



SUDAN STUDIES

Covering Sudan and South Sudan

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EDITORIAL

It is unfortunate that so much of the news that comes to us about events in Sudan and South Sudan are so depressing. Some of the euphoria in South Sudan after the declaration of Independence has now been tempered by a realization that some of the underlying problems and disagreements in South Sudan which were subsumed during the transitional CPA years and the run up to the independence referendum have now re-appeared as various groups try to exert influence through civil strife. In Sudan too unrest has increased dramatically, especially in South Kordofan and in Blue Nile, and it would appear that some of the more re-actionary hardliners in the SAF (Sudan Armed Forces) are smarting from the loss of the South. They would claim that they were never defeated but that they were let down by the politicians. Under such circumstances, it is hardly surprising that little progress seems to have been made in settling disputes over oil and the regularisation of relations between the two new states. I am sure that all of us want to see progress in the coming months. The unspoken fear is that sanity will not prevail and new hostilities between Sudan and South Sudan will erupt into war with all the waste of human life and a rampant misuse of precious resources which ought to be used to improve the lives of ordinary people in both countries.

There are four main articles in this issue. The first is by **Mohamed B. Ahmed (Alsawi)**, a Sudanese writer and ex-diplomat who explores some of the background to the **emergence of** the new two nations of **Sudan and South Sudan**. The second article is by **Omer Hayati and Samir Alredaisy** both on the staff of the Faculty of Education of Khartoum University. In it they explore the impact of an **NGO food security programme** in North Darfur. The third is by **Lillian Harris**, wife of a former British Ambassador to Sudan, who shares some of her experiences staying at the **Acropole Hotel in Khartoum**, a much loved place where many foreign visitors stay. The fourth article outlines a future

programme for **Higher Education in South Sudan**. The author, **John Akec**, is Vice-Chancellor of the University of North Bahr-el-Ghazal.

This issue also includes a note from **John Udal**, a former British D.C. in the Sudan, about the deposition of **his papers in Winchester College Library**, and a piece from **Jane Hogan** about the availability of **Sudan maps online**.

In our series about memorials in Britain to Sudanese and to British who served in Sudan, this issue records the **Memorial in Westminster Abbey** to the British who served in the Sudan during the Condominium.

Three book reviews are included. The new book about Sir Reginald **Wingate** is reviewed by **Jonathan Bush**, an archivist in Durham University Library, who catalogued the Wingate papers as part of the Wood Bequest Project. ***Slaves of Fortune*** about Sudanese soldiers who fought with the Anglo-Egyptian re-occupying force culminating in the Battle of Omdurman is reviewed by **Richard Stock** who has written about this campaign. The third book review is of ***The Sudan Handbook*** by **Peter Elborn** who was in Sudan in 2011.

Under SSSUK Notices (p. 65). Please take note of our **Annual Symposium and AGM to be held on Saturday 29th September 2012 at SOAS**.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

May we once again remind members that subscriptions for 2012 were due on 1st January. Please pay – by cheque to the Treasurer, Adrian Thomas (see address inside front cover) or directly to the Society's account:

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SEPARATION: CRITIQUE OF THE SOUTHERN, AS WELL AS THE NORTHERN NARRATIVE¹

Mohamed B Ahmed (Alsawi)

For most observers separation was a foregone conclusion of the 9th of January referendum. As the historical and contextual background of the referendum will shape future relations between the two states I will try here to present a view of this context rather different from the generally accepted version. This version can be summarized by the phrase made famous by its author, the veteran Southern Sudanese leader Abel Alier, *'TOO Many Promises Broken'*. However, before challenging certain aspects of this narrative, which is largely accepted also by many Northern Sudanese, I would like to make the following point. As far as I am concerned there is nothing sacred about Sudan's unity. Especially in this age of the supremacy of the values of democracy and human rights, the genuine wish of the Southern Sudanese to have their own state should be respected. But, while accepting the basic feature of what might be called the Southern Narrative, namely that the North was more responsible for separation than the South, some of its aspects are questionable or at least open to a different interpretation. Main among these is the well known fact that Northern politicians failed to keep their promise of considering the Southern demand for federation, a promise given to secure their agreement for declaring independence in 1955 from Parliament instead of by a referendum, as was originally stipulated in the Self Rule Agreement. This is taken as proof that the Northern leaders have very little regard for Southern interests and that they are not trustworthy. But what may also be true is that these politicians could not have behaved otherwise because they were in no position to comprehend that federation is not adverse to national unity while this was a sacred cow for them as well as for public opinion in general. It must be

¹ Text of a talk delivered in The African Centre, London, March 2011

understood that the main slogan of the independence movement, '*No Separation for One Nation*' was a reflection of the widely held view among all anti-British nationalist movements in Africa and Asia that the main weapon of colonialism was the '*Divide and Rule*' strategy. The slogan was in no way a reflection of a northern scheme to dominate the South. As a matter of fact, this total preoccupation with the aim of independence and thwarting the British attempt to avoid it, sheds a different light on a more serious accusation against the North and its leaders, that of the Arabization and Islamization of the South.

During the pre-independence period even, a pro-British politician who was responsible for education in an administration set up by the British and vehemently opposed by the nationalist movement, was firmly in favour of using the Arabic language in southern education. This attests to the fact arabism and its islamic connotation were used as a weapon for national liberation at a time when ethno-cultural-religious diversity was not a major issue world-wide and when the level of Northern consciousness could not be expected to foster an enlightened and humane concept of its arab-islamic character. Naturally, this was associated with a feeling of superiority *vis á vis* Southern cultures but the point is that this is common among all peoples of the world, even in the South itself, and that its manifestation in official policies is dependent on whether the government in question is democratic or not.

Since the demise of the socialist block in particular, it is unanimously agreed that equal development, social justice, recognition of diversity, delegation of central power etc are organically related to democratic rule. Hence, the possibility of rectifying those early mistakes committed by the North and their underlying causes was dependent on maintaining the parliamentary system inherited from British rule. But alas, this was not to be, and herein lies the explanation of the demise of Sudanese national unity, as manifested in the impending partition of the country as well as the much greater burden borne by the North in this regard. In other words, I accept the Southern narrative but impute it rather differently. Having been the more advanced part of the country for

historical reasons, the Northern élite was comparatively better equipped to take on this task but, as we now know, what actually happened is that it had abjectly failed to do so and the independent Sudan has been under totalitarian regimes almost all the time.

I would submit that this can be explained briefly as follows. Democracy as a mentality and culture is an alien concept in non-European contexts because it is essentially a product of the 'Age of Enlightenment' during the 17th and 18th centuries. In countries like the Sudan democracy had to be transplanted through a process of modernization usually initiated by the colonial connection itself. The critical mass, led by the educated élites and composed of all sections of the population involved with modern sectors of the economy, is the engine of change and progress. This process started around the beginning of the 20th century but its smooth development was hindered by the fact that it was taking place during a period of strong anti-west sentiment and the emergence of the socialist thought and its regimes which promised, and seemed to deliver, support for national liberation movements and promoting the interests of the socially disadvantaged sections of the population. The more advanced sections of the modernizing forces opted for this model which was lacking in democratic credentials. Combined with the absence of the European historical context, this meant that the parliamentary system was resting on shaky grounds indeed, which was proved by the emergence of the first dictatorship in Sudan's history in 1958, just two years after independence, setting a pattern of a dictatorship emerging every few years, longer in life and thus more capable of arresting the country's development in all aspects. But, in my opinion, the most serious consequence of these series of dictatorial regimes is that they eroded the qualitative weight of the modernizing forces. The starkest manifestation of this fact is that the Sudanese city and educational system have become incubators of the most reactionary forms of Islam and its Arab connotation.

Under the present most totalitarian of all the regimes, the Southern reaction was predictable and understandable: total collapse in trust of the

North. Not even the Naivasha Agreement was able to restore it. The question is: Why was it not possible to reverse this process of deterioration of the qualitative weight of the modernizing forces? Herein lies the major contribution of the Northern Opposition élites with an increasing share of the Southern élites as they increased in size. The Achilles heal of the genuine and demanding efforts of the Northern élites against totalitarian regimes was that they failed to diagnose the real cause of the failure of democracy in Sudan and consequently how to resume implanting it in the domestic context. As time does not allow I will not go into this aspect of the problem: suffice it to say that the Southern elites will be able to build a state which is responsive to the aspirations of their people, and maintain the best possible relations with their former compatriots, if they think of the North's responsibility for separation under this different light. Unfortunately, by the look of things, the North will remain under the present regime for a long time which will make the task even more difficult.



EFFECTIVENESS OF FOOD SECURITY INTERVENTION IN CONFLICT AREAS OF NORTH DARFUR, SUDAN

Omer A M S Hayati and Samir M A H Alredaisy

This study sought to analyze in detail food security interventions that were implemented by the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) - Practical Action in conflict rural areas of North Darfur to see how and why they were carried out, how well they were targeted and what impact the interventions had on food security. Intervention began in August 2005 and evaluation of the project was done between 2nd and 16th August 2006 by a team from the Sudanese Red Crescent, including one of the authors.

INTRODUCTION

Pastoralists have interacted with sedentary farmers for millennia. The increased conflict between these groups has been caused by population growth, expansion of agriculture onto formerly shared grazing lands, and increasing commodity production (Fratkin, 1997), as well as drought and political instability. In Sudan, conflict over resources has similarly occurred and has been exacerbated by high year-to-year variability in rainfall in North Darfur (Elagib, 2010, Hulme, 1990). Rapid population increase and State policies (Ayoub, 2006) have all contributed to conflict over water and grazing rights (Schance, 2007).

The current conflict in Darfur has displaced well over one million people distributed as 300,000 in South Darfur, 400,000 in North Darfur and 500,000 in West Darfur (UN, 2004). The majority (80%) were rural people (Population Census, 2003) who depend solely on traditional rain-fed agriculture and animal keeping. It has been estimated that 2.74 million were affected by these conflicts. Of these 1.8 million were identified as internally displaced living in 125 camps, or with their relatives in secure areas. In these camps, people depend on food aid and on firewood collected from the neighborhood. It was estimated that 62% of these affected people have been provided with food aid, but only 36% have clean water and 18% have access to sanitation services (UN, 2004) provided by United Nations agencies, including World Food Programme and UNICEF, and



NGOs including, for example, Sudanese Red Crescent and Save the Children/UK.

Food aid, in general, is concerned with providing food and related assistance in emergency situations or to help with longer term hunger alleviation and achievement of food security (Shah, 2007). Three types of food aid could be distinguished. They include programme food aid, emergency food aid and project food aid which is delivered as part of a specific project related to promoting agricultural or economic development, nutrition and food security (Anup, 2007). During much of the 1980s, work of NGOs tended to be associated with the notion of more empowering, more humanitarian, and more sustainable development alternatives (Bebbington, 2003). Anderson (1996) says that western NGOs seek to provide emergency humanitarian relief, promote long range economic and social development in impoverished nations, promote respect for human rights and monitor human rights abuses, promote peace, often by encouraging non-violent conflict resolution. Uvin et al (2000) suggest that the main activities now of NGOs include working directly with beneficiaries to have a direct impact on their lives, while indirect activities are to affect the behaviour of other actors who work with the poor or influence their lives and reach their target group through the actions and decisions of others.

However, until the 1980s, the majority of NGOs at work were international NGOs, but more recently local NGOs have become a prominent force in development. In many countries like India and Brazil, local NGOs now rival their international counterparts in terms of their size, impact and resources (Michael, 2002). These NGOs intervene not only to provide food but also to supply seeds, agricultural tools and to work on conservation of the environment. This is important as NGOs are less limited by political constraints and their diversity and independence allows them to work in very difficult places (Branczik, 2004). No discussion on poverty, equality or development to-day is complete without considering the role of NGOs (Michael, 2002). Such a relevant local NGO is ITDG – Practical Action.

This study sought to analyze in detail food security interventions that were implemented by the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) - Practical Action in rural areas of North Darfur, to see how and why they were

carried out, how well they were targeted and what impacts the interventions had on food security.

NORTH DARFUR

Figure 1 shows the position of North Darfur State in western Sudan. The general physical characteristics of North Darfur are essentially that the underlying rocks belong to the Basement Complex. Over this lies a covering of sands (*qoz*) interrupted with clays (here known as *gardud*) with the former the more prominent. The study area relies upon shallow wells for its water supply; though there are also a number of *hafirs* (excavated or natural hollows) where rainwater can collect and some valleys with a base soil of clay and associated sands. Rainfall is erratic and irregular, particularly in the northern part, and somewhat higher in southern parts with a long term annual average rainfall in the order of 300 mm here falling in three summer months of the year. Rainfall figures in the 20th century suggest that the 1930s saw a peak in rainfall and that since then rainfall has been generally in decline until the mid-1970s, when it seems to have levelled out at about 250 mm. The United Nations desertification map distinguishes the study area within the zone of having a “very high risk” of desertification (UN, 1977). Based upon figures available there seems little evidence of significant improvement since 1990 (Alredaisy and Davies, 2001). The population is a hybrid of different tribes who used to settle into small villages near water supply points and where soils are suitable for cultivation. The major crops were *dukhn* (bulrush millet: *Pennisetum typhoideum*) and *dura* (*Sorghum vulgare*), sesame, gum arabic and groundnut. *Dukhn* does well on light soils. The people of Darfur also rear livestock, including cattle, sheep, goats, and camels.

THE PROJECT

This project was launched by ITDG-Practical Action in North Darfur State. The project was committed to the distribution of sorghum and millet seeds; agricultural hand tools; energy saving stoves; and cooking pots among targeted households living in conflict rural areas and camps in North Darfur. These areas were held by either the Government or Sudan Liberation Army. The targeted villages were already ranked as the poorest by local administrative authority

between November 2002 and March 2003. Information on reduction or loss in crop production, shortage of seeds and the need for agricultural tools was collected through Village Development Committees (VDCs) and was used to determine those households actually in need of intervention. Seeds were provided from various parts of Darfur and western parts of North Kordofan State. Agricultural hand tools were manufactured locally, and similarly cooking pots and improved stoves. A pre-sowing test was done to ensure seed viability before being distributed. The improved stoves component was implemented through training of groups of women in the targeted villages.

ITDG-Practical Action adopted a participatory approach. Beneficiaries have trained each other through village-based organizations which were already trained by the project's staff on how to select beneficiaries and distribute relief. Practical connections were initiated with local government partners in North Darfur State to ensure feasibility of the project. Prior to the intervention in August 2005, various data were collected. Firstly, individual meetings were held in Khartoum with the Coordinator of the Darfur Programmes in Practical Action Organization. In North Darfur State, meetings were held with affiliated governmental administrations and managers of operating NGOs in Al Fashir and Kabkabia including, for example, OXFAM and the Sudanese Red Crescent. Also, collective meetings were held, firstly with beneficiaries of the project in Abu Shouk camp to evaluate training on the proper use of improved stoves, and secondly with blacksmiths in Al Fashir market to determine their benefit from manufacturing agricultural tools. A monitoring system has been applied throughout the implementation phases of the project. Evaluation of the project was carried out between 2nd and 16th August 2006 by a team of SRC including one of the authors. A one day workshop was held with 28 participants representing Village Development Committees and community based organizations from Al Fashir, Dar el Salam and Korma localities, entitled by their local committees and organizations. They have evaluated the project using SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threat) analysis.

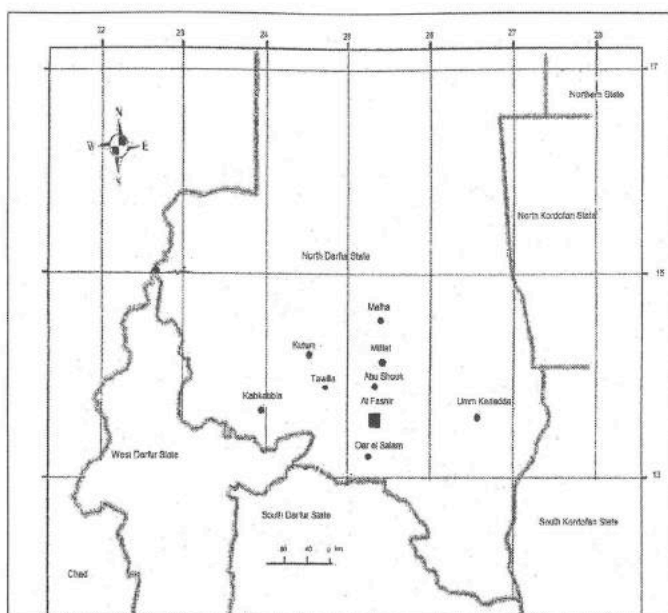


Fig.1: Location of the study area

Source: After Department of Survey, Al Fashir town

RESULTS

The project was committed to the distribution of 176.7 metric tons of sorghum seeds and 252.42 metric tons of millet seeds among 25,242 households (151,450 persons), distributed as 3,750 in Tawilla; 2,500 in Tina; 2,500 in Karnoy; 2,500 in Umm Buru; 12,167 in Milliet and Malha; and 1,825 in Sanam Ennaga camp for internally displaced people (Table 1). These villages belong to Al Fashir and Kabkabiya localities (Fig.1). The majority of the beneficiary households were concentrated in Milliet and Malha, while there were few in Sanam Ennaga but equal numbers in the remaining three locations. The committed amounts per household were 10 kg of millet and 7 kg of sorghum seeds, equally distributed among targeted households by geographic setting (Table 1).

Table 1: Committed amounts of sorghum and millet seeds by household by geographic area

Location	No of households	Amounts (metric tons)			
		sorghum	percent	millet	percent
Tawilla	3750	26.25	14.8	37.50	14.8
Tina	2500	17.50	9.9	25.00	9.9
Karnoy	2500	17.50	9.9	25.00	9.9
Umm Buru	2500	17.50	9.9	25.00	9.9
Milliet and Malha	12167	85.17	48.2	121.67	48.2
Sanam Ennaga IDPs	1825	12.78	7.3	18.25	7.3
Total	25,242	176.70	100	252.42	100

Equal amounts of sorghum and millet were distributed during 2005. In 2006, the amount of millet distributed exceeded fivefold the amount in 2005 while for sorghum it was 25% only (Table 2). The amount of millet eventually distributed was almost equal to threefold the amount of sorghum distributed. It also exceeded the committed amount by 22 metric tons while for sorghum it was less by 10 metric tons. Although the committed amount per household was 10 kg of millet and 7 kg of sorghum seeds, it was reduced to 6 kg for millet and 3 for sorghum (Table 2) resulting from a reduction by 40% for both due to high demand because of the run down of the seed bank.

Agricultural hand tools included ploughs, shovels, *jerrayah* (hand tool for planting seeds), pick axes, *krenkew* (a traditional plough), *tagadi* (small tool for harvesting some crops including *dura*), *najama* (tool for weeding and harvesting some crops) and hoes. Most of the tools were distributed in 2006 apart from *jerrayah* and pick axes which were widely distributed in 2005 and *krenkew* which, in the event, were not distributed at all. Generally, more tools were distributed than originally anticipated: over 50% for ploughs, shovels, *jerrayah* and pick axes, but the intended figures for *tagadi*, *najama* and hoes were not reached, though the shortfall was hardly significant. One plough was

allocated between 5 – 7 households to be exchanged among them, while for all other tools it was one per household. In addition cooking pots, improved stoves

Table 2: Amounts of seeds, agricultural hand tools, cooking pots and cooking utensils distributed among targeted households

Intervention	planned	Achieved				Area covered	Amount per household
		2005	2006	Total	%		
Agricultural seeds	Millet	94 MT	40	218	258	274.5	6 k\ HH
	sorghum	54 MT	MT	MT	MT	Malha	3 k\ HH
			40	50	90	166.7	Al Fashir
			MT	MT	MT	–	Kabkabiya
Agricultural Tools	Ploughs	1000	-	1390	1390	139	1 Pl = 5-
	Shovels	3000	-	3012	3012	100.4	Al Fashir 7 HH
	Jerrayah	5000	2000	5000	7000	140	Kabkabiya 1 Sh = 1
	Pick axe	5000	2000	5000	7000	140	Milliet HH
	Krenkew	2000	-	-	-	0	1 Je = 1
	Tagadi	6000	-	5500	5500	91.7	HH
	Najama	2000	-	1050	1050	52.5	1 Pi = 1
	Hoes	3000	-	2742	2742	91.4	HH
							-
							1 Ta = 1
Cooking Pots	Big Pots	7530 HH	-	2433	2433	81,1	Milliet 1 = HH
	Small	3000 HH		2433	2433	81,1	Tawilla – 1 = HH
	pots			4886	4886	81,1	Dar el Salam 2 = HH
	Dishes			4886	4886	81,1	2 = HH
	Tea cups			4886	4886	81,1	2 = HH
	Water			4886	4886	81,1	2 = HH
	cups						
	Spoons						

and kitchen utensils were distributed among targeted households (Table 2). Cooking pots are durable, made of heavy mud, could retain heat and are usually preferred by the community. The project was committed to the distribution of 25,242 sets of large and small sized cooking pots. Each household was provided with one set of both sizes as well as two pieces of kitchen utensils. The amount of cooking pots distributed was less than what was committed. However, training on the proper use of improved stoves started in 2005 by including 200 beneficiaries only. By 2006, beneficiaries rapidly increased to 2000. Training on proper use of improved stoves was focused on women's groups, methods of manufacturing, and awareness of their environmental benefits into reducing the amount of consumed biomass, time spent on food cooking, and reducing health hazards related to indoor smoke.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT ON FOOD SECURITY

Reports from the Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Women's Development Associations (WDAs) were encouraging. Many groups of people came to ask how to access activities and to obtain information about the dissemination of innovative ideas on environmental conservation *vis-à-vis* the use of improved stoves and social cooperation on using some shared agricultural hand tools. Most of the beneficiaries agreed that targeting was essential. SWOT analysis by stakeholders identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as well as future recommendations for effective interventions in cases of emergency or conflict. Concerning strengths, the project achieved its various objectives which have contributed to improving the humanitarian situation. ITDG became well known to local people in North Darfur. It has trained small farmers in agricultural techniques, established seed banks, trained women's groups in the proper use of improved stoves that contributed to the reduction of expenditure on fuel purchase. It developed good co-operation with government officials. This experience also gave Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Women's Development Associations (WDAs) the opportunity to determine their own preferences and to facilitate practical interventions. Moreover, ITDG Darfur has had considerable success in facilitating the formation and development of VDCs and WDAs, despite the problems of staffing in this area. Sustainability has been the main objective of

the capacity building for VDCs and WDAs; hence there was emphasis on institutional development, training in management, finance and planning as well as in technical skills and access to services. The development of VDCs and WDAs has made a significant contribution to the development of social cohesion and norms of co-operation and action for mutual benefit. The remaining funds were used to cope with the high demand for seeds and tools for beneficiaries. This also could be considered as a positive flexibility. The consequence was that the total number of project beneficiaries could reach up to 310,326 people. The target figure for cooking sets was 7500 households, but this figure had to be reduced to 3000 households to enable more families to get essential pots and other utensils. This goes in line with project positive flexibility which was considering the needs of the internally displaced people (IDPs) and the general complex political emergency situation within which the project operated.

The implemented activities were generally more than what had been planned. Specifically, the agricultural seeds and hand tools which could in part be attributed to a good estimation of transport cost from Al Fashir to the targeted areas. The technology part of the programme was good at focusing on practical skills, for example the improvement of tools for farmers made by blacksmiths. The present project focus on Al Fashir Council area gives an opportunity for consolidating these groups with further training, during the project extension. Furthermore, ITDG's efforts were highly appreciated for the ability to reach an increased number of communities in secure areas and, similarly, to have maintained contact with communities difficult to access and to provide support for displaced groups (IDPs).

Because the majority of NGOs working in Darfur are more concerned with humanitarian relief rather than with development, ITDG's approach was highly acknowledged by beneficiaries as it generated income for blacksmiths, improved stove makers, aluminum casters and seed importers. The stoves component has developed a curriculum for training which was a good contribution to future efforts in energy saving and environmental conservation. In addition, the multiplier effects of the training of trainers in stove making skills will continue to have an impact on people's lives as women are training others. Although the findings about the impact of interventions by ITDG varied

between Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and VDCs, there was evidence of sustainable food security and increased local capacities and diffusion of innovation such as improved stoves. Stakeholders have perceived that, in the long run, seeds and tools will induce self-reliance and improve household income.

Weaknesses have included the slow flow of information from Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and VDCs to ITDG regional office in Al Fashir town and problems relating to transport and communication. Other weaknesses were related to the selection of beneficiaries which required standardized targeting criteria, and the need for more networking among partners. Although VDCs and WDAs have made great progress in improving social relations among different tribal groups, they were unable to extend such efforts beyond their immediate organizations. With the performance of the current project and the need for follow up and monitoring of activities at CBO and VDC level, these seem to be one of the project's main weaknesses. Also, there was no inherited experience from the 1984/85 drought and displacement in Darfur to help into more effective work, partly because the majority of current operating NGOs were unfamiliar with the recent situation which is more complicated. In addition, traditional coping mechanisms against drought as well as work on livestock marketing systems and stock routes, and water provisioning were not included in the ITDG approach, though a participatory approach was indicated.

The plan for the project included opportunities to build upon the positive image of ITDG-Practical Action and its partners in post-conflict recovery programmes. The aim was to create links with other organizations including NGOs and to obtain international recognition for the idea that all could learn from each other. In their viewpoint, determination of those who really need relief intervention in such conflict areas should depend on the most vulnerable groups to food insecurity. The targeted communities also have suggested the build up of VDCs in all localities to ensure that local communities will accept relief intervention. Threats to relief intervention include desertification, delays of the rainy season, pests and diseases and military actions.

NORTH DARFUR IN CONTEXT

Linking relief and development was an essential part of the intervention in conflict areas of North Darfur. Provision of seeds was to induce agricultural activity, ensure a good harvest and secure food for households as well as surplus for sale. This is similar to Bujumbura in rural Burundi and Central Region of Ghana where NGO interventions in agriculture have improved performance (Buadi, 2011). Distribution of non-food items was essential for development sustainability and environmental conservation. Such type of intervention, according to Levine and Chastre (2004), has environmental advantages in re-establishing crop production and strengthening agricultural systems in the longer term. The environmental benefit of improved stoves will reduce the biomass consumption by 40% compared with traditional stoves which consume 50% to 60% more. This is particularly important where firewood is the main source of energy for households as in Darfur. Here the per capita consumption is above the national average of 0.27 m³ (Forest Products Consumption Survey, 1995). Also, the intervention has been implemented in close collaboration with other projects concerned with food security, pro-poor market linkages and goat restocking. In all, this has provided an excellent opportunity for linking the project with other rehabilitation and development efforts. This agrees with a cash for relief approach which includes local availability of food, proximity to markets, adequate transport infrastructure, and thereby reducing dependency on food aid, and stimulates local markets and empowers women (Brandstetter, 2004).

The community based or participatory approach adopted by our intervention example has helped people to organize and depend on themselves in developing their communities. This is very important as Darfur presents an extremely difficult operating environment, according to Anema (2001), where in-depth understanding of the context of such intervention can only be achieved through consultation and communication with stakeholders, careful assessments of the economic situation and nutritional circumstances. Furthermore, the project's dependence on local blacksmiths, aluminum casters and local seed suppliers, as requested by the community, has also contributed to building local manufacturing and suppliers' capacity and so generating income. High yield

productivity is the main goal for both the intervention and beneficiaries in the study area and thus priority of selecting seeds was built on best local varieties and for tools was based on locally made ones. This shows that, during emergencies or conflicts, interventions can be more efficiently managed by NGOs than by government (Khan et al 2003). The unique role of NGOs is not confined to the delivery of social services and pro-poor advocacy. They have developed commercial ventures in order to link poor producers with input and output markets, as well as to develop a source of internally generated revenue for the organizations (Chowdhury, 2008), though it has proved difficult to reach the very poorest sections of rural communities through such interventions (www.helsinki.fi/university. 2008).

The ITDG's efforts at peace building were not accepted by the government as it is generally argued that the political implications of NGOs' work have in many cases exacerbated the very conflicts and violence they were seeking to relieve as they might bring new resources into a conflict situation where each side tries to acquire and control, and NGO aid can present a new focus for struggle (Anderson, 1996). Aid administered through government favours those in power, while channelling aid in a way that by-passes central government can decrease a government's power (Branczik, 2004). Nonetheless, the method of analysis used to evaluate the benefits of the intervention in our example, might be similar to in-depth livelihoods analysis, which was to investigate the effects of the current conflict and humanitarian crisis on livelihoods of selected communities in Darfur (Levine and Chastre, 2004).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main findings of this study are as follows:

1. Food security interventions have achieved their operational objectives.
2. Participatory approach proved successful during interventions where beneficiaries, community leaders, women and village committees were highly involved.
3. There was meaningful local economic stimulation through local purchase of seed and tools.
4. ITDG intervention has scaled-up the community peace building and post-war recovery activities in cooperation with other agencies in Darfur.



5. Previous experience of NGOs in a geographic setting is important as proved by the previous work of ITDG in Darfur.
6. Food security interventions were not the sole solution for conflicting communities.

Though food security interventions play a crucial role in the alleviation of hardship, there must also be a way forward to overcome conflict. This is particularly needed as *"humanitarian aid and development assistance are not straightforward, and they mask many political failures"* (Branczik, 2004). The conflict in Darfur is particularly vital for a conflict riddled country like Sudan where resource based conflicts have seriously affected rural societies. Some scholars have proposed solutions for natural resource based conflicts. One example is that by Mekonnen (2006) who recommended the building of an early warning system that should be adopted at local, national, and regional levels for mitigating impacts of drought, famine and conflict. Here, the authors argue that human, environment and resource utilization should be interrelated to resolve and curb conflicts. Community based knowledge is essential as it includes social norms and cultures which respect others' rights into use of resources. This will contribute to building good relationships among and across communities by diminishing the frequency and intensity of conflict, and so encouraging co-operative solutions to other problems. Building capacity of the institutions of the nomadic and settled populations, including traditional administrative systems, culture of raising animals and use of water points; mobility in search for pasture and knowledge sharing will make these communities more aware of the misuse of resource utilizations and their impacts. Addressing specific needs of local populations, enhancing local knowledge and skills, building the capacity and preparation of traditional mechanisms for combating drought are essential, such as collecting/harvesting rainwater in man-made ponds, diversifying grazing lands, and planting trees.

Rehabilitation of degraded rangelands, establishment of green belts, creation of a rainfall database and permanent water points are major axes for environment sustainability. Rehabilitation of degraded rangeland increases moisture holding capacity. Research on drought and desertification is essential. Here the role of official authorities is most important through monitoring or making people aware of the situation. Reservation of green belts will make people aware of the

need to respect natural resources and other people's rights to resources. A rainfall database will provide information for the agricultural season, expected pasture, locations for good agricultural production and vulnerable areas to crop failure and expected food shortages in order to avoid excess use by farmers or herders. Permanent water points have to be in accordance with rainfall database results and population density taking physical characteristics of an area into consideration. Resource utilization should include mobile extension teams, community resource management bodies, secondary data for cattle routes and pastoralists' movements, participatory demarcation with concrete posts for livestock routes, particularly long distance ones, to avoid conflict. In addition, maps and secondary data for cattle routes and pastoralists' movement should be introduced with local patrolling teams comprising representatives of pastoralists, farmers, tribal leaders and local administration. The introduction of small credit finance systems and agricultural co-operative societies is needed. The empowerment of farmers' and pastoralists' institutions to strengthen their capacity to understand tenure rights and share knowledge on natural resource management is also essential.

Managing the relationship between people, the environment and resource utilization is important as civil wars in southern, western and eastern Sudan are ignited by issues of marginalization, lack of development and poor infrastructure. However, understanding how communities access natural resources and tensions and rivalries entailed in this process is critical not only for discerning livelihood systems, but can also inform sustainable development policy in Sudan.

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THE ACROPOLE HOTEL, KHARTOUM

Lillian Craig Harris

While my husband Alan Goult was British ambassador to Sudan in the second half of the 1990s, the Acropole Hotel used to cater parties in the British residence garden. Thus I came to know George Pagoulatos and his wife Eleanor. But it wasn't until March 2001 on one of my first trips back to Sudan after a hurried, and I had feared definitive, departure in 1999, that I first entered Khartoum's legendary Acropole Hotel - a place of refuge where I have stayed many times since.

ARRIVING AT THE ACROPOLE AND ITS GUESTS

On that first visit, I arrived at the Acropole from Khartoum Airport at 6 a.m. after travelling from London to Frankfurt to Cairo and finally on to Sudan. Exhausted and with my feet severely cramping, I was shown into a spacious, comfortable room where I marched up and down for some time trying to work out the gripping pain in my feet. While this was going on I repeatedly read a notice on the inside of the room's door: "*We apologise for not accepting ladies underwear.*" Wondering what sort of traveller would be so crass as to part with her intimate apparel, I moved on to investigating the rest of my temporary home. In the bathroom I was charmed by a mirror which had clearly been hung by a very tall Dinka tribesman: although I kept jumping while brushing my teeth, I never did manage to see farther down than my eyebrows. Eventually I turned off the air conditioning, wrapped my aching feet in a towel and let the slow, soporific ceiling fan take over. It was 8 a.m. when I was recalled to consciousness and accepted a breakfast tray from a sweet old *suffragi* wearing a *jallabiyah*. On that day I fell in love with a hotel.



This was the beginning of many visits to the Acropole over several years and I quickly learned that the dining room on the second floor is the fount of much information as well as of contacts both useful and extraordinary. Despite being the sort of breakfaster who usually prefers to tackle the grapefruit in silence, in those early visits to the Acropole I fell easily into conversations with an American psychologist working with traumatised Catholic priests, a representative of the British Football Association, archaeologists, tourists of many nationalities, evangelicals from south London, representatives of international charities, a Danish theologian, an Austrian who had worked in development in the south before obliged to leave and many other people I would probably never have met if not for the Acropole. Most of us wanted to 'do something', to help Sudan although inevitably there were some punters looking to benefit financially from the difficulties Sudan was facing. Fortunately, as more expensive hotels opened in Khartoum over the next decade, most people of the second group went elsewhere. Meanwhile, whenever there was no invitation to the British Residence, I gladly went to the Acropole.

The Acropole reminds me of old fashioned boarding houses in the United States or perhaps distant family members gathered for reunion at a hotel in the Welsh borders. There is a lot of information, good advice and friendship available from both the people who manage and those who patronise this historic hostelry. In the early post millenium years my fellow travellers included sun-blasted oil field workers, human rights activists, European and Asian businessmen, hot gospel missionaries inadequately disguised as teachers as well as shifty overweight men who conversed in eastern European languages and avoided conversation with fellow guests.

Once during breakfast I was severely rebuffed by two dubious looking chaps I decided must be arms salesmen and, to check this out, offered to take a photo of them, as an entrée to conversation.

Sadly, unlike the friendly Sudanese who eagerly volunteer to be in every photo, the two men made clear to me that to photograph them would put both my camera and my person at risk. Although this sort of Acropole client is rare today, a few years ago there were a larger number of guests quite needy of motherly advice on how to behave. It was at times difficult to understand how the hotel put up with them.

Among the most extraordinary was a young chap dressed in the black, tight fitting shorts of a cycling enthusiast (in the Sudanese heat!) who carried his bicycle through the dining room two or three times a day and usually, it seemed, while the rest of us were eating. During another visit everyone in the room stopped chewing when an Arab, or possibly an Afghan, who appeared either drugged or sleep walking emerged from one of the bedrooms and passed silently between the tables clad only in a see through white *jallabiyah*. The two old *suffragis*, both known as Babiker, were not impressed. The rest of us were speechless.[1]

All that aside, it needs to be emphasised that, in addition to being inexpensive compared with the options and also, of course, welcoming, comfortable and always helpful, the Acropole Hotel has for decades been the premier place to exchange and pick up information. Sometimes described as the friendliest hotel south of Cairo, the Acropole is an 'oasis' from the furnace heat and sand bearing winds of Khartoum and the place where you can find out just about everything. Over the years it has been memorialised by journalists seeking a good news story to dilute the incessant reports of war, treachery, famine and human rights violations throughout Sudan. According to one well-known journalist, "*International aid workers, journalists and businessmen have learned the virtues of saving their money, health and wits by deserting Khartoum's outwardly fancier hostels for the Spartan efficiency of the Acropole.*" [2] Like its name sake, the Acropole Hotel is an historical monument, a less grand version of that genre of historic

hotels to which belong the Pera Palace in Istanbul and St. Georges Hotel in Beirut before the Lebanese civil war and which, like them, fairly rocks with sources.

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

During the Second World War Panaghis Athanassios Pagoulatos fled civil war on his native island of Cephalonia, found a Greek bride named Flora Adrian Vanos in Alexandria, Egypt, and they moved on to Khartoum to seek their fortune. It was a logical move as at that time there was a community of several thousand Greeks in Khartoum. After working for the British authorities for a while, Panaghis Pagoulatos set himself up as an accountant. Sometime later he opened a night club.

All went well until Pagoulatos's neighbour, the British Governor, across from whose palace the nightclub thrived to all hours, complained of the noise and unceremoniously closed down the club. Forced to search for other means of livelihood, Papa Pagoulatos demonstrated acute understanding of his adopted country. Observing the well known Sudanese sweet tooth as well as a considerable fondness for alcoholic beverages, the transplanted Greek opened both a patisserie and a liquor dealership. But Panaghis Pagoulatos was a visionary with considerable business sense and in 1952 he also set up the Acropole Hotel in rented premises.

Following their father's death in 1967 his businesses passed into the hands of his three sons: Athanassios the eldest and George, both in their early twenties, and Gerassimos, who was still a child. Athanassios married Angela, also a Greek, and George married Eleanora, an Italian, and all four of them have subsequently played major roles in Acropole development and management. Although Gerassimos eventually lived outside Sudan for some time, in recent years he and his wife Colette have also been involved in managing

the family's hotel in Khartoum. It should be evident that the Acropole Hotel is both a labour of love and a shrine in honour of Panaghis Athanassios Pagoulatos and Flora Vanos Pagoulatos [3].

Back to the beginning, the Pagoulatos businesses thrived well until 1983 when President Nimeiri introduced Islamic law. After that it wasn't long until – to the sorrow of a significant percentage of the population – alcoholic beverages were banned. Over a decade later, while I lived in Sudan, Khartoum society still spoke with raw emotion of the sad day when a Presidential decree culminated in a grand ceremony during which hundreds of bottles of Johnny Walker and similar sinful concoctions were poured into the Nile. On that same day the two bars and two wine shops owned by the Pagoulatos family were closed. There was no compensation.

SURVIVAL OF THE ACROPOLE

How has this out of the way Acropole, this historic remnant and monument of love for a long departed father, managed to survive? The first stage of the Sudanese civil war began in 1955, a year before independence from Britain, and lasted until 1972. Most of the fighting was in the southern states, air travel to many parts of the country was relatively secure and hundreds of foreigners continued to live and work in Khartoum and other Sudanese cities. As there were still large herds of animals to be photographed and hunted, the tourist trade was brisk. But Nimeiri's nationalisation programme, followed by the 1973 assassination by Palestinian militants of three diplomats - the American ambassador, the American deputy chief of mission and the Belgian chargé d'Affaire -- changed all that. And when civil war broke out again in 1983, tourism virtually died.

Prudently, as the great exodus of educated and skilled Sudanese began during the 1980s and as British-trained cooks retired, died or moved to Saudi Arabia, the Acropole set up a catering service for

garden buffets and diplomatic cocktail parties, a business which continues.[4] But it may have been the great drought and famine of 1988 which saved the hotel. Humanitarian workers and journalists flooded into Sudan and at the Acropole business boomed. Bob Geldof and BandAid members were among those who checked in. Not even the bombing of the Acropole by Black September militants in that same year dented the hotel's reputation despite the death of two Sudanese workers and five British guests, four of them members of one family and three of them children.

"There was nothing political about that bombing," Anathassios insists. *"We were attacked simply because we were the most vulnerable place filled with foreigners."* One part of the hotel was very heavily damaged but the Pagoulatos family had always rented rather than purchased buildings. After the bombing, they tightened their belts, forgot about the former roof terrace, extra bedrooms and large dining room and continued business in the remaining 40 rented rooms. Visitors soon returned to Sudan, the hotel remained in great demand and today most Acropole guests know nothing of that horrific event.

A second stampede of foreigners to Khartoum occurred in early 2002 when a ceasefire was declared in the Nuba Mountains and peace was widely supposed to be about to break out all over Sudan. International attention to Sudan blossomed even more in the run up to the 9 January 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement between northern and southern leaders.

ADVENTURES AT THE ACROPOLE

On one of my early trips back to Sudan following what had looked like a departure of no return in 1999, I travelled from Cairo on a near empty plane with both an ICRC team bent on family reunification schemes and American and Canadian peacekeepers headed for the Nuba Mountains. As I tried to read, *Do No Harm*:

How Aid can Support Peace – or War [5], two members of the Joint Military Commission stood in the aisle near my seat talking indiscreetly:

“Do you know, so and so?” The Canadian asked the American. “Is he carrying?” Their voices dropped: “Are you carrying?” I was not reassured when the two men reassured one another that, yes they were “carrying”. In fact, I could hardly wait to get to the Acropole and safety.

At the Khartoum airport I waited for the Acropole driver with two Baptists from South London who had come to check on the work their church was funding and, if possible, “to poke around a bit and get a better understanding”. They, of course, were also going to the Acropole and we all managed to get into the car George sent, the cheerful Baptists wedged in the backseat on either side of a couple of my suitcases full of eye glasses frames and children’s clothing all of which Lufthansa agents in London had, with a bit of persuasion, kindly waved through without overweight charges. At the Acropole George greeted us with iced *kerkade* juice and had our luggage carried up, but not before I spotted a British archaeologist I knew slightly who was working at Suakin on the Red Sea and a Kenyan general I’d recently met at a conference in Oxford. It was like coming home again.

“Hotel is busy,” George had emailed a week earlier. “CNN is here, tomorrow, the National Geographic reporter is leaving after an extensive visit around Khartoum, the north, Juba, Jebel Marra. FAO delegation for the Livestock Management meeting, etc.”

Tourist numbers and also UN personnel were up again, it turned out, as well as the usual missionaries, businessmen and archaeologists. Still, George had managed to fit me in.

LIVING AT THE ACROPOLE

Standing on the balcony after unpacking on that first stay at the Acropole, I looked out at the recently reopened Sahara Hotel across the road and congratulated myself. The Sahara is outwardly like the Acropole but lacks the Acropole's historical soul. Nor do the cognoscenti stay in the sterile Hilton, the refurbished Grand Hotel where tea dances were held during the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium or at the Palace Hotel where some years earlier I had marched into the kitchen waving a dumpling which the Sudanese waiter had adamantly reassured me was vegetarian. "*Of course it has meat in it!*" the Chinese cook told me in Mandarin, second language of my childhood. "*What else would I put into a jaozi?*" Such an error would never occur at the Acropole where cooks strive valiantly to replicate the venerable cuisine of the British Empire.

I have also learned that it is wise to keep on the good side of the Acropole *suffragis*, in particular the two ancient men in *jallabiyahs* who, like old people everywhere, are full of wisdom but, quite rightly, let you know if you break 'the rules'. Both of the grand old Babikers had been employed at the Acropole for over 50 years by the time I started staying there and ten years later they are both still going strong. Once when one of my Sudanese colleagues arrived late for lunch, Babiker reprimanded him sharply for keeping me waiting. This, surely, is service above and beyond.

After the dining room, the next best places to meet your fellow Acropole residents are the first floor reception and the narrow corridors decorated with old maps and paintings. Traders, aiders, missionaries and other hopefuls drape themselves over the sofas near the reception desk, reading newspapers in several languages, many of which in bygone years were donated by whoever was last off the Lufthansa flight [6]. Copies of the *Khartoum Monitor*, set up in 2000 and now Khartoum's premier English language daily,

are available unless government censors have once again confiscated an issue.

Permit me to digress here in honour of the *Monitor*. I was never a particular fan of Sudanese newspapers until I discovered the Acropole but now my eyes are opened. Take one good example. Run by southerners, the *Khartoum Monitor* is periodically shut down for politically incorrect reporting such as suggesting that government troops brought HIV back from the South and that slavery does still occur in Sudan. Although there are a number of local English newspapers in Khartoum these days, some of them on the cutting edge between creative English and independent thought under siege, the *Monitor* remains my favourite. I am in particular awe of this newspaper's ability to find and print, almost on a daily basis, photographs of the truly ugliest political and military leaders on earth.

Given that the Sudanese population is much better looking than the newspaper's readership is led to believe, the photographs appear to have a political significance which I have not yet been able to decipher although I suspect that even the position of a story in the *Monitor* is meant to be significant. For example, back in print, after being punished for its claim about AIDS, the *Monitor* defiantly placed two major stories side by side: one was about AIDS and the other about recent troop movements [7]. This is courageous journalism at its best and I would never have known about it had I not taken up residence at the Acropole from time to time.

IN TRIBUTE TO THE ACROPOLE

The Acropole, like the *Monitor*, is a lifeline to many things and one morning I decided to try to ferret out why. One or more of the Brothers Pagoulatos generally spend most of the morning in the office off the reception and I waited my turn as guests asked for sunscreen or help in obtaining a visitor's permit, Sudanese dinars,

a trip on the Nile, advice on how to avoid malaria, confirmation that a fax had gone or sometimes just to ask why Khartoum has no phone book.

What have you learned from all this effort, I asked Athanassios. '*Hospitality and patience*', he said, '*and how to be trustworthy*'. '*Will you stay on in Sudan after you retire*', I wondered. A great sadness enveloped him.

'Up until 1983 there were about 15,000 Greeks in Sudan, many with dual citizenship' he replied. '*We had churches and schools in Wau, Juba, Wad Medani and Gedaref as well as Khartoum. But now we Greeks are less than 150 here. There is no cultural life. Only work and home.*' He shook his head and admitted the bitter truth: the Family would leave. An era would come to an end.

Later I tried my questions on George and Eleanora as he drove us to a dinner given by other white Sudanese in their villa on the Nile. George didn't have time to reply before dropping us off but said he hoped to join us later after sending a boat load of East Germans on a Blue Nile cruise. I had come to understand, however, that George and Eleanora are people of action, not of words, and that the dedication of these innkeepers arises from four essential sources: a deep sense of family loyalty and integrity, faith in God, love for justice and commitment to the gift of hospitality.

The old *suffragis*, I also realise, are not still working because they are always efficient but because they would be heartbroken if asked to retire. Besides, they are picturesque and know where everything belongs and how things should be done. Even more important, there is manifest grace at the Acropole. For example, a geriatric taxi driver in a clapped out car -- '*I worked for the British! Everything has broken down since they left!*' -- was half apologetically summoned for me by George on several occasions when I asked for a driver. Once or twice George even insisted on

paying for this old driver as a donation to the work I do with impoverished women. On reflection, quite a few of the people who work for the Acropole are not entirely useful, but in their neediness have a contribution to make to the rest of us. By bringing them to me and to others, George and his family help us to see what they see – and I am grateful.

The countless hours of service to all who stay at the Acropole and for me (and how many others?) the reduced rates and unbilled items all reflect an energy which I recognise as grace. In the dining room there is a more obvious clue: an enormous painting of Jesus, the Suffering Servant. This painting was the only significant item in the hotel to survive the bombing of 1988.

Occasionally when there was written work to get through or people who wished to see me privately rather than at the **Together for Sudan office**, I have stayed in the hotel and been carried through the day on a soft Gregorian chant compliments of the establishment. Perhaps it was on one of those days that I understood at last that the Pagoulatos family has a calling to create space and opportunity for others. Theirs is a work of facilitation, what the New Testament refers to as ‘the gift of helps’.

During the last morning of my first stay at the Acropole, a northern Sudanese business man I had not seen for a long while burst into the dining room as I was eating breakfast. Highly educated, creative, sensitive, bound by a culture and religion which he loves but wishes would become more flexible, this friend sat beside me distraught and in tears. But the Acropole is a place where he could speak freely, a place where I could listen to him and no one think it strange. ‘Write about us!’ he ordered me. *‘Write about the modern Sudanese! We have lost our identity because we refuse to admit who we are. Sadiq El-Mahdi’s grandmother was a Nuba slave. Bona Malwal’s [8] father sent half of his 40 children to church and half to the mosque. We are as mixed up as the Americans and*

could be as creative. But we deny who we are. Write about us! Help us to admit it!' I have heard similar words from both northern and southern Sudanese women.

A FINAL REFLECTION

Africa has strong effects on people, not least on Africans themselves. Or perhaps it is more accurate to say that tragedy and need can bring out both the best and the worst in all of us. Certainly trouble and weakness stimulate some to feast on the misery of others and representatives of this group do show up at the Acropole although they are, I believe, few. There are others who find in the suffering of the Sudanese, an opportunity to give of themselves. Among these givers are some who are themselves deeply wounded by life yet go to the assistance of others for in doing so they find personal healing and considerable joy. This, too, is facilitated by the Acropole.

Taking me to the airport at the end of that visit in early 2002, George finally answered my question of several days earlier: *'We have a candle burning in us, Eleanora and I. When it goes out, we shall have to leave Sudan.'* 'Not yet, Lord', I prayed silently. *'Let me first get my American goddaughter here to meet my Sudanese goddaughter. Let me use the Acropole for a while longer to facilitate the work of Together for Sudan [a charity: see Sudan Studies 40 (July 2009)]. Let me come here again and again for the blessing I feel in this safe and restful space which the Pagoulatos family has created'.*

A year or so later I was finally able to take my nineteen year old American goddaughter to Sudan. There, during an eye care outreach in the grinding heat and sandy wind of the Soba Aradi displaced persons settlement, she fainted and was revived and comforted by impoverished, displaced women. *'In India I saw poor people but didn't get to know them,'* Sasha told me later as I

took her back to the Acropole. 'In India we lived away from them.' 'When we look with compassion on the suffering of others,' I told her, 'sometimes we see God'. Then I put her to bed in the safe haven of the Acropole Hotel where, as anyone with an open heart can see, God has been at work on many of us for a considerable period of time.

POST SCRIPT 2012.

It has been a decade since I wrote most of the above and the Acropole Hotel is still going strong. However, the three sons of Panaghis and Flora Pagoulatos and their wives are near the age of retirement with no indications that the next generation will take over the Acropole from them. Nor do present circumstances in Sudan suggest that it would be necessary or wise for them to do so. I am consoled to know that, although the world has changed, the Pagoulatos's contribution to modern Sudan and to those who seek to support and to befriend the Sudanese people has been enormous. Hundreds if not thousands of people, both Sudanese and foreigners, must be deeply grateful for the safe haven and the support, the 'gift of helps', which the Pagoulatos family have provided for us.

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1. Both these men worked at the Acropole Hotel since it opened in 1954. Aly, another long time retainer, retired some years ago.
2. Jonathan Randall (15 May 1995) 'Bed, Breakfast – and More-in Sudan' *The Washington Post*.
3. Flora Vanos Pagoulatos died peacefully in February 2010 in the Khartoum home of her second son George and his wife Eleanora with whom she had been living for many years.
4. As one example, Deborah Scroggins of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution discovered in 1988 through contacts made at the Acropole that the famine she was *en route* to investigate in



Ethiopia was also active in Sudan's provinces of Darfur and Bahr el Ghazal. See chapter seven in Deborah Scroggins (2002) *Emma's War*, New York, Pantheon Books.

5. Mary Anderson (1999) *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – or War*. Boulder, Colorado, Lynne Rienner Publishers.

6. Between the mid-1990s and 2004 when British Airways resumed flights to Khartoum, Lufthansa was the only European airline to fly to Sudan.

7. In 2003 Human Rights Watch awarded the *Khartoum Monitor* its Hellman-Hammett award for writers targeted for political persecution. In July 2003 the Sudanese Court of Crimes Against the State revoked the *Monitor's* license to publish on a charge relating to a 2001 article about slavery in Sudan.

8. Bona Malwal is a well-known southern leader, former government minister and journalist who lived in Britain for many years during which he carried on a campaign against his fellow Dinka, the late SPLM/A leader and first President of South Sudan John Garang.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH SUDAN

John A Akec¹

If we are to trust in Mahatma Gandhi's wisdom that the future depends on what we do at present, we will be obliged to conclude that the future of higher education in South Sudan is in limbo. Looking at the current policies of South Sudan's Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (if we can call them policies at all), it would appear that not only are we failing to plan properly for the future, but planning tirelessly to fail the higher education sector in our new nation as a whole. It will have dire consequences for the socio-economic prosperity of the nation both in short and long term if nothing is done to change the current trajectory, especially given the fact that South Sudan needs a skilled human capital in order to exploit its huge potential for energy, agricultural, and water resources; build value-added industries and manufacturing bases; and compete in the global marketplace. This article will attempt to examine the status of higher education in South Sudan, the challenges the sector faces, the implications of the current policies of the Ministry of Higher Education, and provide some pointers to the way forward.

PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH SUDAN

We cannot discuss the status of higher education in South Sudan without referring to Sudan of which South Sudan was a part until July 2011. In the author's view, Sudan ran an elitist model of higher education it inherited from the colonial administration. As recent as the 1990s, the country had merely three public

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universities admitting just a few thousands out of 100,000 students taking university entrance examinations every year.

Egypt, which by then was operating a mass higher education policy, provided more opportunities for Sudanese to study at its universities.

Sudan's public higher education was underfunded, and relied too much on an outdated, élitist model of capacity building that favoured only the brightest — a small section of the potential student population.

Sudan, however, after decades of a stagnant higher education sector, began to adopt a mass higher education strategy. The number of higher education institutions soared from three in 1990 to twenty six in 2011. And the total student enrolment at Sudanese universities has increased from 8,000 in 1989, to 500,000 in 2011.

Out of this number, South Sudan's share was a mere 13,000 at best. This is not surprising given the fact that South Sudan has always trailed behind other regions of Sudan in education and other areas of socio-economic development that was further aggravated by the long North-South war. For example, a study showing the distribution of newly admitted students to higher education institutions in Sudan in 2005/2006, based on seven main regions of the country, revealed the share of the South Sudan to be 4%, compared to that of Khartoum (34%), Central Sudan (30%), Northern Sudan (10%), Darfur (8%), Eastern Sudan (8%), and Kordofan (6%) (Table 1). That means South Sudan is starting from an extremely low baseline, and there is ample room to boost its total student enrolment at university by expanding its higher education institutions and admitting more students annually.

As of July 2011, South Sudan had nine public universities, of which four are still setting up the necessary infrastructure and only five have students on their campuses. This year, there are

15,000 applicants competing for 3,000 places at these five functioning universities (Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1 The distribution of newly admitted students to Sudanese universities in the academic year 2005/2006 according to Sudan regions

Region	Percentage share of newly admitted students
Khartoum	34
Central	30
North	10
Darfur	8
East	8
Kordofan	6
South	4
Total	100

Source: El Tom, *Al-Medan* Newspaper, April 2012.

By any standard, this system sends too many students out to the world with no skills and no access to higher education. As demand increases in time and supply stays static, the situation can only deteriorate, especially that there were 1.4 million children enrolled in primary school by 2010 whilst over 44,000 students are enrolled in some 158 secondary schools, according to latest statistics by the Ministry of Education and General Instruction (this number is expected to jump next year when South Sudan switches from the Sudan system to a new school system in which secondary school starts in year eight and ends in year twelve). A recent UNICEF report reckons the rate of increase of school enrolment in South Sudan is the fastest in the region. This is all the more worrying as this increase in enrolment at school level is not matched by expansion in the number of higher education institutions.

Most recently, a higher education bill was passed by the National Legislative Assembly and was signed into law by the

President of the Republic. This was followed by the formation of a National Higher Education Council tasked with prime policy-making responsibility. The Council is headed by the Minister of Higher Education, Science, and Technology. Controversy was sparked when the newly formed Council membership excluded the new public universities and private universities and colleges.

The Council membership is dominated by veteran, semi-retired South Sudanese academics (most of whom were products of the outmoded élitist higher education system in Sudan) who favour a policy of erecting fewer but well maintained universities. The Council is vehemently opposed to private universities.

However, in order to be competitive in the knowledge economy, South Sudan must turn out a skilled workforce in larger numbers every year, and at a faster rate than would be produced by a narrower, élitist model of higher education.

Table 2 Public and Private Higher Education Institutions in North Sudan

Institution	Public (government funded)	Private Philanthropic or
Universities	26	7
Colleges	20	48

Source: Sudan Admission Office, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Khartoum, September 2010.

PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH SUDAN

South Sudan has witnessed a mushrooming of private higher education institutions (PHEIs) since 2005. As of May 2012, there were some 34 PHEIs, most which were operating without



license under inadequate provisions of infrastructure and poor quality of teaching. The PHEIs attract mostly former SPLA combatants and working adults whose education was interrupted by the North-South war. The advantage of PHEIs is that they are able to admit students who have no Sudan School Certificate or its equivalent. Another advantage is the flexibility of time table (most operate in afternoons and evenings).

Table 3 Public and Private Higher Education Institutions in South Sudan

Institution	Public (government funded)	Private Philanthropic or
Universities	9	34*
Colleges	No record	No record

Source: Government of South Sudan Ministry of Higher Education, Juba, 2012.

*22 of private higher education institutions were closed down in May 2012 by the Ministry of Higher Education.

It is small wonder that the decision by the Ministry of Higher Education to close down 22 of these private universities and colleges has generated a heated debate. The reason, according to Dr. Peter Adowk Nyaba, South Sudan Minister of Higher Education, is to put more emphasis on quality as opposed to quantity.

However, many former students of the PHEIs affected by the closures and their sympathizers accuse the Ministry of Higher Education of lacking pragmatism and describe the decision as an attempt to reinvent the wheel when it should have learned from accumulated experiences of many African countries in the provision of private higher education.

Many African countries have legislations that define the steps to be followed leading to registration and accreditation and

recognition of PHEIs. In others, there are PHEIs that are neither registered nor recognized by the accrediting bodies, yet still attract students. Cameroon is one such example where many private institutions operate illegally, and yet many of their graduates still find jobs. What that demonstrates is that even bad education where it might be found is still better than no education. In India, 90 percent of undergraduate education is carried out by PHEIs that are funded by the government.

A country from which South Sudan could learn invaluable lessons is South Africa because the country suffered from the discriminatory effect of Apartheid that marginalized its black majority in access to higher education. Since the ascendancy of black majority rule, the country has developed an elaborate system of ascension for school drop-outs and adults seeking a second-chance to join a university. South Africa also has 71 PHEIs, the highest number of PHEIs on the continent.

In contrast, South Sudan has no such bridging courses, and yet has decided to close down private higher education institutions with no alternative in sight.

CHALLENGES FACING HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH SUDAN

Before the Sudan broke up in July 2011, there were about 956 North Sudanese academics in five functioning South Sudanese universities, of which 451 were based at University of Juba alone where they formed 73 percent of the estimated 620 academic staff's total head count at that university (the University of Juba is the oldest and largest of South Sudanese universities).

Nearly 700 Northerners were employed in administrative, technical, and support roles. In the majority of colleges and schools in Southern universities, the number of Northern academics averaged 65 percent. In colleges such as veterinary and medicine, the percentage of North Sudanese academics

could be as high as 90 percent or more. On average most South Sudan universities have lost an average of 65 percent of their teaching staff. And some departments have been closed because of the lack of staff. Other subjects such as pharmacy, dentistry, and petroleum engineering are not offered at any of South Sudan's universities. There is no coherent and well articulated strategy by the Ministry of Higher Education to meet the shortage of academic and technical staff. There is a grave shortage of lecture halls, laboratories, and equipment at South Sudan public universities. Most of the functioning universities relocated to Khartoum during the war. After independence, most of their accumulated assets and equipment were impounded by the Sudan government. As of time of writing, the University of Juba remains closed since March following inter student violence, and the University of Bahr El Ghazal is operating at half its capacity (Colleges of Medicine and Veterinary Science remain closed).

Moreover, the South Sudan Ministry of Higher Education has no capacity and system to make arrangements for a new student and staff intake, and has to rely on Sudan's Ministry of Higher Education to do it for them.

A combination of poor planning and lack of vision by the Ministry of Higher Education, and absence of political will by the government, has meant that no students have graduated from any South Sudan university since 2010 and no new students have been admitted to South Sudan universities in the last two academic years (that is, academic years 2010/2011 and 2011/2012).

THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

In an early attempt to evolve a collective vision on the future of higher education in South Sudan, Academics and Researchers Forum for Development (ARFD), a think-tank and an advocacy

forum in South Sudan, in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, the Republic of South Sudan, organised a conference entitled "*The Future of Higher Education in South Sudan*" at Heron Campsite Hotel, Juba, between 14 and 15 November 2011.

The conference was attended by many fledgling and seasoned South Sudanese academics. The speakers at the conference came from various South Sudanese universities, the Republic of Sudan, USA, Norway, United Kingdom, Egypt, South Africa, Kenya, and Uganda. About twenty one papers were presented.

The themes covered by the papers included: quality assurance and accreditation; networking as a strategy for building up human resources; consolidation of higher education institutions; building new universities as vehicles for socio-economic development; management challenges in higher education; students' accommodation; media education; building new university campuses based on American university work models; meeting the increasing demand for higher education; elitist versus mass higher education; and so forth.

Recommendations of the conference included: urging the institutions of higher education to strive to design curricula that are aligned with the needs of South Sudan; asking the national government to allocate adequate resources for research, building lecture halls, libraries and laboratories. Whilst consolidating the quality of the current universities, the government must also increase access to higher education through expansion of higher education institutions. In order to develop human capital and staffing capabilities, universities must collaborate and network with other peer institutions, nationally, regionally, and globally; technical education must be developed concurrently with academic higher education with government putting in place institutions and mechanism for quality assurance. The proposed Council for Higher Education in South Sudan is urged to devise a mechanism for the ranking of institutions of higher education. Higher education institutions must embrace values of good governance, innovation, and enterprise; government and



institutions of higher education should review the students' accommodation model inherited from Sudan with a view to correcting shortcomings. The forthcoming Council for Higher Education should give special attention to the regulating and licensing of private higher education. Fixed retirement of tenured professors should be abolished and made optional.

Many participants advised that the government takes a second look at its policy of free higher education for all because it is not going to be sustainable with the expansion in higher education. Instead, they argued, the government should devise a cost recovery strategy in which students must make their contribution, and only financially support those who cannot.

Unfortunately, very few of the recommendations made their way into the policies agreed by the first meeting of the National Council of Higher Education in May 2012.

THE WAY FORWARD

In order to overcome challenges faced by the higher education sector and meet South Sudan's needs in skilled human capital, the government should adopt a mass higher education strategy. And the country should have at least one public university in each of its ten states. Innovative schemes to resolve funding challenges must be devised. There is also a need to improve quality in teaching mathematics, basic sciences, and English at school level which will lead to improved standards at university level in the long-term.

In order to attract academics who have abandoned the lecture hall for greener pastures (working for the government or NGOs) as well as ex-patriate academics, the pay structure for university teachers must improve.

Students and parents must contribute to educational costs through self-financing and loans. And more loans must be available to students studying science and technology. The newly formed National Council for Higher Education has issued



a statement to this effect although the implementation details are sketchy.

Financing a new drive for public education will need support from the country as well as development partners. Creation of a 'petroleum fund' that draws from oilfield revenues could provide vital support for general and higher education.

Development partners can help financially or in kind — by building laboratories, donating books and equipment, and funding international staff exchange programmes between universities.

To meet the shortage in academic and technical staff at South Sudan's universities, the country needs to agree a policy of recruiting ex-patriate academics for the next fifteen to twenty years. This should be studied, budgeted, and the policy adopted with clear implementation guidelines put in place.

Finally, the Ministry of Higher Education must provide an incentive for each public university to choose to become a centre of excellence in one or more subject areas, and encourage universities to avoid the current replication of academic programmes. Sound policies and co-ordination will be crucial for their success and for the country's prospects for building a technical workforce for development.



SUDAN DOCUMENTS AT WINCHESTER COLLEGE LIBRARY

[John Udal, who served in the Sudan Political Service from after the Second World War until Independence, has presented his collection of Sudan materials to Winchester College Library].

John writes:

While Great Britain is well served with a comprehensive network of academic libraries, inevitably perhaps on specialized African subjects, including the Sudan, research access is limited geographically.

In the publication of my two volume 'opus' *The Nile in Darkness, 1504-1899*, I acquired quite a collection of authoritative books which the Fellows' Library of Winchester College have been willing to accept. More than 30 Wykehamists served the Sudan Civil Service during the Condominium 1899-1956, well exceeding those from any other school.

The College has generously consented to making this 'Udal Collection' additionally available to outside scholars during the Library's regular opening hours and, at other times, by private arrangement with the office of the Fellows' Librarian. Particularly to those resident in South East England, this offer could be helpful.

Any committed researcher seeking to use this facility should first contact the Fellows' Library, Winchester College, College Street, Winchester SO23 9NA; e-mail wgd@wincoll.ac.uk for permission to access the Collection.

John Udal

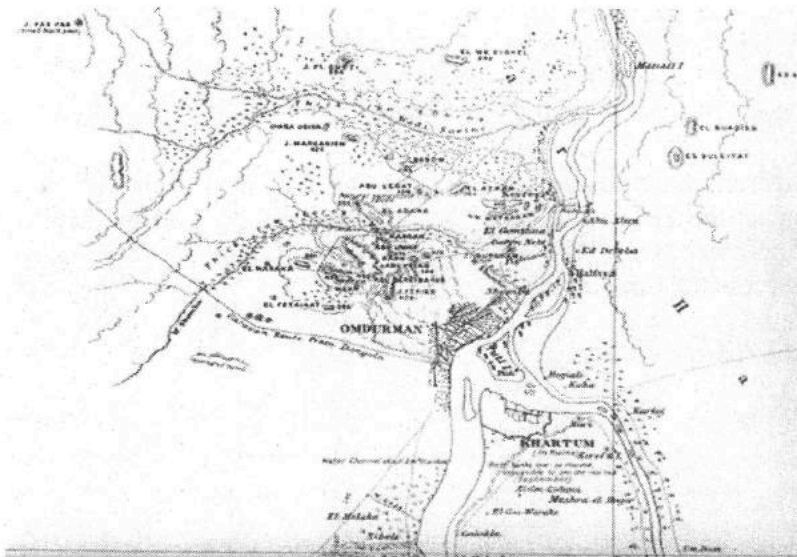


SUDAN MAPS ONLINE

Jane Hogan

In 2008 the Sudan Archive at Durham University was awarded just under £50,000 by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) under their Enhancing Digital Resources programme in order to digitise a range of heavily-used printed and archive material from the Library's Sudan collection and make the material freely accessible on the internet for the scholarly community both in the UK and abroad. The grant, which was matched by the University, enabled us to purchase a high specification digital camera and to appoint a Digitisation Officer for 12 months. The project, which was supported by the Sudanese Association for Archiving Knowledge (SUDAAK) in Khartoum, was completed in 2009 and since then scholars at a distance have been able to consult at

<http://www.dur.ac.uk/library/asc/sudan/> the full text of the *Reports on the finances, administration and condition of the Sudan* (the Governor-Generals' annual reports, 1902-1952), the *Sudan Intelligence Reports* (1889-1902), the *Sudan Government Gazette* (1899-1957), and Sudan Government staff lists (1914-1963).



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Also included in the JISC project was the digitisation of over 800 maps. The Sudan map collection chiefly comprises maps produced by the Sudan Survey Department during the period of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, with some later revised editions produced after independence. Of greatest value is a complete set of Africa 1:250,000 series maps covering the whole of Sudan. Most maps in this series are held in multiple editions, the later ones showing changes in administrative boundaries and the results of new surveys. In recent months the first tranche of these has appeared on Durham University Library's website, the remainder to follow in due course. Access to the maps online is via

<http://www.dur.ac.uk/library/asc/sudan/maps/>. Follow the link on the left of the screen marked "Sudan 1: 250,000 series maps" to find a visual index covering the whole of what is now Sudan and South Sudan. Click on one of the small rectangles to see a particular map, e.g. 55-B for Khartoum and Omdurman. This will bring up the library catalogue where descriptions of each edition of the map available at Durham are held. Only those maps with the icon "Available Online" can be accessed at this stage, but keep checking as more maps will be added in phases. Use the hand symbol to move the map around and the wheel on your mouse to zoom in and out (or the looking glass symbol at the top). Each map can be printed out in sections, but high resolution copies of all the maps are held here and copies can be provided on CD at a cost of £5 per map.

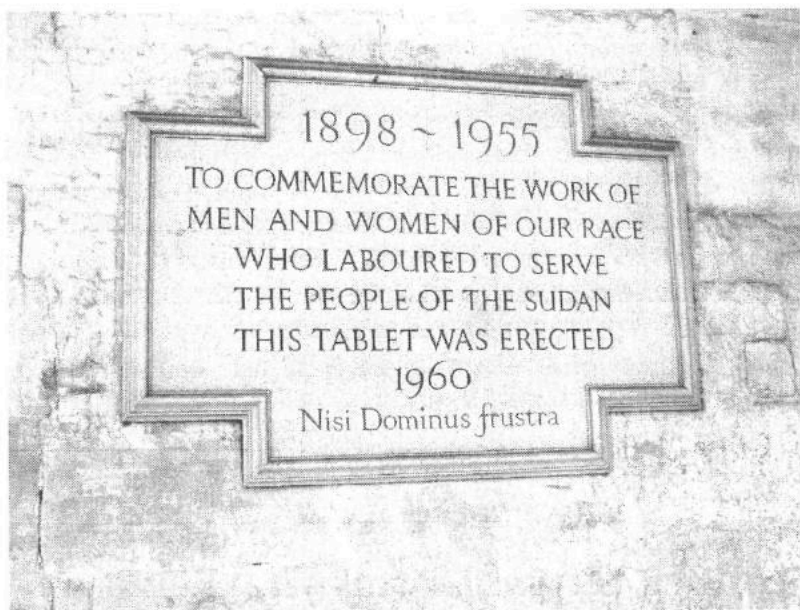
For further details contact Jane Hogan at pg.library@durham.ac.uk.



SUDAN MEMORIAL IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Jack Davies

John Udal reminded me that there was a Memorial in Westminster Abbey commemorating the work of British folk in the Sudan during the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, 1898 to 1955. It is located in the North Cloister.



Copyright: Dean and Chapter of Westminster

The tablet was unveiled on 8 March 1960 by the Duke of Edinburgh. At the service the address was given by Lord Rugby who, as Sir John Maffey, was Governor-General of the Sudan from

1926 to 1933. Among the various dignatories attending the service was the Sudan Ambassador, Sayed Mohammed el Nil. In his address Lord Rugby referred to the personal warmth of friendship between many British and Sudanese. This is a sentiment with which many of us who served in the Sudan in later times would wholeheartedly agree.

[We would like to thank the Dean and Chapter for giving us permission to use this image and for supplying the photograph]



BOOK REVIEW

Pugh, R.J.M., **Wingate Pasha: the life of General Sir Francis Reginald Wingate, 1861-1953**. Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2011.

General Sir Francis Reginald Wingate was born in Renfrewshire, Scotland, in 1861. From a relatively humble background, which included an education at St. James's Collegiate School, Jersey and the Royal Military Academy, he rose through the ranks of the newly-established Egyptian Army. Here, he worked in various administrative roles in Egypt and the Sudan, including appointments as *aides de camp* to the Sirdars of the Egyptian Army, Sir Evelyn Wood and his successor, Sir Francis Grenfell. As director of military intelligence in the Sudan, his reports played a leading role in the success of the Battle of Omdurman in 1898 and, in the following year, he commanded an expeditionary force, which tracked down and killed the Mahdist regime's leader, Khalifa Abdallahi.

At the turn of the century, Wingate was rewarded for his role in the re-conquest of Sudan with the Governor-Generalship of the country and, for the next largely successful sixteen years, was instrumental in building its modern infrastructure. In 1917, he reached what proved to be the pinnacle of his career with his appointment as High Commissioner for Egypt, then the second most important position in the British Empire. He was, however, unable to control the rising tide of Egyptian nationalism and, with minimal support from London, was replaced by Sir Edmund Allenby in 1919. A period of bitter acrimony followed, in which his attempts to rebuild his reputation and obtain suitable re-employment were thwarted at every turn. In spite of this, Wingate's twilight years were relatively happy and prosperous. He received a baronetcy in 1920 and, for the next 30 years, was also a director of several successful companies. He died in 1953, aged 92.

R.J.M. Pugh's book is billed on its dust jacket as the first biography of Sir Reginald Wingate's life but there have been two previously

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published biographies; the first by Wingate's son, Sir Ronald Wingate (which, admittedly, only concentrates on his Sudan years) and a more all-encompassing examination by the American academic, Dr Martin Daly. Pugh makes reference to Daly's work in the foreword; defending the decision for his own biography with the rather weak argument that Daly's was never retailed in the UK. Mirroring Daly's structure, Pugh has opted for a chronological approach with each chapter focusing on a particular stage of Wingate's life. There are also a series of well-chosen photographs in the centre pages, as well as maps, a family tree and a useful list of Wingate's military and civil honours.

The author's main argument, that Wingate remains '*a mere footnote in history*', whose reputation has been surpassed by the more charismatic figures of the period, and who was often underestimated and unfairly treated by his contemporaries, is one made forcefully throughout this book. There is certainly a great deal of truth in this argument, evident, most notably, in the way in which Wingate's role in the success of the Arab Revolt was overshadowed by T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia). Lawrence's heroic reputation was carefully crafted and stage-managed, and part of a lifelong ambition, as Lawrence James posits, to '*fascinate and bewilder posterity*'.¹ Lawrence claimed sole responsibility for winning the Arab Revolt through sheer willpower alone, a bold assertion which even today is still broadly accepted. Wingate, who was responsible for commanding the Hijaz forces and co-ordinating Anglo-Arab activities, arguably deserved the greater credit for the overall success of this campaign but his contribution has largely been written out of history.

While Pugh's argument is not new (Daly puts forward a similar argument) he is able to offer fresh insights into explaining why Sir Reginald Wingate never received the support or acclaim he felt he deserved from the British government. He argues, for example, that there was a class dimension to his often fractious disagreements with other officials. As Governor-General of the Sudan, he regularly clashed with the Consul General of Egypt, Sir Eldon Gorst and his High Commissionership was beset by an uncommunicative and

hostile Foreign Office, centred on the influential 'Cecil clique'. Pugh suggests that the Foreign Office was the archetypal government department, largely staffed by Old Etonians whose nuances of tradition and nepotism were of more importance than administrative ability. Foreign Office officials and those at the upper echelons of the British Government were unlikely to have developed an easy relationship with a man who did not share their privileged background. This was surely a factor, albeit a subconscious one, in the political machinations behind Wingate's eventual dismissal from office in 1919 and his subsequent failure to obtain an alternative government position in the years immediately following. Even T.E. Lawrence, who was not exactly renowned for class snobbery, described Wingate as '*a man who was never much more than a butter-merchant and great-man's friend*' and who '*believed himself great*'.

In his eagerness to absolve blame and to promote Sir Reginald Wingate's more positive aspects, the author has a tendency to ascribe to Wingate characteristics which are not supported in the documentary evidence. Wingate may have held a genuine affection for the Sudanese people but it is questionable that he secretly harboured such anti-imperialist views as supporting self-determination in Egypt and the other Arab nations. On the contrary, there is a wealth of evidence in Wingate's own papers, held in Durham University Library's Sudan Archive, to suggest that he was something of an unapologetic annexationist who wished to see Egypt more firmly attached to the British Empire.ⁱⁱ His willingness to meet with Egyptian nationalist leaders and his support for their attendance at the Paris Peace Conference was based more on a pragmatic need to placate the extremist elements making their presence felt on the streets of Cairo rather than a genuine desire for an independent Egypt. He was also a staunch supporter of Empire Day, so much so that he was a committee member of the Empire Day Movement, which sought to educate (some might say indoctrinate) children in Empire 'values'.ⁱⁱⁱ

Overall, this is a highly readable and accessible survey of the life of General Sir Francis Reginald Wingate and will surely, as the author hopes, '*go some way to ensure his name is not forgotten*' in the popular imagination. Wingate, however, was more of a complex individual than this book would suggest and the reader may be left wanting a more impartial and balanced account. In this sense, Dr Daly's monograph is well worth seeking out.

Jonathan Bush.

ⁱ Lawrence James, 'Lawrence, Thomas Edward [Lawrence of Arabia] (1888–1935)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2011

[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34440>, accessed 21 Jan 2012]

ⁱⁱ See, for example, Wingate Papers, Letter from R. Graham to Wingate, SAD 164/8/26-29. In this letter, Graham suggests that there is a lack of support at the Foreign Office for Wingate's annexationist policy.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Empire Day Movement Report 1931*, SAD.242/5/169



BOOK REVIEW

Ronald M. Lamothe, **Slaves of Fortune: Sudanese Soldiers & the River War 1896-1898**, James Currey, Boydell & Brewer Inc. 668 Mt. Hope Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620, USA, 2011, 227 pages including appendices, notes, bibliography and index.

ISBN 978-1-84701-042-1

Published in the United States and available from Amazon at £45 in hardback.

It is well known that during the Nile Expedition of 1896-98, Sudanese soldiers formed a significant part of the Expeditionary Force. Their major contribution throughout the campaign was recorded by contemporary writers, war correspondents and, most importantly, the officers who commanded them in the field. The words of Bennett Burleigh, G.W. Steevens, Ernest Bennet, General Hunter, Col. MacDonald and others bear witness to their vital role on the battlefield.

On page 4 of the introduction the author states his intention “to reinterpret and rectify” Churchill’s *River War*, a process he also applies to most subsequent histories because they do not adequately recognise and depict the crucial role played by Sudanese troops. He admits that his ‘eclectic, agnostic and scattershot’ approach is intentional and that:

‘the book employs whatever means are necessary to achieve its primary narrative and analytical goals as African history: one, to come closer to depicting it, to employ Ranke’s phrase, wie es eigentlich gewesen [how it actually happened]; and two, in so doing contribute to the ongoing deconstruction of the false binary, once prevalent, of resistor/ collaborator, transcending it with historical complexity and context’.

With this statement of purpose the author invites the reader to proceed further.

The structure of the book is not enhanced by the thematic approach adopted by the author despite his claim that it is semi-chronological. Moreover, his fragmented approach leads to much repetition and adversely affects the balance of the book. In the text we discover a new vocabulary: “*new military history*” (social history), “*new imperial history*”, “*history from below*”, “*British martial race ideology*”, “*Ornamentalism’s constructed affinities*”, “*historiographical exhumation*”, “*Orientalism’s notion of otherness*”, “*ahistorical ciphers*”, “*natal alienation*” etc.,.

The introduction is followed by five chapters of 174 pages. Firstly, the author provides background history of Sudanese soldiers from the time of the Turkiyya until 1896. Subsequent chapters deal with Sudanese soldier identity and social condition, daily life in a Sudanese battalion (pay, rations discipline etc.,) and interactions between British/Sudanese soldiers (camaraderie/competition etc.,). Sprinkled throughout are details of the earlier battles of the campaign, from Firket to Atbara. These intermediate chapters also contain considerable factual information. Gleaned from official records and long forgotten contemporary sources, this material is essential to a better understanding of the origin and development of the role of Sudanese soldiers in the Egyptian Army. Also provided is much needed background information about supporting and non combat roles undertaken by them.

Little known information about individual soldiers is included, notably the memoirs of Ali Jifun, previously published in the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1896 and there are interesting statistics about the Sudanese battalions in the Egyptian Army before and during the campaign.

In the final chapter the author highlights their military role during the campaign, ‘*debunks Churchill’s misleading portrayal of their role at the battle of Omdurman and explores the essential role they played during the Fashoda crisis.*’

The author’s research is thorough, extensive and well documented. Each chapter has a comprehensive notes section and the bibliography contains

a list of archival sources, published primary sources and secondary works. There are also numerous illustrations and maps which support the text. A transliteration note indicates the terminology used in the text, and with few exceptions Arabic words assume their more conventional English form. Names, locations etc., are unchanged from their original sources. There is a glossary and a list of Egyptian Army ranks with their English equivalents.

The book is a classic example of a revisionist historian judging the Victorians and their attitudes by today's standards and opinions. Although he recognises that *'there is much to be taken from contemporary accounts'* (of the campaign) the author states that they *'are often tainted by Victorian attitudes to race and Anglo-paternalism.'* Has he overlooked the fact that those authors were themselves Victorians? He deems the published memoirs of Sudanese soldiers "problematic" because they were written by outsiders who saw Africans as their racial inferiors. Also, that *The River War* has overshadowed most contemporary writings published in the 1890's and *'rehashed versions of Churchill's omissive narrative continue to fill the bookshelves'* (Introduction p.6).

In chapter 4 he refers to *'a River War legacy rooted firmly in 19th century British racial prejudices. For over a century now most historians.....have been simply rehashing the same paternalistic discourse of the late-Victorians'* or *'have chosen to regurgitate the very descriptions of these men that warrant the greatest scrutiny, often parroting the racist language found in contemporary accounts without considering their source or factual basis'*. Whilst a mixture of fair comment, justifiable criticism and reasoned rejection of long held views based on evidence is welcomed, it must be remembered that the impact of new analysis upon the reader may be influenced by the language chosen to express it. Readers do not need to be told *ad infinitum* that certain Victorian attitudes are unacceptable today.

When contemporary writers accord the Sudanese troops high praise the author is not satisfied. At page 161 he states *'it was Sudanese soldiers*

that.... received in many initial accounts the highest praise of any Anglo-Egyptian troops at Omdurman', but in the next paragraph he complains that *'the battlefield performance of Sudanese soldiers was misattributed by most contemporary writers, the credit given to British commanding officers rather than to the men themselves'*. From the research he has undertaken, it should be clear that military commanders cannot win battles unaided and that an unqualified reference to performance relates to all ranks.

The author compares at length Churchill's account of MacDonald's brigade repulsing Yakub's attack during the second phase of Omdurman with those of Bennett Burleigh, Ernest Bennet and General Hunter who were present and contradict Churchill's view conclusively. Churchill wasn't there and relied on the word of others. The issue was worth a couple of succinct paragraphs.

Finally, the author's analysis is not without a few fanciful conclusions. At page 147 we are told of *'a layer of irony in that the British, in the form of these crack Sudanese battalions, had paradoxically become, and continued to be, the direct beneficiaries of the slave trade that they themselves for decades had tried to suppress'*. This conclusion is based on the enrolment of slaves and former slaves in the Egyptian Army many years earlier, some of whom later fought during the campaign.

On the facing page (146) there is a photograph of Mahmud's capture at the battle of Atbara; below is an illustration of Giles's painting "After the battle of Atbara". The author states *'the photograph is interesting in how it differs from the painting.'* In the former they are not *'uniform in appearance, posture and expression.....depicted as individuals'*. No officer is present and the soldiers are at ease. In the painting they are at full attention, with Mahmud, before Kitchener and according to the author, *'somewhat indistinguishable from Mahmud'* although clearly they are in khaki uniform and Mahmud is wearing a *jibba*. The author describes the soldiers as *'appearing to be no more than imperial pawns, doing the ultimate bidding of the British'*. The reason they are at attention is because they are appearing before the Sirdar of the Egyptian

Army. The photograph and the painting depict two different scenes and do not support the author's imaginative conclusion.

There are other examples.

Remove the pretention, rhetoric, verbosity, and tautology of which the author's industry frequently reminds us and we would be left with a shorter and better work. In its present form it is more suitable as a thesis or an exercise for students to précis. At £45 it is also expensive.

Richard Stock

BOOK REVIEW

John Ryle, Justin Willis, Suliman Baldo and Jok Madut Jok (Eds), **The Sudan Handbook**, James Currey, 2011.

This is a book that is what it says on the label – it is a handbook. But that makes it sound like the dull product of a propaganda ministry and it is far from that. Indeed it is a collection of readable, thought provoking and intelligent essays that together provide a thorough introduction to Sudan and South Sudan. It perhaps deserved a more gripping title.

The *Handbook* started life as a series of contributions to a one-week course organised each year from 2004 by the Rift Valley Institute in Southern Sudan. The book covers a wide range of topics in 18 chapters - perhaps better described as essays - by a variety of writers on history from the earliest times to the present, geography, religion, international relations, social anthropology and culture, ending with some thoughts about 'the next Sudan'.

The scope of *The Sudan Handbook* is wide-ranging and comes with an extremely useful glossary, chronology and list of key figures in Sudanese history, culture and politics. While it is in no way a specialist book, it deals with issues intelligently. It is clearly written and, despite having many different contributors, there is little overlap and a reasonable consistency of style. It will be invaluable to anyone who does not have a deep prior knowledge, but is seriously interested in Sudan and South Sudan. Readers, as well as those who have attended the course on which the *Handbook* is based, will be significantly better equipped to understand and do good work in Sudan and South Sudan.

Its underlying premise is that we ignore context and history at our peril. The course, and then this book, argues that to



understand what is happening now, we need to understand what has shaped Sudan over time – its history, culture and geography. The theme of the book – like the British Museum’s exhibition policy – is, as explained in the Introduction, that ‘*an understanding of events as they unfold today needs to be informed by a knowledge of what lies behind them*’.

Sadly, the world teems with examples of diplomats, commentators and aid workers getting things wrong by failing to see the need to understand an issue or a country in all its complexity. It is also a challenge for the under-resourced governments in Khartoum and Juba. Well-intentioned policies made without a thorough understanding of the issues often lead to action that is not effective or – more worryingly – may be counter-productive or damaging. This is one of the biggest mistakes made by policy makers around the world, so it is very welcome that the *Handbook* addresses this issue. It is especially welcome in the case of Sudan and South Sudan as they, perhaps more than other countries, suffer from oversimplified or ill-founded political and media reporting and celebrity attention, leading too often to conclusions that do not stand up.

As I finished reading *The Sudan Handbook* I picked up *The Guardian* to read an article with an eye-catching headline entitled ‘*South Sudan hits at neighbour in border clashes*’. Reducing complex issues to a headline is a necessary part of journalism but having just read the *Handbook* I wanted something better, something more nuanced. As contributors to the book make it clear, Sudan and South Sudan are countries of enormous cultural diversity and ethnic complexity. Ignoring that complexity necessarily leads to superficiality.

The *Handbook* looks at the issue of resource colonialism in Sudan. There have been many expectations of bonanzas in the past – slaves in the nineteenth century, cotton in the next century, oil now, and in the future the prospect of becoming the

breadbasket for countries unable to feed themselves. Over dependence on a single export earner has been problematic for Sudan in the past and highly fluctuating oil prices present enormous problems for economic management in Sudan, and obviously more so in South Sudan.

The *Handbook* does not give much ground for optimism about the future of Sudan and South Sudan. Africa may be 'on the move', but will Sudan and South Sudan be part of that? As writers in the *Handbook* have demonstrated, there have been false hopes in the past and there are difficult issues enough to make us cautious about expecting great changes in the 21st century. One of the positives is in the epilogue where Jok Madut Jok and John Ryle note that '*even at the height of state-sponsored Islamism, with multiple local conflicts between north and south, conflict on religious grounds has been strikingly absent.*' This, together with the fact that young people, who make up such a large proportion of the population in Sudan and South Sudan, are more connected globally, more aware of wider issues and less confined by their parents' prejudices, perhaps provides some grounds for hope.

Peter Elborn



SSSUK

NOTICES



SSSUK NOTICES

**Sudan Studies Society of the U.K.
26th Annual General Meeting and Symposium**

**Will be held
(in association with the Africa/Asia Centre of the School of
Oriental and African Studies and the Royal African Society)**

On

Saturday, 29th September 2012

In

The Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, 09.30 to 16.30

**School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
(off Russell Square)**

Members are strongly encouraged to attend. The two new nations of Sudan and South Sudan have had only one year with their new status and we expect some interesting discussion at the meeting.

Further suggestions and offers for speakers are very welcome. Please contact Gill Lusk: Secretary@sssuk.org

Interested non-members are welcome to attend.

Please see enclosed flyer for booking form and other details.

**Further final details will be on our website:
<http://www.sssuk.org>**



SSSUK COMMITTEE: FOR 2011/2012

As the Annual General Meeting is due to take place on Saturday, September 29th 2012, it seems appropriate to inform members of the make-up of the current committee:

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Notes for Contributors

SSSUK welcomes notes and articles intended for publication, which will be assessed by the Editorial Board. The normal maximum length of an article is 5,000 words including footnotes; longer articles may be accepted for publication in two or more parts. Notes and articles should be typed and double spaced and should normally be submitted as paper copy and as word processed files (in PC format) on diskette or preferably as an e-mail attachment, if at all possible. SSSUK retains the right to edit articles for reasons of space and consistency of style and spelling. *Sudan Studies* aims to follow the editorial style of *African Affairs*, the Journal of the Royal African Society.

Manuscripts are not normally returned to authors, but original material such as photographs will be returned.

It is helpful to have, very briefly (2 to 3 lines), any relevant details about the author – any post held, or time recently spent in the Sudan

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