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Front cover photograph: The Nile in the Shendi Reach (Credit: D. A. Welsby).

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Editorial

Welcome to the second 2021 issue of *Sudan Studies*. It has been written and produced during lockdown in the United Kingdom and while Covid 19 continues to affect the lives of people worldwide. We are very grateful to all those who have contributed to this issue both directly and indirectly and helped to ensure that the journal continues to appear despite the difficult times. SSSUK Committee members have remained active in other areas of our work: meeting regularly, planning online seminars, updating and maintaining the website, keeping the accounts and keeping in touch with members etc. This year's AGM will again take place remotely and we shall circulate details later. We also hope to hold a "virtual Symposium", later in the year. Unfortunately, Deya will not be able to provide her usual delicious food but we hope that we shall be able to meet again in person before too long.

We are sad to report the death of **Ian Simpson** in November 2021. Ian was a member of SSSUK and a regular attendee at our annual Symposium. His son Alasdair has written his obituary for the Society and it is published in this edition. We were also sad to learn of the death of **Anisa Dani,** who chaired the SSSUK committee for some years. We hope to publish an obituary in the next issue of the journal.

This issue begins with a focus on South Sudan. **David Deng** has written a short article about the formation and aims of the South Sudan Studies Association. This is an important and exciting initiative and we look forward to collaborating with SSSA. Staying with South Sudan, **Nyachangkuoth Tai**, a gender officer with Assistance Mission for Africa who is based in Juba, discusses women's role in the peace and security agenda. **Douglas H. Johnson** has written about the trial of *The Vigilant* newspaper in 1965 and the implications of these events for Sudanese human rights. The prosecution of the newspaper resulted from its reporting of human rights abuses in southern Sudan after the overthrow of the Abboud regime. His article contains powerful testimony from some of the witnesses at the trial.

The second section is about the Nile, beginning with a short article by **Suha Hasan**. She presents an analysis of the lyrics of two songs from the 1970s and 1990s and what they tell us about people's connection to land and nature over time. The text of the songs is presented in Arabic and English. **Garth Glentworth** analyses three reports about Nile waters that were written in the 1950s. He asks, 'what would have happened if there had been a different outcome' and the reports had influenced political thinking and actions at the time? The Nile and water issues in Sudan and the region are the focus of some of the forthcoming webinars that SSSUK is organising. Keep an eye on the website!

Peter Verney has written another of his helpful reports on the position of asylum seekers in the UK and their treatment – important but sometimes harrowing reading. There are no photographs to accompany this article as asylum seekers don't feel able to be identified as their position is too precarious.

We have two articles that discuss women in Sudan. The first is the transcript of a discussion between the celebrated artist **Amel Bashir** and SSSUK member **Imogen Thurbon**. This is accompanied by some beautiful images of Amel's work. Finally, another SSSUK stalwart, **Osman Nusairi**, presents his detailed research about women under the Mahdiya which, he suggests, is one of the most neglected subjects in studies of the period.

We have three book reviews for you: **Jamie Pring** reviews **Sarah M. H. Nouwen, Laura M. James and Sharath Srinivasan's** edited volume, *Making and Breaking Peace in Sudan and South Sudan.* The book contains contributions from several SSSUK Committee members past and present: Rosalind Marsden, Douglas Johnson, Aly Verjee and Daniel Large. It is co-edited by another former committee member, Sharath Srinivasan, and has contributions from members including Edward Thomas. **Aly Verjee** reviews **Elizabeth Shackleford's,** book *The Dissent Channel* and **Peter Woodward** writes about the first volume of **Tarik Elhadd's** history of medicine in Sudan: *Colonialism & the Medical Experiences in the Sudan, 1504-1956*.

We are very pleased that the archivist at the Sudan Archive in Durham, **Francis Gotto**, is now back at work after an accident and has been able to send us his regular contribution of 'News from the Sudan Archive'.

We do hope you enjoy the issue and please feel free to send any comments or feedback about the journal and its contents to the Editor. We would also be delighted to hear from anyone who would like to review books for us or contribute an article or other material.

Obituary

Ian Simpson 1926 – 2020

Ian Simpson who died in November 2020, was an Agricultural Economist with a long association with the Sudan.

Ian was born in May 1926 in London. He studied Agriculture at Reading University. In 1948 he was appointed as an Agricultural Economist with Leeds University. The work required collecting data from farms, which was used by the UK Government to set food prices. Reports were produced on topics such as the cost of beef, sheep and sugar beet production. In the late 1950s he was an early pioneer in the use of linear programming and a user of the University's first computer.

In 1952 he married Morag Mathieson, a work colleague. They had three children.

From 1963 to 1966, Ian was seconded to the Sudan. He worked for the Ministry of Agriculture, whilst his wife was a Senior Lecturer at the University of Khartoum. Ian was a member of a multi-disciplinary working party that looked at the future of the Gezira Scheme. He developed linear programming models for the scheme and wrote most of the final report. However, the report was upstaged by a World Bank report that was written at the same time. Perhaps as a result of the report, groundnuts and wheat were added to the Gezira's crop rotation. It is interesting that Ian was born a year after the completion of the Sennar Dam, which provides water for the Gezira scheme.

Ian and Morag lived in a university bungalow at Shambat, Khartoum University's Agricultural Campus. Ian had an office at the nearby Institute of Agriculture but spent a lot of time in Wad Medani at the Geriza Board Headquarters.

Returning to Leeds, Ian was involved in setting up an MSc in Agricultural Economics which attracted

overseas students, including from the Sudan. Ian also did a lot of consultancy work overseas, visiting countries such as Ecuador and Botswana.

He maintained links with the Sudan, visiting it at least another seven times. In 1967 he made a seven-week tour of the central rain belt, where agricultural production was dependent on rain rather than irrigation. A memorable part of the trip was the drive back from El Obeid to Khartoum across the desert on unmade tracks, arriving covered in dust at 11pm! In 1969 he attended the 50th anniversary symposium of the Gezira Research Station, giving a paper. In 1973 and 1979 he was employed by Huntings to look at rural development in Dafur and Nubia. The trip included sleeping under canvas and experiencing the problems of travelling in the rainy season on unmade tracks.

In 1974 he and Morag received funding from the UK Government to carry out a project into mechanised farming in the Damazin area. During the 1970s there were hopes that mechanisation could be expanded and that Sudan would become the breadbasket of the Middle East. A book resulted from the project. Following on from this, Morag was involved with a World Bank project. Further visits to the Sudan followed in the 1980s. He also contributed chapters to a book about the Agriculture of the Sudan published in 1991.

He continued to take an interest in the Sudan. For example, he attended the Sudan Studies Society AGM at the age of 86 in 2012 and raised his concerns about Sudanese academics getting visas to come to the UK.

In 1999 he married Dorothea Leser, after the death of his first wife in 1998. Following Dorothea's death in 2005, he had a further two companions: Sonja Bermudez and Joyce Burton. In good health into his 90s Ian lived independently till summer 2020, when he moved into a Care Home due to deteriorating eyesight and mobility. With increasing blindness, he found the isolation that resulted from Covid restrictions difficult to cope with. He died on November 11th 2020.

Ian kept a diary for every day of his life from the 1940s onwards. Together with a large number of papers, these would be of interest to anybody researching the history of agriculture in the Sudan.

Alasdair Simpson
December 2020

South Sudan Studies Association

A Missing Ingredient in the Study of South Sudan

David K. Deng*

At times, the study of South Sudan can appear paradoxical. When South Sudan achieved independence in 2011, there were thousands of South Sudanese with university degrees. This would appear to be a major asset as compared to most other African countries that had very few university graduates at independence.[1] Yet, ten years later, the Government of South Sudan still struggles to make effective use of this pool of educated South Sudanese, many of whom choose to look for professional opportunities abroad due to the hardships involved in providing for themselves and their families in South Sudan. South Sudan has been a subject study for some of the world's leading scholars, people such as Evans Pritchard and Sharon Hutchinson, but South Sudanese scholars are poorly represented in academic discourse on South Sudan. With a few exceptions, research on South Sudan is typically conceived, conducted, reviewed, and published by foreigners and for the consumption of foreign audiences, particularly the donor governments and international organizations that lead the humanitarian response in the country.

After independence, the education sector in South Sudan showed signs of progress. Public universities that had relocated to Khartoum during the civil war, including the University of Juba, University of Bahr-el-Ghazal and University of Upper Nile, relocated to Juba, Wau, and Malakal. John Garang Memorial University and the University of Rumbek opened in Bor and Rumbek respectively, and the Catholic University established campuses in Juba and Wau.

Primary school enrollment rates broadly followed an upward trend reaching a peak of 1.4 million primary school students in 2010, about 39 percent of whom were girls, according to official statistics.[2] However, by 2018, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), South Sudan had the world's highest proportion of out-of-school students in the world, with 72 percent of primary school aged children out

[1] According to the BBC, for example, the Democratic Republic of Congo had just 30 Congolese with university degrees at independence. BBC World Service, The Story of Africa, *Case Study: Congo*, https://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/features/storyofafrica/14chapter7.shtml.

[2] Julia Duany, Rebecca Lorins and Edward Thomas, *Education, Conflict and Civicness in South Sudan: An Introduction*, South Sudan Studies Association (SSSA) and the Conflict Research Programme (CRP) (Feb. 2021), *available at* http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/108621/1/Thomas_education_conflict_and_civicness_published.pdf.

of school.[3] Universities struggle with dilapidated infrastructure and chronic budget deficits as neither the Government of South Sudan nor its international partners have deemed higher education to be a priority in the context of a humanitarian crisis.

Whatever the reasons, the absence of South Sudanese from academic and policy-oriented research on South Sudan has had far-reaching consequences. The difficulty that South Sudanese have faced in crafting a lasting solution to the conflict can be attributed, at least in part, to the lack of South Sudanese 'thought leadership' (ideas, developed by South Sudanese, about what went wrong in the country and what is needed to fix it) in the peace process. Without a strong understanding of what went wrong in the country and what is needed to fix it, it was all too easy for regional mediators to fall back on political accommodation and the expansion of state and military structures as a solution to the conflict. Very little thought was given to the contextual realities of South Sudan and how existing capacities could be enlisted in efforts to resolve the conflict.

The protracted humanitarian intervention in South Sudan has also played a role in undermining South Sudanese thought leadership. Roughly a billion dollars is spent on humanitarian assistance every year. A humanitarian intervention on this scale has extensive information needs, including everything from evaluations and project assessments to conflict analyses and advocacy reports. These informational needs inevitably skew research agendas towards the priorities of the governments and organisations that are leading the humanitarian response and away from issues that may be of great academic interest but not of immediate relevance to the emergency situation. Young academics and researchers who might otherwise bring an invaluable South Sudanese perspective to the study of South Sudan are instead enlisted by donors and international organisations where they compile information and ideas to feed the needs of the humanitarian response. Moreover, much of this 'grey literature' is kept confidential and only seen by a small number of international policymakers and practitioners. For research that is paid for by public funds in the donor countries to be kept from the public eye in this manner is ethically problematic, to say the least.

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[3] *New Report Shows 2.2 million Children Out of School in South Sudan*, UNESCO (17th July 2018), available at http://uis.unesco.org/en/news/new-report-shows-2-2-million-children-are-out-school-south-sudan. Official statistics paint a different picture. According to the Ministry of Education, primary school enrolment had risen to 1.6 million by 2018. *See* Duany *et al.* However, the official statistics should be closely scrutinized since roughly a third of South Sudanese were displaced from their homes due to the conflict and a third of schools were damaged, destroyed, occupied, or closed as a result of the conflict. *See* UNESCO.

Problems of this magnitude require structural changes that force people to think in new and innovative ways and work towards reversing deeply entrenched practices. This type of change does not come overnight, but it must nonetheless start somewhere. In 2018, a group of South Sudanese academics, scholars, activists, and practitioners launched a professional association - the South Sudan Studies Association (SSSA) – dedicated to the production, development, and promotion of knowledge on South Sudan. Since then, the SSSA has met on an annual basis to consider various aspects of the research agenda for South Sudan, including the politics of humanitarianism, education and civicness, the political and social implications of the Covid-19 pandemic, regional dimensions of the conflict in South Sudan, and priorities for the newly established unity government.[4] The SSSA held its formal launch in February 2021 and is now preparing a strategic plan to guide its activities over the next few years.[5]

A key function for the new association will be to provide a space for network building and professional support to students and early career academics in South Sudan and the diaspora. By partnering with other key research and educational institutions, including the South Sudan Research Council (SSRC), Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, and other research institutions and think tanks in South Sudan and internationally, the SSSA hopes to catalyse more innovative and forward-looking approaches to research and scholarship in the years to come.

We have a website. It is still a work in progress: http://sssasc.org.

*David Deng is a human rights lawyer and researcher who has worked in South Sudan since 2008.

[4] The SSSA was initially conceived at a meeting organized by the Conflict Research Programme at the London School of Economics (LSE). The CRP also facilitated subsequent meetings of the SSSA and co-published several research products with the SSSA over the years, all of which are available on the CRP website. *See* CRP website, *available at* https://www.lse.ac.uk/ideas/projects/conflict-research-programme/South-Sudan.

[5] *See SSSA Launch Event*, Co-hosted by the Rift Valley Institute (RVI) (23 Feb. 2021), available at https://m.facebook.com/RiftValleyInstitute/videos/431224607992837/.

South Sudanese Women on the Frontline of the Women's Peace and Security Agenda

Nyachangkuoth Tai*

My name is Nyachangkuoth. I was born into a community where women always bear the heaviest load. We struggle with harmful gender norms, culture and traditions, and are still considered second-class citizens. To make matters worse, Gender Based Violence (GBV) against women is considered a normal cultural way of life. Throughout South Sudan's history of armed conflict, women have faced multiple displacements, death, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (S/GBV), loss of property and loss of identity.[1] The suppressed potential and contribution of women in South Sudan is to the detriment of their communities, especially in the sphere of peacebuilding.

Having been born in a society where patriarchy and men dominate everything, I witnessed how my grandmother and my mother were robbed of basic human rights such as education because of their gender. My mother and father worked hard to make sure I got my education but I witnessed young girls being kept as a source of income or bride price; girls were taught from a young age that they belonged in the kitchen serving others and not at decision-making tables. As I grew up, all of these things made me study hard so as to prove this culture wrong when it taught that women can't go to school. I made my mum proud when I got my bachelor's degree in 2010. Then I started advocating for the education of South Sudanese girl children and the inclusion of women in decision-making processes. I also became a certified human rights defender and my efforts fighting for development and equality are internationally recognised. My personal experience gave me passion, drive and a sense of my responsibility to continue advocating for women's and girls' rights and show the ways in which we can contribute to the development of our nation and the world at large.

Traditionally, women are known to be instrumental in negotiating, building and keeping peace in their communities. However, while women have borne the brunt of suffering during armed conflict in South Sudan, they have not been adequately represented in the peacebuilding process.

I work as the Gender Manager for Assistance Mission for Africa (AMA), which is a faith-based organisation, founded in 2002. We work in four thematic areas:

[1] In order to have a leadership role, women have to be married and are supposed to represent their in-laws, a condition that doesn't apply to men.

- Peace and conflict resolution;
- Gender and social justice;
- Transitional peace;
- Natural resource management and livelihoods.

Since 2017, AMA has implemented a project called the National Action Plan (NAP) 1325 which is designed to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR1325) and its Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.[2] In addition we are undertaking a 'Leaders of Peace' project (2021-25).

Women's representation in South Sudan: the policy context

Article 16 section 3 of the Constitution of South Sudan (2011)[3] concerns women's equal participation, including the right to participate equally in public life. All branches of the government are to promote equal opportunities for women so that they can contest any position in public life and achieve equal representation. There is currently a quota of 35% for the inclusion of women. This was as a result of lobbying for the inclusion of women that spanned the long peace process. A quota of 25% was included in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005 and 35% in the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) of 2018.

While our nation has made progress in implementing the 35% gender quota, so far only 22% has been achieved. This shortcoming is partly because it's still difficult for our community to accept the fact that women play a fundamental role in society. However, all is not lost.

It's worth celebrating the fact that for the first time in South Sudan's history we have:

- A female Vice-President: Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior;
- A female Defence and Veteran Affairs Minister: Angelina Jany Teny;
- Minister of Health: Elizabeth Achuei Yol;
- Culture, Museums and National Heritage: Dr Nadia Arop Dudi;
- Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation: Beatrice

[2] (S/RES/1325), on women, peace, and security, was adopted unanimously by the UN Security Council on 31st October 2000. The resolution acknowledged the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women and girls. It calls for the adoption of a gender perspective to consider the special needs of women and girls during conflict, repatriation and resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction. (www.wikipedia.org, accessed 4.6.21).

[3] The Constitution was amended in 2013.

Khamisa Wani;
- Minister of General Education: Awut Deng Acuil;
- Minister of Parliamentary Affairs: Jemma Nunu Kumba;
- Other women are in various key positions.

Women and the Peace Process

A lot of work has been done by women and young feminists in the fight for women's rights. They pushed for the implementation of the UNSCR1325 principles and the Women, Peace and Security agenda.[4] Despite these efforts, South Sudanese women have yet to establish a conducive environment and adequate representation in the peace process. For example, during the R-ARCSS[5] peace negotiations, women activists and women's groups faced opposition to their participation in the peace process from some of the mediators and warring parties. The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) did not consider the internationally accepted gender quota for women's representation when forming its mediation team, which was entirely male.[6]

One of the many letters that women's groups wrote to the envoys about women's inclusion is instructive: "We drafted a letter to Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin expressing a desire to be included in the peace talks. But our letter was rejected and we didn't hear back from them." The perceived opposition to the inclusion of women by the mediation team led one woman activist to resort to an unorthodox approach. She locked up one of the IGAD secretariat staff and threatened to harm her if the Special Envoys did not provide a guarantee of women's inclusion in the process. While this act had serious consequences, it contributed to the pressure that eventually resulted in the acceptance of a women's bloc in the negotiations.

AMA's work

As mentioned above, AMA has been implementing the NAP1325 project as part of the WPS agenda for more than five years. Women's participation is one of our main pillars and programmes. We started from the grassroots by campaigning to have women included in the traditional courts, as stipulated in the South Sudan Local Government Act.[7] As a result of this intervention, we now have women sitting in the traditional courts in Unity and Lakes states. At the same time, we have started to see more women represented in tax col-

[4] The WPS pillars are participation, promotion, prevention and protection.

[5] These were held in Addis Ababa in 2014.

[6] The IGAD mediation team consisted of the late Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin (of Ethiopia) as Lead Special Envoy and chief mediator; General Mohamed Ahmed el Dabi (Sudan), Special Envoy; General Lazaro Sumbeiywo (Kenya), Special Envoy.

[7] Awareness-raising and advocacy started in 2017 under this project.

lection committees, as assistant *payam* administrators, and in border and peace committees.

When I started implementing the WPS agenda, it was very difficult to bring women and men together in one space, because cultural norms dictate that women don't belong in the spaces where men sit and make decisions. It took a lot of awareness-raising and the inclusion of men who championed the WPS agenda. We started with 120 women who were survivors of S/GBV, documenting their cases and providing a safe space (a women's centre). We also provided mentorship and advocacy about the WPS agenda's four pillars of participation, promotion, prevention and protection. The women got organised and started income-generating activities in the women's centre; some of them became the sole bread winners for their families. They then formed an advocacy group and started raising awareness about WPS in the villages. Subsequently these women took the lead and started claiming spaces and representation in decision making at the *boma*, *payam*, county and state levels.

Women are not only on the front line of peace and security issues but also climate change. Clearing the flooded airstrip at Ganyliel, Unity State so that a humanitarian assistance flight can land (Credit: Assistance Mission For Africa).

Implementing the women, peace and security agenda through the 'Born To Lead' campaign

Born To Lead (BTL) is a campaign led by a South Sudanese women's coalition and supported by Oxfam. It is a platform where women can join forces to fight for equal rights and equal opportunities, and against harmful gender norms. AMA is a member of the steering committee for the campaign.

We address issues that affect women in all aspects of their lives and demand that the 35% quota for women's participation in politics is met. We net-

work and advocate to empower women and girls at grass-root level and aim to equip them with skills and knowledge so that they can combat gender stereotyping. Informing women about the progress and status of the Revitalised Peace Agreement is another important aspect of the coalition's work. Information is shared in local languages. The empowerment of women and girls so that they can participate in decision-making at all levels, has been a major aspect of our women's emancipation and awareness campaign; this has mobilised women in different counties i.e. Wau, Rumbek, Akobo and Juba.

Implementation of our activities has included:

- Peace visits, where women went to meet others in different areas so as to provide mutual support.
- Using religion and church messages to disseminate the peace process amid conflict.
- Awareness-raising on the radio about peacebuilding.
- Support was given to local organisations working on peacebuilding so that they could take ownership of the process and make it their own.
- Women in Wau developed an approach called 'peace through sharing', where they came together and contributed food and non-food items to the people most affected by the conflict in 2016.

Women leaders in Wau during a BTL Women, Peace and Security workshop (Credit: Nancy Cirino, a member of Born to Lead).

Barriers to women taking leadership roles

Barriers to women's participation in leadership in South Sudan remain numerous. These include:

- Illiteracy – women do not have equal access to education because of harmful gender norms that consider girls and women to be primarily the source of bride price.
- The government is not implementing the 35% quota and there is no strong body to follow and monitor implementation.
- Lack of information about the peace agreement at state level means that women are not aware about their right to hold leadership positions.
- Lack of unity among women – not all women have access to resources, including space, and those that do do not always involve other women or keep them updated about events.
- Culture and tradition hinder women from playing leadership roles by assigning them to household and childcare roles, and characterise them as the weaker sex. This undermines their self-confidence.
- Lack of freedom of expression – during parliamentary sittings and debates, the ideas of female leaders are not considered or implemented.
- Women's associations are not playing an active role in uniting women – leadership positions are held by older women who do not give a chance to girls to join the groups and express themselves. When appointments are made, younger women and girls do not get a chance to apply. For example, in Jur County an unmarried woman cannot be appointed as a leader.
- Lack of support from female leaders to encourage and build the capacity of younger women and girls, so that they can gain confidence and take an active role when the leaders are out of the office or when they retire.
- People's mindset – there is a common belief that women are less effective than men in leadership roles.
- Sexual harassment.

On a more positive note, Sarah Cleto Hassan Rial is the first female governor of Western Bahr el Ghazal and the only female governor in the current cabinet. When interviewed by BTL, she said that we should always dream high and avoid confining ourselves to domestic work. She gave an example from the time before she was appointed Governor. She worked with non-governmental organisations in the period before the CPA was ratified and they built schools to encourage girls and women to obtain an education. She is a champion of WPS and has a female bodyguard, which is rare in South Sudan.

A group photo of the BTL team with the Governor of Wau, Sara Cleto Hassan Rial (second from the left). The author is second from the right (Credit: Nancy Cirino).

* Nyachangkuoth Tai is a South Sudanese feminist, peace activist and human rights defender, and the Gender Manager for Assistance Mission for Africa.

The Trial of *The Vigilant*
A Turning Point for the Worse in Sudanese Human Rights

Douglas H. Johnson*

There are times in any nation's history when a whole people are confronted with the evidence of gross inhumanity and must decide, both collectively and individually, how to respond. These become turning points which chart a country's direction towards or away from a commitment to justice in the public sphere. One such set of events in Sudan were the Juba and Wau massacres of July 1965, and the trial of *The Vigilant* newspaper which followed them. Had the response of the North's public and politicians been different at that time, not only is it conceivable that the first civil war would have ended earlier, but that the second civil war also might never have taken place.[1]

To understand why the massacres and the attempted suppression of *The Vigilant* were a turning point in the Sudan's human rights, I must first summarise the events which led up to them.

Background

The Sudanese parliament voted for independence in December 1955 in the aftermath of an abortive mutiny in parts of the South and in the absence of any referendum, plebiscite, or agreement about the future constitutional structure of the nation.[2] Southern Sudanese attempts to introduce a federal option to constitutional discussions were rejected by a Northern-dominated parliament in the country's first year of independence. The nation's first post-independence elections in 1957 returned a strong pro-federalist bloc in the South and revealed sympathy for federalism in other remote regions. It was ostensibly to prevent the fragmentation of the country, which he claimed this federalist threat posed, that the then Prime Minister, Abdallah Khalil, an Umma Party politician and former brigadier general, handed power over to the army under general Ibrahim Abboud in 1958. This was followed by the suppression

[1] This is a revised text of a paper first presented at the Fifth International Conference on Sudan Studies at the University of Durham, 30th August to 1st September 2000. A condensed version was published in *The Pioneer: An Independent Weekly* (Juba), 1/6, 13-19 (November 2010): pp. 34-5, and reprinted in Douglas H. Johnson, *South Sudanese Past Notes & Records* (Wanneroo, WA: Africa World Books, 2015), pp. 42-6.

[2] Douglas H. Johnson, ed., *British Documents on the End of Empire, Series B, Volume 5, Sudan, Part II 1951-1956* (London: The Stationery Office, 1998), documents 434-7, 439.

of parliament, political parties and an independent press. The early 1960s saw the true beginning of the civil war throughout the South, which had lain rumbling in only a few districts since 1955. This was the beginning of an organised insurgency and exile Southern political movements. The Abboud government blamed unrest on 'imperialists', expelled foreign missionaries in 1963-4, and targeted Southern civilians, especially the educated minority, for retaliation.

A variety of factors led to the overthrow of Abboud in Khartoum in October 1964, only one of which was the escalating war in the South. The replacement of military dictatorship with an interim civilian government allowed for the emergence of new parties, among them the Southern Front, a truly pan-Southern party containing many civil servants. The party founded its own newspaper, *The Vigilant*, early in 1965, with Bona Malwal, a young journalist and former Ministry of Information employee, as its editor.

From December 1964 to March 1965 the government called a cease-fire in the South to enable the various exile groups to participate in a Round Table Conference in Khartoum. This period was bracketed by race riots in the Three Towns in December, in which many Southerners were attacked and killed by Northern mobs, and the breakdown of the Round Table Conference in March. Despite the failure of the conference elections went ahead in 1965, from which most of the South was excluded because of insecurity. This notwithstanding, a number of Northern members of one of the main parties, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), managed to secure their election to Southern constituencies unopposed. The Umma Party secured an overall majority in the Constituent Assembly and formed the new civilian government.

In June 1965 the new Constituent Assembly passed a resolution authorising the government to 'restore law and order' in the South and to give the security forces there a 'free hand'. Following this resolution tension grew in Southern towns. The Anyanya insurgents – now armed with weapons purchased or captured from Congolese Simba guerrillas (ironically, supported by the Khartoum government) – operated closer to the main towns, sometimes infiltrating Juba itself. There were rumours of the Anyanya closing in on the town, and reports that Arab merchants were threatening to show the Southerners 'who was boss'.[3]

On 8th and 9th July 1965 shooting broke out in Juba as a party of about seventy soldiers, including officers, combed through the main residential areas of the town shooting civilians. People were attacked in private houses, in church buildings, including the Anglican cathedral, and in the general hospital, where many wounded were brought for treatment. The killing was sparked off by the murder of a Sudanese army sergeant (some reports said after an argument

[3] 'Sudanese Tragedy,' *Weekly News*, July 30, 1965, p. 17.

over a transistor radio, others after an argument over an alleged prostitute). Two days later, on 11th July 1965, a wedding party in Wau, the second largest city in the South, was also attacked by the Sudanese army. Subsequent reports indicated that this attack was more organized than the shooting in Juba, and that Northern officials checked off the names of the dead from typed lists of Southern civil servants.[4]

The full number of killed in both massacres was never formally established. Reports ranged from at least seventy-six persons killed in Wau and some 360 in Juba to a total of over a thousand for both incidents. Even the Khartoum Arabic press reported over 400 deaths in Juba alone.

Press reporting of events

One of the first papers to publish accounts of these events was *The Vigilant*. Two articles appeared on 13th July (issue number 39), entitled 'Juba Death Toll Rises to over 1,400', 'Massacre & Deliberate Army Plan', and 'The Juba Martyrs of Freedom'. Another appeared on 14th July (issue number 40) with the headline '76 Southerners slaughtered in Wau: Plan to Kill Educated Southerners Started'.

The government response was swift: it seized the two issues of *The Vigilant* and closed down the paper on 16th July. But it could not halt the international press. Eye-witness accounts of the Juba massacre appeared in the Kenya *Weekly News* for 30th July. Western papers such as *The Times* of London and *Newsweek* carried stories based in part on those published in the African press. In Britain *The Church Times* published an account in August which focused on acts committed against church property and Christian civilians. The white settler weekly, *East Africa & Rhodesia*, quoted liberally from many of these sources. The Southern exile *Voice of Southern Sudan* published further eyewitness accounts and gave the names of many of those killed.[5]

Having silenced the main independent English-language daily in Khartoum, the government then presented its version of events in a series of radio broadcasts, letters to Western papers, and in official visits to neighbouring African countries. Both the Prime Minister, Muhammad Mahjoub, and the Minister of Interior, Ahmad al-Mahdi, blamed 'imperialists' and other foreign interests

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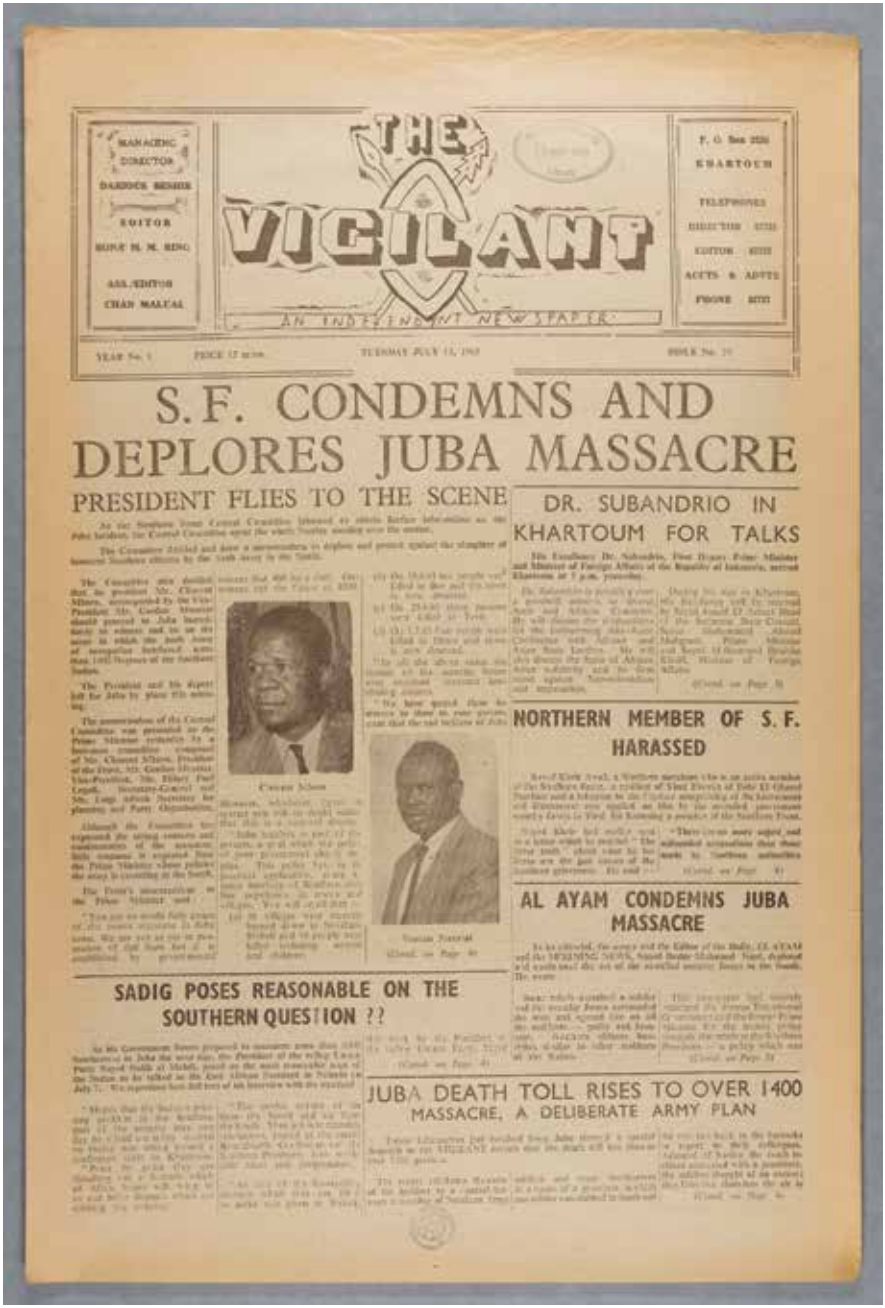
[4] It should be noted that the Juba and Wau massacres were only the most public and well publicized massacres that took place in 1965. There were other massacres of whole villages in Upper Nile Province.

[5] See for instance: *Weekly News*, ibid.; 'Over 1,000 Killed by Sudanese Troops,' *East Africa & Rhodesia*, August 26, 1965, p. 11; 'Inquiry into "Terrible Massacres,' *East Africa & Rhodesia*, September 9, 1965, p. 34; 'Report from the Sudan African Liberation Front Office,' *Voice of Southern Sudan*, 3/2, October 1965, pp. 59-62.



THE VIGILANT

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

S.F. CONDEMNS AND DEPLORES JUBA MASSACRE

PRESIDENT FLIES TO THE SCENE

DR. SUBANDRIO IN KHARTOUM FOR TALKS

NORTHERN MEMBER OF S. F. HARASSED

AL AYAM CONDEMNS JUBA MASSACRE

SADIG POSES REASONABLE ON THE SOUTHERN QUESTION ??

JUBA DEATH TOLL RISES TO OVER 1400
MASSACRE, A DELIBERATE ARMY PLAN

The front page of 'The Vigilant' *newspaper, July 13 1965.*
(Credit: Sudan Archive Durham, SudA PK1500 VIG).

(including Christian priests) for stirring up rebellion in the South.[6] In rebutting the story appearing in *The Church Times*, the press attaché of the embassy in London wrote:

> What actually happened in Juba on July 8 was that a group of dissidents attacked a patrol from Southern Command headquarters. As this seemed to be an organised attack on the headquarters, the patrol had to return fire. It was windy at the time, and some huts in the Malakia area caught fire. The army forces then searched the area and laid hands on arms and ammunition. The Southern Front alleged that 640 people were killed. Only 52 persons were killed.
>
> On July 11, in Wau a group of dissidents gathered in a house adjacent to the technical school where a company of Sudanese armed forces was stationed. The outlaws suddenly opened fire on the company, which had to cordon the house and return fire. On capturing the house 72 bandits were dead. They also found weapons, ammunition and a variety of military equipment.[7]

Elsewhere the liberal Northern academic, Mohamed Omer Beshir, wrote to *The Times*, in language similar to that used by American spokesmen in the] Viet Nam war and the Israeli government about the Palestinians, 'The present fighting in the south resulted from the activities of the Anya Nya terrorist organization. Southern politicians claim no control on this terrorist organization but keep silent and refuse to denounce terrorism as a means to settle the problem."[8]

The government was unable to convince many persons outside of the Sudan of its version of events. In the trial of *The Vigilant*, in which the proprietor (Darius Bashir), the editor, Bona Malwal, and the assistant editor (Chan Malual Chan) were accused of inciting hatred against classes, illegal opposition to the government, and disturbance of the peace, the government tried to discredit the accounts published in that paper. As I shall show, it made no effort to establish an alternative narrative of the events.

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[6] 'Rebellion "Planted by Imperialists,"' *East Africa & Rhodesia*, August 19, 1965, p. 79; 'Foreign Powers Involved in Sudan Plot,' *East Africa & Rhodesia*, September 2, 1965, p. 22 (which reported Ahmad al-Mahdi's allegation that foreign powers, collaborating with separatists, planned to occupy the southern provinces and bomb Khartoum airport).

[7] Quoted in 'Inquiry into "Terrible Massacres,' *East Africa & Rhodesia*, September 9 1965, p. 34.

[8] Quoted in 'Over 1,000 Killed by Sudanese Troops,' *East Africa & Rhodesia*, August 26, 1965, p. 11.

The Trial

The trial began on 16th October 1965 and was heard before a panel of three judges, all Northern Sudanese. It lasted, with frequent adjournments, for several months, the final ruling being made in January 1966. This made it extremely difficult for the defence team to keep their witnesses in Khartoum, and in the end only five eyewitnesses to various acts of murder and intimidation were called. In addition to the three articles specifically dealing with events in Juba and Wau, the government entered two other articles in evidence: 'Life is Grim in the South: Army After the Safest to Kill' (9 July, 1965, issue number 37), and 'The Problem of the Nuba Mountains'. The defence's strategy was to establish the truth of the reports, and in this it would need the cooperation of the court. The prosecution, for its part, tried to avoid dealing with specific details, concentrating on the more general points of intent of sedition.

The prosecution case was opened by the Chief Police Inspector Muhammad Malik, who tried to introduce summaries of the offending articles which, the government alleged, were 'grossly inaccurate' and were meant 'to create ill feelings against the Northerners by Southerners as well as against the Government likely to result in breach of peace.'[9] The Court President, Daf'allah al-Radi, insisted that the full text of each article, rather than summaries, be read out in court. This took up the first day of proceedings.

On the second day *The Vigilant*'s defence council, Abel Alier (a former judge and prominent figure in the Southern Front, later to become Second Vice-President under Nimeiri and the first President of the High Executive Council of the Southern Region) cross examined the Chief Police Inspector:

Advocate Abel Alier:	What is your comment on the Vigilant report concerning the number reported dead in the Juba incident?
Investigator (Inspector) Mohammed Malik:	The figure given by the paper has been exaggerated.
Advocate:	If you think there has been an exaggeration on the part of the Vigilant, then what figure do you think is correct?

[9] All quotations are taken from 'The Trial of the Vigilant Newspaper', transcript compiled by W.M. Aguek, November 1966, a typescript of the spoken testimony in the author's possession which omits texts of supporting documents, and also does not report adjournments. The spelling of Sudanese names in this document has been retained.

Investigator:	I think the correct number killed is 52.
Advocate:	Would you agree with me that Juba and Wau killings were not planned by the Government: and that it is because of that report that the Government suspended the Vigilant Paper?
Investigator:	Yes.
Advocate:	Is it the official view that those who were killed in both Wau and Juba were mutineers?
Investigator:	Yes.
Advocate:	Would you say in Wau mutineers fired on Government Soldiers?
Investigator:	Yes.
Advocate:	In Juba and Wau incidents what were the Government forces casualties?
Investigator:	I think two in both places.
Advocate:	Do you say that the Statements you have given are your views or official views?
Investigator:	Mine.
President of the Court:	How do you formulate your opinion?
Investigator:	From the Newspapers.
President:	Do you read the Vigilant?
Investigator:	Not always.
President:	Reply directly. Did you read the articles in the Vigilant in order to formulate your opinion?
Investigator:	No, I read Newspapers other than the Vigilant Newspaper.
President:	Was the killing of one soldier in Juba the cause of the incident?
Investigator:	Yes, as I heard from reports, the killing of one soldier was the cause of the incident.
President:	Where did you hear about the killing of the soldier and that of the mutineers.
Investigator:	From El Ayam.
President:	Why did you believe El Ayam in that the killing of one soldier was the cause of the Juba incident?

Investigator: That is my opinion.

The prosecution then introduced seven more articles from earlier issues of *The Vigilant*, most appearing before the Juba and Wau massacres, which they alleged proved sedition and illegal opposition to the government. Among them was one entitled 'Ours is a Liberation Movement' (issue number 15), written by a young lawyer, Ambrose Riny (who was later to become the first Chief Justice of the Government of Southern Sudan, established by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005). No other prosecution witnesses were called for the duration of the trial.

Abel Alier then outlined the defence's case.

> The alleged publications of the reports and comments on above incidents are as serious to the defence as they are to the prosecutor and reporters are aware of the gravity of the situation. The editor, as his routine in reporting considers it his duty to the public to report facts and to comment on the same so as to educate the public in the facts.
>
> The editor of the Vigilant has made some allegations about the types of people who died in Wau and their occupations. He showed that if not all those who died most of them were employees of the Sudan Government. What was published in the paper was therefore true and showed a sense of public obligation.
>
> The defence would like to inform the honourable Court that the editor of the Vigilant, basing his allegations on Wau and Juba incidents had reason to believe that the Sudan Government was going beyond the legitimate right of keeping law and order and that this Government encouraged and condoned indiscriminate killing of its own citizens in the Southern Sudan which is not in keeping with judicial process and the upholding of the rule of law in general....
>
> The defence would like to show that many citizens, in the words of the Vigilant, 'were butchered, massacred...'
>
> Furthermore, the defence would like to leave to this honourable Court to decide that the publications were made in good faith and without malice.
>
> The defence would like to leave to the honourable Court to judge whether the words used in the Vigilant do not describe accurately the situation as it exists in the Southern Sudan. Not all of us here are prepared to accept super technicalities of the law of sedition which have prompted the government to prosecute the accused and thank you sirs.

In calling witnesses to substantiate this case, Alier called two Northern officials, a Southern doctor, and a few survivors of the massacres. The first Northern witness was Dr Ahmad Mahjoub Abdun, Director of the Ministry of Animal Resources in Khartoum, who testified as to receiving official notification of the death of some of his department's employees in the Wau massacre. The prosecution's attempt to discredit this testimony only elicited further corroborating details.

Legal Assistant (Prosecutor):	Dr. Abdoun, you said that someone called Salvatore Kuol was killed in the Wau incident, how do you know that he was killed in that incident?
Dr. Abdoun:	The Ministry's representative in Wau wrote to us informing us about the death. I also learnt about his death from the Newspapers after which I wrote a letter to the Ministry of Interior for information.
President of the Court:	What was the reply to your letter from the Ministry of the Interior?
Dr. Abdoun:	We have not been replied yet.
Prosecutor:	Do you consider the letter of your representative in Wau to you as an official report?
Dr. Abdoun:	I have been informed about the death of some of my Ministry's personnel by my representative in Wau and I consider such information as an official report to me.
President:	Dr. Abdoun how many of your Ministry's personnel were amongst those reported to you as killed?
Dr. Abdoun:	Three.

Similarly, when Alier called Muhammad Kamil Shawqi, Director of the Department of Forests, the prosecutor's interventions only strengthened the defence testimony.

Abel Alier:	Can you tell the Court about someone called Joseph Lok, where he works and where he is?
Shawgi:	Joseph Lok graduated successfully in the school of Forests and took up the post of Forest Ranger, Wau.
Abel Alier:	What happened to him?
Mr. Shawgi:	He is reported to have been killed together with the others in a shooting that took place in Wau. We are very sorry to lose such a good person.

Abel Alier:	Do you know someone named Victor Ramadan?
Mr. Shawgi:	Yes, he served in my Department, he is also reported killed in the same incident. I was greatly shocked when I learnt of their death....
Prosecutor:	How did you learn of the killing Sayed Shawgi?
Mr. Shawgi:	From the Arabic Press.
Prosecutor:	How can you be sure of the press reports.
Mr. Shawgi:	Also I received a letter from my representative of the Department in Wau informing me about the death of the two gentlemen.
Prosecutor:	Who sent you the letter?
Mr. Shawgi:	Conservator of Forests, Bahr el-Ghazal Province.

The testimony of these two Northern officials helped to establish that at least some of the claims in *The Vigilant* were not mere Southern inventions and could be verified through official sources. But as residents of Khartoum they could shed no light on the details of what happened in Wau. These were supplied by three Dinka school mistresses: Mary Ayat, Rachel Adak John, and Susan Aluel. All three had been guests at the wedding. All three could testify to the identity of their attackers. And as in the other witnesses their testimony was assisted, probably unwittingly, by the cross examination of the prosecuting counsel, and probably wittingly by the President of the Court.

Mary Ayat, from Aweil, was the first witness.

Abel Alier:	What happened in the wedding feast. Did you celebrate and go home?
Mary Ayat:	We left the house within 30 minutes. The house got surrounded by soldiers and guns were fired.
President of the Court:	Who shot the bullets and whom did the bullets hit?
Mary Ayat:	They shot at the feasting people and we had to run inside while the shooting continued outside the rooms. In the room there was an open window through which we could witness the killing. Within ¼ of an hour some of us were already wounded.
President:	What do you mean by some of us?
Mary Ayat:	I mean ladies, men, girls and small children....
Abel Alier:	You said the shooting continued for ¼ of an hour, what happened after that ¼ of an hour?

Mary Ayat: The soldiers opened the doors of the rooms and began pulling out women, children from the rooms, leaving men alone whom they shot all. I think the soldiers had orders not to kill women.

Abel Alier: Mary, did you hear anything said by the soldiers?

Mary Ayat: Yes, I hard one soldier saying, 'Why should the women be left.'....

Abel Alier: What happened in the other rooms?

Mary Ayat: When women were brought out in the other rooms, men were left behind and shot to death....

Abel Alier: Before you were taken to the hospital, did the soldiers leave the House?

Mary Ayat: No, we left them in the house.

Abel Alier: What were they doing in the house?

Mary Ayat: They were collecting wrist watches and other valuables from the bodies.

Abel Alier: What else did you observe?

Mary Ayat: I also witnessed soldiers shaving off beards from some of the dead bodies....

Prosecutor: How many soldiers entered the fence?

Mary Ayat: More than 100 soldiers.

Prosecutor: Did they say they were soldiers?

Mary Ayat: Yes.

Prosecutor: What were they wearing?

Mary Ayat: They were wearing khaki.

Prosecutor: Was there anything on their heads?

Mary Ayat: Yes.

Prosecutor: What?

Mary Ayat: I saw something on their heads, but I do not know their names. It is something soldiers usually wear.

President: What do you call that something they were wearing?

Mary Ayat: I do not know.

Prosecutor: Did you say they were government soldiers?

President: Are there any others in this country besides government soldiers....

Prosecutor:	Could you identify whether the people you saw were speaking Arabic?
Mary Ayat:	Yes.
Prosecutor:	Do you speak Arabic?
Mary Ayat:	Yes.
President:	Miss Ayat, do you speak Arabic?
Mary Ayat:	Yes.

The President of the Court then began to speak Arabic to the witness. The President discovered that the witness knew very good Arabic, so he acclaims 'Oh, she speaks good Arabic.' This remark drew much applause from the crowd in the court room.

The President of the Court ordered the witness, Miss Mary Ayat, in order to recite in Arabic the actual words used by the soldiers when they were in the fence. The following were recited: '*Kulu niswan barahum*' and '*Wesilu el banat ila isbitalia*...' which means 'Leave the women separate' and 'Take the girls to the hospital' respectively....

Abel Alier:	Miss Ayat, did any of the soldiers speak to you in Jur, Dinka, English or in any of the Southern languages?
Mary Ayat:	No.

Rachel Adak John, who was nineteen years old at the time of the trial, then gave her testimony. She demonstrated a greater knowledge of military uniforms.

Abel Alier:	At what time did you go to the feast?
Miss John:	At 7.30 p.m. Just before a little after the beginning of the celebrations we heard some gun shots outside the fence of the house of the celebration. We then ran into the rooms when we saw the soldiers rushing into the fence. The soldiers began shooting down some people inside the fence and others went after the people who ran into the rooms whom they pulled out and shot dead. The soldiers put women outside and did not shoot them because one of them said, 'Do not kill the women'.
Abel Alier:	Did the people who were celebrating have weapons with them?
Miss John:	No.
Abel Alier:	Were the men shot in one place?

Miss John: Some were shot in the fence and others inside the rooms.

Abel Alier: Miss John, can you tell the Court what the soldiers were wearing?

Miss John: They were wearing khaki uniforms and helmets....

Prosecutor: In what types of clothes were the persons shooting dressed?

Miss John: In khaki.

Prosecutor: What was the colour of the soldiers' skin?

Miss John: Such as your colour. (Laughter).

Susan Aluel, a visiting school mistress from Tonj, was the final witness on the Wau massacre.

Abel Alier: How long did the shooting take?

Miss Susan: For nearly one hour. The soldiers went from room to room pulling people out. They had hand torches. The soldiers were saying 'If there are Northerners they should go out.' On this, one person who thought he was a Northerner tried to get out but was shot on understanding that he was a Southerner. Some soldiers commanded their colleagues not to kill women, but others were saying 'Kill them all'. When men were all outside in the middle of the fence, orders were given, I think by a senior officer, and fire was opened killing all of them....

Again, the prosecutor's questions gave her the chance to provide convincing details of what she saw and heard.

Prosecutor: What were the colours of the skin of the persons who gave the orders?

Miss Aluel: Brown....

Prosecutor: What orders did you hear when those you said were soldiers entered the fence?

Miss Aluel: 'Shoot them all.'

Prosecutor: When was that?

Miss Aluel: When we were out of the rooms.

In establishing the facts about the Juba massacre the defence relied on only one witness, Dr. Noel Warile. As a medical doctor on duty at Juba hospital he saw, and counted, many of the dead and wounded brought there. He was

also the target of one squad of soldiers who broke into the hospital shooting Southern medical staff.

Abel Alier: Where were you when the Juba incident started?

Dr Noel: I was in my friend's house in exactly 11.20 p.m. on 8th July 1965 when the first shot occurred at Attala Bara Quarter, about 1½ miles from my house.

Abel Alier: Was the shooting confined to Attala Bara?

Dr Noel: No, there were shootings at the old British quarters and at Kator. The old British quarter is roughly ¼ of a mile from the Juba Hospital where I worked...

Abel Alier: Was there any incident of shooting in the hospital on 8th July 1965?

Dr Noel: No, it was on 9th July at 9 a.m. that I went to the Hospital, where on my arrival, met dead bodies being brought to the hospital with ambulances & Ministry of Works' lorries. There were also the wounded on whom we began to extend aid including operations. I also saw many people who ran to the hospital perhaps to take refuge, there. With me the three Doctors were busy performing operations on one of the victims of the incident. A medical attendant rushed to us in the theatre and informed us that there were armed soldiers asking about the whereabouts of the Southern Doctors. He also informed us that the soldiers were pulling out some infusions from the patients. When they were moving towards the Theatre where I and the other of my Southern Doctors were working we broke the window of the Theatre and escaped through it. My other colleagues were Doctors Clement Khamis and Oliver Mesu....

Abel Alier: When you first came to the hospital and found dead bodies were you able to count them?

Dr Noel: I was, I saw 71, but later the number of the bodies brought to the hospital grew to 229....

One of the judges on the panel, Uthman Muhammad Ali, then intervened.

Judge Osman Mohamed Ali: You said that you saw some people running to the hospital to take refuge. Did you see any soldier shooting at the people who took refuge in the hospital?

Dr Noel: I saw six soldiers.

Judge	What sort of soldiers did you see, Northern soldiers, or what type?
Dr Noel:	I saw Government soldiers, Sudanese.

As one of the other articles also alleged widespread killing of educated Southerners elsewhere in the South, the defence produced a further witness, Mrs. Mary Antonio Anjelo Kenyi, the widow of a Prison Officer in Yei. She was able to describe in simple detail how her husband was shot dead in their own home, by a corporal in the army, with the distinctive marks on his cheeks of a Sha'iqi from the North, a group of people well represented in the army.

When it came time for the prosecution to summarize its case, the prosecutor, understandably, did not refer to the defence evidence. Rather, he chose to focus on the alleged intent of the editor in publishing the stories, asserting that the truth or otherwise of the accounts was immaterial.

> The learned Counsel for the Defence has been urging the argument that the statements complained of are true and therefore disclose a bare statement of facts without any intention as is required to constitute an offence under sections 105, 106 & 127A. My reply to this is that in the first place no one can be sure of the truth which is a very difficult task to embark upon in the manner explained below, and that in the second place truth, even if duly established as being what was stated in the Vigilant is not relevant to the ingredients constituting the offence with which the accused are charged.
>
> 'Where it is ascertained that the intention...was to excite feelings of dissatisfaction to the Government...it is immaterial whether the words were true or were false...' Amba Prasad (1897) A11 55169, F.B.
>
> People are not allowed to go on circulating what they believe is the truth without giving due regard to the consequences of their circulation, for the presence of the worse does not justify the creation of the worst.
>
> However, how much truth can one trace in the various statements published by the Vigilant?
>
> In the first place the prosecution does not intend to undertake the job of suggesting the truth, for this would rather be done by a commission of enquiry, but he just intends to throw some doubt upon what has been related by the Vigilant as the truth.

In expressing doubt he maintained the government version of events, stating that in Wau 'it is beyond reasonable belief to say that 200 soldiers were shooting into a window for about an hour merely to kill unarmed people. The

truth is such circumstances could as well be that the soldiers were shooting back on some people from the house.' He did not doubt that some innocent people had been killed in the South, nor 'that some of these people might have been "educated" but nothing in my opinion can warrant the allegation that there was a plan to kill educated Southerners.' Some quibbles about the use of such words as 'massacre', 'slaughter' and 'death toll' (which he interpreted to mean a tax), a blanket dismissal of the defence witnesses' testimony, plus the assertion of the editor's intention to incite hatred by repeating such claims, formed the core of his argument.

Abel Alier's closing statement drew not only on the testimony of his witnesses and precedents in law, but the Pocket Oxford Dictionary to make his case. Arguing that the truth of the matter did have a bearing on the editor's intention, and that the reporting of such serious issues was upheld by law, he turned to the prosecutions squeamishness about the language used.

> Your honours' court had the opportunity to put itself in the position the editor of the Vigilant was put when he was confronted with the grisly facts you have heard about events in Juba and Wau. After knowing the facts you will ask yourselves what you would have done had you been journalists coming in possession of such facts about the activities of your government in one region of your country. Would your honours keep these facts to yourselves or would you rather inform the public, as the editor of the Vigilant did? And if you chose to inform the public how would you describe shooting unarmed persons in groups – six groups were shot each at a time in Wau (DW.4 Mary Ayat, DW.6 Rachel Adak and DW.9 Susan Aluel). In this case the editor of the Vigilant described the process of eliminating life as '*slaughter*' meaning *killing of many persons at once*. (Pocket Oxford Dictionary 4th. Ed. p. 779). I would suggest that there is no less natural word than *slaughter* that would give the faintest idea of how most of the marriage party came upon their untimely death. Yet the prosecution is complaining about the use of this word.
>
> The other word to which objection has been raised is *massacre*. The ordinary meaning of that word is *general slaughter especially of unresisting persons* (Pocket Oxford Dictionary Fourth Ed. p. 485). The facts about Juba incident, as the honourable members of the court have come to learn, certainly justify the use of this word to describe the killing. Over 360 persons were killed; none of the soldiers was killed during the two day operations. There is no evidence of resistance of those who died beyond the allegation by the government that Juba barracks

were attacked by Mutineers. The government does not even allege that those who died were mutineers. The conclusion is, in our submission, irresistible, namely the people in Juba were *slaughtered, unresisting.*

There is, therefore a title that ought to be expected from any journalist describing number of deaths in incidents such as that of Juba. For instance the Arabic Daily *El Zaman* of 11.7.65 described the incident as *'Butchery in the South'*. The influential Arabic daily *El Ayam* described the incident as *'Ruthless Butchery'* (12.7.65). The English daily *Morning News* of 12.7.65 carried a similar title as that of *El Ayam.*

It is difficult to know what to make of the prosecution's case. It is possible that they assumed that racial, religious or political solidarity would ensure a favourable verdict from the court. It is also possible that the prosecutors realized the weakness of their case and did not even try to sound convincing.

In the ruling of the panel of three judges both the proprietor and the assistant editor were acquitted. As for the articles of which the prosecution complained, the court ruled that none of those giving details of the murders in Juba, Wau, or elsewhere in the South were seditious. Only one article, Ambrose Riny's 'Ours is a Liberation Movement', which was published before the massacres, was deemed seditious, by virtue of its use of the words 'revolution' and 'liberation struggle', and the editor was found guilty of incitement on the basis of this article alone. This was one of the clutch of articles introduced as evidence on the second day of the trial.

Apparently at variance with this ruling the court then lifted the ban on *The Vigilant*, stating, 'The need for media of enlightenment in this country hardly needs emphasis. Newspapers which are published in English are scanty. To ban the Vigilant would be to deprive non-Arabic readers of a media for spreading news and hence enlightenment.'

The decision had to be referred to a Supreme Court Justice for confirmation. Whereas the original panel of three judges had skirted the issue of the massacres, Supreme Court Justice Abd al-Majid Imam, a Muslim of Southern ancestry,[10]faced it squarely. Criticising the original court's refusal to comment on the issues giving details of the massacres, he wrote:

> In these issues the charge is made against the Government, whether by innuendo or in express plain words, that the said Government is engaged in mass killings in the South picking as favourites its own employees, such a charge is obviously seditious, and the Accused

[10] 'Obituary: Supreme Court Justice Abdel Magid Imam 1917-1999,' *Sudan Democratic Gazette* 11/117, February 2000 p. 10.

ought to have, therefore been found guilty, unless there is in law, a plea or defence to them.

It has been proved by abundant evidence and beyond any reasonable doubt that the following are facts:

a. *The Juba Incident*: The Army seems to have carried a reprisal or revenge attack, onto Juba Native lodging area. About 360 Southerners were killed and many other wounded. The shooting started at about 11.20 on 8.7.65 and did not end till late in the afternoon, the next day. In this second day, bodies of dead and wounded began to arrive at the hospital which is about ½ mile from the scene. Three Southern Doctors were operating. While they were thus engaged, screams were heard, and soldiers broke into the theatre. From what was overheard it was clear that they were after those Doctors. One Doctor was shot dead on the spot. The other two escaped through a miracle, but before they did so they could see one of the soldiers pulling out drip infusion from a patient.

b. *The Wau Incident*: On 11.7.65 two marriage ceremonies were being held, at Wau, one of a certain Cepriano Cheer, and the other of a certain Octavio Deng. The celebrations were carried on inside a private house. About 7.30 p.m. when festivities were going on, the house was surrounded by troops. The troops opened fire and breaking into the house mowing down male inmates. Over 70 were killed. Among these some were prominent Government officials and many ordinary such officials. The list included a 4 year old boy and a 10 year old girl.

The Government did not care to produce a single witness to refute these facts. They might have thought, perhaps, that the truth of the matter complained of, in a seditious case is no defence. This is true, but not in such a case with this latitude of gravity....

The facts in respect to these grievances must therefore, be proved and the truth in respect of them be brought to light.

Commenting that an editor who brought such grave crimes to light ought to be protected rather than punished, he then confirmed that the editor's fine for publishing one seditious article would be no more than £S 20.[11]

The trial of *The Vigilant* was extraordinary in many ways. It revealed that at least some Northern officials were willing to testify publicly in the defence of Southerners. It demonstrated the independence of the judiciary. The first

[11] Abel Alier, *Southern Sudan: Too Many Agreements Dishonoured* (Exeter, Ithaca Press, 1990), pp. 33-4.

panel of judges showed a commitment to uncovering the truth, and by their own questions assisted the defence case in establishing the authority of their witnesses. The conviction on one article which was made and confirmed may even have been tactical; for by convicting the editor on one article which was written before the events of July 1965, they may have effectively prevented the government from bringing any further prosecutions. In any case the testimony of the witnesses to the massacre went undisputed in the first judgment and was broadcast vigorously in the confirming judgment.

The trial ought to have caused an uproar in the Sudan and elsewhere, but in fact it seems to have gone unnoticed and unremarked and had no appreciable effect on the course of the war. International journalists paid scarcely any attention to the threat a brother Sudanese journalist faced and weathered (they would not be so blind later on to the travails of South African journalists, many of them white). The Northern Sudanese populace did not recoil with horror at the facts reported in more than one Sudanese paper, and now proven in court. The court's ruling did not help to turn the electorate against the government. Rather, at about the same time as the end of the trial Prime Minister Mahjoub was quoted as saying that the issue of massacres was 'another red herring'. His Minister of Interior, Ahmad al-Mahdi said in Juba in February 1966,

> We admit our previous faults, and I am here today representing a strong new Government, fully determined to realize stability and execute development plans. When this country obtained independence we promised Southerners protection from imperialists. If imperialism attempts to penetrate through the South, this time it will be the responsibility of Southerners to lead the fight. ... We have nothing for Southern traitors except bullets and death. ... Our borders are now sealed, and the Sudanese are now alone.[12]

It was a chilling promise.

Massacres continued to take place in the South throughout the 1960s and, until its suspension by the Nimeiri coup in 1969, *The Vigilant* continued to report at least some of them. But Northern Sudanese continued to discount much of what *The Vigilant* reported. Mohamed Omer Beshir, who represented a liberal Northern Sudanese viewpoint and, as we have seen, was one of the first to publicly dismiss early reports of the Juba and Wau massacres, wrote in 1967, long after *The Vigilant*'s reports had been upheld in a Sudanese court of law

[12] 'Sudan: The South,' *Africa Digest*, April 1966, p. 107.

> The two incidents at Juba on July 8, 1965, and at Wau on August 11 [*sic*], 1965, where a number of Southerners were killed as a result of army and police activities against the rebels and their sympathisers, left behind them an increased bitterness among the Southern educated class. The background and details of these two events are not fully known, but the inescapable fact remains that a number of educated Southerners lost their lives and many escaped to Uganda.[13]

The Vigilant itself he described as 'the legal newspaper' of the 'separatist' Southern Front, which 'continues to publish material not so different from the propaganda of the ALF [Azania Liberation Front].'[14]

Successive Sudanese governments in the 1960s, whether Umma or DUP, continued to attribute the war in the South to the instigation of imperialists and other enemies of the Sudan. Northern Sudanese of various political hues made public professions of support for anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggles in Palestine, southern Africa and South East Asia, but discouraged foreigners from discussing their own colonial war. One British academic teaching at the University of Khartoum between 1964 and 1969 later recalled that after the massacres Northern Sudanese colleagues made it quite clear that it was 'impolite' to discuss events in the South. Many expatriates, charmed by the Sudan's famous politeness, and displaying their own anti-imperialist credentials, observed this informal ban. This extended even to African diplomats. In early 1969 I asked Tanzania's ambassador to the UN why it was Tanzania had recognized Biafra but not the Southern Sudan, only to be told that the government of the Sudan was not killing its own citizens.

Historians should not indulge in counter-factual history (unless, of course, they are Harry Turtledove), but it is worth contrasting the lack of reaction to *The Vigilant*'s reports and trial to the effect reports by American journalists on the massacre of civilians in Viet Nam had on the American public at about this same time. The facts of such massacres came to be established and accepted. Domestic debates about the war had to take them into account. Those in favour of the war had to argue their support in the knowledge that such events occurred; those opposed based their opposition in part on the same knowledge. The revulsion of a large segment of the American population – especially men of draft age – at such reports as the Mai Lai massacre ultimately made it impossible for any US government to pursue the war.

But some persons did learn a lesson from *The Vigilant*'s trial. In the 1980s

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[13] Mohamed Omer Beshir, *The Southern Sudan: Background to Conflict* (London: C. Hurst, 1968), p. 100.

[14] Ibid. The ALF was then the main exile party associated with the Anyanya.

Bona Malwal was once again the editor of an English language newspaper in Khartoum, *The Sudan Times*. Once again he was reporting on a war in the South being prosecuted by an Umma Prime Minister. When Sadiq al-Mahdi denied reports of slave-taking by government-supported militias, Bona produced freed slaves and ran their pictures and their stories in his paper. The government hesitated to bring a prosecution against the paper. Mindful of how Bona and Abel Alier had proved the truth of the Juba and Wau massacres by producing survivors as eyewitnesses twenty years earlier, it could not risk having the existence of slavery in the Sudan similarly proven in a court of law. The National Congress Party government of Omar al-Bashir, which seized power in a military coup in 1989, of course, had no similar restraints. With no independent press, and a subservient judiciary in the country, it suppressed internal reports and even bullied the UN into evading the issue of slavery.

When *The Vigilant* won its case, it won an historic victory on behalf of the Sudanese people and Sudanese nation. Unfortunately, they never realized what had been won on their behalf and failed to protect that liberty they had unknowingly gained. Malcolm X's comment about 'chickens coming home to roost' comes to mind. The Northern Sudanese public having tolerated government human rights abuses in the South in the 1960s and 1980s a later government was able to carry out similar abuses against its citizens in Khartoum in the 1990s, and in Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile in the 2000s. Had the Sudanese public been roused by the massacres in Juba and Wau and the defence of *The Vigilant* there might have been no second civil war, no ghost houses in Khartoum, no *janjaweed* in Darfur, and no Rapid Deployment Forces in the current government.

Postscript

There have been more massacres in Juba and other parts of South Sudan since 1965, and perhaps the worst have occurred since South Sudan's independence in 2011. The government in Juba seems to have drawn their own conclusions about the aftermath of the 1965 massacre: there is now no independent press in South Sudan to investigate and publicise what the government has done. News outlets have been suppressed and journalists harassed, forced into exile, and even killed. A previous champion of press freedom, Bona Malwal, has aligned himself with government propaganda, repeating the discredited government claim that the events of the Juba massacre of December 2013 were the result of an attempted Nuer coup,[15] and making no reference to the inter-

[15] Bona Malwal, *Sudan and South Sudan: From One to Two* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 203-4.

national investigations that documented government forces targeting Nuer civilians and other communities associated with opposition figures in Juba and elsewhere.[16] The methods of the former oppressor have been adopted by the former oppressed, with much the same result.

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*Douglas H. Johnson is the author of *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars*. 3rd ed., Woodbridge: James Currey, 2016, and *South Sudan: A New History for a New Nation*. Athens OH: Ohio University Press, 2016.

[16] UNMISS, *Conflict in South Sudan: A Human Rights Report* (May 8, 2014); Amnesty International, *Nowhere Safe: Civilians under attack in South Sudan*, (2014).

Revolution in Paradise

Suha Hasan*

This short essay is linked to the agenda of the upcoming Architectural Association (AA) Visiting School Khartoum, *A Blue Dilemma*, that will explore the intersection of climate change and heritage whilst reflecting on new modes of representation. I am provoked by the lyrics of the two songs I feature here and contemplate, through them, an issue related to climate change, which is our changing relationship to land and nature. I do this by juxtaposing the lyrics of *Lovers' Paradise* with those of *Agricultural Revolution*. An in-depth study of the genealogy of the lyrics and the melody would be valuable, however here I am engaged in a contemplative exercise, rather than rigorous research.

I position these two songs[1] alongside one another even though they belong to two different genres and incorporate different influences. The language deployed is also different: *Lovers' Paradise* is performed by Rasha in Arabic, and *Agricultural Revolution* is performed by Kamal Keila in English. The dates on which each song was first released are not clear. I do know from Larissa Fuhrmann, who has carried out various discussions and interviews with Kamal, that he had first performed his song in the 1970s. The dated recording of *Agricultural Revolution* that she had found was from the 1990s. This recording was recently released (in 2018), by Habibi Funk. *Lovers' Paradise* was released under the title *Meroe* as part of the album *El Misterio Del Nilo* (Spanish for *Mystery of the Nile*), by David Giro and Steve Wood in 2005.[2]

As I mentioned earlier, my interest here is in how land is depicted through the lyrics. The notion of our alienation from nature and the entanglement of this process with modernity, progress, and colonisation is something that has been highlighted many times.[3] Nature has become a space of extraction, a space for production that is relegated to the backstage of our urban lives.

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[1] The songs can be listened to on You Tube: *Agricultural Revolution* [05:07], Kamal Keila, Habibi Funk, 2018 https://youtu.be/oG8lQGIn9hE *Lovers' Paradise* [03:30], Rasha, El Misterio Del Nilo, David Giro and Steve Wood in 2005. https://youtu.be/6JD2SUnUjSY

[2] Music and lyrics are by Alferjoony, adapted by Rasha. Arrangements and production are by David Giró. Recorded in Barcelona in 2004 for the documentary film "Mystery of the Nile"

[3] Brenna Bhandar. *Colonial lives of property: Law, land, and racial regimes of ownership* Duke University Press, (2018); Eyal Weizman and Fazal Sheikh. *The conflict shoreline: colonialism as climate change* Steidl, (2015); Edward Said. *Culture and imperialism Vintage,* (2012); Karl Polanyi. *The great transformation* (2015).

I find that these two songs might present a harmonious embodiment of our evolving relationship to land.

Lovers' Paradise is above all a celebration of land and nature, both of which are a natural extension of the human sphere. It is worth mentioning that 'Lovers' Paradise' is a phrase within the song that was originally released under the name *Meroe*. The original name alludes to the heritage site we are investigating at the AA Visiting School Khartoum. I am not entirely sure why the name was chosen since the words could refer to any point on the Nile. It could be that the name was chosen to indicate that it is specifically addressing Sudan. The title I chose is an appropriate name for the song as it is describing the [not] so secret destinations of lovers found along the riverbank. In the song, Rasha is flirting with the Nile, portraying it as she would a human being. The Nile has desires, it too has feelings of nostalgia with the rhythm of a beating heart gently rippling through its surface. Rasha mentions the people she longs for who live on its shores, yet it is the Nile that she is addressing, perhaps directly or as a substitute for her loved ones. Either way, she is describing an intimate connection to the land itself.

On the other hand, Kamal Keila in *Agricultural Revolution* is presenting a political manifesto, a revolution in the nation that can be achieved through the land. The rhythm of the music is an invitation to the body to act; to sway with the beats. The lyrics mirror the beats through an invitation to a political act. Many phrases are repeated such as 'agricultural revolution' and 'let us dig the land'. To him, this is an act that will ensure the independence of the country. He describes land as a resource that should be exploited as a solution to hunger. In his song there is an embedded assumption that people are no longer cultivating their land and are no longer engaged in agricultural activities. Furthermore, his song has a nation building project embedded within it. It is a call to Sudanese to change their habits and to be empowered and independent. At the start of the song, he mentions that "everything at home, was being invented in Rome", if I hear it correctly. He follows this with, "we need an agricultural revolution", which is a clear manifesto to start producing everything, not only food, at home.[4] This is a sentiment that was shared by many at the time, 'to wear from what we produce, and to eat from what we plant'.[5]

There is a lot to be written about the changes in the food ecology that have occurred because of colonisation and aid programmes in Sudan as well

[4] When I discussed the use of Rome in the song with Larissa Fuhrmann, she pointed out to me that he could be alluding to the United Nations World Food Programme, which is based in Rome.

[5] This was one of former President Omer el Beshir's most famous slogans.

as the ongoing, understudied exploitation of agricultural land and the water resources of the Nile.[6] However, here it is the portrayal of land in each song that inspires me to reflect on the land. Kamal was searching for a solution to Sudan's problems, attempting to articulate the need for independence; he was most likely unaware that this could also result in intensive exploitation of the land: "digging it until it could no longer be dug". Rasha, on the other hand, is dreaming perhaps from the diaspora, of the land that she is longing for. She misses not only the people she loves, but the land that embraces them and the Nile that flows between its soil.

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[6] Christian Henderson. "Land grabs reexamined: Gulf Arab agro-commodity chains and spaces of extraction," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* (2020).

جنة العشاق Lovers' Paradise

لي فيك شجون	In you I have feelings of longing
أمنيات وحنين	Desires and nostalgia
أغنيات ولحون	Songs and melodies
في الصبا والغرام	About youth and love
أهلي فيك	My family that resides within you
يا نيل مخلصين وكرام	Oh Nile, you are devoted and honorable
للحزين ماسحين دمعة الآلام	They wipe the tears of pain of the unhappy
ليك سلام يا نيل	Peace be upon you, Oh Nile
بالشجن ممزوج	Mixed with longing
دافقة عبراتو	It's passages flowing
زي سواقي يموج	Like a *sagiya* rippling
فيه خفقات	In it are beats
وبالأماني يموج	And with desires it ripples
بالحنين كاسي	With nostalgia it is covered
وبالحنان منسوج	And with tenderness it is weaved
يا شواطئ النيل	Oh, shores of the Nile
جنة العشاق	The lovers' paradise
قلبي فيه حنين	My heart is longing
لرباك مشتاق	To your slopes
يا شواطئ النيل	Oh, shores of the Nile
جنة العشاق	The lovers' paradise
قلبي فيه حنين	My heart is longing
لرباك مشتاق	To your slopes

ثورة زراعية Agricultural Revolution

لدي رسالة للشعب السوداني	I got a message for the Sudanese people
كل شيء في موطننا تم اختراعه في روما	Everything at home, was being invented in Rome
نحن بحاجة إلى ثورة زراعية حقًا	We need a really agricultural revolution
وذلك لحل مشكلة الجوع	So as to get a solution of hunger
أنا أشعر بالجوع	I am feeling hungry
لكنني لست بحاجة إلى أحد ليعطيني شيئًا	But I need nobody to give me something
يا أيها الشعب السوداني اقول لكم اه	Sudanese people, I am telling you, oh
يا أيها الشعب السوداني اقول لكم اه	Sudanese people, I am telling you, oh
كل شيء في موطننا تم اختراعه في روما	Everything at home, was being invented in Rome
نحن بحاجة لثورة زراعية	We need agricultural revolution
وذلك لحل مشكلة الجوع	So as to get a solution of hunger
أنا أشعر بالجوع	I am feeling hungry
لكنني لست بحاجة إلى أحد ليعطيني شيئًا، آها	But I need nobody to give me something, aha
أنا أشعر بالجوع،	I am feeling hungry,
لكني لست بحاجة إلى أحد ليعطيني شيئًا	But I need nobody to give me something
سأحفر الأرض، حتى لا يمكنني حفرها	I am gonna dig the land, so I can't dig it anymore
لا نحتاج إلى أحد ليعطينا شيئًا	We need nobody to give us something
يجب أن نحفر الأرض حتى لا يمكن حفرها، آها	We have to dig the land, so I can't dig it anymore, aha
إحفرها	Dig it up
نحن بحاجة لثورة زراعية	We need agricultural revolution

Agricultural revolution	ثورة الزراعية
So as to get a solution of hunger, aha	لحل مشكلة الجوع، آها
We need nobody to give us something	لا نحتاج إلى أحد ليعطينا شيئًا
I am going to dig the land, so I can't dig it anymore	سأحفر الأرض، حتى لا يمكنني حفرها
Dig it one more time, everybody has to dig the land	احفرها مرة أخرى، على الجميع حفر الأرض
Dig it	احفرها
We need agricultural revolution, yeah	نحن بحاجة لثورة زراعية، نعم
Look at the South	انظر إلى الجنوب
I am talking about the South of Sudan	أنا أتحدث عن جنوب السودان
Look at the South, yeah	انظر إلى الجنوب، نعم
Only war we can find	لا نجد غير الحرب
Many children are dying	يموت الكثير من الأطفال
No food they are finding	لا يجدون الطعام
I am talking about the South, yeah	أنا أتحدث عن الجنوب، نعم
Many children are dying	يموت الكثير من الأطفال
No food they are finding	لا يجدون الطعام
We have to stop the war	علينا أن نوقف الحرب
Love and peace we are looking for	نحن نبحث عن الحب والسلام
We have to stop the war in the South	علينا أن نوقف الحرب في الجنوب
Just love and peace we are looking for	نحن نبحث فقط عن الحب والسلام
We need love, we need peace	نحن بحاجة إلى الحب، نحتاج إلى السلام
We need love, we need […]	نحتاج إلى الحب، نحتاج [...]
We need agricultural revolution	نحن بحاجة لثورة زراعية
Agricultural revolution	ثورة زراعية

So as to get a solution of hunger	لحل مشكلة الجوع
We need love in the South	نحتاج الحب في الجنوب
We need love, we need peace	نحن بحاجة إلى الحب، نحتاج إلى السلام
We need no war in the South	لا حاجة لنا إلى حرب في الجنوب
Just love and peace	فقط الحب والسلام
Agricultural revolution, Agricultural revolution,	ثورة زراعية، ثورة زراعية ،
Agricultural revolution, Agricultural revolution,	ثورة زراعية، ثورة زراعية ،
So as to get a solution of hunger, Agricultural revolution	من أجل الحصول على حل للجوع، ثورة زراعية

Southern Interests, Nile Water and the Politics of the Sudan in the Fifties: What would have happened if there had been a different outcome?

Garth Glentworth*

Introduction

In 1974, I was a member of a team from Birmingham University's Institute of Local Government Studies, funded by the British Government's Ministry of Overseas Development, that was sent to assess the capacity of the Southern Sudanese local government system and its ability to implement the new National People's Local Government System. This involved a Land Rover survey starting from Khartoum and following the Nile south through Renk, Malakal and Bor to Juba, and then round through Western Equatoria (Yei, Yambio, Maridi) to Bahr el Ghazal (Wau, Tonj and Rumbek) and back to Juba. With side trips to, for example, Torit, Kapoeta, Akobo, Aweil and Gogrial, we managed to obtain information about all 24 districts, actually visiting them all except Bentiu, Pibor Post and Raja (see my article on the journey in *Sudan Studies* 59, January 2019).

We formed a number of very stark and graphic impressions – among them the harshness and fragility of life for the Southern people, and the dependence on the flow of the Nile waters for the largely Nilotic segment of the local population – not only for livelihoods but for actual survival. They depended on their cattle, which could not live through a year without river-flooded grazing (the *toich*) provided by the Nile and its tributaries.

Though not in any detail or context, I did know of the long-term intense interest in the Northern Sudan and, in the Egyptian case, obsession, with the water level in the White Nile and its flow throughout the year.[1] That being the case, I hoped that policies on controlling the water flow, on Southern economic development and, for that matter, the effectiveness of local government in districts affected by the Nile, would have been fundamentally influenced by the many studies on this subject that had already been completed and published. As a result, on returning to Khartoum I went in search of reports about the Nile and found that several were still available.[2]

[1] While in Juba, we had met the latest rather lonely officials of the Egyptian Irrigation Department, who had been posted there as part of a network created in the 19th century and that stretched from Jinja in Uganda to the Nile Delta; their job was to monitor the river flow.

[2] 'Water' reports have been published since the 19th century and in the decades since then. They are of very different quality and have very different agendas.

A flooded area between Old Fangak and Wanglel (Credit: Gregor Schmidt).

A visit to the Government Printer in Khartoum led to the purchase (I seem to remember, at original prices!) of three of the major reports on the river and the Southern Provinces:

- **The Equatorial Nile Project, and its effects in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan**, being the Report of the Jonglei Investigation Team for the Sudan Government, 1954. (ENP)
- **Natural Resources and Development Potential in the Southern Provinces of the Sudan: A Preliminary Report** by the Southern Development Investigation Team for the Sudan Government, 1955.
- **The Nile Valley Plan,** Khartoum: Ministry of Irrigation and Hydro Electric Power, 1958. (NVP)

These Reports stood out for three main reasons. The essentially hydraulic studies in the ENP and the NVP were clearly vitally important and were probably the most intensively and comprehensively researched of those available. Years of work and large teams went into their production. Secondly, the ENP and Natural Resources and Development Potential Reports paid attention to the impact of water diversions to the North of Sudan and Egypt, on the lives of the large Southern population that would be affected. This was highly unusual as former reports had ignored or downplayed the impact on Southern populations. Thirdly, they were produced in the years around Sudanese Independence in 1956, a volatile and politically sensitive time.

These factors provide the context for this paper. In the first section I ana-

lyse the objectives, contents and conclusions of the three Reports. The hope is that readers will find of interest the structure of each, the coverage, research methods employed, expertise deployed, local language skills and the recommendations that were made. They were not completed by consultants but by officials of the Sudanese Government, working in extremely difficult conditions. The contrast with modern consultancy practice has to be noted.[3]

I then address two questions, my answers to which are tentative.

1. Why was there a major emphasis in the ENP and Natural Resource Reports on the hardships and threats to survival facing the Nilotic tribes along the Nile between Malakal and Juba, and to what extent did the political context of impending Independence influence the approach taken in the Reports?
2. The second question is whether the Reports had any practical impact on Nile water policy making and politics generally in Sudan in the fifties?

I have tried to offer possible answers or at least hypotheses but my conclusions are tentative, given my lack of in-depth knowledge of Sudanese history and politics in the run-up to and aftermath of Independence.[4] Having admitted this, I have concluded this article by posing questions for debate, inviting opinions and commentary from historians and political scientists with in-depth knowledge of the Sudan.[5] This explains the list of 'What if?' ques-

[3] These studies took years to complete with teams drawn predominantly from serving colonial officials in Sudan who were familiar with local environments, living and working for months in very difficult conditions and speaking local languages. The conclusions and recommendations of the Reports were nearly always conditional, with the need for additional research emphasised.

[4] The three authoritative published studies I have been able to consult are Professor Peter Woodward, *Condominium and Sudanese Nationalism* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers Inc., 1979); Professor Robert O. Collins, *The Waters of the Nile: Hydro-Politics and the Jonglei Canal 1900-1988* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); and Douglas Johnson, *South Sudanese Past Notes and Records* (Western Australia: Africa World Books, 2015). Obviously, the opinions and assessments here are mine and not those of these authors.

[5] Dr Douglas Johnson has very helpfully read through a draft of this article and made many relevant comments. He has drawn attention to a number of other relevant published sources that I have not been able to consult: Waterbury, *Hydropolitics of the Nile Valley* (1979); Howell, Lock and Cobb (eds.) *The Jonglei Canal: Impact and Opportunity* (1988); Howell & Allan, *The Nile: Resource Evaluation, Resource Management, Hydropolitics and Legal Issues* (1990); and his own two part Sudan volume in the British Documents on the End of Empire Project

tions at the end of this article.[6]

The Reports: An analysis

The Equatorial Nile Project Report

Initially the focus of the ENP was on analysing data on the water flow of the Nile, with the aim of suggesting remedial measures to increase its flow and to even out water levels over the yearly climatic cycle. However, as the work proceeded, it became obvious to the team that an assessment of the impact of the proposed measures on the local populations was also a priority; as mentioned above, this was unusual compared with other studies.

The ENP went back to basics starting with hydrology but also analysing geology, animal husbandry (cattle were the only animals which could survive and reproduce in the environment; sheep, goats and chickens – the study concluded – could not), pasture utilisation, grain crops (*dura,* the local name for sorghum, was the only crop that could stand the climate), fisheries and what was called "sociology", the living patterns and values of the tribes that would be most affected by the proposed "remedial measures".[7]

The analysis emphasised the precariousness of life along the Nile in the South. In the experience of the local population, life, and indeed physical and

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(BDEEP) series (1998), which can be downloaded as pdfs at 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. There are numerous documents on the Nile Waters concerning Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Uganda reprinted in the BDEEP series. Perhaps the most definitive answers would be provided in Dr Paul Howell's papers lodged in the Sudan Archive in Durham University Library. Dr Howell chaired the teams both for the ENP Report and the Natural Resources and Development Potential Study. A second important source would be the papers of John Winder, the Governor of Upper Nile when Howell was heading the Natural Resources Study in the Southern Provinces.

[6] Any comments or responses can be sent to the editor at sudanstudies@sssuk.org

[7] Though they used the term "sociology", it seems rather surprising that there were no references to the work of two subsequently very famous pioneering anthropologists. Professor (later Sir) Edward Evans-Pritchard had completed extensive field work in the Sudan and had published on the Nuer and Azande in the thirties and forties, and Godfrey Lienhardt was completing similar work on the Dinka. Their studies should have been available to the ENP team as the research could not have taken place without Government permission. Douglas Johnson has pointed out that as well as having been a district commissioner among the Nuer, Paul Howell was an anthropologist and student of Evans-Pritchard. His cousin, Jean Buxton, who contributed the notes on the Mandari in the ENP, was a student of Godfrey Lienhardt's.

social survival without starvation, depended on a combination of factors but above all on the survival of cattle herds. These in turn depended on a three-stage grazing rotation and above all on the existence each year of pasture created by river flooding (the *toich*), to which herds could be moved during the months when other vegetation was exhausted. Movements ranged from as little as ten miles to over one hundred but they had to be made.

Mundari cattle camp near Tindilo, Terakeka County (Credit: Gregor Schmidt).

Prospects for changes in the inhabitants' agricultural and economic practices were not assessed positively. Cattle were not sold because of the wealth they represented and their social and cultural importance. As a result, the opening of a new meat canning factory in Kosti was not producing any real impact. Young men's and women's first priority was looking after cattle in the cattle camps. They were not prepared to practise shifting cultivation of crops except for *dura,* which was the most reliable. Maize, rice, millet and beans were possibilities, but low yields and prices, the unpredictability of the climate, distances from markets and the absence of any marketing system were powerful deterrents to cultivation.

The Team's detailed analysis highlighted these vitally important realities and caused a shift in emphasis in the proposals contained in the study. In their words:

> ...it will be realised that any reduction in riverain grazing and thus in annual stock will lead not only to detrimental effects on the economy and standard of diet as will be the case among all inhabitants of the

Sorghum (dura) that is nearly ripe (Credit: Gregor Schmidt).

> Jonglei Area,[8] but also to social difficulties which without suitable remedies may well lead to a complete breakdown in the present political and social organisation before a new system can be developed.
> [ENP Report Volume 1 Chapter 3, 'The Inhabitants', page XXXI].

The Report found that a huge number of people in the area would be affected by changes to the flow of the Nile waters and the loss of *toich* grazing: 660,000 would be directly affected and 400,000 indirectly affected. It was estimated that they would lose 36% of their cattle. Details of the impact on livestock were given in 'animal units' in the Report, one unit equalling one cow. 802,100 units would decrease to 513,900, with the major losses borne in the Nilotic area. There would also be annual losses of 23,000 metric tonnes of fish, which was an essential resource in the season when food was short.

The Team's recommendations were designed to meet both their objectives: the original purpose – to provide more water for irrigation in Egypt and Northern Sudan, especially in the dry season but also by evening out fluctuations, and secondly, minimising the damaging impact of their proposed measures on the lives of the local Southern population. This required a revised project.

It was proposed that to increase water flow, there should be increased storage in Lakes Victoria, Kyoga and Albert in Uganda; a network of dams and barrages would be built, as well as some embankment strengthening. The con-

[8] The Jonglei area is inhabited by Dinka, Nuer and Shilluk between Juba and Malakal, but also by Bari and Mandari in Equatoria, and what the Report called "Baggara Arab Pastoralists" to the north, between Melut and Renk.

struction of what was called the "Sudd Diversion Channel", later called the Jonglei Canal, was to go ahead. The main driver for this was the fact that the White Nile lost between a third and half its water volume in the *Sudd* swamplands.

The Report writers recommended that in order to minimise the impact of these changes on the local population, there should be better pasture and drainage, bush clearing, improvements in grass quality and fodder storage, and irrigation schemes. However, these were very tentative proposals as their success depended on the willingness of the population to change their lifestyles, as well as the creation of a government agricultural extension service, both of which were unlikely in the short term.

The overall concluding impression is that the Team thought it would be better to leave things alone, not to interfere in the very delicate environmental balance, and above all not to drain the swamp and affect flood grazing.

Natural Resources and Development Potential in the Southern Sudan: A Preliminary Report

This 'Preliminary Report'[9] by the Southern Development Investigation Team was based on research conducted and collated in 1954 and submitted to the Sudan Government in 1955. The Report focused on economic development and a consideration of which agricultural products could be produced in the South if investment as well as water was made available. It covered most of the same subjects as the ENP Report and it may well be that it used some of the same research, particularly as the two teams were chaired by Dr Paul Howell.[10]

The reasons why the Report was commissioned were explained somewhat obliquely in the Introduction. It was to provide:

> … a comprehensive picture of all aspects of economic development in the South, [providing] a short work of reference which will be of use to the Sudanese Government in its programme of economic planning and also to any foreign or international advisers unfamiliar with the country…
>
> [Natural Resources and Development Potential Report, Introduction, page 2].

Perhaps the most important political (though that word was never used) aspect was to remind Government that because the three Southern Provinces

[9] Although I may be wrong, I do not think a final version was ever produced or published.

[10] Topics included Ecology, Topography and Climate, Hydrology, Animal Production, Crop Husbandry and Fisheries.

were part of the Sudan and could not be developed in isolation, there had to be at least regional planning, if not provincial planning, when considering economic development so as to respond to the different environmental conditions in the vast country. The South was so impoverished that funds for investment had to be made available from the National Government, in addition to the existing large subsidy that financed basic services and rudimentary development.

The Report included a similar warning about the impact of development initiatives on the local population to the one that was given in the ENP, with one important additional point. It is worth quoting:

> The primary object of economic development in the Southern Province should be the steady improvement of the standard of living and the maintenance and increase of public services and amenities. There appears to us to be one important condition to this policy. It is that development shall not cause so drastic and rapid a disturbance of tribal life and structure that the social equilibrium cannot be maintained even with the normal processes of education. It follows that education must accompany – not precede or follow – development in the economic sphere; development in the economic sphere without suitable and adequate education can be pointless, while education without material advance can lead to discontent and social maladjustment.[11]
>
> [Report, Introduction, page 1].

This caution was reflected in the specific recommendations that were put forward. The aim seems to have been to present an optimistic picture of Southern "potential" but to be realistic about the barriers and shortages that would hold development back. The recommendations for economic development included increasing food production for export and sale in the Northern Sudanese markets (i.e. sugar, coffee, tea, rice, meat and fish). Cotton, oil seeds, chillies and tobacco were also proposed as additional cash crops. The Report's writers pointed out the formidable constraints on achieving these aims, many of which are similar to those outlined in the ENP Report. In addition, the Report details: shortages of labour and low productivity; a lack of rail and road infrastructure; the absence of a marketing board and agricultural extension services; poor quality of outputs; and the need for an agricultural research centre or centres to develop the right products for the future.

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[11] This may have been one of the first studies to make the connection between education and economic development.

The Nile Valley Plan Report

This was largely a hydraulic exercise that aimed to provide a plan,

> "to improve the distribution and utilisation of surface water… for irrigation and hydro-electricity ... in the entire drainage area … the Nile and its tributaries."
>
> [NVP Report, Volume One, Introduction, page i].

Although this Report sought to cover the entire drainage area of the Nile including the South Sudan, there was no attempt at economic analysis and by extension limited concern for the riverain environment and its population. From the Report, it could also be concluded that a major objective was to pioneer the use of computers (supplied by IBM) in the analysis of flow data. Research was conducted between 1955 and 1957. New and existing dams were a major focus. Sponsorship came from the Ministry of Irrigation and Hydro-Electric Power that was part of the new Sudanese government after Independence on 1st January 1956. Egypt and Northern Sudan were to be the beneficiaries of the improvements in water flow. Ethiopia and the Blue Nile, and Uganda and its three lakes were mentioned but not as major concerns in the Study.

The information in the Report contributed to two lasting political agreements about water between Egypt and Sudan. It formed the technical basis for a new 1959 Nile Waters Agreement between Egypt and Sudan that replaced the 1929 Agreement. The 1959 Agreement initially gave Egypt more water to fill the Aswan High Dam and also allocated a bigger share to the Sudan for its ever-expanding irrigated cotton and *dura* schemes. The Report also helped facilitate the setting up of a 'Permanent Joint Technical Commission for Nile Waters' that was principally aimed at alleviating Egypt's ever-present anxiety over the reduction and diversion of Nile waters. However, for the first time the Commission grudgingly recognised the interests of the other riverain states.[12]

These then are the Reports and their findings.

Politics and Nile Water in the Fifties[13]

In this section I address my first question, i.e. Why was there a major emphasis in the ENP and Natural Resources Reports on detailing the hardships and

[12] There have been dozens of agreements and protocols on the Nile waters, going back to the end of the 19th century and continuing and becoming more complex to the present day. None seem to have been implemented effectively.

[13] Nile water allocations and questions of Southern interests were of course part of much wider negotiations on North/South relations and Independence, which are incisively analysed in Woodward (1979).

threats to survival facing the Nilotic tribes should the Nile flow be changed and to what extent did the political context of impending Independence influence this approach? A brief introduction to Sudanese politics at this time is the preliminary requirement.

Political Developments

Support for self–government and Independence among Northern Sudanese political party leaders and educated elites grew rapidly in the late forties/early fifties, especially in the context of a (highly controversial) proposed union with Egypt and frustration at the slow increase of Sudanese representation in the Executive Council and Legislative Assembly. The national elections to a new House of Representatives in November 1953 cleared the way to self-government but did not lessen complaints about the slow progress to Independence.

Although there was some Southern participation, it was very noticeable that enthusiasm for Independence was not shared by Southern representatives, who found their views ignored by the nationalist political parties and the South almost colonised by Northern administrators as 'Sudanisation' proceeded. Southern interests played little or no part in any policy-making and Southern personnel were regarded by Northerners as "inexperienced, naïve, erratic and easily corrupted." [14]

Southern grievances and resentment of the North, encouraged by Egypt, reached such a level in August 1955 that the Equatorial Corps, the all-Southern section of the Sudanese Army, mutinied. This began in Torit but spread throughout Equatoria, Bahr el Ghazal and Upper Nile and involved massacres of Northern civilians in the South. Douglas Johnson points out that the only flare-up in Upper Nile was in Malakal, when there was a shoot-out with Southern prison warders. Bahr el Ghazal was kept quiet, oddly enough because of the efforts of Gordon Muortat, then a police inspector. He notes that the 1955 disturbances were scarcely Southern-wide. Northern troops and British air transport soon brought the rebellion/mutiny to an end and most of the mutineers were either executed or imprisoned.

There were significant long-term impacts as a result of these events. Any form of union with Egypt was finally rejected by the Sudanese Government, as were federalist structures designed to accommodate the interests and separate identity of the South. Any sense of common identity and common interests between the North and South was effectively destroyed, if it had ever existed. Arguably, Southern survivors of the mutiny and their supporters provided the nucleus of recruits to the Anyanya guerrilla force, which formed in the early sixties to fight the Government in the first Sudanese Civil War.

[14] Woodward op. cit. p.150.

A Parallel Initiative

Even in the fifties, there was a very strong element of paternalism in the attitude of the ruling British Administration towards the South.[15] The exclusion of Southerners and vital Southern interests was a source of concern to key British officials in the Sudan Political Service (SPS), especially those who served in the South and had Southern interests at heart (perhaps having been 'bog barons' in their earlier careers). They did not want to see Southerners as permanent second-class citizens, marginalised, left behind and ignored in the drive to Independence.

In this context, key members of the SPS, who were also members of the preparatory teams for the ENP and Natural Resources and Development Potential Reports, took the opportunity to highlight the disastrous effects on the Nilotic population of interfering with the flow of the Nile.[16] This appears to explain the detailed analysis of the social and economic impact of changing water flows that is contained in the Reports.

Impact of the reports

In this section I address my second question, i.e. whether the Reports had any practical impact on Nile water policy-making and politics generally in Sudan in the fifties.

As mentioned above, one hypothesis is that the Reports must have been seen by their authors as a potentially effective way of focussing Egyptian, Sudanese and British attention on Southern problems and interests. This did not happen. Egypt rejected the ENP Report and the Nile Valley Plan and never showed any real concern for the welfare and development of Southern Sudanese.[17] Nor for that matter did the Northern Sudanese, especially after they formed the first independent government. It also has to be recognised that the British had only been sporadically interested in Southern development before the fifties.

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[15] The Sudan Political Service (SPS) continued to insist that there were no Southerners capable of representing the South in constitutional and wider negotiations without their support and coaching. Almost similarly, the Northern parties (Umma and Unionists/NUP) believed the South was confused in its demands which were primarily shaped by the SPS.

[16] The key figure must have been Dr Paul Howell, who chaired both research teams and led their report writing.

[17] Chapter 7, 'Plans and Dams' of Professor Collins' study, *The Waters of the Nile: Hydro-Politics and the Jonglei Canal 1900-1988* (1990), gives a full account of the convoluted and frequently acrimonious negotiations in the fifties and on into the sixties and beyond. It is clear that concern for the interests and wellbeing of the Southern Sudanese population in what was sometimes called "the Jonglei Canal Zone" was never a factor.

Negotiations with Egypt at this time focused almost exclusively on the vital issue of its share of Nile water. Egypt's central concern was, as always, maximising its 'life blood' – the flow of White Nile water. The Blue Nile provided six times as much water as the White but only in the rainy season in Ethiopia. The White Nile was relatively constant and could be made more so by the use of dams, barrages and particularly the proposed Jonglei Canal to bypass the *Sudd*.

The Nile by the confluence in Khartoum (Credit: D. A. Welsby).

The negotiations initially involved Egypt and Britain but increasingly after 1956 the Sudanese government was also involved. Britain wanted Egypt to have more water for agriculture and particularly cotton growing, but above all, after the Suez crisis it was motivated by its need for a stable and peaceful Egypt and access to the Suez Canal, which was the vital gateway to the British Empire further east.

The Nile Waters Agreements of 1929 and 1959 between Egypt and Sudan divided the water in Egypt's favour, although in the latter case, once the Aswan High Dam had been filled, more water was to be allocated to Sudan for expanded, irrigated cotton production. The Agreements did not result in a lasting resolution over water shares.[18] Egypt continued to insist on its 'histori-

[18] An additional complication was the assertion by newly independent riverain states that they did not recognise the agreements as they had only been signed by the United Kingdom as the colonial power, which thus effectively nullified the Agreements.

cal rights to water while Sudan continued to want to readjust quotas to secure a bigger share for expanded cotton and food crop production.[19]

Irrigation on the banks of the Nile (Credit: D. A. Welsby).

Although only on a limited scale in the fifties, in later years other riverain states became involved in discussing the flow of the two Niles' waters. In the late forties and early fifties, Uganda was already in negotiations over water flow and the construction of the Owen Falls Dam at Jinja. Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire and Tanganyika declared an interest and wanted to have their views heard. Above all Ethiopia (which Egypt, Sudan and Britain had contrived to ignore for decades when it came to discussions about Nile water) began to assert its right to control and utilise the Blue Nile waters. The Grand

[19] Almost ironically, the huge increase in rainfall around Lake Victoria in the period 1961 to 1964 raised the Lake's level so that enough water was available to Egypt and Northern Sudan for their expansion plans. The decades of haggling were rendered almost irrelevant. Tragically, it was the South that suffered the most loss of life and animals due to massively increased flooding. The opening of the Owen Falls Dam did nothing to help South Sudan, though it did lessen flooding around the Lake itself. Lake Victoria did not return to its pre-1961 level until 1987 (Collins 1990, pp. 283-285). Recently there was another catastrophic rise in Nile levels and exceptional flooding in the Nilotic areas south of the Sudd.

Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is the most spectacular recent result, which has probably put agreement on shares of Nile water even further out of reach.

The 'What If' Questions

Below, I present some of the subsidiary questions that occur to me as a result of thinking about the Reports and their political context. They are necessarily speculative and designed to invite comment and discussion from readers:

If the Sudan Government had reacted positively and practically to the warnings about the loss of *toich* grazing, and recognised the development needs in the South, would that have had any effect on the mutiny by Southern Army Soldiers in August 1955 and the subsequent formation of the Anyanya?

Was the location of the warnings about the catastrophic impact of diverting the Nile waters that was contained in the ENP and Natural Resources and Development Potential Reports an effective means of communicating the seriousness of the crisis?

Did the constant battles over Nile water and its allocation distract both Sudan and Egypt from more important development issues and particularly the issues with the South?

Did the forceful 'guardianship' of Southern welfare and development issues by senior members of the SPS mobilise opposition to their messages among the (Northern) Nationalist Sudan Government and Egypt?

Did the additional SPS lobbying – for a separate Ministry of Southern Affairs or what was described as a 'federalism' for the South – have the same effect in terms of Northern unwillingness to take any initiatives on Southern development?[20]

Realistically, the conclusion has to be that mainstream nationalist politics in the North and Egyptian influence would probably have excluded Southern interests whatever the SPS had engineered in the content of the Nile Reports. Neglect of the South started early and catalysed support for South Sudanese Independence and armed resistance to the independent Sudanese Government. Still, it is interesting to speculate what might have been…

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[20] This question has not been discussed here.

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Asylum Seekers in the UK in 2021: The state of play

Peter Verney*

For asylum seekers coming into the UK, or just trying to subsist while their claims are processed, the impact of Covid 19 has compounded an already miserable situation. There are significant numbers of Sudanese among them, for whom the struggle to survive outside Sudan has become even harder. Those who fled the Bashir regime can be found among the people in makeshift camps in Calais, in run-down housing around the UK, and on dinghies trying to make the Channel crossing. Most notoriously, some have ended up in rotting former army barracks, exposed to Covid 19.

The recent changes to Home Office procedures have increased their sense of isolation and powerlessness, pushing some to breaking point. The experience of lockdown, often in appalling living conditions, and for many the threat of deportation, has worsened their often already fragile mental health. One Sudanese volunteer told me, "I recognised this a while ago - it's an unseen epidemic that's haunting these young migrants. The sad reality is that mental health is hardly spoken about openly in Sudan nor in the Sudanese community in the UK."

Twenty-nine asylum seekers of different nationalities died in Home Office accommodation in 2020 – five times as many as those who lost their lives on perilous Channel small boat crossings over the same period. While fewer people sought asylum last year from Iran (-26%), Iraq (-21%), Afghanistan (-19%), Pakistan (-42%) and Vietnam (-60%), there was a marked increase in applications from Eritrea (+29%), Sudan (+35%) and Syria (+44%).

A large majority of these Sudanese fled Sudan by way of nightmarish conditions in Libya, where many were held up for months or years, doing forced labour or in detention facilities, and treated like slaves. The EU has a policy to 'push back' to Libya would-be refugees who are found at sea and many die trying to escape. A Sudanese poet, Abdel Wahab Yousif, was one of 45 people who drowned in the Mediterranean when their ship was shot at and caught fire. Authorities from Libya, Malta and Italy were all called but no one came to their rescue.[1]

Our own coastal waters are lethal, too. Among those who lost their lives in

[1] See 'It's a day off': wiretaps show Mediterranean migrants were left to die https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/16/wiretaps-migrant-boats-italy-libya-coastguard-mediterranean

the Channel was Abdulfatah Hamdallah, a young Sudanese man.[2]

Treatment on Arrival

Home Office Policy

Since 1994, UK Home Secretaries have repeatedly increased controls on asylum-seekers' freedoms, particularly their access to the economy.

Asylum-seekers used to have the right to work after their first six months. In 1994 the government ended access to income support, and with it the right to work in most cases. In 1999 the Home Office took over the provision of accommodation for destitute asylum-seekers from local authorities (with the exception of those under-age). This was then farmed out to private companies instead.

In 2000 the Home Office began trialling a voucher-only system. Not only did this give the asylum seekers less than income support rates but it also meant people could not get change or choose the cheapest shops. This year, the Home Office reliance on a card payment system called 'Aspen' left people in dire financial straits when it stopped working for nearly three weeks during a botched changeover.

Phones

For those who don't lose their lives, official hostility on arrival includes the confiscation of people's belongings, notably their mobile phones. The phones are taken away because, the Home Office argues, they could be used for illegal activity. It is not clear whether this action is justifiable, with its implication that an asylum seeker is more likely to commit a crime, but the practice is widely reported.

In Kafkaesque fashion, the asylum seekers have to telephone a number to get their phone and belongings back. They then have a hit-and-miss chance of retrieving phones containing their precious contacts, phone numbers and family photographs - which are lost if they do not apply in time for their return. The Home Office has allowed an option for applicants to email them to apply for the return of their property, but few are in a position to do so without help.

Steering

Not only are mobile phones being treated as potential links to crime: people who steer the dinghies across the Channel now face being charged as people smugglers. The Home Office immigration enforcement unit has been analysing drone footage of small boats, singling out migrants and prosecuting

[2] https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/dec/15/revealed-shocking-death-toll-of-asylum-seekers-in-home-office-accommodation

them for steering them. In a shift in policy, the offence of assisting unlawful immigration -previously used to prosecute members of organised crime networks- is being applied to asylum seekers who steer boats, because they have "facilitated" a journey.

Sudanese people appear to make up a higher proportion of those charged with people-smuggling operations than other nationalities. This is probably because they tend to be poorer and may have been offered discounts by the operators if they agree to hold the tiller. It is not because they are involved with international smuggling kingpins. An official report has found that there are "no organised crime group members" on board.[3]

None of the Sudanese I have spoken to, expected the gruelling treatment they encountered both on arrival in the UK and for years afterwards. Applications can take years to process, during which time they are not allowed to work. Even those granted asylum have found themselves destitute and homeless. "I do not sleep during the night," says 'Omar, a Sudanese asylum seeker who crossed by boat from Calais. "All night I'm just lying there overthinking what I have to do with my life until 5am, 6am or 7am. I can't work. I can't study. I'm losing my life."[4] One Sudanese asylum seeker refused food for at least four days after repeatedly seeking answers about when he would be moved out of Napier barracks.

The charity Care4Calais commented recently:

> After experiencing so much suffering already, after surviving conflicts, persecution and torture, it is here in the UK that hope is fading. Cut off and isolated, the mental health of asylum seekers has declined over the last few months. The conditions in hotels have added to this. Waiting weeks in pain to see a dentist; rationing of basic supplies like food, toilet paper and soap; demeaning treatment from staff charged with their care. Residents have been told to 'go back to their countries' by staff members. They have repeatedly been told that if they complain it will affect their asylum claims. Asylum is a matter of life and death for many; the climate of fear has become overwhelming.

The British government's "hostile environment" policies are a long way from the idealised Britain portrayed and absorbed abroad. Far from the four-star treatment some critics claim people are receiving, the reality is appalling.

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[3] https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/channel-crossings-migrant-boats-jailed-dinghies-smugglers-cps-b1722937.html

[4] https://www.vice.com/en/article/93w3be/napier-barracks-asylum-seekers-face-mental-health-crisis-as-ngos-refuse-to-sign-gagging-clause

In Bradford, a two-year-old Sudanese girl was seriously injured when the ceiling – which her mother had been raising concerns about for months – fell in on her. "When I moved in all the rooms were dirty, and in the bedroom upstairs I could feel that the floor was moving," her mother Omeimah told Refugee Action. "I contacted Migrant Help and informed them, but nobody took notice." When builders eventually arrived, the ceiling had become so weak that as soon as they started work, it caved in on her child in the room below. She had to spend three days in hospital and have 20 stitches in her head. Omeimah says her daughter has been left with psychological problems and won't leave her side. "Even animals don't get treated like this," she adds.[5]

The level of media noise generated about asylum seekers is out of all proportion to the actual figures, of course. The number of people coming to the UK for protection has actually fallen in recent years, and compared with, say, Germany, the UK has taken in fewer refugees, but the impression given has been one of a threatening invasion to be repelled.

The 'migrant boat crisis' in the Channel was not in fact a 'crisis'. It was all about the visibility of people crossing rather than increased numbers. According to official UK immigration statistics for the year ending March 2021, asylum claims were down 24% on the previous year; however, the issue dominated headlines last summer and has been periodically resurrected ever since.[6]

Although the number of people claiming asylum in Britain dropped by 24 per cent to 32,411, the number of people waiting longer than six months for a decision on their asylum application has risen by 71% and now stands at 50,000.[7] At the same time there have been growing delays in the processing of applications from people who arrived months, even years ago. This sluggishness in decision-making has a terrible impact on morale.

Badr El Din Abdallah Adam

In Glasgow, which has a large proportion of new arrivals, these pressures had a tragic outcome in June 2020, when Badr el Din Abdallah Adam, from Sudan, was shot dead by armed police after he stabbed and seriously injured six people.

The 28-year-old had been placed in the Park Inn hotel as part of the response to the coronavirus pandemic. Giving little or no notice, Mears

[5] https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-housing-coronavirus-pandemic-home-office-refugees-migrant-help-b1258294.html

[6] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2021/how-many-people-do-we-grant-asylum-or-protection-to#grant-rate

[7] https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-asylum-seekers-deportation-returns-b1854858.html

Group, the Home Office contractor that manages asylum accommodation in Glasgow, moved some 350 asylum seekers – mostly recent arrivals who were living in temporary accommodation – into six hotels. Among them were pregnant women and survivors of trafficking and torture.[8]

Badr el Din had already become so frustrated at his situation that he had asked to be allowed to return to Sudan. He had been referred for a mental health report, and while his tragic outburst might have happened in another context, it was made much worse by being forced into a hotel. He had been specifically complaining about this, saying that he could not bear being with so many people in an unmanageable environment. Being kept in a hotel felt as if he was back in NISS (National Intelligence and Security) forces' detention in Sudan.

After his death, Sudanese people in Glasgow pulled together to try to address the crisis, liaising with police and local officials to defuse the situation. Their actions are part of a growing role being played by Sudanese community groups in the UK who have stepped up to provide new energy as well as the emotional, cultural and language-related support that non-Sudanese cannot give.

Deportations

Some new arrivals from mainland Europe do experience a more diligent and rapid response from the British authorities - the attempt to send them straight back.

In 'Uncovered: the brutal secrets of UK deportation flight Esparto 11', the *Guardian* revealed the ongoing efforts to deport asylum seekers before they have had a chance to make their case here, on the grounds that they passed through other countries on the way here.

It tells the stories of "Nazeer" and "Omar" (names changed for their safety), two Sudanese from Darfur who made the perilous Channel crossing only to be summarily rejected. They would normally be eligible for refugee status in the UK, notes the *Guardian*, "But the Home Office, noting both had been fingerprinted in other European countries, chose to deport them back to those states under an EU legal mechanism called the Dublin regulation."[9]

Compensation

A Sudanese national who was arrested and tortured in Sudan is one of a group

[8] https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/oct/18/from-sudan-to-the-park-inn-the-tragic-story-of-a-migrants-killing

[9] https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/may/29/asylum-seekers-risked-all-to-get-to-the-uk-then-they-were-deported-at-dawn

of more than 20 asylum seekers who are suing the Home Office for being illegally detained. The *Guardian* reports that compensation could be owed to thousands held unlawfully between January 2014 and March 2017.

In November 2019 the Supreme Court found that Home Office policy on detention was unlawful and ruled that the claimants were entitled to substantial damages.[10]

Under-age

The Home Office is facing legal action over a new policy of recruiting its own social workers to carry out age assessments on young people when they arrive in the country via small boats, May Bulman reported for *The Independent* on 20th March 2021, "after it emerged a number of children had been wrongly judged to be adults during this process".[11]

In October 2020 a Sudanese teenager was assessed to be over 25 "in a matter of minutes" despite insisting that he was under 18. He was transferred to Yarl's Wood removal centre, then to Harmondsworth and then Brook House removal centres. The Home Office twice attempted to deport him to Germany because he had travelled through the country en route to the UK, but both times lawyers intervened. During detention for over a month, his mental health is said to have deteriorated so much he was placed on suicide watch. During this time he was also identified as a victim of torture. Kent social services agreed to take him in pending an age assessment. He was eventually assessed to be 17 years old.

Food, Clothes and Shelter

In the early months of the Covid 19 pandemic, the focus was on the use of hotels, both for homeless people and for asylum seekers waiting to be processed.

This was portrayed in some media circles as a form of undeserved luxury, whipping up right-wing outrage. Racists tried entering the hotels to terrorise the inhabitants. The reality was that if they were accommodated in hotels, they received £8 per week in spending allowance. Some were threatened with homelessness if they did not comply with an ostensibly unlawful 23-hour curfew.[12]

A Sudanese Darfuri woman who escaped to the UK after her husband's

[10] https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/oct/25/asylum-seekers-sue-uk-over-unlawful-detention

[11] https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/children-asylum-deportation-adult-age-assessment-home-office-uk-b1810618.html

[12] https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-seekers-homeless-curfew-high-court-b1816073.html

disappearance told HuffPost UK in March 2021 she had been living in a hotel room with her three children for the last five months. She had become ill with coronavirus while they all lived in the same space. "My children are really struggling and home schooling in one hotel room is very hard," she is quoted as saying. "My kids are fighting and crying and asking when we can go to live in a home, and they miss their dad." Saira's children managed to attend school for a month before the third national lockdown. But one contracted Covid-19 and brought it home.[13]

In 2020 at least nine asylum seekers died in hotels run by Home Office private contractors, while others were forced to sleep in parks and streets after being ejected by contractors for breaching hotel rules. Yvette Cooper MP, as chair of the home affairs select committee, called on the Home Office to investigate if the private firms running the hotels were "fit for purpose".[14]

The Home Office subcontractors Mears Group, Serco and Clearsprings have come in for criticism for their inability to respond to cultural and safeguarding needs. Despite massive funding, "They are in over their heads," according to one volunteer.[15]

In November 2020, the parliamentary Public Accounts Committee said elements of the new asylum services were "set up to fail", because local and health authorities were not consulted or informed when hundreds of Covid-risk asylum seekers were moved into hotels in their areas.[16]

Stay Belvedere Hotels Ltd (SBHL) is responsible for providing temporary accommodation for asylum seekers in about 50 hotels and hostels in London and the south of England. SBHL is subcontracted by Clearsprings Ready Homes, which stands to earn up to £1bn for its Home Office contracts despite controversy over its running of Napier barracks in Kent, where asylum seekers have complained of dire living conditions.

Food

When they are moved into hotels, hostels and barracks, people are not given any money to fend for themselves, but instead are obliged to subsist on the food provided for them, at times set by the provider.

On top of not being able to leave the premises, people are depressed that

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[13] https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/asylum-seekers-coronavirus-hotel-room-struggling-financially_uk_604f8b34c5b65bed87dcc4e9

[14] https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/feb/21/asylum-seekers-subjected-to-sexual-harassment-in-government-hotels

[15] See for example: https://corporatewatch.org/clearsprings/

[16] https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/127/public-accounts-committee/news/132736/elements-of-new-asylum-services-set-up-to-fail/

they have no freedom to cook for themselves and are fed a diet so different that it adds to the alien nature of the experience. Complaints about the food, often chip-heavy, are frequent. Some describe the food as "just terrible", and one interviewee said he throws up after he eats it.

For many, the social value of cooking together according to their own taste is a fundamental part of the process of recovery. But when they can't even buy a bag of rice or flour, this vital function is lost. Instead, they face fixed mealtimes, strictly enforced, and miss meals if they do not go down at the exact time. Technically it might be "free" food, but for people living with trauma, the procedure itself is demoralising.

Women have also struggled to obtain sanitary protection, and there is poor management of underlying health conditions.

ASPEN

This year, the Home Office reliance on a card payment system called 'Aspen' left people in dire financial straits when it stopped working for nearly three weeks during a botched changeover.

A transfer of the Home Office's Aspen card contract from facilities management company Sodexo to financial technology firm Prepaid Financial Services meant asylum seekers were to receive new cash cards on 24 May. Two days later thousands had not received the new cards, and after three weeks many were still waiting. Unable to obtain their weekly allowance - £39.63 if they are in a house or £8 if they are in a full-board hotel - they were left penniless and forced to resort to charitable sources of food.[17]

One anonymous 'Asylum Seeker' (@asylumseekerx) wrote in early June 2021:

The Impact Of Great Aspen Depression On Us:

1. A wrong card with a different name came last Wednesday.
2. A card on my name with a wrong address came last Friday. (Don't ask how - Smiling face with open mouth and tightly closed eyes)
3. I set up the PIN and used the card last Monday.
4. The card stopped working today.
5. Comedic...

Positive Action in Housing @PositiveActionH wrote:

> Day 23: This weekend, we took 130 cases to the Home Office for people with no financial support because of #aspencardscandal. They include a Glasgow asylum seeking family with a five year old girl who

[17] https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-seekers-mothers-babies-aspen-card-home-office-b1861142.html

have had no money for 23 days and counting. Imagine getting nothing, having nothing.[18]

Moving Out

The Home Office began 'Operation Oak' in February 2021 to "accelerate" moving the 9,000 asylum seekers housed in hotels during the pandemic into longer-term accommodation. However, this has been done in a rushed and unbalanced way. The "mass movement" of people from hotels into authorities that already house large numbers of asylum seekers is a "recipe for disaster" as it will place more vulnerable individuals at risk, according to John Grayson from South Yorkshire Migration and Asylum Action Group (SYMAAG).[19]

The government has been looking at other options for housing asylum seekers, but still with the emphasis on isolating them from society. *The Times* reported on 16th March 2021 that the Home Office planned to build new centres to accommodate asylum seekers in the south of England, alongside ideas for locating them off-shore. The reasoning given by the Home Office was that hotel rooms (and £8 per week) constitute too much of a "pull factor". The Refugee Council's chief executive Enver Solomon responded, "There is no credible evidence that people seeking asylum come to the UK because they believe they will have a luxurious life."[20]

Barracks

The dire conditions in the former military barracks at Napier in Kent and Penally in Wales became a running sore, and Penally was eventually closed by the Welsh authorities.

On 3rd June 2021 the High Court found the Home Office's decision to house asylum seekers at military barracks to be unlawful. The court had heard evidence that the Home Office ignored Public Health England advice that the dormitory-style accommodation at Napier barracks, which holds up to 28 men in a single block, was not suitable during the pandemic. About fifty per cent of the near 400 residents contracted the virus. "The Court found that the accommodation at Napier Barracks did not comply with section 96 IAA 1999 read with Directive 2013/9/EC, which sets out *"minimum standards"* for reception of asylum seekers ("the RCD")."[21]

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[18] https://twitter.com/PositiveActionH/status/1404350405899960324

[19] https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-home-office-far-right-b1826012.html

[20] https://thetimes.co.uk/article/917ebf8a-85ce-11eb-9186-403d3ffc3950

[21] http://www.matthewgold.co.uk/napier-barracks-two-day-trial-begins-in-high-court-on-14-april/; https://dpglaw.co.uk/high-court-finds-decision-to-house-asylum-seekers-at-military-barracks-unlawful/

However, despite legal condemnation, the Home Office has persisted in using Napier. It began emptying the barracks briefly in early April 2021 amid concerns from senior public health officials that the site cannot be made COVID-19 secure. But on 9th April 2021 the Home Secretary began re-filling the barracks. Clearsprings Ready Homes, the private contractor that runs the site on behalf of the Home Office, said it intended to bring in new arrivals, bringing the total back up to over 300 residents.

Since then, over 45 people have been transferred out of the Barracks following the threatening or issuing of legal proceedings on the grounds of their vulnerability. This suggests that there is still no adequate screening process in place. "Lawyers have been denied access to an army barracks used to house asylum seekers to speak to dozens of clients who require urgent legal advice, even as residents are moved directly to detention centres for removal from the UK," the *Guardian* reported on 7th December 2020.[22]

It is important to remember that the people in the barracks are not supposed to be detained. They are not people whose asylum claims have been rejected and are awaiting deportation. In theory, their initial accommodation should allow them to go outside at any time. But at Napier, following the COVID outbreak, residents were locked inside the compound for a month. They were under a stricter lockdown than any other UK resident. Even before the COVID outbreak, there were security guards on the gates and a barbed-wire fence around the perimeter. There was a curfew, and residents were only allowed out of the barracks for two hours at a time.

Napier also became a target for far-right groups and individuals, as one resident told Open Democracy: "When we wanted to go out and walk around or go to the beach, there were some people who were trying to harass us, usually the far-right activists – they were shouting at us or swearing at us."[23]

Stuart McDonald, Scottish National Party Member of Parliament and member of the home affairs select committee, said:

> The Home Office doesn't need to use these dilapidated former barracks to accommodate people fleeing war and violence but are choosing to do so anyway – despite a damning inspection and the ongoing pandemic. That choice is a political one. The whole Home Office machine is hell-bent on ensuring life for people seeking refuge is as miserable as possible in the hope it will put off others from

[22] https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/dec/07/lawyers-denied-access-to-asylum-seekers-in-kent-barracks

[23] https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/opendemocracyuk/i-feared-i-would-die-life-inside-the-napier-barracks-asylum-seeker-housing/

applying for refugee status. The use of these dilapidated barracks is shocking and shameful – but it is consistent with everything else the Home Office is doing.[24]

Further Reading

For a legal perspective see, https://www.freemovement.org.uk/asylum-support-during-the-pandemic-the-year-in-review/

'High Court strikes down pandemic protections for refused asylum seekers', June 24 2021,

https://www.freemovement.org.uk/high-court-strikes-down-pandemic-protections-for-refused-asylum-seekers

A report (2021) by Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit looked at the impact of Covid 19 on their work with people with insecure immigration status,

https://gmiau.org/how-did-covid-19-impact-people-with-insecure-immigration-status/

*Peter Verney worked in Sudan until the 1989 coup and has been editor at Sudan Update information service since 1990. He has written on cultural, scientific and political issues, and has been consulted in Sudanese asylum cases for the last 20 years.

[24] https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/apr/07/home-office-to-send-more-asylum-seekers-to-unsuitable-napier-barracks

An Interview with Amel Bashir

> Like a tale, her paintings are powerful for their alluring but deceptive simplicity that belies the social critique embodied within them, which can most clearly be seen in their often sinister undertones that serve as an important reminder of the darker side of society and human nature.[1]

Amel Bashir's work has been exhibited in galleries around the world. It has graced the covers of progressive Muslim women's journals, illustrated literary articles, brought a delicate yet sinister magic to anthologies of Sudanese folktales and garnered both iconic and subversive significance in revolutionary times.[2] Keenly aware of the scrutiny women artists can be subject to while unapologetically independent in her artistic approach, Amel Bashir's work often centres on women as archetypes of nobility and quiet strength. In July 2020, I wrote a blogpost on the arresting quality and the cultural diversity of her work.[3] Recently, she was kind enough to answer five questions for SSSUK and to provide images of some of her most recent work. I would like to thank Amel for the generosity of spirit she reveals in replying so fully and evocatively.

Imogen Thurbon (IT) Sudanese life is lived against a backdrop of intense, vibrant colour and yet your recent work is rigorously monochrome. Why?

Amel Bashir (AB) The Sudanese cultural landscape stands out – as does that of many other African countries – for its vibrant, rich colours; a vibrancy clearly reflected in the work of its artists. I began my life as a friend to those colours and my first exhibitions – those of my early studies at Khartoum College of Applied Studies – were works steeped in colour. But then I found myself drawn towards black and black inks and this came to dominate a stage of my artistic journey. It's true that I don't have a tangible explanation for why black has taken over my work; perhaps it is the austerity and ascetic qualities of the colour or perhaps I'm seeking a form of serenity. Whatever the case, I didn't know at the time that it would come to define a certain stage of my life until I found, without ever planning it, that my feet had taken me down an international road. And I'm happy about that artistically. Unlike others, I'm not worried about artistic rules and obligations; the world of drawing and

[1] Contemporary Artists of The Sudan, Art in Times of Adversity, p. 4

[2] See references below for a list of the publications illustrated by AB's work.

[3] https://womensliteracysudan.blog/2020/06/16/amel-bashier-taha-delicate-defiance/

colour is a space in which I exercise my freedom, doing what I love. Don't forget there are many artists who are drawn to the magic of black and its secrets. Pierre Soulages comes to mind; one of the most famous of France's contemporary artists. From as far back as 1979, Soulages has been notable for his rigorously monochrome works, and he's the only artist to be honoured in his own lifetime by the Louvre. This doesn't mean that I will never return to colour – it could happen at any moment; whenever inspiration I find in a work calls me back to colour once again.

IT: How do you see your artistic style evolving in the future? You have said you are self-taught and like many major Sudanese artists, for a long time you lived your creative life outside Sudan. What impact do you think the recent cultural opening-up of Sudan will have on the artistic landscape in Sudan generally and on your style in particular?

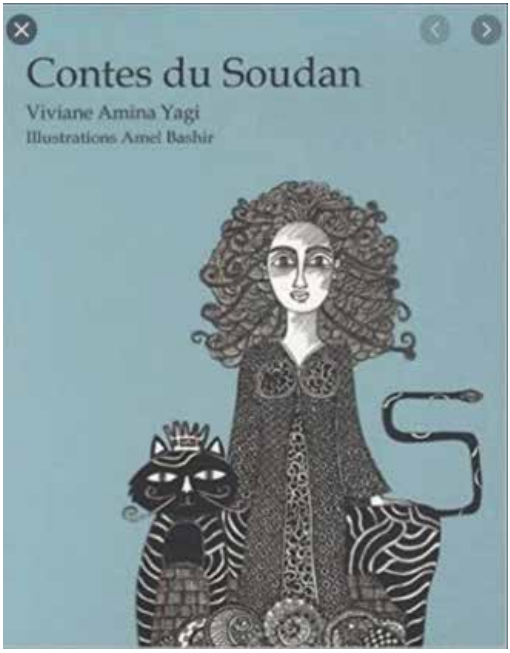
AB: I see the artist's style as something that evolves through their different experiences – by that I mean both artistic experiences and the lived reality of the artist's life. An artist's style and their unique fingerprint are the result of an artist's whole life, as experienced spiritually, emotionally and in the beliefs they hold and even the environment they live in. All of this becomes translated into an unwritten language in their work. As far as my own style and how it may develop in the future is concerned, it's not something I'm keen to map out or fetter by deliberation as I live it every day in every experience I have – enjoyment, happiness, sadness, longing or the homesickness of the emigre. All these experiences find their way seamlessly onto the blank canvas every day and become imprinted into a style and ideas and hope.

On the whole, I believe the practice of art is inseparable from other human practices – take the Chauvet Cave paintings by Stone Age man for example; they reveal art to be a sublime human practice, unlimited by time or place. It's true that the difficulties of recent times have affected all areas of life in Sudan, including the arts, and yet the Sudanese artist remains a citizen seeking life and hope; someone striving to throw light on the arts movement in Sudan. Sudan enjoys a bustling and diverse cultural landscape and flowing from that are a multiplicity of schools in fine and plastic arts. The uniqueness of the elements that go to make Sudanese art are what has made it a focal point for researchers and those interested in art. And don't forget, exhibitions of work by big artists in galleries and other cultural institutions haven't stopped.

The recent opening-up in Sudan is indeed a positive step towards a broader cultural opening-up and interchange of ideas with the outside world but it's my belief that the soul of Sudanese fine arts hasn't in fact changed and that's because of the bonds it has with its cultural landscape. I have to say on a

personal note, I was one of those artists fortunate enough both to have the chance to attend and share in a number of exhibitions in several countries and the opportunity to exchange artistic experiences.

I**T:** While you were attending the Paris launch of '*Contes du Soudan*' which you so beautifully illustrated, you gave a creative workshop for children and it was clear what a unique and special experience that was for the children there. Could you talk a little about your childhood and how it might have influenced your work? Where did your early artistic inspiration come from?



AB: Attending the workshop in the Arab World Centre was a really enjoyable and interesting experience – both for me and for the children as well. Working with children is such fun – in ways you don't feel when working with adults, especially because of their curiosity and all their questions about cultures and civilisations different from their own. The experience encouraged me to take part in several similar workshops in France.

My own childhood is one I look back on as rich with the flavours of cities, grandmothers' tales and the bonds that tied me to people and paths; the thresholds of old houses where I and my sisters used to play; the walls of my grandmother's house shaded by trees covered with my charcoal drawings – all this and many more memories and fond thoughts denied but which sometimes filter through into my works as inspiration.

Much of my early childhood was spent between Jeddah in Saudi Arabia and Port Sudan and I think of this stage of my life as incredibly rich; it holds so many memories still of the sea, the little towns neighbouring Port Sudan, the evening stories my grandmothers used to tell and my father's garden where we planted a lemon tree together and which is still there.

I**T:** On many levels your work expresses a delicate fusion of different aesthetic

and cultural traditions, flowing from your diverse cultural background. Your work reflects Persian, Indian, Nubian and ancient Egypt influences. Can you tell us more about this cultural fusion and how it informs your creative work?

AB: My work has certainly been informed by my belonging to various nationalities and tribes and this influence manifests itself as a prism of scenes buried in my memory from the time I was small, due to the close contact I had with relatives during my childhood in Port Sudan – where everything was coloured by the way they kept their customs and traditions alive in everything they did. And all this gives rise to a culture and civilisation that has endured up to the present day.

When you visit them, you feel you are stepping into a different world, everything from the aromas and scents enveloping the home, the flavours of the food and the colours to clothes and language; each one is a different world of beauty and magic and culture that remains alive in my memory and if anything these memories have become even more powerful as an *emigre*. My father was born in Dongola, northern Sudan – the heart of the civilisation of the Nubian pharaohs. My father's family was very proud of their Nubian heritage and kept alive their ancient Nubian language – that spell-binding language of the symbols and talismans inscribed on the walls of ancient Nubian temples. And in the way my grandfather cherished the palm tree in the courtyard of his home and dedicated so much care and attention to it as if it were one of the family. My maternal grandfather was from India and settled in Sudan. For many long years it was his second home and he loved it. And though he settled in Sudan, he never lost all those things he brought from his homeland; he was always seen in Indian dress and he would eat Indian meals and bread until the last day of his life. My relatives from India kept their customs and traditions alive despite being integrated into Sudanese society – customs which came to the fore when there were weddings and other special occasions. They also love the sea and are very attached to the city of Port Sudan – filled with love and beauty. My grandmother was from the Bani 'Amir tribe of eastern Sudan and I came to love their goodness and generosity. I also came to love the pride their women take in themselves. I always remember their celebrations – sword dances and the songs that accompanied them and which I loved but didn't understand a word of but whose meaning flowed through their swaying bodies and their eyes and the heads of swirling braids. And I understood that they were singing about their courage and their pride in their beauty and their womanhood.

The marriage of all these languages and customs and cultures and different countries and cities coming at an early stage of my life grew my belief in

accepting what is 'other' and different and only strengthened my desire to be open to the world and that love is the only thing that will always and eternally prevail.

IT: Among the many mysterious elements that people your work are peacocks, owls, eagles and other species of birds. I know that you prefer not to provide commentaries on your works, but I wondered if you might be able to give us a hint on the significance of birds in your work?

AB: That's true and I still prefer not to explain or comment on my work because I feel that doing so limits what the work means and locks it into a certain framework and that lessens its magic. The viewer having to work to read the work and analyse it – that's what gives me pleasure. Having said that, it's no secret to those who follow my work that I have this basic leaning towards portraying women and that's because for me woman is an eternal icon, a source of inspiration and the embodiment of everything beautiful on this earth.

I'm a descendent of those fearless Queens of the Nubian Kingdom. I am proud to draw inspiration from these female figures and they continue to inspire and fascinate me – all the way back from those Sudanese women of ancient history up to the women of the December Revolution.

I find inspiration too in the patience and strength of women living in regions blighted by poverty, conflict and war, such as the women of Darfur. I was so impressed by the experience of Rwandan women who lived through tribal wars and genocide and then rebuilt and brought life back to their societies. The way they would gather under the shade of trees to hum and sing, swaying from side to side in joy as a way to bolster one another's morale with their music. It's the patience and strength and power of women like these that inspires me – the givers and providers of life.

And on a personal level, I was brought up in a family where women played a big role. This was particularly true after the death my father when I was still very young. My mother and big sisters were to play a major role in my life and they have had a profound influence on me.

I see the recurring elements in my work such as birds and plants as a way towards expressing visually the connection between humans and the creatures around us. Sometimes I attribute them something which gives a specific quality to the subject of the work, like life with plants. The qualities of certain birds, the hoopoe for example, have captivated me; from the hoopoe's beauty of form with its crown of feathers to the way it lives – wild and rebellious and proud, traveling long distances alone. Birds are present in so many popular cultures around the world like China and ancient Egypt.

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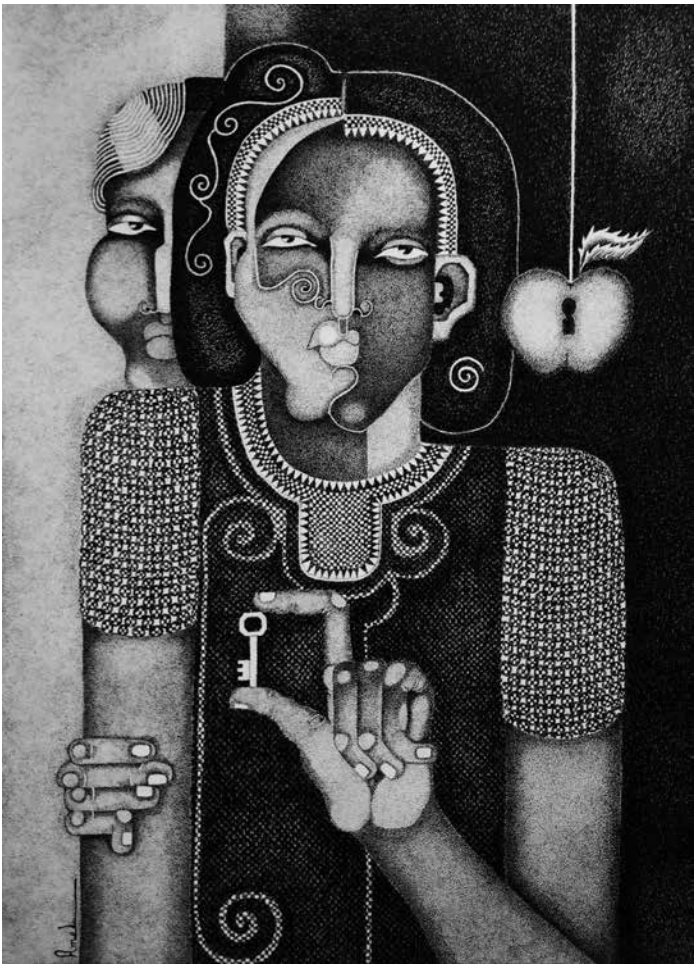

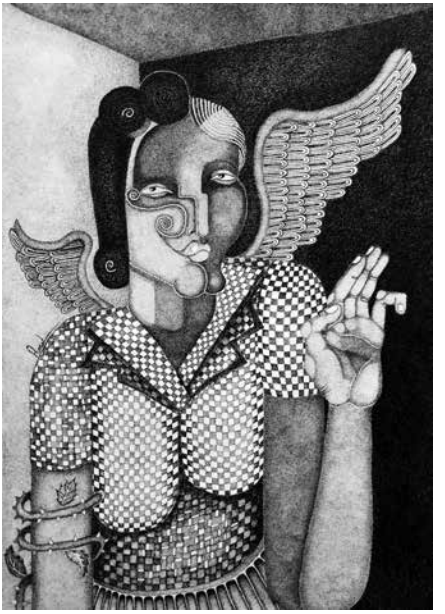

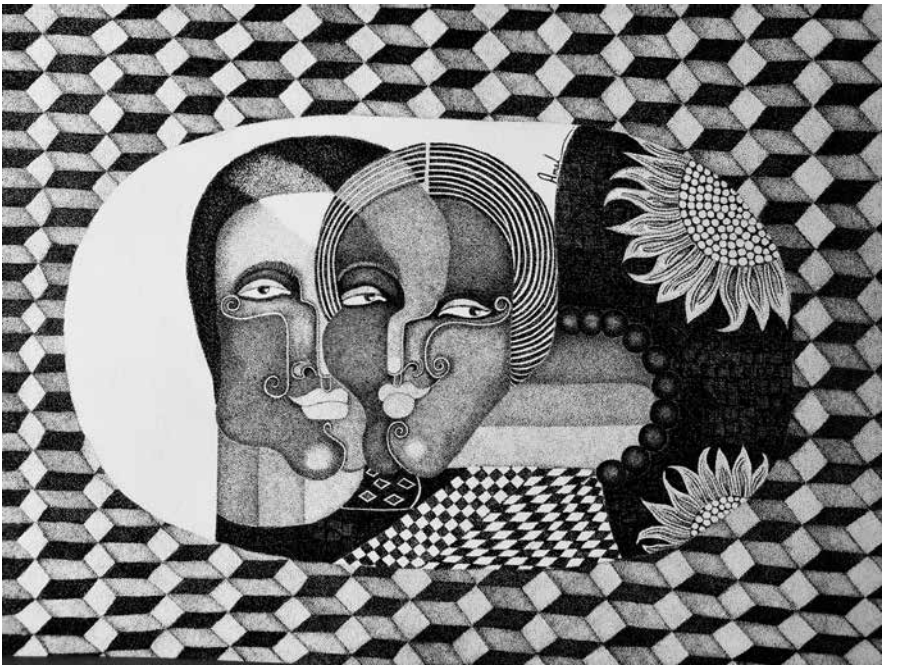

Women under the Mahdiya

Osman Nusairi*

The role of women in Sudan during the Mahdiya (1881-99) is one of the most neglected areas in modern studies of the period.[1] Women rarely merit mention unless marriage to an influential personality enables a strategic alliance between different communities. As we shall see, however, contemporary sources – both Sudanese and foreign – give us fascinating insights into the social activities and behaviour of free women, within and outside the Mahdiya elite, and even of female slaves.

Indeed, it was a female poet named Zeinab bint al Makkawi who foretold the Mahdi's revolution. At a time when even semi-literate Sudanese would swear that they had read the words 'Al Mahdi' etched on to the shell of a freshly laid egg or spelled out in the seeds of a watermelon, a mere two lines of verse by Zeinab bint al Makkawi were enough to persuade followers to rally around the Mahdi:

طبل العز ضرب هوينه في البرزة غير طبل امكان أنا ما بشوف عزة
ان طال الوبر واسيه بالجزة وإما عم نيل ما فرخت وزة

The drum of glory was beaten in the fight;
I see no other glory except in the call of the battlefield.
If the animal fur has elongated, then shave it to make it even.
Without the Nile flooding, no goose eggs would hatch.

For the Sudanese historian Mohamed Abdel Rahim – who was present at the siege of Khartoum, the defeat of Abdel Rahman wad el Nijumi's expedition to Egypt and the defeat at Karari (Battle of Omdurman) – these verses were an explicit incitement to topple the occupation government in Khartoum.

> These two lines [he wrote] marked out the destiny of a people…. Nothing had greater impact in stirring the blood of a people who had suppressed their anger over the unjust tyrannical conduct of the Turks for too long. It was a real wonder that this poetry came from a woman – but in the past women have succeeded, with the power of words, in dictating what will become the pages of history books.[2]

[1] Notable exceptions include Mahgoub (1992), Abdel Halim (2010) and a section entitled 'Status of Women' in Layish (2000).

[2] Abdel Rahim (1936), pp. 16-17. Note that the poet uses the imperative in addressing the Mahdi.

Women through the eyes of the Mahdi

There are more than 60 references to women in the volumes of Mohamed Aḥmad al Mahdi's collected writings. Many of these relate to rules about female behaviour and issues pertaining to family law – matters that would conventionally be the remit of the chief justice (*qadi islam*).[3] But as the Mahdi was the highest judicial authority, the *qadi* sought his decisive ruling in any case without precedent.[4] Other references deal with disputes over enslaved women. Female slaves were often used in lieu of currency to settle taxes or fines – indeed, the Mahdiya Treasury (*Beit el Mal*) occasionally held more slaves than it could afford to feed.

While the Mahdi's father was ascribed the honorific *Al Sayyid*, suggesting that he was a descendent of the Prophet Mohamed, his mother was never named in any contemporary account.[5] Once he became an adult and an influential community leader, the number of women in the Mahdi's household is disputed. Na'im Shuqair, a Levantine official who translated many Sudanese documents for Major F. R. Wingate of British Military Intelligence in Cairo, put the figure at one hundred.[6] Professor Ahmad Diab of the Third World Institute of Studies and Research estimates the number to be 70, including 13 women of Egyptian origin.[7] That is much closer to the figure of 67 reached by British officials in Sudan at the fall of the Mahdiya.[8] The most important of these women were the four recognised as the Mahdi's formal wives, each known by the honorific 'Mother of the Believers' (*Umm al Muminim*).[9] There were also dozens of women taken captive after military victories: 22 following the fall of El Obeid, 22 after the capture of Khartoum and another 19 from the campaigns in the Gezira region and elsewhere.[10]

[3] The Mahdi's first appointee in this role was Jubara, who had been educated at Al Azhar in Egypt. When he was killed at El Obeid in September 1882, he was replaced by Ahmad Ali, who remained in position until 1894: Holt (1958), pp. 131-2.

[4] On 11 Shaban 1301 (6th June 1884), for example, the *qadi islam* wrote with questions relating to a fratricide triggered by marital infidelity, breast-feeding, menstruation and improper public behaviour by feisty women: Abu Salim (1990-94), vol. 3, pp. 110-13.

[5] Bedri (1969), p. 34, describes how the Mahdi visited his mother's grave in Khartoum after the capture of the town.

[6] Shuqair (1903), p. 608.

[7] Diab (2007).

[8] *Sudan Intelligence Report* No. 60, Appendix 38 (1898).

[9] The Mahdi had six wives in his lifetime (but no more than four at any one time): Fatima bint al Haj Sharif; Fatima bint Ahmed Sharfi (*Umm al fouqara*); Al Na'ma bint Sheikh al Qorashi wad al Zein; Al Surra bint Sheikh Mohamed el Tayeb wad al Bashir; Aisha bint Ahmed Sharfi; and Maqbula bint al Sultan Teirab.

[10] Among these women were several relatives of important establishment figures

Mahdist defences on the banks of the Nile (Credit: D. A. Welsby).

In this respect, the Mahdi set clear rules for free Muslim women – even those whose families were part of the Turkish administration. If they were taken as spoils of war (*Ghanima*) or given as a tribute by their fathers, they were to be respected and protected and were eligible to be married. They could not, however, be enslaved: "He who does that is not one of us," he told his followers.[11] Nor was it permissible to abuse, assault or violate them in any way.[12] Following the capture of Khartoum, the Mahdi learned of a group of women who had been imprisoned in a thorn enclosure within the town precincts. He gave specific instructions to his treasurer (*Amin Beit el Mal*), Suleiman, that

in trade and government: Umm el Hassan, the sister of Ahmed Bey Dafa'allah (see Note 18, below); Aisha bint el Haj Ahmed Umm Bireir; and the daughters of El Saud Bey el Akkad and Abu Bakr Bey el Jarkuk. In respect of the last of these, a series of letters relates to the Mahdi's request to marry Abu Bakr el Jarkuk's daughter, the pardoning of the family and the restitution of their womenfolk: Abu Salim (1990-94), vol. 4, pp. 342-6.

[11] Edict dated 21 Dhu al Hijja 1299 (3rd November 1882): ibid., vol. 1, pp. 195-7. In a letter dated 17 Rabi' I 1302 (5th January 1885), the Mahdi stated explicitly that the wife of Farajallah Bey al Zeini, Commandant of the recently captured Omdurman Fort, was not to be sold into slavery: ibid., vol. 4, p. 190.

[12] Letter to the Khalifa Abdullahi dated 10 Jumada I 1302 (26th February 1885): ibid., vol. 4, pp. 339-41.

'all these women must be sent to suitable homes before sunset. If a woman is known to anyone, or knows him, let her go to him; as for the young ones whom nobody knows and who know no one, let them be married.'[13]

The Mahdi's attitudes to the position of women in society are clarified in a plethora of edicts on the themes of behaviour, marriage, polygamy, dowries and divorce.[14] Modesty, obedience and prayer are pervasive themes, alongside harsh punishments for breaches. A woman's voice should be heard by a man only from behind a curtain; a woman who speaks in a loud voice is to be flogged with 27 lashes of the whip. The same punishment was meted out to a woman who removed her head covering for even a moment. If a girl over the age of five is deemed to be improperly covered, it is her parents who are to be flogged but not imprisoned.[15] No woman is to own more than two dresses. After quoting a conversation between the Prophet Mohamed and his daughter Fatima – in which the young woman is asked 'How can a woman be at her best?' and replies, to the Prophet's satisfaction, 'By seeing no man and allowing no man to see her' – the Mahdi decreed:

> All women should be banned from going to the marketplace and the streets, except old women and girls too young to be desired. Any woman who comes out of her house will receive 100 lashes of the whip as both punishment and deterrent…. The display of their looks and appearance is forbidden and banned by the Koran and the Traditions of the Prophet.[16]

These strictures were based on the Mahdi's strongly held ideas about not just female conformity but female dignity – and his interventions included his own family and senior officials as well as rank-and-file followers. Authorising the maximum punishment for a close relative caught in a sexual indiscretion, he asked: 'Why did you do it? I could have made it possible for you to marry the best of women.'[17] In October 1884, he wrote to Suleiman in response to a legal dilemma: the controller of the Treasury already had four wives but an uncle in Darfur had contracted him another woman to marry; should he divorce one of his existing wives immediately or wait until the new arrival

[13] Bedri (1969), p. 33.

[14] Nicoll (2009), pp. 173-4.

[15] Edict dated before Rajab 1300 (before 9th May 1883): Abu Salim (1990-94), vol. 1, p. 301-8.

[16] Letter to Mohamed al Ṭaweim during the year 1300 (between 12th November 1882 and 1st December 1883): ibid., vol. 1, p. 443.

[17] Letter to El Jallal Mohamed Shareef, dated after Jumada II 1301 (after 29th March 1884): ibid., vol. 2, pp. 291-3.

came from El Fasher? The Mahdi responded that the divorce should be promulgated at once as the new contract of marriage was already operative.[18] When it came to marriage, mutual consent was – under most circumstances – the basis of contractual validity. When one Idris Awad married a woman without her consent, the Mahdi ordered him to divorce her immediately.[19]

In his own case, as we learn from one unusually personal public letter, the Mahdi worried about the incompatibility of multiple partners with his professed asceticism. 'Women,' he wrote, 'are, frankly, a serious preoccupation and a temptation towards worldliness.' But he went on to insist that 'every woman who joined my household did so on condition that she chose the afterlife over worldly pleasures.' In this unique appeal – far from the usual authoritarian tone that brooks no disagreement, let alone solicits advice – he revealed unexpectedly intimate details and left himself open to the collective judgement of the community:

> After the capture of El Obeid, some of our brothers brought me young women. I was inclined to keep them, yet I feared the attraction of women and so thought to expel them from my house. But then an invisible voice said to me: 'We allow you 15 maids, as was the case with the Prophet Mohamed.' Then some dear, noble people brought Umm al Ḥassan *bint* [sic] Dafaʿallah to me.[20] I felt some disquiet at seeing her but the inner voice said: 'There is no trouble for you over her.' Then a further woman was offered to me and when I met her I became interested – but then was struck with fear. Again, the inner voice said: 'She is the spoils of the Prophet Mohamed's victory' – and I realised that, in choosing her, I was free and clear of any liability before Allah.…
>
> Nonetheless, I am concerned about the large number of these women, despite the fact that those who are not slaves number only four and they do not bother me in terms of worldly distractions. So please advise me as to what you see fit: should I keep them or not? And when I travel, I propose that these women use the tent taken from Hicks Pasha as booty, while I revert to my own leather bivouac. Do you agree that this tent should be used by my womenfolk when I travel?
>
> I do not disrespect you, nor do I belittle your views on things,

[18] Letter dated 3 Muharram 1302 (23rd October 1884): ibid., vol. 4, pp. 14-15.

[19] Letter dated Rajab 1302 (17th April-16th May 1885): ibid., vol. 5, p. 26.

[20] This should be sister, not daughter, of Dafaʿallah. Originally from the Shendi region, he commanded a Sudanese contingent of the government force defending El Obeid against the Mahdi: Hill (1967), p. 31.

> for I am one of you: I am your superior neither in deeds, knowledge, prestige or status. I need Allah, who looks after me and you alike. I fear the loss of that which makes me attractive to Allah.[21]

Women through the eyes of the Khalifa

The Khalifa Abdullahi is reckoned to have had as many as 25 women in his household. As with the Mahdi, four were legally sanctioned wives; like the Mahdi, the rest were spoils of war or gifts offered by their parents. In March 1884, for example, the Khalifa wrote to the Darfuri *Amir* Mohamed Khalid Zughal to thank him for concluding an unsolicited marriage contract on his behalf:

> You say that you have arranged a marriage contract for the daughter of Al Khabir, as her father had given her as a gift, and that you are making arrangements for her to be sent here. You add that I should expect still another bride to be on her way as well!
>
> The first is acceptable, as long as you handle the details – and as long as you are quite clear about my position, may Allah reward you. It is essential that this deed is done for the sake of Allah and the afterlife, and for no other purpose. Sincere acts are, God willing, blessed and safe. So as soon as you receive this letter, I expect you to inform me truthfully about the father's aims in granting me his daughter: is it worldly or heavenly reward that he is after? Then we will be clear about the matter.
>
> As for the second woman, do not arrange any contract before contacting me – and until I let you know what Allah has inspired me to do. But thanks anyway, my beloved one, and may Allah bless you.[22]

After the premature death of the Mahdi in June 1885, his rulings on legal and social issues remained in force under the Khalifa. A famous decree outlining the penal code of the Mahdiya in some detail was recycled by his successor with a few minor errors, mainly in grammar and spelling.[23] But the Khalifa's reign (1885-99) was different in three key respects. It featured several destabilising episodes of large-scale migration from rural areas to Omdurman – often at the behest of the Khalifa as a way of keeping potential enemies close at hand. The economy became more dependent on raids and military expeditions, in which the aim was to maximise loot (*Ghanima*), including

[21] Letter to the Mahdi's followers dated after 23 Rajab 1301 (after 19th May 1884): Abu Salim (1990-94), vol. 3, pp. 61-3.

[22] Letter dated (9th March 1884): Abu Salim (2001), vol. 1, p. 13.

[23] Original edict dated 18 Jumada I 1301 (16th March 1884): ibid., vol. 2, pp. 263-4.

women, and the Khalifa was explicit in his orders that his fighters were not to marry women who were spoils of war without his own specific permission.[24] Thirdly, the Khalifa was more reliant on the *qadi Islam* to issue legal guidance and administer what became a recognisable court system. The position of chief justice was not, however, risk-free: both men who served the Khalifa in the role were imprisoned and executed.[25]

The Mahdi's tomb (Credit: D. A. Welsby).

Women of the Mahdiya as seen by Babikir Bedri

While Babikir Bedri is celebrated today as the father of female education in Sudan, he was also a zealous member of the Mahdi's forces who came through a succession of tight scrapes unscratched. His personal life was conventional enough – he had three wives – and his memoir is valuable for the intimate details he records about the role of women in family life, wider society and, when forced by circumstances, in the workplace. But it is impossible to escape the conclusion that women and girls were often treated as chattels, to be used as items to barter for personal advancement. In marriage, divorce and, occasionally, re-marriage, the women are rarely accorded any say in their fate: a wife

[24] Abu Salim (2001), vol. 1.

[25] Both Ali (see footnote 3, above) and his successor, Ḥussein Ibrahim wad el Zahra, were removed by the Khalifa and the position of the *qadi Islam* became obsolete: Holt (1958), p. 262. See also Hill (1967), pp. 29 and 168-9.

The Khalifa's house (Credit: D. A. Welsby).

could be acquired as a tactical interim measure, to be disposed of if and when a better offer was forthcoming. When push came to shove, Bedri's own attitude was summed up when he mulled over one convoluted trade-off between prospective partners, current and potential: 'This one is my servant as well as my wife; the other will be not only my wife but my owner.'[26]

This attitude might explain some odd omissions, especially about his wives. Having failed to mention his first marriage, he drops in a casual reference to his wife only in the context of his decision to prioritise joining the attack on Khartoum over helping on the family farm.[27] When Bedri decided to take a second wife during Al Nujumi's disastrous campaign against Egypt, his account again omitted any detail. Again, when imprisoned in Egypt after the defeat at Toski, he mentions that his mother and sisters were still in the desert but neglects to reveal his wives' whereabouts.

Many women and children became camp followers when the *Ansar* were on the march – and Bedri's memoir is generous in recognizing the women's stoicism. They were forced to endure food shortages, illness, abandonment by their menfolk and the death of children during the campaign; as prisoners in Egypt, they were compelled to take on menial employment to earn money for food. Additionally, women found themselves in a social milieu that was strik-

[26] Bedri, (1969), p. 74.

[27] Bedri's translators explain this omission by noting that he had been compelled to marry an older woman to fulfil his family's wishes: ibid., p. 21 fn.

ingly different from Sudan under the Mahdia. So free women could be found marrying outside their conventional circles, while women who had been slaves in Sudan could find ways of shaking off the 'liberation' that the Mahdi's *jihad* had achieved.[28]

Once they were back in Sudan after nearly two years in Egyptian captivity, civilian life appeared to offer as many opportunities as war to enjoy women as the spoils of conquest. Serving as a clerk on a provincial tax-collecting mission, Bedri noted how his colleagues were as tough as the *jihadiya*, a special *Ansar* contingent, 'or even a little better, at severity; but at fornication they were a lot better.'[29] Bedri himself was always on the lookout for improvements in his marital position. A fellow gum arabic trader, Hajj el Amin, once boasted about the merits of his own wife, the orphaned daughter of an Egyptian officer in the Khartoum garrison: 'We will go to my house and we will find my private room with doors and windows closed to keep it cool, sweet with the smell of sandalwood smoke, and its furniture and fittings all spotless and in order. As soon as we arrive there would be cool sweetened yogurt, then spiced coffee, then savoury vermicelli or couscous.' When everything was exactly as he had said it would be, Bedri immediately asked his friend to have his wife find 'an Egyptian woman like her' for him.[30]

The treatment of women as chattels could lead to disputes between tribal groups. On 1st July 1897, the *Amir* Mahmoud, a nephew of the Khalifa Abdullahi, led an assault on the riverside town of Al Matamma, where Jaaliyin residents contested the Khalifa's autocratic rule.[31] After the massacre, the female dependents of those who were killed or taken prisoner were transported by river to Omdurman. Bedri describes how Daud, an officer of his acquaintance and a member of the Jawama tribe from western Sudan, 'jumped up briskly, slapped his thigh, and exclaimed in his broad dialect, "Whoops! I'm off to the Khalifa to get me a Jaali woman for a concubine!" A fellow officer named Mukhtar – himself a member of the Jaaliyin diaspora – took offence, punching his colleague and shouting, 'I'll kill you! The Khalifa will make Jaali women concubines, will he? Could he do that without setting all Omdurman ablaze?' After the intervention of their commanding officer, the *Amir* Yaʿqub – a man more sensitive to the dangers of division at a time when the British invasion of northern Sudan was already under way – the Khalifa gave his order: "Go at once… to the Treasury, and hand over each woman to the care of someone

[28] Ibid., pp. 71-102.
[29] Ibid., p. 143.
[30] Ibid., p. 178.
[31] Holt (1958), pp. 232-3; Hill (1967), p. 224.

she knows, or who knows her, and encourage people to come to the Treasury for that purpose.'[32]

It is worth noting that the one woman beyond reproach for Babikir Bedri was his mother, whom he describes as 'fanatical in her faith'. When her husband suggested that the Egyptian expedition might end in failure, she berated him while pinching his cheek in reprimand: 'Hey! This man's an unbeliever! If you are abandoning God, do it alone.' 'Her faith,' writes Bedri, 'remained whole until the day of her death in Omdurman, when she said, "How I pine for sweet rest in the shadow of the dome [of the Mahdi's tomb]!" '[33]

Sudanese women as seen by an Italian missionary

One final insight into the role of women during the Mahdiya – one that gives us a considerable amount of vivid day-to-day detail – comes from a non-Sudanese source: the Italian missionary Father Paolo Rossignoli, who arrived in Sudan in January 1881.[34] Rossignoli was captured along with a group of priests and nuns from Dilling in southern Kordofan and, after witnessing the siege and fall of El Obeid to the *Ansar*, he was a prisoner in Omdurman until his escape in 1894.[35] His information about women in society is intimate, almost graphic in comparison with Sudanese contemporaries. Given that there are details that he could not have known in person, it seems likely that his source may have been among the 37 eunuchs found in Omdurman after the battle of Karari.[36] According to Rossignoli's informant, the women of Omdurman enjoyed a life of leisure.

> Slaves work all day ... Free women rarely leave their homes. They take very great care of their bodies and are waited upon by small slave girls. Sometimes the latter with great guile steal the affection of the husband. They pass their time spinning, weaving mats and making small objects from palm leaves. The first wife has some authority over subsequent spouses but it often happens that harmony does not reign between co-wives.[37]

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[32] Bedri, (1969), pp. 7.

[33] Ibid., p. 61.

[34] Hill (1967), p. 320; Angeloni and Sabatinelli (2006), pp. 162-8.

[35] After his escape, Rossignoli was asked to write up his recollections for British intelligence in Cairo: National Records Office (*Dar al Wathaiq al Qawmiya*), Khartoum, CAIRINT 1/40/240. The manuscript of his memoir, subsequently published as Rossignoli (1898), is held in the Sudan Archive, University of Durham, Wingate Papers Section 5.

[36] *Sudan Intelligence Report* No. 60, Appendix 37 (1898).

[37] Rehfisch (1967), p. 49.

Rossignoli's social observations conform to what we know of prevailing behavioural restrictions. As soon as they married, women were obliged to cover their entire face except for the eyes and never show themselves to men. When they left the house, they were accompanied by a considerable retinue of female slaves. Like many Western observers of local mores in Africa and elsewhere – and despite his priestly vocation – Rossignoli was not immune to salacious rumour. He reported that, even though the rules of behavior appeared to be very strict, Sudanese women used their wiles to achieve immoral ends, even to the extent of acting as procurers for their own husbands.

But it is in the personal – if not secret – detail of a woman's private life that Rossignoli's account has real value. His measured account of female circumcision was unprecedented outside the field of anthropology. He gives precise details of the oils, ointments, unguents and perfumes that were hand-made by free women – a job not delegated to slaves – for their personal toilet. And there is considerable detail about the jewellery, bangles and other bodily ornamentation worn by the wealthy ladies of Omdurman, some of it European-made.

> Female ornaments are of various kinds. A few wear earrings which because of their great weight are supported by strings tied around the head. Usually they wear necklaces made of trinkets that are said to come from Austria and are very dear.… Necklaces of coral, amber and glass also exist. Some also wear small European gold and silver coins around their neck. If not enough of these are owned to make a full necklace, other objects are added. Heavy silver, ivory or thick brass wire bracelets are worn, gold ones being the possession of only the very rich.[38]

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Sudan Intelligence Report No. 60, Appendices 37 and 38. 25 May-31 December 1898.

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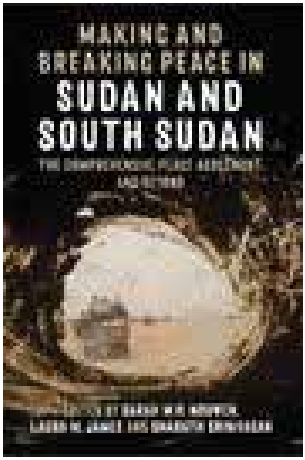
Book Reviews

Sarah M. H. Nouwen, Laura M. James and Sharath Srinivasan (eds), **Making and Breaking Peace in Sudan and South Sudan: The Comprehensive Peace Agreement and Beyond,** Oxford University Press, for The British Academy, Oxford, 2020, ISBN 9780197266953 hardback, £90.



How can one understand more than half a century of peacemaking in some of the world's most fatal conflicts, all in one book? *Making and Breaking Peace in Sudan and South Sudan: The Comprehensive Peace Agreement and Beyond,* edited by Sarah M. H. Nouwen, Laura M. James, and Sharath Srinivasan, aims to cultivate such an understanding by providing multiple and often divergent views on peacemaking in Sudan and South Sudan, including Abyei, the Nuba Mountains, and the Blue Nile. The book brings together a powerhouse of scholars, practitioners and scholar-practitioners to share their insights on forging and implementing the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the succeeding peace processes. Beyond the chapters' rich description of events, issues and actors, the book's uniqueness lies in the connections these authors make about peacemaking, based on their first-hand experience.

The editors have facilitated a 'perspectival approach' to analysing peace processes in Sudan and South Sudan. This approach "allows for insight into how the contested nature of peace might affect peacemaking in otherwise unforeseen and poorly anticipated ways." (p. 3). It creates the space for each contributor to weave insider information with their own reflections, creating an in-depth analysis of various aspects of the CPA. The perspectival approach also presents each author's perspective as if they are all equally valid – without deeming one as superior to another. The first set of contributions focuses on the CPA, its design and implementation challenges. In this part of the book, topics range from a discussion of conceptual recognition processes linked to self-determination, the broad international landscape including China's role, and the practical economic and peacebuilding plans in the CPA. The second set of contributions focuses on Darfur: the management of natural resources, and the Abuja and Doha negotiations. The last set of essays analyses peacemaking in the new state of South Sudan; topics include the motivations of elite actors and the grassroots clamour for justice and accountability. The book contains widely diverse views that are as complicated as the peace that

most of the book's contributors have been helping to forge.

In introducing the chapters, Sharath Srinivasan and Sarah Nouwen outline the differing conceptions of peace that are used throughout the book. They classify each variation under the different forms of international peacebuilding that have taken place in the last half a century, which themselves reflect trends in international intervention. Several chapters explicitly highlight key themes, such as legitimacy, justice, and accountability. Other themes emerge across chapters, for example the significance and use of the liberal peace paradigm and the importance it gives to inclusivity in peace processes. Wendy James in 'Making peace on paper only: A view from the Blue Nile' and Peter Dixon in 'Strategic peacebuilding and the Sudanese Peace Process' point out that the exclusion from the CPA of Blue Nile and other stakeholders has helped to perpetuate conflict. In contrast, Nada Ali in her chapter, 'Gender and Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration, in post Comprehensive Peace Agreement' details the backlash that can result from DDR initiatives if this is done haphazardly and only as a short-term measure.

Several chapters focus on South Sudan. In his chapter, 'How mediators conceive of peace: the case of IGAD in South Sudan', Aly Verjee points out that the liberal version of peacebuilding that promotes inclusivity is only one pathway to peace of several that are possible in the mediation process in South Sudan. Edward Thomas, in 'Fiscal policy and Sudan's 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement', points to the inequalities between the centre and periphery that the CPA was intended to address through greater inclusivity. Marieke Schomerus and Anouk Rigterink in their chapter, 'South Sudan's long crisis of justice: merging notions of lack of socio-economic justice and criminal accountability', provide rich empirical evidence of the clamour for justice and accountability in South Sudan, which remains unaddressed in predominantly elite-based peace processes.

The book gives an analysis of the *Realpolitik* side of the conflict. Sophia Dawkins, in 'Why negotiate? Why mediate? The purpose of South Sudanese peacemaking', examines the interests of elite groups and their actions, and their effect on the success of the peace process. Verjee shows that the mediators' versions of peace range from containment, due to regional power-plays, to ceasefire facilitation; this necessitates a pragmatic and minimal approach to mediation. Benedetta de Alessi in her contribution, 'Peacemaking, the SPLM/A's political transition during the CPA era and conflict in the Sudans', points to the persistence of the rebel mindset of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army and argues that it hinders broader governance institutions from taking root. Daniel Large, in 'China and the CPA: developing peace in Sudan?', examines the activities of an emerging peace actor, China, and argues

that while currently appearing to follow a liberal peacebuilding and diplomacy agenda, China's inner and future workings will continue to be guided by its national interests rather than more altruistic considerations of building peace in Sudan and South Sudan.

In the concluding chapter, Alex de Waal puts his hopes for the future on strengthening the true voice of civil society so as to make peace sustainable. Nonetheless, he expresses scepticism about the overall applicability to Sudan and South Sudan of the dominant liberal peacemaking theories that are discussed in many of the contributions.

The book's editors wanted to include more contributions from Sudanese and South Sudanese academics and practitioners. While this is certainly a worthwhile aim, this aspiration reflects an assumption, particularly in the book's critiques of the CPA's implementation, that there is a clear distinction between the national and international, and between the political elites and the marginalised and liberal civil society. For example, insights about the failure of the CPA to equalise the imbalance between the centre and periphery, deliver justice and reform the SPLM are generally based on an analysis of national elites. However, at the same time, prospective solutions rest on there being a united and liberal civil society. The same analytical rigour that is directed at national elites is not expended on analysing the shortcomings of non-nationals and their insider roles throughout history. Similarly, divisions within civil society in making and implementing the CPA and enabling these national elites, are not examined in any detail. The fact that the varieties of peace and peacemaking in Sudan and South Sudan discussed in the introduction reflect the trends in international peacemaking and peacebuilding through the years attests to the longevity of international involvement in the two countries, for better or worse. This longevity has resulted in the entanglement of national actors with international and regional actors, whose active roles are relatively overlooked when insights are presented about Sudanese and South Sudanese elites as faulty agents in the design and implementation of the CPA.

While the introduction and conclusion synthesise the main arguments and concepts of the contributors, more could have been done to provide an overall sense of their reflections about their experiences of working on these peace processes. The unique value of the book lies in the first-hand reflections of long-standing scholar-practitioners, such as Wendy James and Douglas Johnson. Given the calibre of the authors, their reflections and analysis could usefully be considered alongside their positionalities and experiences; this could maximise the envisaged perspectival approach.

The book is essential reading for dedicated scholars of the two countries and long-serving practitioners working in the area of peacemaking. However,

the book as a whole may not be the best introduction for new scholars and practitioners on and in the region. Several chapters begin with the assumption that the elementary facts about their topic have been already laid out and dive straight into a discussion of its intricacies, as well as insider information, and the reflections of the authors. This may prove challenging for readers who are only beginning to be familiar with Sudan and South Sudan, as well as those who specialise in only one aspect of the area's conflicts.

The book comes at a time when both countries are carving new paths but walk with the same gait – one that is all too familiar to long-time observers and peacebuilders in the area. Current challenges such as the lack of political will in implementing the 2018 Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) and the fragile government in post-Bashir Sudan seem to replicate and extend the challenges of the CPA and post-independence SPLM and South Sudan. The multiple debates that are presented across the chapters offer a wealth of information and reflections on continuities and changes but place the responsibility for drawing definitive conclusions on the reader. The plurality that results from the perspectival approach taken in this volume may prove challenging but may also be the only way to comprehend the complex web of conflicts that characterises the two countries.

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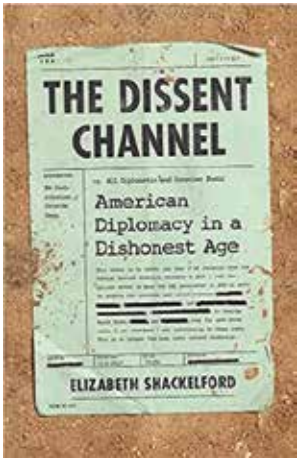
Elizabeth Shackleford, **The Dissent Channel**, Public Affairs, New York, 2020, ISBN 9781541724488 hardback, £25.



In *The Dissent Channel,* Elizabeth Shackleford recounts her time as a political and consular officer at the American embassy in Juba from July 2013 to July 2014, the year bisecting the outbreak of South Sudan's civil war in December 2013. After leaving Juba, the memoir briefly touches on the next three years of Shackleford's diplomatic career in Washington, Nairobi, and Mogadishu. The book culminates with her widely reported November 2017 resignation from the U.S. Foreign Service, when she calls for then secretary of state Rex Tillerson to "follow her out the door." Shackleford resigned a year into the Trump presidency, when she concluded that she "couldn't in good faith defend the policies of the administration," (p. 273).

But the heart of the book is a South Sudan story. By her own account, Shackleford is inexperienced and unsure when she arrives in Juba. The first part of the memoir is almost one of angst, a story of diplomatic coming of age. Does her boss, U.S. ambassador Susan Page, like her (p. 65-66)? How can Shackleford make friends with the "Atrocities Crowd," a "seemingly impenetrable group of international experts," (p. 57-59) who know South Sudan and its distressing details well?

As her assignment progresses, Shackleford's professional uncertainty is matched by increasing doubts about "our friends," and the value of American relationships with the Government of South Sudan. As she writes, the relationship "didn't feel like friendship. It felt like our bilateral relationship was a one-way street," (p. 55).

Worse was to come, both for South Sudan and for Shackleford personally. Having served only five months in Juba when fighting broke out in December 2013, and as the American consular officer, Shackleford is now at the centre of a massive evacuation operation. At the same time, she must try to keep her political hat on to understand what is going on in the first days of the emerging civil war. Beginning in chapter 9, and relying as it does on her first-hand experience, this is by far the strongest and most original passage of the book. Part consular thriller, part testimony to those brutal moments at the opening of the war, Shackleford performs a valuable service by documenting those days, for those whose experiences risk being dismissed as biased or,

worse, for those victims who do not have the opportunity to tell their own stories. Shackleford is clearly traumatized by her experience; it seems the retelling may have been therapeutic.

Neither of the two Susans – U.S. ambassadors Page and Rice, nor then head of the UN Mission Hilde Johnson, come off particularly well in Shackleford's book. The author does keep trying to understand other peoples' perspectives and is honest about her limited vantage point, noting that at least she "had never witnessed [South Sudan] at [such] a promising moment," (p. 236).

However, the broader thesis of the book is awkwardly wedded to the case of South Sudan. In a book launch event at the Rift Valley Institute in January 2021, Shackleford said that her book was a story of the failure of American diplomacy. Interspersed in chapters throughout the book, Shackleford explores the decline of US diplomacy over the last 40 years, targeting an American audience ready to buy-in to the decline of the United States as a responsible international power. In the age of Trump, it is not hard to make this case.

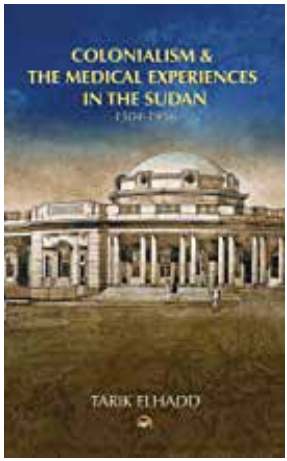
The question for this book is whether South Sudan is the best evidence for Shackleford's broader thesis of American diplomatic decline, or an example of other, contextual failings. Undoubtedly, both before and after 2005, 2011, and 2013, there were innumerable mistakes made by the United States, the United Nations, and almost everyone involved in the politics of South Sudan, this reviewer included, not to mention the failings of South Sudan's politico-military class itself. But it is not clear how the examples the author cites of the "greatest hits" of America's "brave global leadership" – the Marshall Plan, founding the International Automatic Energy Agency, brokering the Camp David Accords (p. 147-149) – really chart the path to American failure in South Sudan. Others might argue these diplomatic pinnacles were also experimental gambles that could well have failed. The ideals of diplomacy, patience, and wisdom are cited as underlying such achievements, but as Shackleford herself later describes, her ultimate conclusion about the wrongs of American policy towards South Sudan are those of magnitude, execution, and honesty, not of paradigm. When the book's titular dissent is thus narrated, it is thus almost anticlimactic. By Shackleford's own description, in her dissent, "the position we were taking wasn't controversial. It was just stronger and more determined than that of many others working on South Sudan, all of whom lamented the state of affairs," (p. 251). While she "might have disagreed mightily with our strategy in South Sudan…I knew we all wanted the same peaceful outcome," (p. 273).

From the outset, Shackleford doesn't have high hopes for the official avenue for State Department diplomats to express dissent on policy: "one could generously describe it as a type of departmental suggestion box, though

it would be more accurate to picture it as a shredder," (p. 245). Classification means the actual dissent is not included in the book. Shackleford shares with us the title: the "U.S. Should Change Course on South Sudan: From A Short-term Focus on Elites in Addis to a Long-Term Focus on Sustainable Peace," (p. 248-249), which sounds very much like the conversations those of us working on the peace process were having in Addis Ababa and elsewhere in the same period. That the dissent was quickly dismissed provides near finality to Shackleford's career in South Sudan – "we know we have done everything we could to influence this effort," (p. 255), she tells her colleagues, although one further involuntary encounter with South Sudan is still to come while serving at the embassy in Nairobi in 2016. More broadly, the dissent does seem to be another missed opportunity for a careful re-examination of American policy on South Sudan since 2011. However, individual American office holders – Rice, special envoy Booth, secretary of state Kerry – seem just as culpable for missteps on South Sudan as any wider institutional deficit of American diplomacy. Shackleford is rightly disappointed in the system, her colleagues and bosses, but this does not mean that South Sudan proves more general assertions of American diplomatic decline.

Aly Verjee

Tarik Elhadd, **Colonialism & the Medical Experiences in The Sudan, 1504-1956**. The Red Sea Press, Trenton, 2021, ISBN:978-1-56902-653-3 hardback, $39.95. [Available from Amazon in the UK]



Dr Tarik recounts in his Prologue that it was while working in a hospital in Ayr, in Scotland, that he came across Dongola Road, so named in memory of the re-conquest of 1898, and it sparked his interest in researching and writing about Sudanese-British relations. I felt some trepidation when I was invited to review this book as the history of medicine is hardly my thing. But then I thought that I have had Sudanese friends, both in Sudan and in UK, who have been doctors, and that it would be interesting to know more about the historical background from which they had emerged.

Tarik's starting point of 1504, in the days of the Fung kingdom is a very long time ago, and as he says there is relatively little about things medical in the historical materials that are available. Thus from then until the early nineteenth century he has written a summary of the general history of what was to become Sudan. For medical buffs the book really takes off with the arrival of the Egyptian army in the 1820s and the period of Turco-Egyptian rule commonly known as the Turkiyya. In particular it saw a number of Egyptian and European doctors enter the country and the establishment of a small number of hospitals, primarily attached to military garrisons. The situations the new arrivals found were pretty grim. There were a variety of established diseases as well as repeated epidemics such as smallpox, meningitis and cholera; in addition the incomers imported a number of new diseases with a longer history in Egypt and beyond. As new cities and towns grew, a general lack of sanitation also saw a rise in related diseases, though at the end of the Turkiyya, during General Gordon's rule from 1877 to 1880, efforts were made to improve sanitation.

It is with the establishment of the British-led Anglo-Egyptian Condominium in Sudan in 1898 that the book moves on to describe the growth of modern medicine in the country. Once government control was in place, the Sudan Medical Department (SMD) was founded in 1904. The SMD was led by senior British figures with support of doctors mainly from Egypt and Syria. Government resources were limited but a Civil Hospital was set up in Khartoum as well as smaller facilities in other major towns, in addition to

which there was a River Hospital on the Nile.

Knowledge of medical conditions in Sudan also required research, and here the authorities had generous support from Sir Henry Wellcome. Wellcome was born in the United States and became a major pharmaceutical manufacturer having founded, with Silas Burroughs, the internationally famed firm of Burroughs and Wellcome. Wellcome came to Britain where, as a supporter of colonialism in general, he met Sudan's first two British governors-general, Lord Kitchener and Sir Reginald Wingate. He was invited to visit Sudan and swiftly took up the cause of medical research which later found a base in the Stack laboratories, a picture of which adorns the front cover of this book.

In addition to supporting valuable research in that field, he also had a great interest in archaeology which had drawn him first to Egypt and then to Sudan. Wellcome started digging around Jebel Moya at the southern end of the Gezira region, where his extensive field work employed some 4,000 local people for several seasons. The remnants can still be seen as can the enormous hilltop 'House of Boulders' in which he stayed when supervising the diggings.

Medical development in the country was led by a succession of outstanding British figures, whose biographies fascinate Tarik and are discussed at some length. Amongst those who stand out here are Andrew Balfour (later Sir Andrew), who led the research by the Wellcome Foundation, and John Christopherson, long time head of the Khartoum Civil Hospital, both of whom made significant contributions to the advancement of medicine and its practice in Sudan. They and others also appear in the course of five appendices.

While the book focuses on 'Colonialism and Medical Experiences in the Sudan', we in Britain have benefited greatly from the service given by Dr Tarik and many other Sudanese doctors who have come to work in the NHS. On my visits to the University of Khartoum I have admired the efforts of the Faculty of Medicine to maintain its standards in the face of mounting challenges. Many Sudanese doctors have gone overseas, in part to work in the kinds of services for which they have been trained rather than the often-deteriorating conditions pertaining in the public services in their home country. Many longstanding conditions such as malaria and bilharzia remain common. Sudan, like Britain, also now struggles with Covid-19, which has sadly killed a number of Sudanese doctors in this country as this journal has recorded. Meanwhile, in Sudan I have also discovered that pharmacologists are researching traditional medicines and their merits: perhaps some of the practices from as far back as 1504 may still have their part to play today.

Peter Woodward was born in Atbara Road in London, which was also named in memory of the re-conquest.

News from the Sudan Archive, Durham

The range of material in the Sudan Archive provides an exceptionally rich research resource for scholars in all disciplines of studies relating to Sudan and South Sudan and to the wider region, with records dating from the 19th century to the present day. Despite the pandemic, (as I write in June 2021, the Archive remains closed and all staff have been working from home since March), most research enquiries can still be answered and image orders fulfilled. So please get in touch, whether to further your own research, to suggest additional records we should try to collect, or to make a donation to the collections yourself. The Archive's homepage is www.dur.ac.uk/library/asc/sudan/. More digitised material from the collections is added most weeks, and can now be browsed here http://iiif.durham.ac.uk/jalava/. A Google Maps finding aid was recently added, geo-referencing some of our digitised maps: https://tinyurl.com/yavcsthy.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the residency of the 2020 Sir William Luce Fellow, Dr Katie Hickerson, has been deferred to 2022. Past Luce lectures are available online at www.dur.ac.uk/sgia/research/fellowships/.

Recent accessions to the Sudan Archive

Acquisitions of recent publications are not generally noted – but are nevertheless received with deep thanks. Large accessions generally remain uncatalogued for a period of time but can usually be accessed on request. This is a summary of accessions since June 2020.

*__Sir William H. T. Luce__ (1907-1977), Sudan Political Service 1930-1955: 2 files of letters, lecture notes, article, interview, cuttings, and 50 photographs, [1914]-2003.

*__Edward W. T. Morris__ (1899-1995), Sudan Medical Service 1929-1944: A Surgeon in the Sudan. *The 1930 letters of E.W.T. Morris*, compiled and edited by Nicholas Morris (2020), supplements the earlier publication of the 1931-1943 letters in 2019.

Khartoum News Letter, November 1964, by Caroll W. Brewster.

*__Graham D. Lampen__ (1899-1960), Sudan Political Service, 1922-1949: *Absence*

makes the heart grow fonder. Mother's letters to father during their engagement, 1936 to 1937, ed. John Lampen (2020).

Nancy M. Softly of Letchworth: 1 album of photographs of Sudan, including Sennar Dam (under construction), Merowe, Sinkat, Omdurman, Khartoum, 1922-1923.

*Photograph of **Sir Frederick Hervey-Bathurst** (1870-1956) and his dog, [1890s].

***Dick R. Ewen** (1925-2018) English studies lecturer at Gordon College / Khartoum University, 1951-1964: 1 file of cuttings and letters, 1960s.

Rev. Canon Chris Hayward: 1 box of papers concerning the history of the Episcopal Church of Sudan, chiefly 1985-2000, including correspondence and papers from Archbishop Benjamina Yugusuk, Bishop Bulus and Provost (later Bishop) Ephraim Natana.

***Mervyn F. B. Bell** (1914-2005), Sudan Political Service 1936-1943: 1 box of photographs, publications, and maps, chiefly Kurmuk and frontier operations 1940-1941.

Soldier, The British Army Magazine, March 2020, including feature "Saving South Sudan" (pp 36-40).

Major J. F. Friend: 11 photographs of Port Sudan scenes, *c.* 1942.

Emma McCune (1964-1993): 2 files of photographs and negatives of South Sudan, 1990s.

Albert W. Punter (1898-1988), Sudan Government Inspector of Agriculture 1924-1931: 1 file of official and personal correspondence, papers, maps, and 7 printed items, 1920s-1940s.

[Childhood] Memoir of Sudan (1 file), by **Robert Franklin**, son of T. F. Franklin, in the 1940s and 1950s the Chief Engineer, Mechanical Division of the Dept / Ministry of Agriculture and Director of the Equatoria Projects Board.

***W. T. W. (Dai) Morgan** (1927-2020), Professor of Geography, Universities of Nairobi, Durham, Jos, 1956-1993: 7 boxes of diaries, memoir, field notes, slides and photographs, correspondence and printed items, 1933-2019.

Col. Randle M. Feilden CBE (1871-1965), seconded to the Sudan Political Service in 1904-1921: 1 cd-rom of photographs.

The Sudan diaries 1971-1973 compiled by **Paul Thurston**, VSO teacher at Ed Dueim.

***Harold R. J. Davies** (1931-), Khartoum University (1955-60) and Swansea University (1960-97): 102 maps, tables and aerial photographs, 4 boxes of slides, 1895-1991.

Hugh R. B. Hack (1921-2018), agricultural botanist and research scientist at

Gezira and Kenana Research Stations 1963-1971: 16 boxes of field data, maps and scientific papers.

Joseph Lagu (1931-), founder leader of Anya-nya, 2nd vice-president of Sudan 1982-1985: copies of speeches, correspondence, cuttings, hymns, 1980s-2010s.

Colonialism & the medical experiences in the Sudan, 1504-1956. Volume 1, The roots of medicine, medical research & education (1504-1924), by **Tarik Elhadd** (2020).

Charles L. Hawkes (1895-1964), engineer in Sudan 1919-1944: biographical summary.

Sir Thomas Percival Creed (1897-1969), Chief Justice of Sudan 1935-1941 and Legal Secretary 1941-1948: newspaper report of a talk by Creed on Iraq, where he had served, [Sept. 1941].

Timothy R. G. Moir (1917-1992), Department of Agriculture 1941-1948, 1950-1955, and later UN Syria 1960s-1970s: 6 printed items and 1 file of agricultural reports and publications.

John Howie (1925-1999) and Mary née Coburn (1918-2020), Cable & Wireless, Khartoum and Port Sudan 1940s-1950s: 2 albums and loose photographs, 1940s-1950s.

Maj. Andrew C. Robertson (1901-1985), Mechanical Engineer, British Army and Sudan Government, 1927-1951: 5 files of personal correspondence and papers.

* accruals to existing collections.

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Society for the Study of the Sudans (UK)
34th Annual General Meeting, 10th October 2020
by Zoom

MINUTES

1. *Apologies for absence*

Apologies for absence were received from committee members Douglas Johnson, Fidaa Mahmoud and John Ryle and from members Simon Bush, Jihad Mashamoun, Hazel Oberst, Alison Pinkerton and Pieter Tesch.

2. *Introduction from the President, Leila Aboulela*

Leila spoke about the experience of living life during a pandemic – both here in the UK and in Sudan, where for many Covid-19 was yet another hardship. In some ways, life in these unexpected times made her feel like she was back in Sudan. Leila then read an extract from one of her short stories.

3. *Minutes of the 2019 AGM*

There were no matters arising so the minutes, which had previously been circulated, were accepted as a true record.

4. *Report of the Chairperson*

Gill Lusk, the Chairperson, welcomed everyone to this first digital AGM and regretted that we were unable to meet in person and enjoy lovely Sudanese food.

She paid tribute to those members who had died during the previous 12 months:

Dr Abdel Wahab Yousif Babiker, a consultant physician at Scarborough Hospital, one of five Sudanese medical staff who had died during the pandemic. Gill spoke of the enormous contribution they had made to the NHS, as highlighted in the tribuite to them in the recent edition of *Sudan Studies*.

Lesley Forbes, a founder member of the Society and long term member of the committee. For many years she had been in charge of the Sudan Archive at Durham University. A moving obituary for her by Peter Woodward had also appeared in the most recent journal.

Dr Zaki El Hassan, of the University of the West of Scotland, former Secretary of the SSSUK and a mine of information on Sudanese politics and good friend to many.

Gill also spoke of Dr Mansour Khalid, who was not a member but for

whom an obituary had appeared in *Sudan Studies*.

The Society had recently organised two successful webinars, one on "Reflections on the coronavirus pandemic in Sudan, South Sudan and the UK" and the second on "The 2018 Revolution and the prospects for lasting democracy in the country". Both had been well attended and viewed many times since, bringing in people from difference continents who would not normally be able to attend Society events. They can still be accessed via the Society's website (www.sssuk.org).

Finally Gill thanked two long standing members of the committee who had recently resigned: Michael Medley who had been Website Editor for many years, and Cherry Leonardi, and thanked them both for their contributions.

5. *Treasurer's report*

Adrian Thomas described the Society's current financial position, as shown in the 2019 accounts previously circulated to members. We started 2019 with reserves of £5539, but these had been reduced by about £1000 and obviously this was a situation which could not continue long term. In a normal year the symposium more or less covers its own costs, but the journal costs continued to rise, largely as a result of rising postage charges. It had been agreed at the last AGM to increase the subscription rates, as this is our main source of income. However, not all members are paying at the new rate yet so Adrian urged everyone to update their payments. Some generous donations had been received this year so this will almost cover the deficit.

Fifthteen new members had joined the Society since the last AGM and 10 members had either resigned or died. The total number of members is about 220. A larger membership would obviously help our finances and all were encouraged to help bring in new members.

Adrian wished to record his thanks to Charlotte Martin and Jane Hogan and also to Gill for rising to the challenges of electronic media and her work on raising the profile of the society.

Thanks were also extended to Heywood Hadfield for his work in examining the accounts.

Finally, Adrian reminded members that he would be standing down as Treasurer in 2022. If anyone is interested in taking over they are encouraged to get in touch with Adrian (treasurer@sssuk.org).

Those attending voted to accept the 2019 Accounts.

6. *Editor's report*

Charlotte Martin reported that two issues of *Sudan Studies* (61 and 62) had been produced in 2020. Issue 61 was the usual mix of articles and book reviews

while the bumper issue 62 had articles and obituaries and comment pieces reflecting the pandemic and its effects in Sudan, South Sudan and the UK. The journal continued to attract offers of book reviews, articles and comment pieces from contributors.

Members of the SSSUK committee and the Editorial Board had contributed greatly to the journal's successful production for which Charlotte was very grateful.

She encouraged members to get in touch if they had any comments, suggestions or offers of an article or book review.

7. *Website Editor's report*

Mawan Muortat, Vice Chairperson of the Society, had also taken over the editorship of the website from Michael Medley who had stepped down from the committee. Mawan highlighted recent changes to the website – chiefly the latest editions of the journal and the streaming of Twitter feeds. He also drew attention to the recent webinars which had been attended by hundreds of people from around the world, and thanked all the contributors.

It will soon be possible to top up subscriptions to the Society via Paypal on the website (useful for those still paying at the old rate) and to make one off donations to the Society.

Finally, work on improving the security of the website had recently taken place.

8. *Elections to the Committee*

The following members of the committee had agreed to stand for re-election as Trustees:

Mawan Muortat (Proposed by Peter Verney and seconded by Peter Woodward)

Fidaa Mahmoud (Proposed by Imogen Thurbon and seconded by Gill Lusk)

Charlotte Martin (Proposed by Sara Beleil and seconded by Jane Hogan)

Francis Gotto (Proposed by Fergus Nicoll and seconded by Adrian Thomas)

Zoe Cormack (Proposed by Aziz el Nur Abdel Magid and seconded by Cherry Leonardi)

The following co-opted member of the committee stood for election as a Trustee:

Aly Verjee (Proposed by Rosalind Marsden and seconded by Abel Azim El Hassan)

All those named above were elected unopposed.

9. *Any other business*

Mohamed Baraka asked why so few South Sudanese are members of the Society and wondered what we could do to encourage them to join. Mawan pointed out that the 2005 peace agreement had led to an exodus of many South Sudanese, but agreed that we could be doing more, especially among students. This group in particular often attend the symposium but were reluctant to get involved. There is still an underlaying reluctance to join anything which brings Sudanese and South Sudanese together. However, many of them had watched the webinars and there had been two South Sudanese participants in the first webinar. He agreed that the two countries are still inter-connected and asked for suggestions of topics for webinars which would appeal to South Sudanese.

Farouk Abdel Eisa, who attended the meeting, but for technical reasons was unable to be heard, rang in at the end of the meeting to raise the matter of the next international Sudan conference. He encouraged the committee to consider co-hosting a conference in Khartoum. He felt that the new Vice Chancellor of Khartoum University, Dr Fadwa Ali Taha, would be very receptive to such an idea. This matter has been under discussion by the committee but under the present circumstances, no progress could be made. It would however be kept under review.

Jane Hogan, Honorary Secretary
27th October 2020

Society for the Study of the Sudans (UK)

The Society for the Study of the Sudans (UK), (founded in 1986 as the Sudan Studies Society of the UK) encourages and promotes Sudanese studies in the United Kingdom and abroad, at all levels and in all disciplines. SSSUK is a registered charity (No. 328272).

Enquiries about Society matters and membership should be addressed to:

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Membership:

Anyone with an interest in South Sudan and Sudan, general or specialized, is welcome to join the SSSUK. Membership is by annual subscription payable in January each year; new members can join at any time. Current annual subscription rates are:

	UK	**Europe**	**Elsewhere**
Individuals standard rate (standing order / Pay Pal)	£18	€28/£25	US$30/£25
Individuals (cheque or cash)	£20	€31/£28	US$34/£28
Students (with identification)	£12	€18/£16	US$20/£16
Institutions	£28	€35/£32	US$40/£32

NB: Dollar & Euro subscription rates take into account postage and any bank charges.

Members receive two issues each year of *Sudan Studies* and the right to vote at the Annual General Meeting.

Chairperson: Gill Lusk

Vice-Chairpersons: Fidaa Mahmoud and Mawan Muortat

Hon Treasurer: Adrian Thomas

Hon Secretary: Jane Hogan

Website Manager: Mawan Muortat
www.sssuk.org

Editorial Board, *Sudan Studies*: Mr Jacob Akol; Ms. Jane Hogan; Dr Douglas Johnson; Ms. Charlotte Martin; Rev. Andrew Wheeler and Professor Peter Woodward.

Sudan Studies

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All correspondence, articles and features relating to *Sudan Studies* and books for review should be addressed to:

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Notes for Contributors
SSSUK welcomes notes and articles intended for publication, to be assessed by the Editorial Board. The maximum length is 5,000 words including footnotes; longer articles may be accepted for publication in two or more parts. Short pieces are also welcome. Notes and articles should be typed in Times New Roman and single spaced and should normally be submitted as Microsoft Word files and sent to the editor as an e-mail attachment. Maps, diagrams and photographs should be of high definition and sent as separate files, with a file name corresponding directly to the figure or plate number in the text. Any bibliographies should be in Harvard style. SSSUK retains the right to edit articles for reasons of space or clarity, and consistency of style and spelling.

It is helpful to have some relevant details about the author (2-3 lines), e.g. any post held or time spent in the Sudan and interest in the topic being discussed.

Single copies and back numbers may be obtained from the Secretary (secretary@sssuk.org) at a cost of £8 per copy plus postage.