created some of their best cinema right after a war or revolution, and below I analyse events in Italy and Argentina.

Italy

By the beginning of the Second World War in 1939, Italy had achieved a respectable level of film production but it did not have the most renowned cinema scene in the world. Its cinema industry received a major boost from the government of the Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini (1883-1945), who was quoted as saying that "Cinema is the most powerful weapon".[5] In 1937, he created 'Cinecittà', a 'city of cinema' in what is now a suburb of Roma and modelled on Hollywood's industrial approach to film production.

[5] This article (in Italian) gives the date of Mussolini´s quote as 1922 and also shows a photograph from the inauguration of Cinecittà with the same words, proving that they were used by Mussolini. Note that the same article contains a photo of the cover of a book by Andrea Giuseppe Muratore, "The Strongest Weapon", with a photo of Mussolini, further proof of the association of the phrase with him: https://auralcrave.com/2018/03/03/larma-piu-forte-come-il-regime-fascista-manipolava-il-cinema/
Another article, this one in English, that quotes Mussolini is https://cinema.tesionline.it/cinema/article.jsp?id=706

The massive government support for Cinecittà ensured that Italy developed a strong film industry, with developed infrastructure and human resources. However, far from producing cutting-edge films, the very alignment of cinema with government ensured that before World War II, films were rather uniformly adulatory of, or at least did not confront, the Fascist regime and garnered only modest international recognition.

When the World War came, Cinecittà was, like the rest of Italy, heavily damaged by Allied bombing raids and by retreating German forces who, in cooperation with the Fascist government, moved from Rome taking with them a lot of the film equipment and trained personnel. When British, and in particular American, forces arrived in Rome, they showed little interest in reviving Italy's cinema industry, possibly so as to favour the penetration of Hollywood films into European markets. At one point, Cinecittà's great studios were used to house up to 3,000 war refugees, consequently falling into a state of near abandonment.

However, out of this state of utter destruction and desolation, there was born an artistic movement that was to greatly influence world cinema: Italian Neorealism.

Directors such as Roberto Rossellini (1906-1977), Luchino Visconti (1906-1976) and Vittorio de Sica (1901-1974) learned to work with minimal resources to create cinematic masterpieces that are still admired today. Taking advantage of empty post-war streets, these directors shot many scenes in exterior urban locations without having to worry about restricting traffic or asking for municipal permission to close a street.

Film stock, cameras, lights and other production equipment were very hard to get, so the Italian neorealist directors learned to work with natural light and to adapt to challenging situations. Similarly, with so many Italians dead, or prisoners abroad, there were few available professional actors, so directors had to cast amateurs, even for leading roles. For example, when De Sica wanted to make "Bicycle Thieves", he needed two actors to play a factory worker and the worker's son. Unable to find professional actors, he finally recruited a real factory worker, Lamberto Maggiorani, to play the leading character in the film and for his son, he recruited Enzo Staiola, after noticing the young boy watching the film's production on a street where he was helping his father sell flowers. 'Bicycle Thieves' earned an Academy Award nomination in 1950 for Best Foreign Film.

Argentina

Another country that went through some violent and troubled times, emerging from them with renewed artistic creativity and an internationally acclaimed film

industry, was Argentina. It was ruled from 1976 to 1983 by a brutal military dictatorship, responsible for the killing of up to 30,000 people. Yet from the ashes of that catastrophe, which ended with the return of democracy under President Raúl Alfonsín, was born the movement known as New Argentine Cinema.

Soon after the fall of the Argentine regime in 1983, Luis Puenzo directed 'The Official Story', which won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Film. Though fictional, it addressed the very difficult but socially relevant issue of the appropriation by the Argentine military of newborn children from mothers who were anti-government protesters. The stolen children were given to military families who were unable to have children of their own. Thus 'The Official Story' addressed issues that were very much in the minds of the Argentinian public at the time it was made. It was this focus on real-life issues and a willingness to take a sometimes painful look at what had happened in the country, that gave the cinema industry renewed vigour and relevance.

The New Argentine Cinema movement led Argentina to win 16 Goya Awards for Best Spanish Language Foreign Film, making it the most awarded country. In addition, director Juan José Campanella won an Oscar in 2009 with 'The Secret in Their Eyes', another film that addressed the issue of the atrocities committed by the previous regime.

We could cite other examples (France´s *Nouvelle Vague* cinema movement, the resurgence of Iranian cinema after the 1979 revolution, etc.) but we must now examine what this all means to the future of cinema production in Sudan.

The future of cinema production in Sudan

Can Sudan follow a similar path? I argue that it can, based on several factors.

Sudan has a considerable pool of talented film makers. I was able to meet some of them in Khartoum in January 2020 during the Sudan Independent Film Festival and during the Film Production Master Class that I taught there at the time.[6] I liked the fire, the dedication and the passion of the new Sudanese generation of artists in general, and of film makers in particular.

Let me mention one example that particularly impressed me. I was privileged to watch 'Journey to Kenya', a beautiful documentary by the young Sudanese director Brahim Ahmad, who goes by the artistic name 'Snoopy'. The short film (29 minutes), which won the Special Jury Award at the 2020 Sudan Independent Film Festival, tells the story of eight Sudanese *Jiu Jitsu* competitors who had trained for months to prepare for the "Lion Heat 2019 Nairobi

[6] The author's report of this workshop was published in the last issue of *Sudan Studies* (62).

The author and participants in the Film Production Master Class workshop, Khartoum, January 2020 (All photos, credit: Ricardo Preve, unless stated otherwise).

Open" competition in Kenya and follows their progress from Sudan to Kenya.

'Journey to Kenya' has some of the classic ingredients of a road movie: the sense of travelling with a team of athletes, looking out of the team's minibus windows at the landscapes of Sudan and Kenya. The camera takes its time to get to know each of the young athletes, and their coach and mentor, so that when the inevitable obstacles appear during the trip, the spectator has a stake in the outcome of the expedition, wondering if the Sudanese will make it and how they will fare in the competition.

The documentary is skillfully crafted utilising the classic 'three parts of a story' technique: beginning (the premise of going to the competition), middle (the long journey with its many challenges), and end (arrival at the tournament and the denouement with the result of the fights). The story telling builds the narrative tension throughout the film, as we do not know the eventual outcome of the team's efforts.

Beyond its successful structuring, what struck me is how similar the film is, in a 21st century version, to an Italian Neorealism production. It was shot with a small digital camera, with the director travelling with the team, recording the events as they happened in real time. There was no opportunity for elaborate

sets or too-carefully orchestrated scenes. Snoopy's camera shows us reality as it is, the new Sudan that is not afraid to fail but that will not accept the comfortable business-as-usual world that people had to endure before. Therein lies the great accomplishment of this simple yet moving film.

'Journey to Kenya' and the other recent acclaimed Sudanese films are examples of why, though the country is under severe economic strain and there is not yet complete freedom of expression, I believe that the seeds of a collaborative cinema movement, much like Italian Neorealism or the New Argentine Cinema, are firmly rooted in Sudan.

I was particularly impressed by an organisation called the Sudan Film Factory (SFF), an eclectic group of Sudanese artists who gather at a home in Sudan's capital, in a way that is reminiscent of the Bauhaus movement in 1920s' Germany, and mentor new film makers. SFF promotes interdisciplinary cooperation between Sudanese artists: musicians, actors and so on. As long as organisations such as SFF are given room to grow, I believe that the interaction of talented Sudanese will bring about the change that is needed to relaunch Sudan's cinema industry.

Practical pathways to success

However, while the talent and the desire are there, we must ask ourselves: what are the best practical pathways that can be used to get to the ultimate goal? How can we prevent the talent and efforts of Sudanese filmmakers from being wasted as the country (and the world) struggles with international health issues and political and social conflicts?

Looking again at examples of how other countries have grown their film industry, one avenue that I would encourage Sudanese to consider is the production of audiovisual content for commercial purposes. Sudan may be in an advantageous competitive position for the production of advertising commercials, television series, and films meant for consumption by the entire African continent. The reasons for this include a low-cost structure resulting from a weak Sudanese pound, an abundant workforce (for extras, etc.), stunning and relatively unexploited locations (Meroe pyramids, Red Sea coast and so forth), and a dry climate that maximises work-days for exterior shoots. The pre-eminent position in audiovisual production, traditionally held in Africa by Egypt, could shift to Sudan, much as in South East Asia, Chinese-based manufacturing shifted to other regional countries, such as Vietnam or Cambodia based on their lower production costs.

I have worked as an actor in commercials and can confirm that, most of the time, this type of work does not reward you with the kind of artistic satisfaction that comes from making independent films. However, it does provide you

Filming on board a ship on the Red Sea, Sudan.

Filming on the island of Barra Musa Kebir, Red Sea State.

Filming in Port Sudan, Red Sea State.

Underwater filming in the Red Sea, Sudan (Credit: Arne van Leuvenhaege).

with a much needed income, and can be very good experience for directors, producers, cinematographers, production designers and other film crew candidates, who can learn skills that can be put to use in their own projects. This is not to say that it will be an easy road: there will be difficulties which, when overcome, will provide invaluable lessons for Sudanese film makers.

One challenge is the lack of in-country availability of equipment to produce commercials, such as cameras, lights, tripods. Thus, at least for the near future, foreign production companies will have to bring production equipment into Sudan when shooting, and face some of the legal and political uncertainties that are associated with bringing film equipment into the country. Restrictions on the use of drones and other film equipment will have to be relaxed if foreign film producers are to be convinced to consider Sudan as a location.

My experience of filming in Sudan (and in other countries where this is also an issue), is that such a large country, with its autonomous states, can present a bewildering array of local regulations to foreign producers who want to film in different areas. As you move equipment, crew, and talent from one location in Sudan to another, conflicting local jurisdictions may hinder the successful conclusion of a shoot.

One solution would be the creation of a Sudan Film Commission, which could be an autonomous national government agency that would handle all requests for film permits taking a 'one-stop shop' approach. Other countries have done this with great success, ensuring that foreign producers need only talk to one agency to get all the necessary approvals to film across the entire country.

Another challenge is that while many Sudanese are extremely talented and committed film artists, Sudanese crew mostly have little experience of working with foreign productions. Certainly, if foreign productions begin to visit Sudan to film commercials and other audiovisual products, that level of experience will rise but the start might be difficult and anything that can be done to accelerate the level of training of Sudanese film makers will be important to protect the future of the industry.

Those countries that are interested in providing development assistance to Sudan through international cooperation agreements should consider the possibility of setting up training courses for Sudanese film crew as well as for candidates who wish to enter that line of work. Also, the fees generated from issuing film permits (by the proposed Sudan Film Commission) should be used to promote the training of future technicians. In this way, as the pace of foreign direct investment in location shooting in Sudan increases, the revenue generated could be used to ensure that an increasing percentage of production jobs will be filled by Sudanese.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the comprehensive solution to the problem of developing Sudan's film industry could emerge from a Sudan Film Institute that would include not only the commission mentioned above, but also the creation of at least one film school (with possibly several regional branches), incentive programmes to open exhibition theatres to show the work of Sudanese and foreign film makers, the launch of new interactive media platforms to showcase independent Sudanese fiction and documentary films, and other similar initiatives.

There are challenges and opportunities facing the rebirth of Sudanese cinema. I have great confidence that Sudanese film makers, like their peers from other countries who have faced great and difficult challenges in the past, will rise to the occasion and not miss this chance to move forward towards a better artistic future. The opening trailer of 'Journey to Kenya' quotes Nelson Mandela: "Everyone can rise above their circumstances and achieve success if they are dedicated and passionate about what they do." Those words apply, in my opinion, to the promising future of Sudanese cinema.

* Ricardo Preve is an Argentinian-Italian filmmaker. His most recent feature film, 'Coming Home', was partly shot in Sudan, and was broadcast on Sudan National TV in May 2020.

Sanders of the Sudd?

Douglas H. Johnson*

Zoltan Korda's 1935 film version of Edgar Wallace's novel *Sanders of the River* is best remembered for two things: Paul Robeson's role as an African chief, and Jomo Kenyatta's fleeting appearance as a non-speaking extra. Robeson later denounced the film for its glorification of colonialism, claiming that different scenes were added to the script he had been shown. Set in Nigeria it also features scenes filmed in the Gambia and Uganda for added authenticity. So nothing about Sudan there.

Or is there?

In 1927-30 Sudan had been in the news with the British press reporting on what became the last pacification campaign in all of Britain's African territories. In fact there were two parallel campaigns, sometimes conflated in contemporary newspapers. One was the subjugation of the Lou Nuer and their prophet, Guek Ngundeng, who was referred to as a "witchdoctor" in official documents and press reports. Rumours of Guek planning a rebellion had circulated during the rainy season while the district commissioner, Percy Coriat, was home on leave, and on his return he was quickly flown back to his province in one of the RAF's two-seater biplanes. The other was the punitive campaign among the western Nuer following the murder of the district commissioner, Captain Vere Fergusson. His death, too, was wrongly attributed to the machinations of a local "witchdoctor". The alleged witchdoctor was later cleared of complicity in the crime, but his guilt was still proclaimed in the memorial volume, *The Story of Fergie Bey*, published by Fergusson's grieving mother in 1930.

The first book in Edgar Wallace's *Sanders of the River* series was published in 1911, and while the film features many of the novels' characters, it does not draw on the events the novels depict. So where does Sudan come in?

In the film Sanders goes on leave. While he is away there are rumblings of a tribal uprising. Sanders' assistant, a district commissioner named Fergusson, tries to suppress it, is captured and murdered by a witchdoctor. Sanders is recalled from leave and is urgently flown back to his district in a two-seater biplane. The rising is suppressed with the liberal application of machine guns, peace is restored, and Paul Robeson is filmed singing joyfully (something he later regretted).

It is possible that only someone with Sudan on the brain would assume the filmmakers based their plotline on a recent and well-publicised murder of a

district commissioner named Fergusson during a "tribal rising" led by "witch-doctors" in Sudan.

On the other hand it is possible that is exactly what they did.

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The Church's Commitment to Reconciliation in South Sudan

Father Gregor Schmidt*

Abstract
I was asked to write about my commitment as a religious in South Sudan in 2019 by a quarterly magazine in Germany. This article was adapted for publication in *Sudan Studies* in mid 2020 and published in Issue 63 (January 2021). It reflects my views on issues regarding the Christian faith and the causes for conflict in South Sudan based on personal experience. The first section provides an insight into how the Gospel has spread in South Sudan, especially among the Nuer. The second section describes the country's violent conflicts and some of their causes. In the third section, I reflect upon the work of reconciliation, which is an integral part of the mission of the Church.

The Arrival of the Gospel in Sudan and South Sudan

In the book of Isaiah there is a reference to the peoples of Sudan:

> At that time gifts will be brought to the LORD of hosts from a people tall and smooth, from a people feared near and far, a nation mighty and conquering, whose land the rivers divide, to Mount Zion, the place of the name of the LORD of hosts (Is 18:7).

The "rivers" are the Nile with its numerous tributaries that cut through the territory. Isaiah foresaw the time when these peoples would bring gifts to the Lord in Zion. It did not happen in his lifetime, but rather in New Testament times. The African in Acts (Chapter 8), who was baptised by Deacon Philip, was the first Sudanese Christian from the Meroe Empire of Queen Kandake. The man himself, whose conversion happened even before the Gospel reached Europe, left no historical traces. From the 3rd century, contacts were documented between Egyptian monks and Christians of Sudan (Nubians). From the sixth century onward, all royal dynasties were Christian. There was a long period in which Christianity flourished in Sudan until the 15th century. However, the memory of the Christian faith disappeared completely under the influence of Islam and was only made known – for the second time – by Saint Daniel Comboni almost 400 years later. It took until the end of the 20th century before the Nuer, the Nilotic people with whom I live, became Christians in large numbers. In colonial times, there were only sporadic conversions.

The Nuer were displaced during the Sudanese Civil War in the second half of the 20th century. Expelled from their homeland, some became Christians as refugees when they met with Catholic and Protestant missionaries in Khartoum and Ethiopia. During the liberation struggle against the Islamic

government they discovered the God of the Bible as the Holy One who hears the weeping of his suffering people, just as he heard the enslaved Israelites in Egypt. The Gospel spread among the Nuer like wildfire during the 1980s and 1990s when returning converts shared their new faith with their families in the villages. The vision of Isaiah that the "people tall and smooth" of the Nile would worship God has also come true for them. Today, there are hundreds of thousands of Nuer Christians: mainly Presbyterians, Catholics and Episcopalians (Anglicans). A Catholic catechist Joseph Pal Mut reported that he baptised more than 20,000 converts during his time on duty between 1987 and 1996.[1] This shows that the local church in its beginnings has been essentially a lay movement without clergy.

The Comboni Missionaries were invited by the Bishop of the Diocese of Malakal in 1998 to accompany Catholics who live scattered in the villages of the Fangak region in the Sudd, the wetlands and marshes of the Nile. Our young Christian community, whose first generation of believers are still alive, is extremely hospitable and generous. In order to keep the parish together, we missionaries visit people regularly in their villages. We walk on foot because there are no roads and accordingly no vehicles. The most distant chapels are up to four days away from the parish centre. The parish's territory is about five times the size of the administrative region of Greater London. Paths that are not used disappear within a few weeks in the constantly growing vegetation. During half the year, the waters of the Nile and the rains flood the region, which is as flat as a disk (see the photo on the front cover of this issue). There are no hills except termite hills. On our hikes, we cross waters that reach up to our necks. Tropical diseases are part of everyday life and safe drinking water is rare.

The basic food of the Nuer consists of sorghum (millet) with milk or fish. The people plant and harvest with hand tools, as the ox plough has not yet been introduced in this region. Furthermore, there is no telephone/mobile phone network, no postal service, no power grid – we depend on solar power – and no local radio station; only shortwave radio works to receive the BBC and Voice of America (VOA). In recent years, some humanitarian organisations have set up satellite dishes for internet communication. If it makes sense to speak of the 'ends of the world' on this round planet, I maintain that the marshes of the Nile are a good contender for this title. I am grateful to testify that the True God is worshipped in one of the most unlikely places on earth.

[1] Andrew Wheeler author and editor of the 'Faith in Sudan' series writes that Pal Mut died in a road accident in Nairobi on 29th March 1996. See his chapter (15) about Catholic catechists in Upper Nile in, Wheeler, A. C. (ed.) 1996. *Announcing the Light. Sudanese witnesses to the Gospel. Faith in Sudan* No. 6. Paulines Press Africa.

Fr Gregor (second from the right) and Fr Alfred (fourth from the right) with three catechists on a journey through the swamps of the Nile (Credit for all photographs: Gregor Schmidt).

Sunday Mass in Old Fangak.

The main task of the missionaries is to train men, women and the youth to become competent prayer leaders and teachers of faith (catechists) in their chapels. Our parishioners have a strong, sincere faith in Jesus as their Redeemer, but little Christian education. We also offer catechumenate for adults who ask to become Christians. About half of Fangak County's population is now baptised. There are many followers of traditional religion who are attracted to Jesus Christ. However, because more than 95% of the population in this part of South Sudan are illiterate due to their isolation (nationally, the illiteracy rate is at about 75%), we offer education programs in Nuer and English. Since 2014, we have been operating a primary school at the parish centre. So far, around 250 Primary Eight students have graduated with a certificate. It is a tiny seed considering the fact that only less than 1% of the county's population have obtained a primary school certificate. This document is as prestigious as a doctorate title in developed countries. Finally, due to the current civil war, reconciliation between the various ethnic groups has become an important task, not only for us but for all the churches in South Sudan.

A violent society

South Sudan is in the news only because there is a civil war and the tacit assumption is that there will be peace in the country when this conflict ends.

Baptism in Pakan.

Comboni primary school in Leerpiny.

However, I would argue that this is unlikely to be the case. The main elements of Nuer (and other pastoralist cultures) are very old and I was struck by the similarities between Nuer culture and those described in the Bible. A comparison with murder and manslaughter among the Israelites, who were themselves shepherds, is a good introduction for Western readers (e.g. 1 Chr 7:21; Gen 34). The polygamous patriarchal family and value system is very similar: among other things, revenge killings. These are based on an equilibrium recognized by all, which demands that a human life must be taken in order to atone for the death of a victim. Unlike the Old Testament (Gen 9:6), however, it is not important to find the murderer. It is enough to assassinate a close male relative as 'compensation', because the individual person represents the clan.

In South Sudan, deadly conflicts are taking place on three levels at the same time: for six years until recently between the government and the opposition (with the risk of returning to the battle field); at the same time violent clashes between various ethnic groups and among sub-tribes (in particular Dinka); and revenge murders between clans at the local level. The Red Cross reported on the radio, in the middle of 2019 that, while the number of people injured in the civil war has fallen since the last peace agreement was signed, the total number of patients with gunshot wounds is not much smaller. Regarding this

issue, I point out the tragic interrelation between humanitarian food aid and local clan conflicts. Men organize themselves to fight when they are well nourished and strong. They are less inclined to engage in conflict when they are weak because of hunger. The food distribution of the UN World Food Program (WFP), which is supposed to prevent starvation, becomes the occasion to carry out deadly clan conflicts. Instead, the national conflict is determined by the change of dry and rainy season because the road network consists of paths of cotton or loamy soil. Vehicles that carry heavy armoury get stuck when the soil turns into mud.

While men killed each other with spears until the middle of the 20th century, South Sudanese pastoralists have increasingly armed themselves with Kalashnikovs (AK-47) and other firearms since 1955 and the beginning of their struggle for independence against the Arab rulers. They also started using these arms in cattle raids against other ethnic groups and in revenge killings against other clans. In the years following the 2005 peace treaty (CPA) and before the outbreak of civil war in 2013, there were thousands of murders and revenge killings committed each year in inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic conflicts in South Sudan.[2] In the period between April 2011 and April 2012, conflict between the Nuer and Murle alone resulted in the deaths of 5,000 people in Jonglei State, where my parish is located. The Murle are distinguished from other ethnic groups in that they raid not only cattle but also young children in order to increase the number of tribal members. This causes enormous hatred among the neighbouring peoples. Although the conflict was included in statistics reported by UN observers, it was only worth a footnote in the international press and was not interpreted as a 'war'. Admittedly, the current civil war has increased killing tenfold, but in my experience there have rarely been peaceful periods in many parts of South Sudan. The rate of violence goes up and down. The country is like a patient who has constant fever, sometime more and sometime less. Therefore, a ceasefire, such as the one that is now in place, must not be interpreted as reconciliation.

The cultural causes of conflict

I shall describe three aspects of South Sudanese reality in order to explain the behaviour of clans and ethnic groups.

The first aspect is that people have survived for centuries in a hostile environment, where they have been threatened by other groups; by nature (drought, floods, diseases etc.); and by wildlife (snakes, crocodiles, scorpions, etc.). The individual can only survive in the collective, which provides security

[2] These were documented by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and other UN and international organisations.

School building destroyed in New Fangak in December 2014.

and distributive justice. There is an African proverb: 'I am because we are'. These are the immediate relationships that carry you. In the West, relationships and friendships are optional. Contact can be cut off even with parents and siblings because it is possible to take care of oneself in the modern state. A Nuer or Dinka, on the other hand, cannot rely on anything, except that his brothers and sons will risk their lives in his defence and in old age, only the extended family will provide for him. Therefore, there is 100% loyalty to a close relative, whether he is right or wrong. Furthermore, one's own clan is uncompromisingly defended against others; for these reasons I would argue that the civil war is ethnic. The clan and tribal collective almost completely overshadows the identity of the individual and because the identity of a person is embedded in his or her collective, the 'other' is almost always perceived only as a representative of his collective.

The second aspect concerns the marriage system and bride-price. While some people in Europe are debating the need to stop begetting children as a contribution to ease the effects of climate change, in traditional Africa it is the fundamental human destiny to continue the lifeline of one's family through one's own offspring. Marriage is the legitimate place to beget and raise children. In a patriarchal society such as South Sudan, it is necessary for the father

of the children to pay the bride-price in full, otherwise the children do not belong to him, but to his wife's clan. Biological fatherhood has no relevance, only legal paternity counts, which is legitimized by the bride-price. Among the Nuer, the bride-price for a woman is about 50 healthy cattle, among the Dinka, it can reach over 200 livestock. This creates pressure and desire but because one does not want conflict with neighbouring clans, cattle are usually raided from farther away, from other tribes. The shepherds are killed in an attack so that they cannot sound the alarm, and the herd can be led calmly away. This practice is common, for example, in the border region of Warrap, Unity and Lakes State, and between Lou Nuer and Murle in Jonglei.

Violence among men causes a surplus of women. This surplus makes polygamy (more precisely, polygyny) necessary and stabilizes it, because a woman is only considered 'grown up' and recognised in the community when she is married and has become a mother many times over. While we in the West understand women's rights as having equal human and civil rights with men, including the right not to want children, pastoralists in South Sudan know only one women's right: to become a wife and a mother; because there are not enough men, it is obvious to all women to accept entering a polygamous relationship. These relationships also reduce the burden of housework (cooking, cleaning) for the individual woman as it is shared among several women. Polygyny is also the reason why men crave more cattle in order to marry more women which leads to further cattle raids and killings; this is a vicious cycle. However, it must be noted that the reality of cattle raiding is a complicated issue and exists for different reasons. Besides greed (for women), young men often engage in daring competitions to prove their manhood or even consider raiding as a form of initiation. Revenge attacks, which target only people when they start, can escalate into cattle raids so as to inflict greater harm to the other side.

The third aspect concerns the perception of state laws and, in conflicts, the lack of understanding of the distinction between civilians and armed parties. Societies in developed countries have specialised in more and more professions and occupations. Even killing has been, in a sense, professionalised. Generally, only soldiers and others authorized security personnel (police, etc.) are permitted to kill under certain legal rules. The state's monopoly on the use of force is recognised and desired because the state usually proves to be reliable. In South Sudan, however, the state has never functioned nor brought visible benefits, not under the colonial rule of the British, nor the Arabs, nor the current government under President Salva Kiir. The state has never acted as a reliable service provider and is rather perceived an intruder, for example in the case of new legislation. In most cases, therefore, clans prefer to regulate their

Caterina Nyadul in stormy Kuerdap.

Women carrying water from a borehole.

interests at the local level according to custom and tradition. Although they are granted some autonomy in the transitional constitution, they also follow customary law where it is explicitly forbidden in the written law of modern South Sudan e.g. girl marriage.

Additionally, the people in rural regions have hardly diversified activities, apart from the separation of the two sexes. A Nuer (and Dinka) man is at the same time a shepherd, fisherman, farmer, architect, trader, soldier and blood avenger. Every pastoralist has one or two semi-automatic rifles (AK-47). The local culture cannot distinguish between civilians and fighters, at least not among men. Furthermore, it knows childhood only until the beginning of puberty. From then on, a boy learns to hunt, shoot and kill. The modern political definition of adulthood from the age of 18 is incomprehensible in traditional culture – quite apart from the fact that many do not even know their birth year – and therefore, the problem of child soldiers, which is causing so much attention in the West, is difficult to communicate.

Mundari pastoralists with their cow.

We Comboni Missionaries serve a parish in Unity State, whose centre is in Leer, the birth town of Nuer opposition leader Riek Machar. Right at the beginning of the civil war, the town was captured by militias fighting for the Dinka government. In 2015, the militias locked more than 60 men and boys inside an overseas shipping container on our church plot who then suffocated to death. From the point of view of outsiders, this amounts to a war crime committed by militias against Nuer civilians including children. From the point of view of the murderers, it was a preventive measure, because the

victims were potential fighters and avengers. Amnesty International published a detailed report on the incidents in Leer.[3]

There are many exiled South Sudanese who have enjoyed a good education in Anglo-Saxon Countries and have also come to know the benefits of a functioning state. After independence, however, the returning exiles were accused of cowardly running away. The power in the new state was distributed among – often uneducated – guerrilla fighters who know nothing but war and are deeply rooted in the traditional pastoralist culture as described above. Since there is no South Sudanese national identity apart from hatred of the Arab government in Khartoum and pride at having won the liberation struggle, every politician and civil servant is tempted to act in the interest of his clan and ethnic group. In concrete terms, this means that state revenues at all levels go into private pockets if they are not used for the war against the opposition. What is commonly referred to as corruption and nepotism is the basic pattern of how ethnic groups ensure that their members are doing well. This used to make sense in the past in order to ensure the survival of the clan in a hostile local context, but for a modern state this means death because every group in power tries to exclude the others. The 'cultural DNA' makes the mechanism of this conflict tragically predictable.

In addition, the government takes advantage of what I would call the 'Helper Syndrome' of the international community and the United Nations (UN). While spending millions of US-Dollars on weapons, it has handed over, to a large extent, important sectors such as agriculture ('livelihoods'), education and medical care to the responsibility of the UN, other aid agencies and the churches. Although the use of aid money is controlled to some extent, the Central Bank retains almost 50% of the value of every US-Dollar that is exchanged in local currency by any aid organisation. Skimming humanitarian aid money has become a business model. In addition, no one is monitoring the flow of oil revenues and the horrendous fees ("work permits") that foreign aid workers have to pay to be allowed to build up the country. The capital, Juba, has a high density of SUV and luxury car dealers because politicians and generals help themselves, taking money out of the state treasury unscathed.

The Reconciliation Work of the Church

The South Sudanese Catholic Bishops' Conference (SSCBC) has had difficulty gaining influence on the warring parties because many bishoprics have been vacant. In addition, ethnic belonging is still a strong aspect of the identity of Catholics and of Christians in general, as it is among church leaders. In

[3] Amnesty International, 2016. *South Sudan: 'We are still running': War crimes in Leer, South Sudan*. 28th July. Index number AFR 65/4486/2016.

this difficult tension between cultural and faith identity, the ecumenical South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC), of which the Catholic Church is a founding member, has helped prepare a path towards national reconciliation.

At the local level of the parish, we find ourselves in the unlikely situation that the national war has reached only the fringes of Fangak County. With the exception of the county capital New Fangak, other areas have not been directly affected by battles or displacement. This is due to the isolation of the area that is created by the Nile swamps and thus the lack of road connections. In our diocese, in whose territory much of the fighting and destruction has taken place, our parish is the only one that has not had to be closed in all these years. In all the other parishes of Malakal Diocese, the work was stopped for several years. Still, every Nuer family in our parish has lost relatives in the war. Because the 'enemy' breathes down their necks, but is still reassuringly far away, our reconciliation work looks different from that of a parish in which there are mixed hostile groups.

I am working on the side of the losers. Although the Nuer of my region wish to get rid of the current government, it is a blessing from the point of view of the Gospel to belong to the marginalized (cf. Lk 1,51-53). In order not to be misunderstood, I add that those South Sudanese controlling the government are not worse people than others, but they simply have more opportunities through their control of better weapons and Uganda's military aid. Apart from the first year of fighting, when the opposition had some victories and committed terrible crimes among the Dinka, the war has mainly taken place on territory where people who support the opposition parties traditionally live i.e. not in the Dinka homelands. In addition to ethnic cleansing of minority tribes in the Greater Equatoria Region, there has also been expulsion and confiscation of land by the government, which settles its own loyal people there.[4] Even though fighting has not (yet) taken place in our parish area, it is an enormous challenge to preach love of ones enemies in such a context.

Sometimes I get asked by European Christians why South Sudanese Christians don't just follow the word of Jesus and forgive their enemies. That suggestion is easily expressed but only because those persons do not have a real enemy who seeks to kill them or destroy their livelihoods. I myself am a foreigner in South Sudan and because my own life is not threatened by anybody, I do not superficially demand love of one's enemy from Christians of my parish as this would be to ask something that I do not have to implement myself.

[4] Personal communication. A South Sudanese Comboni Missionary from Nimule confirmed this in regard to his home area. Also see reports and information by the United Nations Human Rights Council on www.ohchr.org.

Instead, I have made the suffering of the Nuer my own suffering and make no demands. We pray for the dead and bless the wounded who are taken to our hospital ward. On certain occasions, our Nuer Catholics pray at Mass in the language of the Dinka in order to set a sign for national reconciliation.

At the local level of clan conflict, traditional reconciliation talks go hand in hand with Christian prayer (insofar as the clans are Christian). Our active parishioners are noticeably less inclined to use violence than the average Nuer. The ecclesial life is like a shelter where a new, peaceful lifestyle is maintained. The Catholic Church is known and loved for the fact that differences of opinion are settled without violence. In contrast to traditional festivals and gatherings, weapons and alcohol are not allowed at church festivals and on church grounds. Anyone interested in this 'alternative lifestyle' can join us. A traditional feast often runs the risk of ending in bloodshed because youth (men) injure or kill each other; either a previous attack needs to be revenged or a new dispute is started under the influence of alcohol. Furthermore, in our sermons and conversations, we shape the idea of inviolable human dignity because every person is an image of God. 'Dignity' cannot be adequately translated into Nuer. As an illustration, we explain that everyone must respect other persons deeply, even if they are women or strangers of another tribe. The stories of Jesus in the gospels help to underline that message.

In South Sudan, there is no secular society. Therefore, international peace

Parish youth walking from New Fangak to Lele. We went to visit the chapel for a few days to pray and give the sacrament of confirmation. It is custom that a big group of people walks with the missionary. They carry his bag and sometimes a flag or a drum to accompany singing. This demonstrates the unity of the faithful.

programs, which always appeal to reason and emphasize human rights, have little effect on the ground because they do not understand the dynamics of ethnic identity or negate it, and do not take people's religious identity seriously. As a missionary, I make the Gospel that presents God as a merciful Father, known to the people. A disciple of Jesus is called to imitate the Father and love the neighbour, even the enemy (cf. Eph 5:1-2; Lk 6:27-36). This message is about a change of mentality so that it is no longer ethnicity or the clan that defines whom one can and cannot trust. The Gospel and the Bible clearly show what constitutes a just, honest person. This should be the benchmark for building a just and peaceful society.

A peaceful and conciliatory attitude must be exemplified in everyday life. This is the strength of the Church and the missionaries. We live with 'our' people and suffer with them. Jesus Christ changed and converted people by loving concretely and making Himself the servant of all. We missionaries strive to learn the language and culture and walk their paths both literally and figuratively. People honour this and they are ready to open themselves to the perspective of the Gospel because we have opened ourselves to their perspective. Patience is needed. Jesus explains that the Kingdom of God grows like a tree, slowly but steadily.

* Comboni Father Gregor Schmidt is the child of a German father and a Korean mother. He first got to know his Order, the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, in Peru where he performed his community service (substitute for military service) through the German diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart. He studied theology in St. Augustin, Jerusalem and Innsbruck. Fr Gregor has lived among the pastoralists of South Sudan for 12 years, the first three years with the Mundari and then nine years with the Nuer. (Contact: gregor.bogdong@gmail.com).

Contact Tracing in 1903: How one man turned around a potential smallpox disaster

Ann Crichton-Harris*[1]

In late July 1903, a case of smallpox was found in the town of Omdurman, across the river from Khartoum where the Blue and White Nile meet. Within hours, this case was followed by two more, both children.

After confirming that first case Dr John B. Christopherson, one of only four British physicians in Sudan at that time and head of the newly formed Sudan Medical Service, pressed his staff, Dr Hasan Zaki, an Egyptian, and several Syrian and Sudanese medical workers into action. They traced the infection to visitors from another town and within a few hours had limited the movement of troops and workers and inspected, vaccinated and quarantined suspects.

Medical facilities in the early days of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium were primitive: the hospital was a 30-bed mud-brick building that lacked doors – even for the operating theatre. Temperatures of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or more, ferocious dust storms and the absence of refrigeration, together with a myriad of often lethal or disabling diseases, were daily challenges.

The medical team placed those who were infected in a vacant courtyard (*hosh*) enclosed by a residence. Follow up checks were made on the initial vaccinations on the arm and if they were not satisfactory, a re-vaccination was made at the hospital. A guard was posted to ensure neither entry nor exit from the *hosh*. The isolation camp was indicated by yellow quarantine flags. Dr Christopherson telegraphed for tents and vaccine lymph from Khartoum and assigned a team to be sent out to systematically check how far the infection had spread. When a ship in port was found to have a case on board, it was impounded and a yellow flag was hoisted for twelve days. The crew was ordered to remain on board, which was fortunate as twelve days later, a second sailor became infected.

As each new case appeared, the team isolated them and cleaned and secured

[1] This article came about because some time into the Covid-19 pandemic I had a 'light bulb' moment. I realised that what my great-uncle Jack Christopherson had done all those years ago in Africa, was precisely what Dr Anthony Fauci and his scientific colleagues at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) are attempting to do, right now, in the United States. Christo, as he was known, didn't use the term 'flattening the curve,' no one did back then. He did realise, without a moment's hesitation, that something serious was developing and that dismissing it as minor would lead to catastrophe and perhaps cause thousands of deaths.

Dr Jack Christopherson and his medical team in front of the first mud-brick hospital in Khartoum before it moved to new premises in 1905/6. He is second from the right in the front row and Dr Zaki is next to him on the right. Dr Zaki and Jack worked closely together in very difficult circumstances and became good friends. (Copyright, Sudan Archive Durham, Christopherson Collection, SAD. 2/2/12).

the *hoshes*. Occupants were listed by name. This strategy was successful but soon the doctor understood that those who were confined needed to be fed and local grain was distributed.

Dr Christopherson took steps to limit the spread of infection. He checked the number of people crossing from the infected quarter in Omdurman to Halfaya, on the other side of the Blue Nile. Halfaya had troops, a customs post, a market and a railway station, all set to carry infection to the north. There were also steamers that could carry infection along the river route and to Khartoum. He recommended all troops be kept in barracks and Omdurman placed out of bounds to troops based in Khartoum. Although his letters to those in charge of both steamers and boats were ignored, a further appeal, this time to the Governor General, stopped traffic.

Dr Christopherson was an enthusiastic epidemiologist but luck also played a part in limiting the spread of infection. He learned that ten days previously, a girl had arrived at the local workshops but had been too ill to return home. She had slept in the same house as one of the cases that had been admitted the day before. The doctor realised that this was the local source of the infection

This photograph was taken in front of the New Khartoum Civil Hospital. Front left, standing: Hasan Afandi Labib, dispenser; front, seated, from left to right: Dr N. Malouf; Dr Haddad; Dr Nikhlawi, senior medical officer; Christopherson, director; Miss M. Pye Moore; Miss M.R. Borthwick; Miss Douglas; second row, standing second from right: J. R. Newlove, pathologist. Also features Sudanese tamargis, dressers and nurses. Photographer: Wadad S. Shoucair, 1914. (Copyright, Sudan Archive Durham, Christopherson Collection, SAD. 7/4/4).

and that as it had only been imported a short time before his discovery, it had not had much time to spread.

Tracing the contacts of those who were infected required considerable questioning of people about where they had been and at what time and with whom on previous days. Anyone suspected of being exposed to infection was kept in isolation for a minimum of twelve days. As the spread of the infection and the number of cases decreased, Dr Christopherson made a daily note of who was cured, who was out of danger and who had left hospital. Finally, he allowed the quarantined boat to be freed.

In August, Dr Christopherson instructed his sergeant to draw up a map indicating in red the numbers of cases and infected buildings. As a British doctor, he would have been familiar with the epidemiological work and mapping by Dr John Snow who, in 1854, using careful interviews and documentation, had traced the source of cholera in Soho, London, and proved it to be a waterborne disease.

Sudan was no stranger to smallpox; between 1885 and 1899 there had been five major and two lesser epidemics, all facilitated by the trans-desert trade and pilgrimage routes to Mecca. That this outbreak resulted in only 21 cases (some severe but no deaths), was obviously due to contact tracing, using methods similar to those used this year in Wuhan, China. Dr Christopherson was successful because he had authority, he understood science and he applied it. His tackling of the smallpox outbreak in Sudan in 1903 was an achievement that merits recognition.

Selected Publications by Ann Crichton-Harris

2001. *Seventeen Letters to Tatham: A WWI Surgeon in East Africa.* Keneggy West, Toronto.

2003. 'Dr. J.B. Christopherson Appreciated – at last', *Sudan Studies* No. 30, April, 20-26.

2004. 'A Microscope in the heart of Africa'*, Barts and the London Chronicle,* Vol. 6. No. 2, 36-37.

2005. 'Mysteries on the Nile' *Melik Bulletin*, Issue 2, Vol. 2, December, 2.

2006. 'Undercurrents on the Nile: the life of Dr. John B. Christopherson'. 1868-1955. *Journal of Medical Biography*, Vol. 14, No. 1, February, 8-16.

2009. *Poison in Small Measure: Dr. Christopherson and the Cure for Bilharzia.* Brill.

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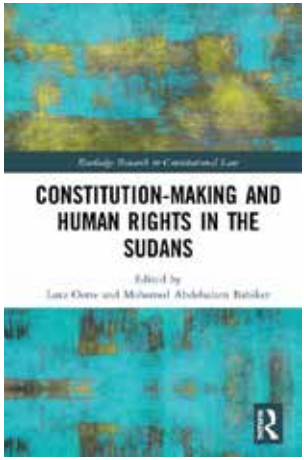
Book Reviews

Lutz Oette, Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker (eds), **Constitution-Making and Human Rights in the Sudans**. Routledge Research in Constitutional Law Series, Routledge 2019, ISBN 9780367663407 paperback, £29.59.



This book is edited by Dr Lutz Oette, Reader in International Law at SOAS, University of London, and Dr Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker, Associate Professor of Public International Law at the University of Khartoum. It has contributions from four researchers and academics. The book is presented in two parts: 'The challenges for peace and human rights protection and consitutionalism in the Sudans' and 'Constitutional protection of human rights'.

Although it was published on the eve of the protests before regime change in Sudan in 2019, this book discusses the issues that feature in the dreams of activists in Sudan and South Sudan, particularly that of an inclusive constitution-making process. A year has now passed since the Inghaz regime in Sudan (1989-2019) was removed, yet the adoption of a new constitution remains a real challenge for the new government. At the time of writing (July 2020) it has failed to prioritise the matters addressed in this book and it is clear that the rule of law and constitutionalism will remain on both Sudan's and South Sudan's agendas for the whole interim period and beyond.

This book makes an important contribution to the literature on constitutionalism in Sudan and South Sudan as the authors provide an in-depth analysis of the driving forces of conflict and human rights violations in the two countries. The contributors have worked on constitutional rights in Sudan and South Sudan for several years and they provide a thoughtful analysis in this book, setting out reform agendas for the transformation of democracy and the rule of law. The discussion covers most of the factors driving instability in the Sudans, including power struggles and human rights in Sudan and the challenges for peace, human rights protection and constitutionalism in both Sudan and South Sudan. The distinct studies comprise a workable roadmap for the Sudanese to overcome the vicious circle of violence.

In the first chapter Dr Oette provides an in-depth, contextual account of the structural factors and legacies that impact on the protection of constitutional rights in Sudan. This includes a balanced criticism of the approaches pursued in the peace agreements signed by the Inghaz government of Sudan and armed groups, at different stages of the armed conflict. Interestingly the factors and

mistakes he highlights are presently confronting the Transitional Government as well as the challenging ongoing peace talks. Many observers describe the current standstill in the peace talks as a reflection of the same mind set and approach that resulted in the unworkable peace agreements signed by the former regime. Due to the non-participatory process adopted, South Sudan's government is also suffering from constitutional uncertainty and growing divisions. This situation exacerbates the existing drivers of civil war and the state of insecurity that triggered a new circle of violence in December 2013; an event that put the new government on the track of a series of broken peace agreements. The failure to agree on peace and a constitution-making process is a repeated phenomenon in both countries due to a lack of public participation and transparency which leads in turn to the questioning of their legitimacy and that of the constitutional documents that they produce. The same mistakes are in the making in the 'Juba Peace Talks' that at the time of writing are taking place between the government and armed groups from Darfur and the three areas.

Professor Ali Suleiman Fadlalla and Dr Mohamed Abdelsam Babiker's chapter 'In search of constitution and constitutionalism in Sudan: the quest for legitimacy and the protection of rights' examines the historical root-causes of the lack of participatory and transparent processes in constitution making in Sudan. They begin their analysis with the 'colonial constitution' (the self-rule statute of 1953) which led to many short-lived constitutions (in 1956, 1964,1974,1985) and the interim National constitution of 2005 and its subsequent amendments after the secession of South Sudan. The legacy of long periods of rule by military regimes, the ideological manipulation of constitutions, the unpreparedness of political parties to embrace genuine democratic practices and a lack of public participation all still shape the constitution making process in Sudan.

Prof. Suleiman observes that the 'western constitutionalism' model does not fit the structure of the African societies in terms of their diversity and complexity, as some:

> scholars tended to see constitutionalism in terms of Western liberal articulation of that concept, summed up neatly in a much used quotation from De Smith in which constitutionalism would only be identified in country where the government is accountable to an entity or organ distinct from itself where elections are freely held on a wide franchise of frequent interval, where political groups are free… and where there are effective legal guarantees of basic civil liberties enforced by an independent judiciary (p. 58).

This approach has been criticised as it does not represent the African context

where the multi-party is not in conformity with African traditional politics of consensus or other diverse cultural and religious factors. These criticisms may have been manifested in post-colonial constitutional developments; Professor Suleiman argues that "constitutions and laws have been used for ideological or political purposes and as a means of control and repression". This was particularly evident in the constitutions adopted during the Nimeiri and Inghaz regimes. Both regimes used constitutions and laws for ideological purposes and did not consult widely or provide transparency when making constitutions. Later Inghaz regimes imposed their religious ideological agenda, designing draconian laws to control society. The significance of the historical background presented in this chapter is that it presents the facts from which lessons can be learned by contemporary Sudanese in their new quest for a fair and just constitution-making process.

In chapter 3 David K. Deng provides an in-depth analysis of the development of the South Sudanese constitution-making process and highlights the negative impact of the civil war on the formation of institutions, rule of law and human rights mechanisms. South Sudan is striving to break away from the cycle of short-lived constitutions. The first interim constitution was subjected to numerous amendments by the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement (SPLM) government "to suit the short-term interests of a small political elite" (p. 63). Deng identifies three main factors that cause constitutional instability in South Sudan. The first is the transitory nature of peace agreements and constitutional arrangements. Secondly, the non-democratic attitude of the SPLM, which fought for decades to establish fair and just rule but has displayed many of the characteristics of the previous authorities. The notion of civilian control of the military is largely absent from military culture. Constitution making lacks public participation, which seems to be one of the intractable problems that Southerners have carried with them into their young nation where only 27 per cent of adults can read. Thirdly, civic engagement and dialogue were also absent in the peace talks and in efforts at conflict prevention. The outbreak of the civil war which erupted in December 2013 undermined constitution building and the formation of the effective governance mechanisms that are thought to facilitate a transformation to civilian rule. These shortcomings are further reflected in the formation of the National Constitutional Review Commission which was appointed by a presidential decree and whose members were mostly older males from the SPLM; resulting in more mistrust in the government.

Transitional justice and nation building are both needed if South Sudan is to address the legacies of conflict, establish effective mechanisms to remedy past violations and put an end to impunity. Such a process needs political will to hold senior political and military leaders to account but this is impossible where

violence is ongoing. The commission on human rights in South Sudan has played a pivotal role in engaging with south Sudanese civil society and in reaching out to the people to highlight the need for the transition. David Deng argues that, "within its seven years of existence the Republic of South Sudan has in many ways relived the entire saga of post- independence rule in African States" (p. 87).

The second part of the book deals with 'Constitutional protection of human rights' and begins with Dr Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker's overview of the development of bills of rights in Sudan's constitutional history (1953-2005). He echoes the findings of Prof Suleiman that the various constitutions adopted in Sudan contained bills of rights which "generally reflected the ideological outlook of the nature of the regime in power". Dr Babiker provides a rigorous analysis of the provisions of the 2005 Interim National Constitution including, 'equality before the law and equal protection'. He highlights the flaws in the provisions in terms of the duty of the state to protect, and points to the inherent discrimination in Sudan's hybrid legal system that is derived from shari'a law and customary law, leading to discrimination against certain individuals in particular women, and religious, ethnic and linguistic minorities. The limitations he identifies are manifest in (among others) fair trial guarantees, enforcement of the death penalty, prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment, religious rights and freedoms, and freedom of expression and media freedoms. The chapter concludes with a series of recommendations that remain valid for the Interim Government. Their implementation would facilitate the protection and effectiveness of constitutional rights and guarantees, which should be complemented by legislative and institutional reform, judicial independence, and parliamentary oversight.

The fifth chapter by Dr Munzoul is entitled: 'Citizenship, statelessness and human rights protection in Sudan's constitutions and post South Sudan secession challenges.' Dr Assal argues that the root causes of Sudan's instability since its independence in 1956 are connected to unequal citizenship. South Sudan's secession has brought the severity of the citizenship dilemma to the fore and "created new challenges particularly, concerning the status of individuals with links to South Sudan" (p. 119); these are especially complex with respect to mixed marriages and children, as well as in the context of the armed conflict in the Nuba mountains and Blue Nile in June 2011, and in Abyei. These problems are also due to the weak level of protection of citizenship rights on the basis of non-discrimination provided in the Bill of Rights, as discussed in detail in Chapter 4 by Dr Babiker.

The author emphasises the negative impact of the lack of public participation in constitution-making processes. The lack of public participation raises the fundamental question as to whether the constitution is intended to represent

the interests of the people or the ideological purposes of those in power; especially when it comes to citizenship and nationality Sudan is a multiethnic, multicultural, and multi-religious country but both law and common discourse focus on nationality rather than citizenship. The author rightly notes that the basis of Sudanese citizenship laws is ethnicity and birth or settlement in the territory. Consequently, many people who are connected to South Sudan became stateless after its secession and are stranded between Sudan and South Sudan with no access to basic services or documents. Dr Assal suggests that "the problem of citizenship in what remains of former Sudan is political and therefore the solution must also be political… challenging unitary conceptions of identity and embracing multiculturalism will not only settle citizenship problems but also tackle the identity problem, which is tearing the country apart"(p. 138).

Dr Noha Ibrahim Abdelgabar, Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker and Dr Lutz Oette jointly author a separate chapter about the issue of minority rights and the rights of people in the Sudans. They provide a detailed analysis of the levels of recognition of minority rights in both Sudan's and South Sudan's constitutions. This question is particularly salient after the secession of South Sudan and resulting debates about whether Sudan has become homogeneous as a result. The authors examine the extent to which the constitutional order and legislative and constitutional frameworks have responded to apparent concerns over respect for minority rights and ensured the effective protection of rights in different contexts. The lack of debate and lack of participation by civil society has led to a failure to address the diverse identities of the people of Sudan. The authors revisit colonial polices in Africa and the similarities of their impact in the post-colonial period in most African countries in relation to self-determination, before considering the extent to which international law standards matter in Sudan.

The constitutions of both the Sudans recognise diversity but there has been a failure to safeguard these rights in law and practice: "although successive constitutions since Sudan's independence guarantee religious rights and freedom, these guarantees are contradicted by national laws" (p. 149). The imposition of Islamic laws and failure to guarantee the rights of other religious minorities has continued to fuel violence, while this problem still confronts the Interim government in Sudan during the Juba peace talks.

The final chapter 'Women's rights in Sudan: constitutional recognition and lived experiences' is by Dr Ebtisam Sanhouri Elrayah. In it she discusses several factors that have contributed to the denial of equal rights for women in Sudan. She identifies the landmarks of the women's movement and highlights the dynamic political participation of Sudanese women throughout the struggle

against colonial rule. Women's contribution has been undermined throughout Sudan's political development by the limited space they are given and their minimal participation in decision-making.

Dr Elrayah sheds light on the lives of women who belong to marginalised groups and details their experience of multiple discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, displacement, and disability, among other things. Although women were the beneficiaries of positive discrimination and affirmative action in the constitution of 2005, in practice the state has failed to implement these measures effectively and women's enjoyment of their constitutional rights is often compromised in practice. This is either because laws have not been enacted or their enforcement is not in conformity with the constitution. Many laws include provisions that discriminate against women such as the Criminal Act of 1991, the Evidence Act of 1994 and the Public Order Act of Khartoum State 1998, among others.

Elrayah concludes that Sudan's future constitution must disentangle the women question from that of other marginalized groups, as women endure intersectional discrimination; women's rights should be mainstreamed in the text of the constitution. While she suggests that the 2005 constitution is the most advanced in the history of Sudan as it affirmed the incorporation of international standards, she stresses that key treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) and the Maputo Protocol have still not been ratified.

This book is significant, coming as it does from some of the most knowledgeable scholars on constitutional issues and peacemaking in Sudan and South Sudan. The book is timely, as it both provides national and international actors with a way to understand the challenges facing their Interim governments as well as the ongoing peace talks and constitution making processes. Interestingly, the Prime Minister of Sudan, Dr Abdalla Hamdok in his recent public statement about the Juba Peace Talks, echoed some of the book's key findings. Dedicated experts on national policy and law making, mediators, civil society actors and political leaders in both Sudan and South Sudan should use this work as an advocacy tool.

Ali Agab is a Sudanese human rights lawyer who previously worked for the Khartoum Centre for Human Rights and Environmental Development and the African Centre for Justice and Peace Studies as a legal researcher on Sudan. He holds a master's degree, LLM in Human Rights, Conflict and Justice, from SOAS, University of London.

Khalid Wad Albaih and Larissa-Diana Fuhrmann (eds), **Sudan Retold**, Hirnkost, Berlin, 2019, ISBN 9783945398906 hardback, £27.00

In January 2017 the Goethe-Institut in Khartoum held a workshop for emerging young artists from all kinds of backgrounds, interests and skills, to discuss their visions and their ideas about what it meant to them to be Sudanese.

The result of this endeavour is *Sudan Retold*, which is described on its cover as "An Art Book About the History and Future of Sudan". *Sudan Retold* is the the first Sudanese graphic novel and is a large coffee-table book. It is written in English, Arabic and German. One of the two editors is Khalid Albaih, a Sudanese illustrator and well-known political cartoonist, and the other is Larissa-Diana Fuhrmann, who was Cultural Coordinator at the Goethe in Khartoum. The workshop and book were the result of Khalid's concept of a graphic novel that would retell or initiate stories by young artists about their visions of their country and which would also interest those living outside its borders.

The contributors work in different disciplines, as writers, graphic designers, cooks, film makers, illustrators, painters, graphic designers etc. Most but not all have lived all their lives in Sudan, although some have spent part of their lives abroad and a few are now based there. Most of the artists have contributed an individual piece of work but sometimes two have collaborated. As a result, the book has 27 chapters produced by 31 artists.

This is an eclectic mix of historical facts, myths and alternative realities, as well as text, artwork and photography. A lot of regions in Sudan and South Sudan are covered. For instance, the first chapter uses artwork to explore a Nuer myth from South Sudan about the separation of heaven from earth, whilst another chapter uses artwork to explore an alternative reality where the great revolution against British colonialism of 1924 was a success. There is also a chapter of colourful drawings of the Stone Age, depicting the visual possibilities of this era, while a chapter entitled 'The City of Faras in The Christian Era' attempts to recreate the lost Sudanese city using mixed-media techniques. One interesting chapter, 'Chinese Gordon', consists of illustrations without a text, that portray General Gordon moments before his death from his point of view, continuing to depict events after he is stabbed. Other chapters

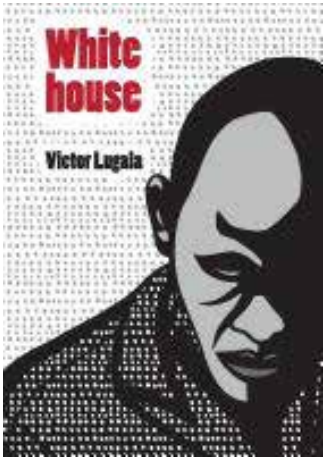
explore historical leaders, including Dr John Garang de Mabior, and renowned artists including Ibrahim el Salahi, Ahmed Shibrain and Kamala Ibrahim Ishaq. We see depictions of the people of Sudan in beautiful photography in chapters such as 'A Thousand Faces of Sudan' and 'Women'.

The project was conceived, and the book produced, before the 2019 revolution in Sudan. A lot of the artists who are featured in *Sudan Retold* were actively involved in producing artwork during and after those events. These include Almigdad Aldikhairy, Hazim Alhussain, Amna Elhassan and Dar al Naim Mubarak, who have since attained a notable presence on the international art scene with some of their work exhibited outside Sudan. Their work can most easily be seen on their Instagram or Facebook pages.

This book is a rich and varied offering from a myriad of contributors with different creative backgrounds and gives the reader much to think about and enjoy.

Aziz El Nur is a Sudanese living in the diaspora who is interested in the country's arts and history. He is a long-standing member of SSSUK.

Victor Lugala, **White house**, Africa World Books, Perth, Australia,
ISBN: 978-0-9876141-0-0 paperback, $14.99, 2017.



Victor Lugala, a South Sudanese journalist who lives and works in Juba, has been widely published in prose and poetry. Two of his novellas have been published by the Australian-based *Africa World Books*; the first, *White house*, is reviewed below.

Set at the time of the rebel shelling of Juba in 1992, *White house* is a skilfully plotted and thrillingly told story that is hard to put down. White House was the notorious State Security headquarters; anyone who was taken there disappeared for good.

The story is of Riti, a photojournalist, who was arrested and taken to the White House. He was so badly beaten that, "If Riti's mother was to be brought to the container [at the White House] at that moment she would swear by her withered breasts that the young man with a swollen face was not her son" (pp. 66-67).

He was sexually assaulted when he was ordered to undress and sit on a long-necked bottle. "Riti", pronouncing the name with a northern accent, "We don't have chairs for our visitors. But feel at home. This is your new home. Now, sit on the bottle. That is your royal stool. Sit!" (p. 68).

On the fourth day of his detention, "A slender uniformed man entered gingerly as if he was afraid of stepping on a fresh piece of shit. He had curly hair and a heap of moustache that covered his upper lip… The man was smoking a thin roll of marijuana. 'Who brought you here? Why are you here? What did you do?' … Riti plucked some courage from his reserve energy to look at the man straight in the face and said, 'Are you Abbas? The man frowned, surprised. 'Do you know me?', the uniformed man asked, as knowing smile lingered. 'My sister is Bianca. We stay in Atalabara. I am innocent.'" (p. 69).

The first time Riti heard of Abbas was when Leila, wife of his 'disappeared' friend, Ben, warned him not to go to Sara's café. "That tea place is a booby trap, if you don't know…". Leila lowered her voice and said, "Do you know Abbas?" Her voice betrayed her fear. Riti shook his head and said, "No, I don't know a person by the name. Abbas? No!"

"I don't know him either but I'm told he is a dangerous man," said Leila (p. 45).

From then on, the name Abbas came to represent in Riti's mind everything that was repressive and detestable in Juba: "Who is Abbas? What could he be doing or what has he been doing? Dangerous man! He must be a hit man. An informer. Murderer. Killer. Spy. Bloodthirsty vulture. Fundamentalist. Or is he Mr Lover Man, wife snatcher, girlfriend snatcher, widow inheritor? He thinks he has extra testicles? I don't know the man but I feel like puking when I hear his name. I don't want to see Abbas. Your name is already causing me diarrhoea" (p. 46).

Women close to him, including his girlfriend, Sara, and his own sister, Bianca, who owned a bar, must all be "sleeping with the enemy", Riti said to himself; Abbas seemed to be the cog in the wheel of any woman who owned a business like a bar in Juba.

He confronted his sister one evening when she arrived home late: "Sister, aren't you afraid of breaking the curfew?... And who was that man in the army car?" he demanded. Bianca replied, "Have you become a policeman, a guard or my husband?" Riti removed his slipper and slapped it hard on the ground and said, "I'm the man in this house and I have all the right to ask even if you are my older sister!" "Riti, you want to speak like who in this house? If you are a man enough why don't you start by buying a kilo of sugar or meat for your mother?" (p. 17).

Now, this man in uniform, on his fourth day of detention and after the mention of 'Abbas' and his sister Bianca, gave him tea and slippers… and led him to a military jeep – he must indeed be Abbas himself come to liquidate him, Riti thought. While in the car, the man introduced himself, "My name is Abbas" and never said anything else until the jeep entered the main gate of the Juba University Teaching Hospital. He dropped Riti there and said, "Greet your sister".

Riti saw Leila leaving the hospital and called to her, but Leila had difficulty recognising him in his filthy clothes and swollen face. When she eventually did, she embraced him, sobbing. While leading him to a ward to see his sister and mother, Leila whispered, "Sara went to Khartoum two days ago. She eloped with a northern soldier. Can you imagine!" (p. 72).

In the maternity ward, Riti's mother pointed at the newly born baby that Bianca was breast-feeding and said, "'Riti, see your little nephew, he came into the world yesterday evening.' Her voice lacked enthusiasm or happiness". Riti noticed that "The baby had very light skin, almost white. His dark curly hair was pasted on his small head. He had large ears" (p. 72).

Sitting alone on the grass under a tree in the hospital compound, Riti's bitter thoughts were on the baby. "Now she has Abbas junior who will forever keep the history of oppression alive in their family memory. He does not want to be

reminded of that ugly history every day."

His mother joined him on the grass: "My son, whether it was Abbas or God who saved you from death, let's praise God. Abbas is an exploiter, a murderer... I am not happy at all with Abbas and Bianca. She has brought a curse to this house. She has been going with a man who is a killer of our people…" (p. 73).

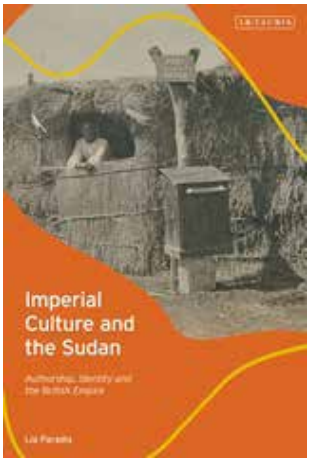
"Riti," said Bianca a few days later, "You would have been a dead man, but I tried my best to get you out. I am sorry that I am carrying shame in my arms, but it is shame and abuse that saved your life, Riti. I cannot go into details because it hurts. I'll remain with the shame for life. Just tell me what day you want to go to Khartoum. I will ask somebody to fly you out."

Back in his room, Riti resolved, "I am going to Khartoum… I am going to hunt for that traitor called Sara. She used sex as weapon of war to lure me into the crocodile's jaw. I defied untimely death. I defy oppression of any nature. I'll fight for freedom. *A luta continua!*"

Professor Taban lo Liyong says in his foreword to the book (back cover), "If you want to know why South Sudanese broke away from the Sudan, then *White house* is the novella to read!" I fully agree with him.

Jacob J. Akol is a South Sudanese journalist and author of several books, including *Burden of Nationality* and *I Will Go the Distance*.

Lia Paradis, **Imperial Culture and the Sudan: Authorship, identity and the British Empire**, I.B. Tauris, London, 2020, ISBN: 9781788318990 hardback, £85.



> On arrival in Port Sudan I can remember being very disappointed to see Fuzzy-Wuzzies … mundanely unloading our ship. Having read Kipling, as everyone had in those days, I was expecting to see them standing with their long spears, romantically silhouetted against the sky, gazing from the top of the hills into the far distance. (Recollections of a Sudan Political Service wife who arrived in 1926).[1]

Rudyard Kipling's *Fuzzy-Wuzzy* (1892), General Gordon's journals, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, advertisements for Ogden's cigarettes and Bovril beef paste, Boy Scout songs, school textbooks and children's adventure stories were the genres through which British literature explored Sudan. Lia Paradis describes how these genres diversified and proliferated during the 1880s and 1890s, building a kind of "textual echo chamber" – dense networks of intertextual quotation, reference, allusion, and plagiarism – which made varied imperial narratives support each other's believability, vividness, and familiarity (p. 58).

The 'Sudan sensation' coincided with the birth of tabloid newspapers such as the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Telegraph*, and the newsy fiction of Kipling, Haggard and G.A. Henty. Slatin's captivity memoir, *Fire and Sword in the Sudan* (1897), published five years after Henty's adventure tale for boys, *Dash for Khartoum* (1892), "is so rich with Henty's literary tropes," Paradis writes, "that it's hard to remember that it was intended as adult non-fiction, not a derivative knockoff" (p. 36). The Sudan was an uncanny place for the British officials who arrived there in the 1910s and 1920s; having grown up with Messrs. Kipling, Haggard, and Henty in the 1890s, the heroes and villains of their childhood make-believe were all there in mundane roles: Wingate was sweeping up, Zubeir Pasha was living in quiet retirement in Geili, working on his memoirs, while Rudolf Carl von Slatin made the dinner party circuit. It was all a bit like stepping into one of Jasper Fforde's *Thursday Next* stories. 'Dervishes' carried luggage for hotel guests and led donkeys around for tourists. 'Fuzzy-Wuzzies' were stevedores.

Echoes of a childhood reading Kipling intrude into the letters written by

[1] Kenrick, R. 1985. *Sudan Tales: Reminiscences of Wives in the Sudan Political Service, 1926-56*. Oleander, p. 13

the Sudan Political Service (SPS) officials and their wives that are at the centre of *Imperial Culture and the Sudan*, Lia Paradis' study of the epistolary space that 'British-Sudani' and their correspondents fashioned out of thousands of letters which they sent back-and-forth between Khartoum, Wau and Nasir, and Exeter, Aberdeen and Carlisle.[2] The book focuses on the long-term British administrators of the SPS, from their childhoods in the 1890s, through the years between 1920 and the early 1960s – roughly, from the post-First World War transition from military to civilian administration to the end of the Anglo-Sudanese Association. Much as the British-Sudani of the twenties and thirties tried to escape the old-fashioned imagery of adventurers and soldier-heroes, 'that Gordon business' proved hard to escape, seeming to haunt their letters as a ghost flits past a palace staircase after dark. "Sheila my dear," the educator Ina Beasley wrote to her sister in August 1945, "I do not know how much you have read about these parts but you have heard talk about the Mahdi….". [3] Even the silence of these ordinarily prolix letter-writers and diarists around their homecomings, Paradis says, stemmed partly from an intertextual obstacle to "the narrative flow of their lives. The literature of adventure, travel, conquest and empire lacked potent images of return" (p. 138-9).

There is a fundamental uncertainty at the centre of the 'cosmopolitan epistolary space' that Paradis maps out. Mail routes stretched across Sudan along roads and rivers and between aerodromes, connecting dozens of out-stations staffed by clerks and mail carriers, but letters did not always reach their intended recipients. They went missing: "I have located the mail at last, …. It had been running all round the country in a merchant's lorry…" (p. 97). Ink ran. Messages were burnt and correspondents forgot to write: "We seem to be having a bad patch regarding letters, but you, fortunately, seem to be having a good one regarding [bombing] raids".[4] These letters were not only attempts to maintain a presence 'at home', across the distances of time and space between Khartoum and London, but also to cross the subtler distances that come between people.

The longer SPS officials and their spouses lived in Sudan, the more distant their lives became from their friends and family 'back home', and the more remote the Sudan of the metropolitan imagination – with its mythology of martial sacrifice and redemption – became from the day-to-day life of an Assistant District Commissioner, say, or a Deputy Assistant Director, an Education Officer or a Secretary of the Red Cross Society in Khartoum. As

[2] Paradis calls the SPS officials and their wives 'British-Sudani' to emphasise their hybrid identities.

[3] SAD.657/7/1, Beasley to her sister, 10th August 1945.

[4] SAD.657/5/9, Beasley to her mother, 6th July 1941.

this distance grew, so did anxieties about returning to Britain. From the start of their service in Sudan, the mail provided the glue that would help to bind British-Sudani to their families and friends 'at home'. Many on both sides of this correspondence were reassured by the community it created, expecting the epistolary space to go beyond tying distant writers together to pave the way for their eventual reincorporation into British society.

Imperial Culture and the Sudan falls into three parts. The first describes the contrast between the mythic image of Sudan fixed by events in the 1890s and the mundane work-lives of civilian SPS officials of the 1920s-1950s. The years between the 1890s and 1920s not only marked out the contrast between a metropolitan memory of a martial career in Sudan in the 1890s and civilian careers in the 1920s, they also measured the distance between old-fashioned 'Bog Baron' types and young DCs, with their better Arabic and their coursework in anthropology. Paradis explores the contrasts produced by the civilian transition through 'Books of Interest', a list provided to candidates appointed to the Sudan Political Service, the children's literature and Gordon-mania of the 1890s, and a short history of the colonial administration course. The first part of the book ends with a diverting comparison of Wilfred Thesiger and Gawain Bell, 'The adventurer and the administrator,' in which Paradis writes entertainingly about virile moustaches and how Thesiger imagined himself to inhabit a 'pre-Condominium world' (p. 84).

The book's second and third parts were originally the author's 2004 dissertation: *Return Ticket: The Anglo-Sudanese and the Negotiation of Identity, 1920-1965*. One of Paradis' aims in Part two, 'Authoring the British-Sudani Identity', is to make us better readers by focusing attention on the discursive practices by which British-Sudani and their families produced a shared epistolary community. Private letters are often useful to historians looking for substantiation or a telling detail. These letters and dairies are unusual objects. Rather than private texts meant to substitute for face-to-face intimacy with someone in particular, these texts were already semi-public documents before entering the archive: meant to be passed around – "…shown around to anyone in the family" (p. 102) – and inviting readers to come together to gossip: "thought as I was sending this to Sheila via you I would put a note in about Ruth…"[5]. Even other readers intrude. "Rotten letter", Helen Foley wrote to her brother during the Second World War, "how can one be funny or interesting with the censor's blue pencil hovering?"[6]

British-Sudani used letters to create and maintain an epistolary community

[5] SAD.657/5/11, Beasley to her mother, 9th July 1941.

[6] Foley, H. 1992. *Letters to her Mother*. Castle Cary, p. 68.

and cosmopolitan identity, despite differences of generation, geography, and experience, even as other events enlarged these differences. Authoring a British-Sudani identity was a work of fiction in which British residents of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan constructed themselves and their lives in the ways they wanted to be perceived by their recipients, partly to ease their eventual return.

> [Life] events [such as marriage, or the acquisition of a new home], and the quotidian details of life in the Sudan, were commonly described in a cheery, neutral voice, suggesting these milestones and daily regimen were similar to life in Britain. By writing against the emotional impact of the content, they reduced the distance between their experiences and those of their audiences and, in the process, mingled particular versions of Britain in the Sudan (p. 94).

But this construction was vulnerable to other interpretations and events (the '1924 Mutiny', Sudanisation) that challenged the idea that Anglo-Sudani were "wanted, welcome and doing good work" in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (p. 139).

Part three, 'Remembering the Sudan', examines the re-negotiation of an Anglo-Sudani identity in the country to which they returned. British-Sudani had begun the process of returning 'home' by remaining present among their family and friends through letters and photographs. But they returned to a society where becoming post-colonial had involved repudiating an imperial past. Inasmuch as the basic contradictions of colonial rule were unresolved by decolonisation, the totalising 'figure of the coloniser' was partly a product of attempts to grapple with colonial history in the 1960s and 1970s. "[F]ixing the persona of the [colonial] administrator in an earlier [pre-WWI] version" (p. 10), Paradis suggests, supplied a past that **could be** repudiated and drew a sharp line between old colonial careers and new modes of service in post-imperial organisations like Oxfam or the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). This historiographic sleight-of-hand provided assurance to metropolitan society that Britain had passed beyond Empire into a more 'modern' condition. But what kind of publicness was then available to ex-colonials' desire for recognition as "good civil servants and faithful citizens" in the 1960s and 1970s (p. 9)? The Anglo-Sudani identity was created by events that many would not have wished to commemorate: their role in colonial rule, with its violence, forced labour, racism, and the 'tyrannising of the population'.[7] It was embarrassing.

What forms did historical memory take for returning Anglo-Sudani during

[7] Staniforth, A. 2000. *Imperial Echoes*. WorldView, p. 130.

an era of decolonisation? British-Sudani maintained community identity and memory after their departure from Sudan with a dining club, an annual pensioners' tea, and a biennial pensioners' lunch, which alternated with the Sudan Church Association bazaar. Efforts to protect their pensions, especially, brought Anglo-Sudani together around a common project; and groups such as the Senior Civil Servants' Association of the Sudan (SCSAS) and the Sudan Government British Pensioner's Association (SGBPA) provided an institutional focus for social identification, helping to shape Anglo-Sudanis' changing relationship to the British government and an independent Sudan. Of particular interest to readers of *Sudan Studies* will be Paradis' examination of the changing community that has formed around the project of reading, preserving, and engaging with letters written by SPS officials, their families and friends, and others who worked in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. Much of this labour of memory has been carried out by women. Families (most often mothers) preserved and collected the letters which SPS officials or their wives (or daughters) later edited for publication in memoirs or for deposition in the archive at Durham. With changing projects around these letters, Paradis shows, the meanings of this correspondence for its authors and various readers have changed over time.

Imperial Culture and the Sudan is a well-written, entertaining, and thought-provoking book. Readers interested primarily in Sudanese experiences will be disappointed, but it is a bit unfair criticising a book for what its subject matter does not do. "If one were to read his record of these years", Paradis writes of one typical letter-writer, "the cast of characters would be entirely British, in speaking roles, with a vast pool of extras made up entirely from the Sudanese population" (p. 102). This does not diminish the value of this book, which offers much on informal linkages of empire and a useful contrast for scholars broadly interested in the well-travelled lives of Sudanese government clerks and bookkeepers who, after independence, also had to reckon with decolonisation and find second jobs in other professions elsewhere, or the difficult homecomings of refugees (and other migrants) to Sudan and South Sudan during the 1970s and 2000s, or the various ways that contemporary transnational communities maintain links through images, video, and text.

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Society for the Study of the Sudans (UK)

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