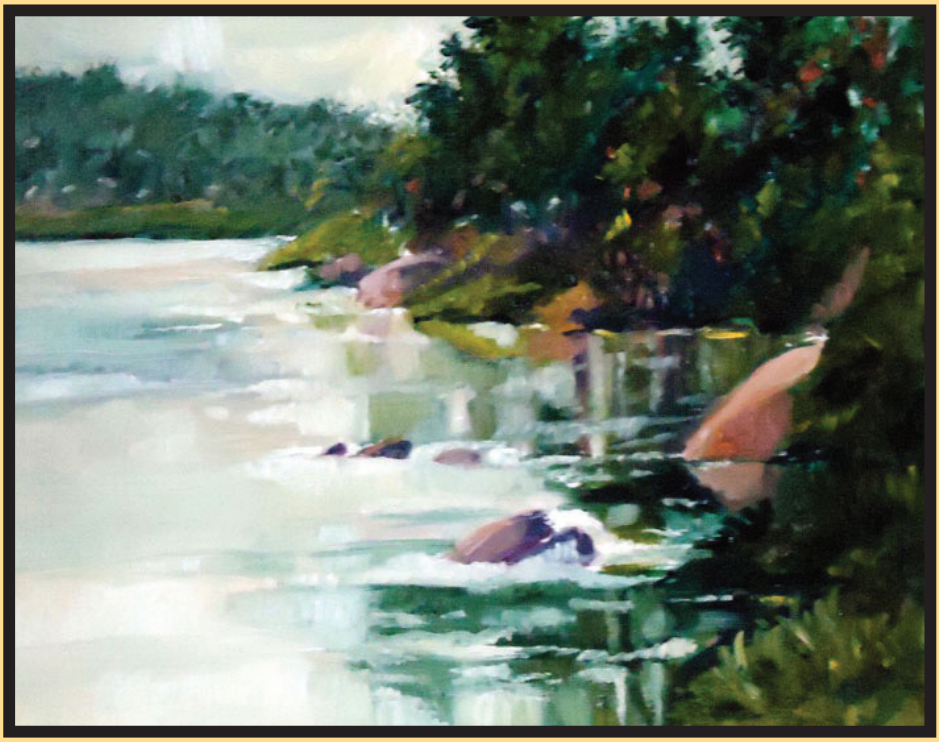
Sudan Studies
for South Sudan and Sudan

Number 56 October 2017



Front cover photograph: 'The Nile in Juba' a painting by Iman Shaggag

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Editorial

This 'summer' issue of *Sudan Studies* (No. 56) is appearing in October, due to unexpected illness in the editorial team. We would like to apologise for this delay and hope to produce the next issue (57) at the usual time, in January-February.

This means that our annual Symposium and Annual General Meeting have already taken place. September 16th was an interesting and stimulating day, the best attended Symposium in recent years. Indeed, the meeting was full, highlighting the need for people to book early next year! The atmosphere was warm and people were visibly enjoying themselves.

We welcomed our first Uduk speaker, indeed almost certainly our first from Blue Nile. Later, Joseph Stalin was quoted – again almost certainly a first! It was clear that our attempts to encourage young people had had some success but we still would like to see more South Sudanese people involved; understandably, the current crisis is very preoccupying for them. In the next issue of *Sudan Studies*, we hope to include contributions from some of this year's speakers.

In this issue, you will find two contributions from noted analysts of the peace process in South Sudan. The first is by **Philip Winter,** who uses his experience of the peace process in Congo-Kinshasa to make suggestions about how the outside world might help South Sudan; the second article is by a speaker from last year's Symposium, **John Ashworth,** who looks at the role of the Church in the peace process.

Ronald Forrest writes about his experiences as a teacher in Sudan in the years straddling Independence in 1956. He worked in secondary schools in Kordofan and Omdurman, and offers insights into attitudes in schools at that time and the wider relationship between Sudanese and British. Then **Aru Muortat** writes about some key South Sudanese leaders from modern history, drawing on material that he presented at last year's Symposium. The SSSUK Chairperson, **Gill Lusk,** reviews this year's report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Sudan and South Sudan, *Engagement Beyond the Centre: An enquiry report on the future of UK-Sudan Relations*.

As readers of the last issue of our journal will remember, we published a brief obituary of one of our members, the ceramic artist Mo Abbaro. This time, his friend **Jillian Osman** writes a personal and moving account of her memories of him. This is followed by a review of the recent art exhibition in London, *Sudan: Emerging Singularities,* by **Raphael Cormack**. The exhibition featured work by Mo Abbaro and photographs of his ceramics by its curator, Frédérique Cifuentes-Morgan.

Finally, **Francis Gotto** presents the first of what is to be a regular newsletter from the Sudan Archive at Durham University, where he is an Assistant Keeper in charge of that Archive.

In the last section, you will find five book reviews. The first two are memoirs of Sudan in very different historical periods: the academic **Willow Berridge** writes on Steve Howard's book *Modern Muslims: A Sudan memoir,* which is an account of his experiences with the Republican Brothers in modern Sudan, while the retired Editor of *Sudan Studies*, **Jack Davies**, reviews Richard Owen's *Sudan Days 1926-1954, A memoir.* This is a series of essays written in 1962 and drawing on his work in the Sudan Political Service.

The third review is by SSSUK committee member and journalist **Jacob Akol** of a book by academic and politician Francis Mading Deng. *Bound by Conflict: Dilemmas of the Two Sudans* analyses the relationship between and within the Sudan and South Sudan. In the fourth review, seasoned analyst and SSSUK member **Aly Verjee** reviews Hilde Johnson's book, *South Sudan: The Untold Story,* a political memoir about her time as Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General in the then newly mandated UN Mission in South Sudan.

Our final book review is by another long-time SSSUK member, **Abdel Aziz Hussein Alsawi**, who has written on Mirghani Hassan's satirical novel *The General and the Frogs,* about the lives of Khartoum University students during the early 1970s.

How Might the Outside World Help South Sudan?

Philip Winter

Introduction

Today, few foreign politicians, United Nations officials or diplomats, be they of Eastern, Western or regional origin, enjoy much influence on the course of governance in South Sudan. The state is bankrupt, conflicts continue, leaders are in denial and human rights a mirage. The hopes of 2011 are shattered but the diplomacy of external threats and incentives – the usual tools – is not working. International and regional powers are disappointed, frustrated and at a loss. Southern intellectuals point out that the answers can come only from South Sudanese themselves. Given that no credible outside intervention is in sight, perhaps all that those wishing to help South Sudan can do is investigate how best to support the efforts of South Sudanese peacemakers, be they from the churches, civil society or traditional authorities.

My own reflections below are based on an engagement with South Sudan which started in 1975, as well as my experience in the 2000-03 Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) peace process. They are offered as a contribution to a debate in which there are no easy answers. I have not attempted to say much about the escalating humanitarian needs, as a quarter of the population is displaced or takes refuge in neighbouring countries: they deserve a review of their own.

Current Approaches

Recently, the testimonies of three analysts[1] to the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations have been published, with three different recommended approaches to the crisis for the US government to consider. One might categorise these as ranging from "disengage, cut relations, pull out, sanction and punish" to, at the other end of the scale, "do more of the same but do it better."

The recent peace process by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development was far too conventional and limited, treating as credible Southern Sudanese leaders who have lost control of the forces they have unleashed. Hence the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan was stillborn. Recently IGAD launched a "revitalisation" process, at which 'Troika' members (US, United Kingdom and Norway) stated that they could invest no more without some signs of progress from the organs of ARCISS.

[1] See Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health Policy, July 26, 2017, by Payton Knopf, Joshua Meservey and Aly Verjee (https://www.foreign.senate.gov/.../south-sudans-conflict-and-famine-07262017).

Ways Forward

There is no "silver bullet" for the successful reduction of internecine conflicts such as those in South Sudan but the experience of the DRC peace process indicates that there are opportunities that peacemakers, indigenous and foreign, could exploit. For example, foreign politicians and diplomats could:

- Review and reformulate the international approach to peace talks;
- Invest much more in diplomatic leadership and coherence;
- Identify more South Sudanese initiatives worthy of their support – peace has a thousand fathers;
- Invest as broadly as possible in "outreach" to all interested parties;
- Make use of the power to convene all interested parties.

While indigenous peacemakers could:

- Promote opportunities, such as national dialogue and local reconciliation, involving traditional authorities, youth and chiefs;
- Insist on inclusivity in any peace process or national dialogue;
- Follow through with war reparations for all households;
- Invest time and effort in outreach to the interested parties;
- Insist that the ARCISS-mandated hybrid court start work soon.

Such efforts are likely to take place against a background of fragmentation and increasing conflict amongst those bearing arms but in the absence of military victory or a credible external intervention, such initiatives will have to be given a chance if the dynamics of war are to be slowed and the incentives to fight reduced.

Revising the Process and Investing in Diplomatic Coherence

The Congo experience

At a comparable juncture in the DRC, after more than two years of negotiations, fighting and meetings, two of the parties, the government and the Mouvement de Libération du Congo (MLC), signed a bilateral deal, outside the scope of the previous Lusaka Accord but with the blessing of the representatives of the US, European Union and Belgium, who were impatient with the slow progress of the facilitation process and had limited confidence in "the Facilitator", the late Sir Ketumile Masire, former President of Botswana, who stuck faithfully to the precepts of the Accord.

When this partial deal failed, a new, more coherent approach was agreed, at a meeting in the basement of the UN building, by all the interested parties – except, to their great disgust, for the Congolese parties required by the Lusaka Accord to participate in the "Inter Congolese Dialogue": the Government, Rassemblement

Congolais pour la Démocratie (RCD), MLC, Political Opposition and Civil Society. It then took a year to put the process back on the track specified in the Lusaka Accord. This was achieved through the combined efforts of the Facilitator, and other African leaders: Kofi Annan, Thabo Mbeki, Mustapha Niasse, Haile Menkerios and several South African ministers.

At this point, there was no major division in the UN Security Council or within the African Union (AU) with regard to the DRC and so concerted international support for a return to the Inter-Congolese Dialogue as first constituted meant that, at length, all three armed parties to the process (i.e. government, MLC and RCD) signed up to a new political dispensation; this brought the Inter-Congolese Dialogue to a conclusion and opened the way for a transitional government and national elections in 2006.

This context: the failure of the bilateral deal in 2002; the fact that donor funds had already been invested; the scale of "excess mortality" in the DRC; and the relative lack of interest from China and Russia, set the stage for a new approach. At the time, the DRC (famously dubbed 'a geological scandal' because of its mineral wealth) was seen to be of more strategic and economic value than South Sudan is today, with its modest oil endowment and its complex layers of conflict.

South Sudan

Today, the Security Council remains divided over South Sudan and IGAD's diplomacy has so far proved incoherent, subject to the unspoken competition of the member states and their interests. The interests of IGAD's member states vary: regional security (all of them); commerce (Kenya and Uganda); regional hegemony, oil and stability (Ethiopia). Egypt, with its national Nile obsession, was left out of peace negotiations since it is not a member of IGAD but it continues to court the government in Juba. The largest foreign investors – China, India and Malaysia – whose oil investments provide most of the income the government receives, have been curiously inactive, at least in public. When Princeton Lyman was US Special Envoy to the Sudans, he told the writer that he hoped to work closely with China but not much seems to have come from that hope.

For it to stand any chance of success, any deal that is tabled by the parties to the conflict – or by others – must have a degree of consent from all those who have the power to implement or undermine it. Ideally this has to happen at four levels: international, regional, national and local. Any change to or rejuvenation of the process, if it is to stand a chance of being implemented, will thus have to involve not only the people of South Sudan, their leaders, their generals and their now multiple militia groups but also the UN Security Council, the Troika and the EU, AU and IGAD.

It would help, too, if Egypt, Malaysia and India could be more involved and

supportive. This alone would involve a major new investment of diplomatic energy. The fighting in South Sudan has not yet generated such an investment but it might yet be forthcoming since a failure to resolve the conflicts in South Sudan adds to the risks of regional instability as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Ethiopia and Egypt manoeuvre to profit from the fault-lines now appearing and re-appearing in the Middle East and the Horn. Meanwhile, eastern Africa is being destabilised, not for the first time, by refugee flows and a flood of light weapons.

Diplomatic Coherence

What then might diplomatic coherence look like in terms of a resolution of the conflict in South Sudan?

In his testimony to the Senate, Aly Verjee suggests a reassertion of US leadership, the appointment of a new Special Envoy and a more measured approach to IGAD and ARCISS, to ensure that an inclusive political process gets under way and gives the South Sudanese hope once more. Payton Knopf meanwhile argues for a more robust approach – to alter the dynamic which has been created in favour of the sitting government in Juba, the legitimacy of which is increasingly open to question, by use of an arms embargo and financial sanctions and penalties. He cites the absurdity of giving US$350 million to Uganda to help with the influx of refugees from South Sudan, when Uganda supplies more than that amount in weapons to the government in Juba. Lastly, Joshua Meservey suggests the US should cut ties with South Sudan, close its embassy, impose sanctions and an arms embargo, and expel some South Sudanese from the US.

All three analysts thus look to the US to reassert itself in some way. At the time of writing however,[2] there is no US Special Envoy and no Under-Secretary of State for Africa. The new US administration has not made known its policy vis-à-vis South Sudan and is offering no leadership. That may change but in the meantime, I would suggest that any effort to create a more coherent international approach should be lead by the appointment by the UN Secretary General of a senior envoy, ideally a former president or a soldier/ diplomat of unimpeachable record or a rebel-turned-statesman – but a politician, not a diplomat. The envoy would be charged with a review of the current process and asked if he or she could take it forward, perhaps building on what ARCISS can offer, rather than scrapping it altogether. This will require diplomatic determination and political imagination of a very high order, combined with a long view and coordination between the new UN Special Envoy, the AU Special Envoy and the UN Representative to the AU, who will collectively have to service such a sustained effort and maintain its momentum and coherence.

[2] July 2017

Facilitation or Mediation?

I would also suggest that, to be workable, any agreement must originate with the parties and be facilitated, not mediated or imposed, i.e. the parties must devise their own way forward with the help of a neutral team, not have an external solution forced upon them.

Much of the substance of ARCISS was apparently proposed, negotiated and agreed by the parties themselves during protracted sessions in Addis Ababa under the auspices of IGAD, so it partly met the necessary criterion of ownership but that ownership was too restricted in that only two parties signed the agreement, under substantial regional and international pressure. Unsurprisingly, it is not working. The difference between mediation and facilitation is that mediation involves listening, establishing "bottom lines", beyond which the parties feel they cannot go, and then exploring possible compromises. Facilitation requires that the parties come up with the compromises themselves, if need be in a forum convened by others not party to the conflict, and that they are supported, cajoled and encouraged, not instructed.

Facilitators have to be strong enough to resist outside influences, too. Symptomatic of the outside pressure from an interested party, Uganda's President Museveni, President Salva Kiir's main supporter, managed to intervene in the IGAD process and was allowed – in violation of all known protocols of negotiation – to change in the government's favour parts of the agreed text which related to power-sharing and demilitarisation of the capital. Since then, the US, Ethiopia and the AU have succeeded in effectively removing a key player, Riek Machar, from the negotiating stage, at least for now. This has not made things any better. In addition, Tanzania opened up another process to reconcile the factions of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement. Such procedural confusions destroy any hope of coherence and suggest that the 'international community' lacks the capacity to manage such a process, at least in this case.

Broadly, the only way forward for outside parties appears to be either to coax the antagonists at long last to implement what they agreed in 2015 or to bring in a wider constituency to develop a new agreement, using external pressures in a more considered way, as part of a wider plan; or some combination of the two. Whatever the forum or framework, unless the majority of South Sudanese themselves can buy in to new approaches, the alternative appears to be endless, fragmented conflicts of the type Somalia and the Central African Republic have suffered.

Communications

Whatever is attempted, it has to be communicated to all interested parties, not once but repeatedly. As IGAD under pressure gradually reduced the peace talks

in Addis Ababa to a power-sharing deal between two belligerents, more and more voices were either silenced or raised in protest at their exclusion. People in South Sudan depended on snippets from friends in Addis Ababa and there was little understanding – and thus support – for what was happening in the hotels there.

In the DRC in 2002 on the other hand, using helicopters of the UN peacekeepers, the Mission des Nations Unies en République Démocratique du Congo (MONUC), a tour of the country's eleven provinces was organised, led by the former Foreign Minister of Botswana, Archibald Mogwe, and Mohamed el Hacen Ould Lebatt, Mauritania's ex-Foreign Minister, to meet civil society and explain what was happening in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue and how the peace deal required them to select their representatives to it. In at least one place, they were met with the assertion that no one from Kinshasa had ever visited them before, let alone explained anything to civil society. Mogwe and Lebatt were diplomatic artillery of high calibre and managed to achieve credible civil society representation at the Dialogue by these means. The contrast with IGAD's outreach is instructive.

That said, the challenge of providing public information in South Sudan is huge. In a limited way, the aircraft of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) ferry Civil Affairs staff and others to numerous locations for outreach but messages about any developments in the peace process could be amplified by further investment in the country's radio stations and telecommunications networks. For this to happen, the current government strictures against journalists local and foreign would have to be removed. Foreign leverage might be of help in this context. Such investments would be important, too, for future elections, which are likely to form part of any peace agreement, even if they look unlikely at present. Most people in South Sudan are illiterate and most are not part of any social media network but many do have mobile telephones, so that spreading messages by visits, meetings and digital means is not impossible.

The private sector would have a role to play here, as well: commercial service providers would need incentives to renovate telecommunications towers – and provide them with solar power not diesel generators – to ensure wide and more reliable coverage. UNMISS might then have to guard them. One could go even further and ask Facebook to prioritise South Sudan in its plan to give people free access to the internet in remote areas without power supplies, using satellites to broaden access.[3] In other words, an ambitious communications plan is a necessary condition for the negotiation, explanation and ultimately acceptance of a peace process (if not a sufficient one) and this is the sort of area where external support is going to be needed.

[3] See https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-08-31/facebook-to-start-africa-satellite-this-week-to-find-rural-users

Of course, another necessary condition for progress is the attainment of a broad ceasefire, one more effective than what is currently in place. It will be very difficult to achieve but it does not need to be perfect or, at the start, comprehensive, and may have its origins in a number of smaller, local initiatives. If talks gain momentum and some armed groups begin to feel marginalised, they will, experience suggests, start to demand access to the negotiating table.

Lastly, the churches of South Sudan, perhaps the only institutions left with any moral standing, have also invested in outreach to their constituents, using a structured approach to national peace and reconciliation. Would-be peacemakers therefore need to ensure that the churches' on-going efforts are not compromised by outside initiatives, which should instead be complementary to whatever progress the churches manage to make and explicitly coordinated with them. Nothing kills a peace process like a competing one.

Exploring New Ideas

If it can be preceded by a ceasefire – or the beginnings of a ceasefire – on the major battlefields, a national dialogue, credible enough to gain momentum and pull doubters in, is a worthy goal. As all analysts have pointed out, a national dialogue has to be as inclusive and independent as possible but, when he announced it, the President positioned himself as the patron, did not consult those he named to organise it and made no concrete offer of security in Juba to his opponents. He did however leave the door open to other ideas and later stood down as patron. Like an election, a national dialogue can be rigged and is not the answer to all a nation's problems but is likely to be a step forward in many ways, i.e. in recognising issues, listing grievances, broadening the search for answers, involving wider constituencies, building support, buying time and slowing the dynamic of violence. The old adage still holds: 'You don't make peace by sitting down with your friends but by sitting down with your enemies.'

Encouraging compromises

There remains a repertoire of metaphorical carrots and sticks that could help to encourage the necessary consent by the parties for the compromises that will have to be made.

ARCISS contained a provision for an AU-sponsored hybrid court. The AU has slowly begun to lay the foundations for such a court and if it is realised, it could be an effective incentive for certain leaders and armed groups to moderate their behaviour. It will need considerable international support, so this is another area where other nations can assist.

No incumbent government will easily give up the right to collect and spend national revenue as it sees fit. In the case of South Sudan, most of the oil wealth

has gone into private hands or been spent to buy weaponry, so that its brief interlude as a middle-income developing country (as measured by per capita gross national product) has disappeared for the foreseeable future and its population is largely impoverished. Its citizens therefore might well support a peace deal which incorporated measures for independent revenue oversight within a transitional government, so that they could receive cash compensation for war damage, drawn from oil revenue. This would fulfil one of the provisions of ARCISS, which stipulated a "Compensation and Reparation Authority" to administer such funds. It would probably require independent international oversight for it to work. It might also be necessary to make the US dollar the unit of account and transaction, as was done by Zimbabwe when printing more and more money destroyed the currency, as has happened in South Sudan today.

Lastly, ARCISS missed whole areas of national life in South Sudan, such as the role of the "customary authorities", already the subject of a number of meetings organised by the Rift Valley Institute and a potential peace-building resource which it is foolish to ignore. In addition, years of analysis pointing out how elders have lost power over the youth and that cattle-camp leaders have to be involved in local peace initiatives do not appear to have been taken seriously enough by would be peace-makers.

How to disarm the bulk of the population is another area that needs more commitment and imagination, given the failure of past efforts. Would it for example be possible in future to link internationally-funded local provision of health services, education and roads to the surrender of weaponry? Of course, no one will give up their weapons if their neighbours have not done the same or if soldiers and rebels are on a rampage but this is a goal that cannot be abandoned, however long it takes, if South Sudan is ever to be governable again.

The Church and Peace in South Sudan

John Ashworth*

Abstract

The Church in South Sudan has a unique credibility and moral authority. It was the only institution which remained on the ground with the people throughout the 1983-2005 civil war. It has been involved in peace processes at all levels since 1972. This article seeks to trace some of those activities and show the relevance of the Church to resolving the current conflict.

Introduction

The current conflict in South Sudan which began on 15th December 2013 and is now in its fourth year needs no introduction for readers of this august organ. Suffice it to say that in mid-2017, the single word that sums up the state of the nation is "fragmentation" or perhaps "splintering" as the United Nations (UN) puts it.[1] No longer can the conflict be described as a power struggle between two political leaders or factions.

The opposition has indeed splintered. Although Dr Riek Machar is still the best known figurehead and cannot be ignored (despite the best efforts of many international actors to keep him sequestered in South Africa), he long ago ceased to be the effective director of the opposition. As well as the very early division between himself and the 'Former Detainees', (all ex-government members), and subsequent splits in the Nuer forces followed by the Collo (Shilluk), a new opposition has sprung up in Equatoria. Initially many Equatorians kept out of the fray – "let the Nilotics fight amongst themselves but not on our land" – but misbehaviour by government forces, the Sudan People's Liberation Army, guarding the cattle of the "big people", which had been brought to Equatoria for safety, led to the resurgence of local self-defence forces ('Arrow Boys'). They were not initially fighting against "the government" but only against what they perceived as invading or occupying forces of the SPLA. It became convenient for them to claim to be part of the formal opposition – seeking to legitimise their struggle, with the hope that they would be supplied with weapons – while it was to the advantage of the opposition to support the claim as it was seeking to portray itself as more powerful and broadening the ethnic appeal. At the same time, the lesson has been well learned that in South Sudan, if you want a share of power you must take up arms. While many leaders are known only locally, the defection of General Thomas Cirillo, a Deputy Chief of Staff, brings to the fore a household Equatorian name with a credible military background and it bears watching. Some

[1] United Nations, Splintering of South Sudan war makes peace more elusive June 20th, 2017 http://www.reuters.com/article/us-southsudan-unrest-idUSKBN19B0AB

relatively powerful opposition military forces exist and skirmishing continues in many parts of the country but so far, the internal conflicts within the opposition have precluded any unified offensive against the government.

The government itself has also been weak and divided from the start. Individual politicians and political factions, pressure groups such as the Jieng (Dinka) Council of Elders, the military and indeed different figures within it (cf. the recent sacking of the Chief of General Staff, Gen. Paul Malong Awan), ethnic militias, the national intelligence organs, family and communal groupings, all have exerted pressure on a President who often seems to be isolated from decision-making. The entrance into government of Taban Deng's faction of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-in-Opposition (SPLM-IO), albeit with virtually no power or influence, further complicates matters.

Added to political fragmentation, one must take account of the suffering and instability being caused by economic meltdown and the man-made famine. If there are two largely separate economies in South Sudan, the cash economy and the subsistence economy, it is rare that both have collapsed at the same time; usually one has been able partially to alleviate the suffering caused by weaknesses in the other. This time, they have crashed together. The third economy, the aid industry (and the associated peace, human rights and security industries), continues to sustain itself and to channel a little assistance to the people.

The current fragmentation makes a mockery of the 2015 'Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan' (ARCSS). As the Church leaders said in a statement issued on 23rd June 2017, ARCSS "has not brought peace to our nation... The agreement expires next year and virtually none of it has been implemented. We ask ourselves how we can move beyond this agreement." The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which mediated the agreement, worked on the flawed premise that this was basically a two-way power struggle and that the solution was a two-way power-sharing government, with a nod to the Former Detainees. This is a fiction which both the government and Riek Machar's opposition were anxious to maintain. However in reality, there are now numerous political and ethnic factions with differing agendas, most of them armed, who must all have a voice in any peace agreement – to say nothing of the ordinary people, represented by chiefs, church and civil society. While IGAD may wish to save face by insisting that ARCSS is still viable, in fact it must be renegotiated to an extent where it will be barely recognisable. And this is where the Church needs to have a voice.

The Church

The Church in South Sudan has a unique credibility and moral authority. It was the only institution which remained on the ground with the people throughout

the 1983-2005 civil war, during a period when there was no government, no civil society, no non-governmental organisations (NGOs), no UN and when even the standing of the traditional chiefs and elders was being eroded by the young comrades with guns. Wherever there were people, the Church was present and, unlike the aid industry, it had no "Level 4" evacuation option. Church personnel remained, suffered, lived and died with their flock. The Church provided many of the services which one would expect from a government – health, education, food and water, local peace and reconciliation mediation, even security, to the extent that the presence of Church personnel often moderated the violence. South Sudanese of all faiths, including Muslims and followers of traditional religion, looked to the Church for leadership during troubled times.

The Church in South Sudan (as in Sudan) is also an ecumenical church and in this article, the word "Church" is used to refer to the united churches unless the context is clearly that of an individual denomination. Around half a century ago, the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) was formed and, unusually for councils of churches internationally, the Roman Catholic Church was both a founder member and a full member, along with Anglicans and Presbyterians. Gradually, other denominations came on board, including Copts, Orthodox, Pentecostals and various evangelical churches. In the late 1980s, as the divide between areas under government control and "liberated territory" under the SPLA became more apparent and it became impossible for Church leaders to move safely between the two, the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) was formed to cover the liberated territories which were inaccessible to the SCC. After the Independence of South Sudan in 2011, a South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) was formed in the new nation.

The Church's engagement in peace building in Sudan and South Sudan has a long and proud history. The Addis Ababa Agreement, which ended the first civil war in 1972, was brokered by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the All-Africa Conference of Churches, as both parties felt they could trust the Church as an honest broker. In the first half of the second civil war, relations between the Church and the liberation movement (whose human rights record was appalling in those early years) were strained to say the least. However by the mid-'nineties, following the 1991 split (when Dr Riek Machar and others rebelled against the leadership of Dr John Garang), the subsequent loss of territory by the SPLA, the emergence of fighting between southerners rather than with northern forces as the main dynamic of the conflict, and the Chukudum Conference of 1994, the time seemed to be ripe for rapprochement. Hence in 1997 a reconciliation meeting between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army and the NSCC was held in the small village of Kajiko, near Yei. It was a very hot meeting. The NSCC accused the movement of human rights abuses, while the SPLM/A accused the Church of closing doors to the liberation of the south. Eventually there was

reconciliation and the SPLM/A asked the Church to handle internal reconciliation within the south, as well as providing chaplains to the SPLA.

Following the 1991 split, the Church had attempted to reconcile John Garang and Riek Machar but had failed. With the impetus of the Kajiko meeting, the NSCC turned from the top level to the grassroots and began the 'People to People Peace Process' (often referred to as "Wunlit", after the village where the most visible reconciliation conference was held in 1999). It began in 1997 with a meeting of chiefs and elders in Lokichoggio, followed by chiefs visiting each others' areas and the subsequent mobilisation of the population. While it is tempting to focus on the high-profile meeting in Wunlit, the success of the process depended on the years of patient preparation and grassroots mobilisation by a trusted body, the Church; this is often forgotten by those who try to replicate the process and call "reconciliation meetings" at the drop of a hat. Wunlit brought peace between the Nuer and Dinka on the west bank of the Nile. Subsequent large meetings in Waat and Liliir were more complex and the results more nuanced, and there were also many smaller conferences. In 2000, an evaluation workshop in Wulu (near Rumbek) brought together chiefs, elders and women participants from all the previous conferences. The unanimous message was, "We have now made peace; it is our sons who are causing the fighting", the sons, of course, being Doctors John and Riek. The next step was thus a conference to bring together not the two learned doctors themselves but representatives from the movements, with intellectuals, church leaders, chiefs, elders and women; this was held in Kisumu in 2001. Once again the message was pretty unanimous – the two doctors must reconcile. A few months later, early in 2002, Dr Riek rejoined the mainstream SPLM/A. Around this time too, the United States Agency for International Development took an interest in the people-to-people process and invited bids for a huge grant. NSCC was part of the winning consortium but was soon marginalised by powerful international NGOs and from that point on, the Church played a lesser role in reconciliation except in certain very local situations.

Recognising the need for international advocacy for peace, in the early 'nineties the Church formed the Sudan Ecumenical Forum (SEF), bringing together the Sudanese Church and international church partners under the auspices of the WCC. By the turn of the century, SEF had recognised three priorities for advocacy: stop the bombing of civilians, stop the exploration and exploitation of oil until the war ends, and advocate for the right of self-determination for South Sudan and other areas (Abyei, Southern Blue Nile and Nuba Mountains). In early 2002, the Church issued an influential paper on self-determination entitled 'Let My People Choose', when international envoys were literally laughing in our face at the very thought of self-determination; just a few months later, it was a central element of the Machakos Agreement of July 2002.

As the IGAD peace negotiations gathered pace in Naivasha, Kenya, it became clear that the preparations for a 'Comprehensive' Peace Agreement, as the subsequent accord was named, were anything but comprehensive, being only between the two main warring parties and excluding all other political parties and military factions, as well as the Church and civil society. Undaunted, the Church set up its own parallel process in Entebbe, Uganda, consisting of a series of meetings bringing together Church leaders, civil society from north and south Sudan (the first time that had ever been done) and the various militias (again, a first) subsequently known as "Other Armed Groups", a label they themselves chose at the third Entebbe meeting. Of course many of the SPLM delegates in Naivasha were church members, so the resolutions and recommendations of the Entebbe process found their way informally into the hallowed halls of the Naivasha process.

So the war ended in 2005. At an SEF meeting held near Pretoria in 2003, South Africans shared the experience of their own liberation and warned that the Church could not rest after peace came but would have to work twice as hard to sustain it. However the Church in Sudan had suffered badly during 22 years of war and many more years of religious discrimination from the Khartoum regime, and so the personal and spiritual renewal of Church personnel and the rebuilding and revitalising of church institutions and structures became a priority. During the same period, the merging of the SCC and NSCC during the Interim Period after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the subsequent splitting of the SCC into two new councils after Independence in 2011, consumed a great deal of time and energy. The Church took its eye off the ball.

Nevertheless many localised peace initiatives were still led by the Church. Heightened violence broke out in Jonglei State before the 2010 elections and again in 2011. Church leaders began to engage with the communities from an early stage and organised a series of local peace conferences which ultimately failed when violence escalated again around Christmas 2011. Early in 2012, President Salva Kiir Mayardit formed the Committee for Community Peace, Reconciliation and Tolerance in Jonglei State, led by Anglican Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul, which included a number of experienced Church leaders and facilitators. Grassroots mobilisation and a further series of local conferences led to an All-Jonglei Conference in Bor in May 2012 at which all six main communities in Jonglei State were represented. An agreement was signed, many abducted women and children were returned along with stolen cattle, and there were several months of peace. SCC began a new programme entitled Peace from the Roots, engaging with cattle camp youth, due to culminate in an All-Jonglei youth meeting early in 2013. Unfortunately when a new conflict emerged, led by David Yau Yau, that meeting became impossible. Once again the Church intervened and a team led by

Bishop Paride Taban succeeded in brokering an agreement between Yau Yau and the government early in 2014.

International advocacy had also come to the fore again late in 2010, when it seemed that the referendum was not going to take place in January 2011, a situation which Church leaders were sure would lead to an immediate return to war. A high-level Church delegation was sent to meet the UN Secretary General and to brief US White House advisors, and they communicated that message loudly and clearly. The referendum duly took place on time. The Church also made contact with rebel George Athor, who had threatened to disrupt the referendum, and persuaded him to put aside his grievances temporarily in the interest of the nation.

The Action Plan for Peace

In December 2013, during a controversial meeting of the SPLM leadership, heavy fighting broke out between Dinka troops loyal to President Salva Kiir and Nuer soldiers loyal to Riek Machar (who had been dismissed as Vice-President earlier in the year). The fighting quickly spread beyond the barracks into the streets of Juba and took on an ethnic dimension when Nuer civilians were targeted by the President's troops. Within 48 hours of the conflict beginning, while fighting still raged in the streets of the capital city, Church leaders gathered in Juba and issued their first statement calling for an immediate end to the conflict. Over the next four years, their statements echoed common themes: the conflict must stop immediately and unconditionally; this war is senseless and has no moral justification whatsoever, indeed it is evil; there is no military solution; the conflict must be ended through dialogue; the killing, raping and looting by all sides is unacceptable. Church leaders met political and military leaders from all sides but it became clear that although the Church was speaking, nobody was listening.

By 2014, people on all sides and internationally were calling on the Church to take the lead in bringing peace but the SSCC, newly formed two years after Independence, was still a weak institution. It was not until 2015 that it was able to hold a series of meetings of the Heads of Churches, including one in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in April where they met the Prime Minister. This led to a retreat for reflection and discussion in Kigali, Rwanda, in June at which the Church issued its 'Statement of Intent' to move ahead with a peace process which eventually came to be called the 'Action Plan for Peace'. The APP consists of three pillars: Advocacy, Neutral Forums and Reconciliation. Later a fourth pillar, the institutional strengthening of SSCC, was added.

The Advocacy pillar

The Advocacy pillar includes not only the international and regional advocacy of which the Church gained such experience during the period of the SPLM but

also internal domestic advocacy to change the narratives of violence within South Sudan and to address the hate speech, incitement, tribalism, disinformation, misinformation, propaganda and rumours which cause so many problems. At the time of writing (June 2017), a group of senior Church leaders is doing an advocacy tour of neighbouring countries, including visiting refugee settlements and camps in Uganda and Ethiopia, while Bishop Paride Taban is in London speaking at Chatham House,[2] having just accepted a peace award from the Archbishop of Canterbury. In 2015, the Ecumenical Network South Sudan was formed as a replacement for the old SEF, again bringing together South Sudanese and international Church partners. A number of South Sudanese Church leaders and international partners in the United Kingdom, USA and elsewhere have also begun to work with the diaspora on the issue of hate speech, much of which seems to originate overseas. SSCC has also reached out to the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury. Their planned joint visit to South Sudan has been postponed for various reasons but it is still very much on the agenda.

The Neutral Forum pillar

The Neutral Forum pillar is basically dialogue. It aims to create safe spaces where South Sudanese stakeholders from all sides can meet to build trust, and discuss the root causes of, and develop a home grown indigenous resolution to, the conflicts. It has not yet become visible but a great deal of patient behind-the-scenes preparation is ongoing, including holding sensitive conversations with stakeholders from all sides and creating the conditions where they can begin to establish a dialogue under the auspices of the Church. It is hoped that in the second half of 2017, the formal Neutral Forum dialogues will begin.

The Reconciliation pillar

The Reconciliation pillar will benefit from the long experience of the Church in the previous civil war and will build on the methodology of the independent 'Committee for National Healing, Peace and Reconciliation', led by Archbishop Daniel Deng; this was formed early in 2013 before the conflict began but was soon overtaken by events. Since then, the Church, often in collaboration with Muslims, traditional leaders and the protagonists themselves, has already brokered local agreements in Yambio, Yei, Wau, Bor, Pibor and elsewhere, with mixed success. Reconciliation is long term: the Church expects this process to last for ten to twenty years. One of the reasons for the latest conflict is that the need for reconciliation arising from previous conflicts was not addressed. This time, the Church is determined not to make the same mistake. While it may take time to

[2] Bishop Paride Taban spoke at a public meeting at Chatham House, 'Mediating for Peace in South Sudan: The role of the Church', on 21st June 2017.

end this conflict, the hope is that the conditions will be created to prevent another conflict from breaking out again in two or five or ten years' time.

The APP has attracted interest and funding from many quarters, including the USA, Norway, Switzerland and the European Union. The SSCC is working closely with a number of its international Church partners, notably Norwegian Church Aid, Catholic Relief Services and Finn Church Aid, with the UK's Christian Aid playing an important role in the Advocacy pillar.

National Dialogue

In December 2016, President Salva Kiir issued a decree creating a National Dialogue. While many welcomed the prospect of dialogue, concern was expressed about its independence and inclusivity and it was rejected by many in the opposition. Since then, the Dialogue has gone through a change of leadership and a reshuffling of the members of its Steering Committee, and the President has reportedly recused himself as Patron in order to emphasise its intended independence. It has not begun its work yet.

Church leaders issued an official statement on 23rd December 2016 welcoming "unreservedly" the language of dialogue: "it seems to us almost a miracle to hear positive and peaceful language from the highest civil and military authority in the land". They welcomed the "climate for dialogue", the "space he is opening up for those who seek non-violent paths to peace" and "his assurance that non-violent dialogue is now the national policy". However they also reiterated their longstanding call for the killing to cease immediately, expressed the need for "positive changes" in the security environment and spoke of the need for inclusivity: "All South Sudanese must own it". Anglican and Catholic bishops have also issued their own statements broadly welcoming the National Dialogue.

While the presidential decree appears to have incorporated SSCC into the Steering Committee and while some individual Church leaders have taken up their places on the Committee, nevertheless SSCC has not yet officially joined the endeavour. Church leaders have been seeking a meeting with the President to clarify various points and concerns but, six months on, that meeting has not yet taken place. While offering the Church's expertise and advice, and expressing a willingness to "liaise" with the National Dialogue, nevertheless the Church leaders made it clear that they intend to go ahead with their own dialogue process in the Neutral Forum pillar. The President's National Dialogue is "the beginning of a long process, a movement, and a space to be filled by all those who seek peace in South Sudan through non-violent means" – including the Church. No further official statement has been issued.

The Church as microcosm

their own political views and sympathies. As a result of the colonial Condominium policy of dividing southern Sudan into spheres of influence for different Christian denominations, certain denominations have come to be associated more with one community or geographical area than others. This provides internal challenges for the Church but so far, Church leaders have remained united on the important issues: the need for the conflict to stop immediately, the need for non-violent dialogue; the central role that the Church must play in bringing about peace. If the Church as microcosm can overcome these tensions, then this is a hopeful sign for the macrocosm.

It is also true that communication between and within churches is not always as good as it should be, and you will hear some church leaders complaining loudly and publicly that the Church is doing nothing for peace. They are misinformed. Much of the work is still sensitive and has not been made public; some of the less sensitive work is supposed to be made public but advertising itself is not one of the Church's strengths; some of the work is out there for all to see but busy people (including Church leaders) tend to overlook it.

Holy Trinity Peace Village, Kuron

One cannot speak of the role of the Church in peace building without mentioning an initiative which has a track record stretching back more than fifteen years. Retired Catholic Bishop Paride Taban grew up in a multicultural village where the Condominium government brought workers and their families from all over Sudan; he was educated in Catholic national seminaries containing students from all communities and later in life, experienced living in a peace village which brought people together from all sides of the Israel-Palestine conflict. In a remote part of Eastern Equatoria he subsequently created a peace village to bring peace and reconciliation to communities in conflict, mainly over cattle and other resources. Although development activities were the initial tool and the village now boasts agriculture projects, a primary school, a clinic, a vocational training school, bridges across the river, community mediation services, improvements to the main road between Kapoeta and Boma, and even an internet cafe, it is not primarily a development project – it is a peace village, demonstrating the virtuous circle of peace and development. A key element of the experience is personal transformation and Bishop Paride has his own unique spirituality of peace and reconciliation which he shares with all-comers.

As its Founder passed his eightieth year, many in the Village asked themselves the question, "Can we just sit here as an oasis of peace while the rest of the country burns? What can we do to help?" The Village cannot expand too much without diluting itself (although it has already opened an office in nearby Boma to address inter-communal conflicts from that direction) and it is not practical to

try to replicate the village elsewhere. The solution – a Peace Academy. Already groups such as the Rift Valley Institute (RVI) and SSCC have held their own conferences in Kuron, and now the village is planning its own programme of inviting groups and individuals to experience life in the peace village, to undergo personal transformation, to learn whatever lessons they need to take back to their own community and begin the process of conflict transformation in a manner appropriate to wherever they find themselves.

Non-violence

In many ways non-violence is alien to South Sudan. After the best part of 60 years of conflict, violence is a way of life. In many communities violence was traditional, if on a lower level than currently, through cattle raiding. In some communities, justice is revenge and revenge is justice – more violence. During the 1983-2005 civil war there was a strong sense throughout the southern population that violence was justified in the liberation struggle against the oppressive regimes in Khartoum. Even certain individual church leaders had been known to ask for defensive anti-aircraft missiles to counter the dreaded Antonov bombers.

This war is different. There is a widespread view throughout South Sudan that it is a senseless conflict with no moral justification whatsoever and that violence is no longer justified. Indeed, in a statement issued on 25th September 2014, the Catholic bishops of South Sudan stated: "In our Prophetic role as bishops, we state without hesitation or fear that the current conflict is evil and must be stopped immediately and unconditionally, regardless of any other considerations. We call on every political leader, every military officer, every individual soldier, every armed civilian, whether government or opposition, to avoid any further killing. It is immoral and evil. The question to ask ourselves is: do I have the sincere will to renounce violence, to compromise and to bring peace?"

SSCC participated in the conference on 'Non-violence and Just Peace: Contributing to the Catholic Understanding of and Commitment to Non-violence', held in Rome in April 2016, and the specific language of non-violence has gradually crept in to the documents of the SSCC, along with quotes from Pope Francis' Message for the World Day of Peace in January 2017, 'Non-violence: a Style of Politics for Peace'. There is no doubt that the ordinary people of South Sudan want the conflict to end through non-violent means. Maybe even many of the perpetrators would like the same end but they are out of ideas; so steeped are they in the culture and politics of violence, that they literally have no idea how to bring peace, how to look at the very real problems and disagreements through the lens of non-violence. This is yet another unique dynamic which the Church can contribute to the nation.

Ending this conflict will not happen quickly and even once the active killing

raping and looting ends, South Sudan faces decades of hard work to ensure a just and lasting peace. Reconciliation, at which the Church can take the lead, is only part of this task – it must include political and military reform, good governance and the rule of law, development, education and many other aspects which can best be done by others. But the Church can and will continue to focus and refocus the nation on non-violent dialogue in all these endeavours.

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An expatriate in the Sudan, 1957-1962

Ronald Forrest*

Introduction

While studying for the Oxford Post-Graduate Diploma in Education in 1955-56 I had the good fortune to be taught by Vernon Griffiths who had previously been the Principal of Bakht Er Ruda Teachers' College in the Sudan. Until then I had only a vague idea of the Sudan from references to Gordon and Kitchener in history lessons. Griffiths filled me with a deep interest in the country and its educational system. A year later I noticed an advertisement in *The Times Educational Supplement* in the formal language that still survived in the Sudan Embassy and *The Times*: "The Sudan Government is desirous of appointing schoolmasters on five-year contracts…" I applied, was invited for an interview at the Embassy in Cleveland Row and duly appointed.

Within a few weeks I made the two-day plane journey to Khartoum, with an overnight stay in Malta and stops in Nice, Benghazi and Wadi Halfa. After a couple of very hot nights in the Grand Hotel in Khartoum I was told I was to teach English at Khor Taqqat Secondary School some six miles from El Obeid in Kordofan. This was one of several boarding schools established on English public school lines before independence in 1956. There I joined the English Department which consisted mostly of expatriate British teachers. Many of the teachers of other subjects were Sudanese or Egyptian. The pupils, all boys between the ages of thirteen and twenty, were a delight to teach as they were all highly motivated which was not surprising since a very small percentage of boys (and of course even fewer girls) in those days survived the educational system to secondary level.

The author in Sudanese attire, November 1961

The syllabus closely resembled that in secondary schools in most of the territories that formed the British Empire – essay writing, précis, comprehension and literature based on English classics.

attention had yet been paid to selecting literature that might have some relevance to the background of Sudanese youths. I found there was a great deal that required explanation in Galsworthy's play The Silver Box, for example. I also doubted the validity of précis writing for pupils using a foreign language but when I complained to a curriculum committee in Khartoum about this I was rebuffed with the accusation that I was suggesting a lowering of standards. I did my best to strike a balance between preparing my pupils for a somewhat old-fashioned school leaving examination and trying to improve their English.

Boys at work in the library of Omdurman Ahlia Boys' School.

The pupils had a remarkably good level of English but I am sure this was due to the fact that they had massive exposure to the language as all subjects except, of course, Arabic and religion, were taught in English. It was not until the mid-sixties that Arabicisation was introduced. I still possess a copy of the Sudan Teachers of English Newsletter for August 1965. The editor declares:

> Arabicisation is with us at secondary level. English in all Northern schools now gradually becomes a foreign instead of a second language. For our colleagues in Maths, Science and Geography there are laborious changes of text and presentation to be worked out. For us, teachers of English, radical changes of emphasis may be necessary.

Indeed radical changes were necessary and the nature of English language

in methodology inspired by applied linguistics departments in universities. A syllabus based on the needs of students whose first language was English was replaced by one suited to the needs and background of Sudanese students. At the same time more emphasis was to be placed on language as communication rather than as a set of rules.

Teaching at Khor Taqqat Secondary School

I did not find life very congenial in this remote desert posting. There was not a pleasant atmosphere among the British expatriate staff although I had the warmest relations with the Sudanese. It required a certain type of self-sufficient character to prosper in this restricted social environment and it seemed to me that few of the expatriates, including myself, had it. This gave me some understanding of the psychological demands facing colonial officers posted to remote places in the days of the British Empire.

Although our pupils at Khor Taqqat could not have been criticised for their attitude to study, discipline was very strict. The ethos of British public schools of those days combined with Islamic tradition resulted in frequent use of corporal punishment for the least misdemeanour. It was also used to suppress any sign of political insubordination, as I soon discovered. The school was very efficiently run by the Headmaster Sayed Bushra, who later became Cultural Attaché at the Sudanese Embassy in London. He was certainly a strict disciplinarian.

A few weeks after I arrived in Khor Taqqat it was announced that the Minister of Education would visit the school. The ambitious headmaster was naturally keen to make the best possible impression on the minister as at that time there were golden opportunities to gain promotion. It was, therefore, planned that a football match would be played in the minister's honour, and appropriate seating was arranged around the sports field. When the moment came for the match to start the minister with his assistants, the headmaster and all the staff, found themselves facing an empty and silent football field. There was not a boy in sight: not only were the two teams missing, so were any of the hundreds of boys who were expected to be spectators. The referee passed a message to the headmaster from the Students' Union: this was a boycott in protest at the government's refusal to meet certain demands made by students at the University of Khartoum.

The headmaster was clearly very embarrassed. This was lese-majesty on a monumental scale. The staff dispersed and the minister and his entourage soon left for El Obeid Airport to return to Khartoum. That evening there were demonstrations around the boarding houses. One group of pupils surrounded the house of the headmaster chanting '*el inglees el aswad*' (black Englishman); this, incidentally was the nearest I got in my five years in the Sudan to hearing anything vaguely anti-British. Next morning as soon as the boys were in their classrooms

the headmaster called a meeting of the staff and quickly secured agreement for his decision to cane the entire school. Each boy was to receive six lashes. I alone among the staff declined to participate, much to the headmaster's disappointment. School servants joined the meeting each carrying a bundle of canes which were distributed to the staff. Within minutes of the canings beginning some senior boys were running from classroom to classroom telling the pupils to refuse the punishment and to leave the school premises.

Soon the school buildings were deserted as the boys made their way home. In 1957 there were no mobile phones or e-mail, of course, and for those boys from nomadic families this meant several days searching for their families. Weeks went by and eventually the boys were informed by radio that they could return to the school and resume their studies on condition they accepted punishment: eighteen severe lashes for the ringleaders, twelve for others who had a minor role in organising the protest and six for all the others. Gradually the boys returned and were duly punished. I continued to refuse to administer the punishments.

One morning I was working in the English office when a very dignified and well-dressed Sudanese gentleman in his fifties approached me. He explained in impeccable English that he had urged his son, a third year pupil, to take part in the protest and he now realised that he was wrong to have done so. Therefore he asked me to give him several severe lashes. I assured him that he should not feel guilty, but he insisted that his conscience would only be clear if he was punished. I told him that it would be better if he discussed the matter with the headmaster. I never heard what the outcome was.

Expatriate Life

The British staff at Khor Taqqat School limited their social life to their compatriots. Not long after I arrived I invited a fellow teacher of English who happened to be Sudanese for a meal at my house. It will appear unbelievable now that the British head of English said he had noted what I had done and advised me that I should "keep a certain distance from the indigenous staff". Inevitably, the atmosphere among the ten or so British teachers was not always very happy. I recall that on at least one occasion a drinks party at a teacher's house ended in fisticuffs. One teacher and his wife were in the habit of drinking a crate of twelve Camel beers every evening and, far gone in alcoholism, were eventually invalided out of the country. Another, notorious for his meanness and ambition, returned to the UK, quickly rose to be the Chief Education Officer of a local authority, but was found guilty of embezzlement and received a custodial sentence.

What were the material attractions of a teaching post in the Sudan in those days? The terms of appointment were the ones devised by the British administration prior to independence: five-year contracts at rather more than double the salary

that could be earned in a comparable teaching post in the UK. It was tax-free with housing at a nominal rent and eighty-four days of home leave annually. On completion of the contract the teacher was paid a bonus of 25 per cent of total earnings. A British teacher I knew in Khartoum, an adherent of the Moral Re-Armament movement,[1] wrote to the Ministry of Education to ask if his salary could be reduced as it was much more than he needed. He received the reply that there was no regulation permitting a reduction in salary but that he could consider making a donation to charity.

The main distraction for the staff at Khor Taqqat was nothing more exciting than a visit to El Obeid in the school truck to call at the Greek grocery stores and perhaps to see an old film at the cinema. Medical treatment was available at the hospital run by Dr Husband, a retired British Army doctor, and his wife as matron. Dr Husband doubtless did a great deal of good for the people of Kordofan but his bedside manner was rather grim. When he diagnosed that the stomach pains I was experiencing were caused by appendicitis he said an immediate operation was necessary. He continued:

> Unfortunately at the moment we don't have an anaesthetist and I will have to give you the anaesthetic myself. The last time I did that the patient woke up in the middle of the operation and the occasion before that he did not wake up at all. Are you willing to go ahead? If not I am afraid, given the advanced stage of your appendicitis, you will almost certainly die.

I had the operation and quickly recovered.

Transfer to Omdurman Ahlia

At the end of the school year I requested a transfer to a less remote place and was posted to the Omdurman Ahlia: a secondary day school for boys on the edge of the desert. At first I lived in the 'Sudan Club' in Khartoum but later I found a flat in what was known as the 'Slatin Pasha Mess' a little further along the Nile embankment. This accommodation was typical of that provided for unmarried government expatriate staff; married people mostly lived in houses in various parts of Khartoum. So for four years I commuted across the Nile from Khartoum to Omdurman.

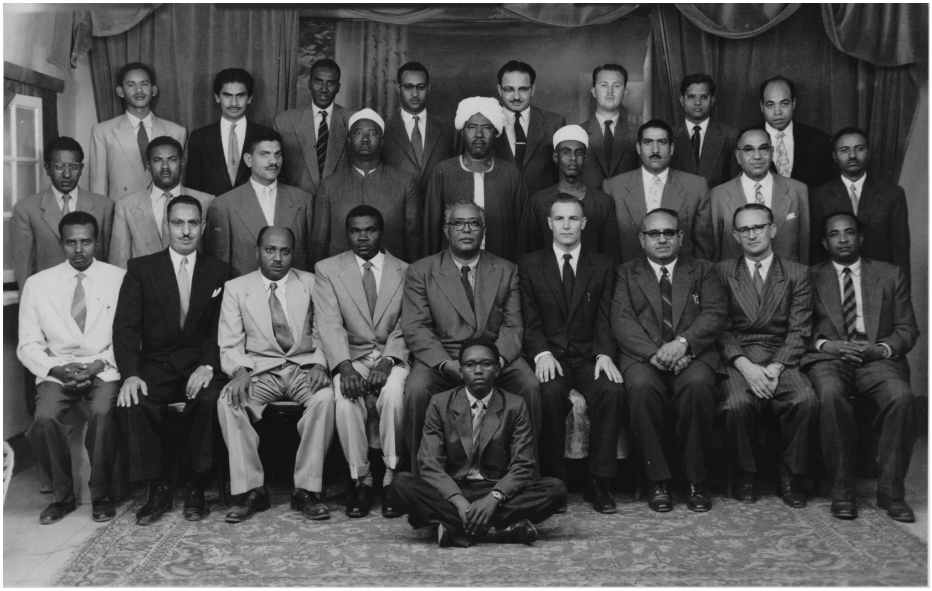
The Head of English at the Omdurman Ahlia was John Atkins, a remarkable man. He was already an established literary critic, renowned for his books on George Orwell, Julian Huxley, Ernest Hemingway and others. He soon left the Ahlia for a teaching post in Khartoum Technical Institute and I became Head of Department with a staff of four British, one Egyptian and two Sudanese teachers.

[1] The Moral Re-Armament movement was a powerful international movement of the time that called for a more moral approach to politics and human relations.

The author with some students at Omdurman Boys' School.

Bridge over Nile, Khartoum to Omdurman.

Atkins had a rather cruel sense of humour, and the editor of an English language Sudanese newspaper fell victim to it. Wanting to show that the editor did not have a perfect command of English he placed an advertisement in the paper



Staff of Omdurman Ahlia Boys' School, 1959. The Headmaster, Khalid Musa, is centre in the front row; John Atkins, literary critic, is second from right front row; the author is third from right back row.

which read "English expatriate shortly leaving the Sudan wishes to dispose of a delightful Courtesan. Apply…" Apparently the editor thought a courtesan was a type of car. This prank was the talk of the British community for days and the Ambassador called Atkins in to give an explanation, telling him that such a joke undermined the reputation of Great Britain and that the next time a Sudanese wanted a car he would buy a Volkswagen rather than a Morris. A complaint was made to the Ministry of Education. Several months later Atkins received a letter from the Ministry to say the matter had been investigated but it was not thought that it in any way affected his position as a teacher – an outcome which many British expatriates considered an example of Sudanese reasonableness.

Expatriate life in Khartoum

Khartoum in the late fifties of the last century had a considerable European population. Sudanisation was proceeding apace but there were still large numbers of expatriates in the country, many of them on the staff of commercial companies. Others were teaching in schools or at the University or working as advisers to government ministries. I recall in particular Jack Mavrogordato, a British legal expert who had worked in the Sudan earlier, always walking in the town with a

Staff side in a tug of war between staff and boys at Omdurman Ahlia Boys' School.

Warden of Gordon Memorial College and author of a series of Arabic booklets which did much to promote literacy in the Sudan; he came out most winters to teach voluntarily at a girls' school in Omdurman while lodging in the Sudan Club.

For the British the centre of social life was the Sudan Club by the Nile and just across the road from the Roman Catholic Cathedral. There was a swimming pool and extensive tennis courts. The restaurant was a great attraction, especially at lunch time on Fridays. There was a strict dress code: 'Gentlemen to wear their shirts tucked inside their shorts and not otherwise as in the Indian manner' the rules stated. From October to March after 8pm gentlemen were required to wear ties and a *suffragi* visited the bars and verandahs with a tray of ties for rule-breaking members to hire. Membership was strictly limited to British citizens. As more and more Americans came to work in Khartoum the question arose as to whether 'North Americans' could be admitted to Sudan Club membership and this was debated at a full meeting. One member called for an unambiguous definition of the term, would Mexicans be included? The Club remained exclusively British for some years.

The coup of 1958 and life under the Abboud regime

On the morning of 17 November 1958 I woke to hear on the BBC that a coup had taken place in Khartoum. Shortly after seven I nevertheless made my way as usual to Omdurman and witnessed what must have been one of the most

peaceful revolutions in history. There were tanks guarding government buildings and at both ends of the bridge over the Nile but no signs of any violence. I performed my normal teaching duties and at two o'clock drove back to Khartoum. Some of the tanks had already been withdrawn. The revolution was complete, and General Ibrahim Abboud began his six-year rule. Little did we realise at the time that parliamentary democracy had effectively come to an end and decades of dictatorship had begun.

A number of native English speakers were employed by Radio Omdurman to produce and broadcast short English programmes, mostly news and current affairs, glorifying the achievements of the regime. I had an interesting time as a member of the team. In editing the news items I had to observe a strict order of importance: any item referring to President Abboud had to come first, followed by any reference to the Minister of Information who was head of the radio station, then other Sudan news, African news and lastly world news. I did this for some time until eventually the Minister of Information, who had received letters from listeners abroad asking if the Sudan was still under British rule, decided the time had come for Sudanisation to take place and we were asked to recommend suitable people. I recommended a colleague who was both an English teacher and a journalist. He lasted in the post only a few weeks as his accent was considered too British.

In those days there was comparatively little crime. In hot weather many people slept out of doors on their verandah or in their garden with the more cautious putting the key to their house under their pillow. I heard of no house burglary in my five years in the Sudan. The worst crimes seemed to consist of house servants increasing the water content of bottles of whisky and gin, or not reporting correctly what they had paid for produce at the market. Years later, I found it incredible when I heard that amputations had been introduced to combat theft.

I had been advised that if I was stopped by a policeman while driving I should simply say '*ana mudaris'* (I am a teacher) and because of the high status of that profession I would be excused. As it happened I was never stopped by a policeman. Traffic in Khartoum in those days was very light. I witnessed the arrival of the first NO PARKING sign – placed outside the British Embassy for the Ambassador's Rolls Royce. It was when I took my driving test that I had my only contact with Khartoum's friendly neighbourhood police. Unlike in Khor Taqqat Khartoum was clearly a place where a car was necessary. An Egyptian colleague gave me a few driving lessons and insisted that I should take a driving test. I certainly did not feel ready but my colleague made the arrangements and we duly went to Khartoum Police Station for a test. By this time I had sufficient Arabic to understand that in order to help me he told the policeman assigned to give me the test he wanted to accompany me and would translate his instructions for me. He explained to the

policeman that because there were many more words in English than there are in Arabic, he would not simply translate '*ashemel*' as 'turn left' but would have to say 'Now slow down, go into second gear, put out your indicator and slowly turn left'. I took the ten-minute test, stalling the car three times and nearly running over an old lady. At the end of the test the policeman, apparently never having encountered an Englishman who could not drive, was silent for several seconds but then passed me with the words '*arrabia battal lakin asawag kwai's'* (bad car but good driver).

Leaving the Sudan

At the end of my five-year contract I saw prospects elsewhere in both teaching and journalism and with some hesitation declined an extension. Looking back now, nearly sixty years later, I remember the five years I spent in the Sudan as some of the most interesting and enjoyable years of my life. Later I lived in several other countries but my warmest memories – in both senses, of course – are of the Sudan. What has happened since in that beautiful country and to those friendly people I lived and worked with can only fill me with deep sorrow and despair.

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Some of South Sudan's Historical Figures

Aru Muortat*

Introduction

South Sudan entered the international arena when it gained independence in 2011 but the region and its myriad peoples have a long and rich history. Most of that past is characterised by violence, notably its long liberation wars against the northern political elites that monopolised power in the old united Sudan.

Hopes that the partition would lessen the bitterness and the mistrust between the two new neighbouring countries – perhaps even usher in a new era of cooperation – were quickly dashed. Differences over borders, oil and other entanglements spawned new hostilities. The post-separation period is one in which each country has tended to charge the other with harbouring insurgencies, with South Sudan bearing the brunt of these proxy confrontations.

These threats, coupled with rampant corruption and tribalism in the government, pushed the already fragile new state to the brink. Subsequent wrangling over power, which the ruling elite failed to contain, led to a vicious and violent confrontation in December 2013 as the army split in half. This marked South Sudan's descent into civil war only 15 months after it had gained its independence. The war has since increasingly taken a marked ethnic form, threatening the very notion of South Sudan as a nation state.

Although the burgeoning state had been expected to struggle to find its feet, the extent of corruption and the poor conduct of officials dismayed South Sudan's allies, and shook and disappointed the South Sudanese, who had pinned great hopes on the governing revolutionaries.

The state has never established itself in South Sudan and has always been regarded by the various ethnic communities that live within its borders as a predatory foreign entity. While 98.6% of the South Sudanese people voted for independence, highlighting their determination to have home rule, the country remained one where people's fundamental allegiance is to their ethnic group. Government, civil society and community leaders should have prioritised the concept of nation-building from the outset.

When the current war comes to an end, South Sudanese will embark on a new period of post-war reconstruction and strong emphasis will need to be placed on fostering an inclusive state. That means trying to harmonise ethnic interest with national interest.

New revolutionaries, old revolutionaries

emphasise the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) era (1983-2005) and to downplay that of the Anya Nya war (1955-72). For various complex reasons, some regions featured more prominently than others in the different periods. This disparity has caused conflicting narratives to grow. Who liberated South Sudan? Who, therefore, should receive more credit? Which regions, ethnic groups, communities?

By idolising the SPLM/A's role, the Government of South Sudan has become embroiled in these raging, conflicting narratives and it has opened itself to the accusation of trying to isolate certain political and ethnic groups. Bitter resentment has grown among some who feel that their contributions are not valued or are being erased from history altogether.

While the causes of the current war, which broke out in 2013, are numerous, the issue of competing historical narratives must feature prominently among those causes. Few disagreements among South Sudanese are more emotive than the wrangling over who has contributed more to the liberation, who contributed less, who did not contribute at all or – most bitterly – who betrayed the cause?

I believe that the struggle of the people of South Sudan for freedom cannot be confined to the SPLM/A era or even to the Anya Nya and SPLM/A eras combined. Communities and leaders are known to have arisen against foreign invaders from as long ago as the early 19th century. A better understanding of these earlier stories of the struggle and the Herculean stance of those first heroes, and how they had risen among different communities, could hopefully help South Sudanese accept that almost all regions and communities have played a role in liberating the country – that it was truly a national struggle.

This article seeks to provide some balance by including prominent leaders from earlier periods, with brief accounts of historical leaders who are revered by their communities.

King Gbudwe

King Gbudwe (1825-1905) was a powerful Zande king who fought successive battles in defence of his kingdom against invaders. He is remembered as an embodiment of the nation's determination to practice their traditional customs and way of life free from oppression.

Born in Yambio to the Zande King Bazingbi in 1825, as he grew up Gbudwe displayed many leadership characteristics, which led to him becoming his father's closest confidant and leading his military campaigns (Edward Evans-Pritchard, 1957). He inherited his father's kingdom in 1869, albeit not without powerful resistance from his elder brothers. However, it was external factors that shaped most of his leadership. His reign coincided with the Mahdist expansion from Northern Sudan into parts of the South and the European scramble for control of the region and the Nile Basin.

In 1882, Gbudwe was captured by agents of the Turco-Egyptian regime in Bahr el Ghazal and imprisoned. He was unexpectedly released by the Mahdists, who in 1885 defeated the Turco-Egyptians, on the condition that he kept the Zande from actively opposing the Mahdists (Emmanuel K. Akyeampong and Henry Louis Gates, Jr, 2012). However his captivity hardened his resolve against foreigners (Abol Kuyok, 2016).

Gbudwe subsequently established a strong centralised leadership and mobilised the kingdom's resources to fight off foreign invasion. In 1898, the Mahdists sent an army under Arabi Dafallah to attack the kingdom but they were firmly crushed by the Zande forces at Bilikiwe (Yambio).

These invasions from the North coincided with Belgian expansion from the South. King Leopold II sent military expeditions into Zandeland but most ended in defeat (Redie Bereketeab, 2014). Belgium made a military pact with Italy in 1905 and sent a huge force from neighbouring Congo to pacify King Gbudwe's forces. In ferocious fighting at the Battle of Mayawa, the Zande incurred heavy losses as a result of the Europeans' advanced weaponry. Prior to this defeat, Gbudwe had resisted British expeditions from Khartoum in 1903-1904, refusing to establish friendly relations. British forces arrived in Gbudwe's compound in February 1905. His weakened army was unable to mount any significant resistance but he refused to surrender. He was fatally shot on the 10th February 1905. King Gbudwe is lauded for his unprecedented success against imperial powers. In his honour, one of South Sudan's new 28 states was named after him in October 2015.

Buth Diu

Buth Diu (1917-1975) was a prominent politician noted for demanding that the people of Southern Sudan be given equal rights at the 1947 Juba Conference. He also co-founded the first party that represented the interests of peoples from the Southern Region, the Liberal Party.

Born into the Nuer tribe in Fangak in 1917, Buth received no formal education, yet he taught himself to become literate in both Nuer and English. He worked as a translator and interpreter for the District Commissioner and by 1946, he was active in the civil administration, where he worked as a magistrate (Kuyok, 2015). In 1947, Britain convened the Juba Conference to determine the political future of the two regions of Sudan. Buth Diu was one of the Southern representatives at the meeting and demanded that if the two regions were to remain a single country, legal safeguards must be put in place to protect Southern Sudanese. These included land rights, the right to govern local politics independently and laws against verbal discrimination (BV Marwood, 1947). Shortly after the Juba Conference, he became a parliamentarian in the Legislative Assembly in Khartoum and was the sole Southern member of the Constitutional Amendment Commission (CAC), set up

to increase the efficiency of the Assembly and Executive Council. He pushed for a federal government in the South and for a Southerner to be Minister of Southern Affairs (Kuyok, 2015). He subsequently resigned from the CAC as his Northern counterparts rejected his demands.

In 1951, Buth Diu co-founded the Liberal Party, the country's first Southern party, and served as Secretary General. In this capacity, he appealed to the United Nations regarding the unjust treatment of the Southern Sudanese and the agreement reached by the CAC (John Gai Nyuot Yoh, 2005). He was also said to have coordinated with leading mutineers in Torit in 1955, which marked the start of the First Sudanese civil war. In the late 1950s, his staunch stance on Southern nationalism softened; he split from the Liberal Party and became an independent member of parliament (Kuyok, 2005). Throughout his later life, he remained an MP and served in the Sudanese cabinet in numerous positions. He died in Khartoum in 1975.

Gordon Muortat

Gordon Muortat Mayen (1922-2008) was a veteran politician and an early leader of the Anya Nya in Sudan's first civil war. He was one of the first leaders to articulate the demand for Southern Sudanese to be given a referendum to determine their future. He's also remembered for rejecting the 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement, which ended the first liberation war and pushing instead for continued resistance against the Khartoum government.

Born in 1922 just outside Rumbek, he was the first member of his family to receive an education. In 1951, he was amongst the first Southern Sudanese to graduate from the Sudan Police College and he eventually rose to become Chief Inspector of Police. While serving in Wau in 1955, he was responsible for keeping relative peace after Southern soldiers mutinied at Torit in Equatoria, marking the beginning of the Sudanese civil war. In 1957, he joined the Sudanese civil administration, where he was appointed Assistant District Commissioner, serving in many places across the Sudan. In 1964, Gordon co-founded the Southern Front (SF). The SF and the Sudan African National Union (SANU) were to become the South's dominant political parties.

In that same year, protests and strikes took place across the Sudan against the unpopular military regime of General Ibrahim Abboud. This uprising, which later became known as the 'October Revolution', resulted in the return of the country to civilian rule. In an attempt to address the 'problem of the South', the new Prime Minister, Sir el Khatim el Khalifa, who headed an interim civilian coalition, called for a Round Table Conference, with Southern politicians and Northern party representatives. Gordon Muortat headed the SF delegation to the talks and in a memorable speech, tabled his party's position, calling for the South to have the right to self-determination through a referendum.

Under the transitional government, he was appointed national Minister of Works and Mineral Resources but this was short lived. After the massacres of civilians in Juba and Wau in 1965 at the hands of the Sudanese army, Muortat was convinced that there could be no peaceful solution to the Southern Sudan problem. In 1967, he left Khartoum to join the Anya Nya resistance movement in the liberated territories of Yei River. Aggrey Jaden Ladu, the head of Anya Nya's political wing, appointed him its Foreign Minister. In this position, Muortat successfully led meetings with a sympathetic Israeli government which promised to provide military support to the insurgents.

After Aggrey Jaden left Anya Nya the following year, Muortat was elected to succeed him, renaming the movement the Nile Provisional Government (NPG). His short tenure was riddled with instability as he was unable to fulfil the promise of delivering Israeli arms to his forces. Backed by Israel, which favoured a stricter military leadership, the movement's military head, Joseph Lagu Yanga, whom Muortat had earlier dispatched to Israel to follow up on the promised military assistance, declared a coup against Muortat's government. Muortat refused to be drawn into a fight with the dissenting Lagu and his forces. Instead, he encouraged the forces still loyal to him to join Lagu. He reasoned that the newly acquired Israeli weaponry, which Lagu now held and which was expected to increase the effectiveness of the fight against Khartoum, should be immediately put to use, irrespective of who led the Anya Nya.

Two years later, the Addis Ababa Agreement was signed with the Khartoum government, by then under Colonel Jaafar Mohamed Nimeiri. Muortat vehemently opposed this agreement, calling it a sell-out. Joseph Lagu and his deputies set out to implement the Agreement, eventually returning to Khartoum and integrating the Anya Nya forces into the Sudanese army. Muortat remained in exile and continued to campaign for armed resistance to achieve a just solution for the people of South Sudan. After being expelled from Zaïre (previously Congo) by Gen. Mobutu Sese Seko and refused political asylum by several African countries, Muortat was granted asylum in the United Kingdom in 1973.

In 1975, elements of the former Anya Nya, comprising mainly Nuer soldiers, mutinied in Upper Nile and fled back into the bush, near the Ethiopian border. Muortat joined them and organised them into the Anya Nya Patriotic Front, becoming its political leader. Unable to secure financial and logistical support, however, the APF never rose to prominence. He returned to South Sudan in 2006, after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, and joined the newly formed Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly, representing the constituency of Rumbek East. During the long years of the SPLM/A-led war and while in the UK, Muortat had served as Personal Advisor to the SPLM/A Chairman, Dr. John

Garang de Mabior, and was a member of the National Liberation Council. In 2008, he passed away in Rumbek after a short illness.

Joseph Oduho

Joseph Oduho Haworu (1927-1993) led Southern Sudan's call for independence and helped to found the SPLM/A.

Born to the Latuka tribe near Torit in Eastern Equatoria, he undertook his primary and secondary education in South Sudan and went on to qualify as a head teacher, serving in several schools. He first displayed his political awareness of the injustices in Sudan when in 1953, he took part in demonstrations against the lack of involvement of Southern politicians in the negotiations for Sudan's independence. Two years later, he was arrested and sentenced to death, accused of conspiring with the mutinous Southern soldiers in Torit. He was released on Sudan's independence in 1956 and quickly embraced politics. In the following year, he was elected to the first post-independence Parliament, where he pushed for federalism for the South. In 1960, he fled into exile in Uganda, where he and other prominent politicians founded SANU.

SANU, notably Oduho and William Deng Nhial, worked to provide political leadership to the Anya Nya rebels and articulate the cause of the Southern Sudanese people. Deng and Oduho published a small book in 1963 called *The Problem of Southern Sudan*, in which they called for Southern independence. After regaining the leadership of the Southern movement in 1965, he renamed it the Azania Liberation Front (ALF), however internal political wrangling continued to dog his leadership. He remained a prominent leader in exile throughout the 1960s and although briefly splitting with the Anya Nya when Joseph Lagu assumed the leadership, he participated in the Addis Ababa negotiations.

Oduho served as the Southern Region's minister of both Housing and Public Utilities and of Education during the years of peace following the Addis Ababa Agreement in 1972. His key achievements in office included helping to procure funds for the regional government buildings in Juba and the establishment of the University of Juba, both of which are still in use today.

Oduho is widely praised for his opposition to the 'Redivision' of the South (Kokora) into three regions in 1983, which many saw as an attempt by the Khartoum government to weaken South Sudan. That year, Oduho left Sudan to join the SPLM/A in Itang, Ethiopia. When he arrived, he encouraged people to join John Garang's camp as opposed to that of Samuel Gai Tut and was later appointed Chairman of the Movement's Political Committee. He fell out with Garang in 1985 and was imprisoned for seven years; following his release, he joined the SPLM-United faction. He was tragically killed in 1993 at an SPLM-

United meeting in Panyagor, Upper Nile, in an ambush by Garang's SPLM/A Mainstream forces.

Luigi Adwok

Luigi Adwok Bong (1929-2010) was a politician, educationalist and civil servant. In both Sudan and South Sudan, he is remembered for serving briefly as Sudan's head of state – the only South Sudanese ever to do so – and for his achievements as a minister in the Southern Regional Government in the 1970s.

Adwok was born in the Shilluk Kingdom in Agodo, Upper Nile. After completing his secondary education in Rumbek in 1950, he qualified as a teacher and taught for four years before being elected to Parliament in 1958 while serving as Secretary General of the Liberal Party. After a brief return to teaching during Gen. Ibrahim Abboud's rule, he joined the Southern Front party. After the fall of Abboud's regime in 1964, the transitional civilian government established a five-man Supreme Council of State which had ultimate authority (Robert O. Collins, 1970) and later that year, Adwok was chosen to be the SF's representative on the Supreme Council (Robert S. Kramer, 2013). The rotating chairmanship of the Council meant that he was head of state during a state visit by Queen Elizabeth II of the UK and her husband, Prince Philip. The fact that a Southern Sudanese had been granted the responsibility of formally welcoming the royal couple offended some Northern Sudanese, prompting a constitutional amendment that made the Supreme Council chairmanship a permanent post. In 1965, after massacres in Wau and Juba by the Sudanese army, Adwok stood down from the Council.

Two years later, Adwok split from the SF after disagreeing with his party as to whether it should participate in the 1967 elections. He stood as an independent candidate and won in Shilluk North. After the Addis Ababa Agreement in 1972, he served in the Southern Regional Government. With Joseph Oduho, one of his main achievements during this period was to be instrumental in setting up the University of Juba (Kuyok, 2015). He briefly served as Commissioner of Upper Nile after Kokora in 1983 but retired from politics in 1985. He is remembered as a patriot and intellectual. He died in 2010 and was buried in his hometown, Kodok.

Samuel Gai Tut

Samuel Gai Tut (1939-1984) was a Nuer commander who fought in both the First and Second Sudanese civil wars. He was prominent in the negotiations which led to the foundation of the SPLM/A. The suspicious circumstances of his death in 1984 still have a profound impact on the tension between Nuer and Dinka peoples in modern-day South Sudan.

Gai Tut was born in Kurmayom village, Upper Nile, and enrolled in primary school in 1948. His secondary education was cut short as he chose to join the

Anya Nya in 1962. He quickly distinguished himself as a competent soldier and by the late 60s, he was a leading commander (Daniel Wuor Joak, 2016). Along with other commanders such as John Garang, he opposed the terms of the 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement. Eventually, though, he was convinced to accept them and this resulted in his integration into the national army, the Sudan Armed Forces. He was soon discharged, however, suspected of colluding with Nuer mutineers in Upper Nile. He subsequently stood for the Regional Assembly, winning the Lou Nuer West seat.

Although Gai Tut served as a regional minister in the South during this period, he remained convinced that independence was the only solution and therefore while in government, he procured weapons for the Southern rebels that were growing in numbers along the Ethiopian border (Gérard Prunier, 1986). In 1982, he was arrested and held responsible for a cargo of arms that were heading to the rebels, but with legal assistance, he was released and himself joined the fighters in Upper Nile (Kuyok, 2015). In the following year, he reached Itang, where the rebel forces were stationed and later rose to become a potential leader of the new movement, the SPLM/A.

Differences arose with John Garang, the other potential leader, when they disagreed over the Movement's proposed manifesto. Garang wanted to fight for a 'New Sudan', partly to garner more international support, while Gai Tut believed staunchly that they should fight for the complete independence of South Sudan – a debate that was to continue to divide the Movement. Samuel Gai Tut went on the lead Anya Nya II and died in 1984 in an SPLA ambush at Adura, Ethiopia.

William Deng

William Deng Nhial (1929-1968) was a pan-Africanist and one of the most popular Dinka leaders of South Sudan. He put forward a vision of a united, secular Sudan that respected the rights of all groups within the Sudan regardless of ethnicity or religious belief. His ideology was driven by the fact that the country's indigenous African groups outnumbered the Arabised ruling elite and his belief that if these marginalised groups united, they could democratically defeat the elite and bring proportional development to all regions of the Sudan. Based on his experience in Southern Sudan while fighting with the Anya Nya against the Khartoum government, he was adamant that the South was not ready for separation. The lack of development in the region and prevalent tribalism led him to believe that it would benefit more from the vision he proposed. Deng's ideology had a huge influence on John Garang's 'New Sudan' philosophy.

William Deng was born in Tonj, Bahr el Ghazal, in 1929. He excelled at school, completing his secondary education in Rumbek in 1953 and going on to attain a certificate at the School of Public Administration, Khartoum University College

(Kuyok, 2015). He joined the civil administration and rose to Assistant District Commissioner but fled to Uganda in 1961, where he and others formed the Sudan African National Union. SANU's name was designed to show solidarity with other African nationalist movements of the period (Francis Mading Deng, 1995). It provided much needed political leadership for the Southern Sudanese rebels and with Joseph Oduho, he published the book The Problem of Southern Sudan in 1963. Deng travelled widely in Africa and Europe to spread awareness of the Southern cause.

The Anya Nya forces, revitalised by the leadership of SANU, inflicted increasingly serious attacks on government-held towns, intensifying pressure on Gen. Abboud's military regime. In 1964, the regime fell and Sir el Khatim el Khalifa became Prime Minister of a transitional civilian government. He issued a general amnesty which coincided with political wrangling inside SANU. William Deng then decided to return to Sudan, which caused a split in the party's ranks. He formally registered the SANU (Inside) party on 11th April 1965 in Omdurman and led its delegation to the Round Table Conference (RTC) on Southern Sudan. The politicians who stayed in exile condemned his decision, with Aggrey Jaden leading the SANU (Outside) faction. After the split, William Deng's faction decided to accept peace and operate legally and democratically, while Aggrey's vowed to continue fighting the government for complete separation of the South.

Deng took a more pragmatic stance than he had previously, advocating at the RTC that South Sudan be given an autonomous status in a federated Sudan (LB Lokosang, 2010). Based on his pan-Africanist views, he aimed for political partnership with other indigenous African Sudanese people from across the Sudan, such as the Nuba, Fur and Beja. William Deng was convinced that a peaceful settlement with the North could be achieved through dialogue and working within the democratic framework of the state (Kuyok, 2015). He was elected as an MP in 1967 and stood again in the 1968 general elections. However, as the results were being announced, in Cueibet County, he was assassinated by what was assumed to be a government army unit. He is buried in his hometown of Tonj and is viewed as one of South Sudan's national heroes.

More leaders remembered

There is no space here to go into detail about other South Sudanese 'notables' (Kuyok, 2015) of recent history but it is important to at least mention some. They include Ariath Makuei, a spiritual leader of the Malual Dinka who fought tirelessly to unite the Dinka clans to resist British Rule; Father Saturnino Lohure, a Catholic priest from the Lotuho people of Equatoria who became one of the most prominent and respected leaders of South Sudan's struggle for independence; Ngundeng Bong, a 19th century Nuer prophet who preached peace and unity amongst the Dinka and

Nuer and whose prophecies are still highly influential in South Sudan; and Aggrey Jaden, one of the first South Sudanese university graduates and a selfless fighter for independence. More recent additions might include the founder and Chairman of the SPLM/A, John Garang, and co-founders Kerubino Kuanyin Bol, William Nyuon Bany and Arok Thon Arok, as well as countless others who fought in both wars to win the independence of South Sudan for future generations.

People cling to their ethnic communities, at least in part, because they find the community a more reliable source of support than the state. If South Sudan is to build a strong national identity and unite its divided peoples, the government should, among other measures, attempt to reverse this situation. Recognising and honouring the country's many heroes – a hugely diverse group – could help to create that much needed inclusive environment.

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Engagement Beyond the Centre: An Inquiry Report on the Future of UK-Sudan Relations. All Party Parliamentary Group for Sudan and South Sudan. A Review[1]

Gillian Lusk*

The British government's controversial policy of 'strategic dialogue' with the Sudanese regime, launched in April 2016, and the equally contentious attempt by the European Union (EU) to restrict immigration by cooperating with that regime prompted this ambitious Inquiry Report, published in February 2017. The Report details many of the issues arising from this startling change in British policy, which is now often termed "strategic engagement", but seems afraid of its own conclusions. There is insufficient analysis of the Sudanese context, whether of the Sudanese regime's own strategy in embarking on this "Dialogue" – many would say in 'planning' the policy – or of how such diplomatic and economic engagement by Britain (and the EU) does or should relate to the Khartoum regime's nearly 30 years of repressive Islamist rule that precede the Western policy reversal.

The Report nevertheless upset Khartoum. One response from the Sudan Embassy in London came in early March via the daily *Sudan Vision*. The government paper denounced a Report that "resorts to three ploys to achieve its goal. (Fabrication, omission and distortion)." In contrast, many Sudanese seized on the Report's assumption that Britain's strategic engagement would continue and dismissed it as not worth reading.

This is understandable but ill advised: the Report is the result of hours of interviews and reading, and it summarises and examines in some detail most of the key issues currently afflicting the Sudanese people: war in Darfur and in the Two Areas (the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile); the International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrants of 2009 and 2010 for President Omer Hassan Ahmed el Beshir and other officials on charges of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity; the lack of an independent judiciary; the absence of human and democratic rights and freedoms; the brutal and ever growing power of the security services; economic collapse which leaves most of the population hungry and with scant access to health care. Skilfully weaving together the testimony of many people and organisations, it places the responsibility for these crises squarely on the Sudanese regime.

What the Report fails to do is follow the logic of its own series of overwhelmingly negative assessments of the current situation in Sudan and fully join up the dots of the regime's responsibility. It is good on the symptoms of the malady but less

February 2017: 44 pp. Available in print or on line.

so on its underlying causes. So any overriding sense that engaging with Khartoum may be pragmatically fruitless or morally questionable takes effort to find. Yet such would be the logic of the Report's scattered conclusions. It is also what I hear from Sudanese of a wide range of political opinion and it may help to explain why the Report has not had the desired impact among them or, it would seem, among British government officials: those officials who have read it will have found no accusations so robust that they cannot deflect them. There's always scope for a very British "Yes, but ...".

Islamism? What Islamism?

The Report also steers pretty clear of the regime's use of Islamism (meaning political Islam or what Sudanese call 'the abuse of the religion') at home or abroad, which would be fundamental to understanding its thinking and which, in an age of worldwide Islamist attacks, might also be deemed crucial to Western security concerns. On the once important but currently unfashionable theme of trying to understand how the other side thinks, the report does not sufficiently pursue the logic of its rather separate examples of regime responsibility to consider how the National Congress Party (NCP) regime might also have 'a strategy' of its own which itself raises serious doubts about the very existence of the United Kingdom's 'strategic engagement'.

Many long-term observers of the NCP – which previously called itself the National Islamic Front (NIF) – might think that it is more prone to think strategically than, in an age of short-termism, its British or other Western counterparts. Having seized power in a military coup 28 years ago, in June 1989, after some 14 years of covert preparation for power, the country's most detested government has indeed had to think strategically and has had plenty of practice. Democratically elected governments are not compelled to think long term and recent major events in the UK confirm that they often don't.

The All Party Parliamentary Group

Founded in 1998 as the Associate Parliamentary Group, the APPG's stated intention is to "influence the UK government's policy and practice by promoting the cause of peace, human rights, justice and development for all the people of Sudan and South Sudan across the political spectrum in Westminster and Whitehall." The latest Report certainly tries to do that but Whitehall does not look as if it is about to change its own policy, let alone Khartoum's. It is short of leverage, as the Report notes.

Much of that lack of leverage is of London's own making. By "moving from the 'stick' to the 'carrot', altering the balance between criticism and cooperation to bring about behavioural change from the Government of Sudan and to secure

its own interests in the region", as the Report describes it, London has actually reduced what influence it had or, with other policies, could have had. The chances of its current policy either bringing a change in Khartoum's behaviour or securing UK "interests in the region", however, they are defined, are virtually nil, as any Sudanese democrat will tell you. Indeed, the reverse is true. The NCP regime's hold on power has been strengthened by Western (and Arab) engagement, while Britain and its EU partners are widely perceived as having jettisoned democratic and humanitarian principles in favour of the short-term gain of a reduction in African immigration – and even that result is in doubt, as the ever rising number of deaths in the Mediterranean tragically demonstrates.

Sudan? Where's that?

The NCP's long incumbency has fuelled a decline in wider British interest in the country, something Khartoum has not been slow to note and take advantage of. With Sudan sliding down many agendas, a once bustling Parliamentary Group has difficulty in attracting to meetings many of the over 100 members of parliament who signed up to it. An informed interest in foreign policy is, sadly, no vote-winner for MPs and members of the House of Lords have latterly been more energetic on both Sudans than the elected occupants of the 'other place'. An exception is Mark Durkan of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, who deftly chaired the APPG until he narrowly lost his Derry seat to Sinn Féin in the June 2017 elections. Several Peers who are doughtily active on Sudan and South Sudan also belong to the Group and signed off on its Report, including three cross-benchers, David Alton, Caroline Cox and John Montagu, and the Labour Party's Glenys Kinnock. There is some hope around that the new Chairperson, Sir Henry Campbell Bellingham, MP for Cheltenham, will bring new energy to Commons participation but since he is a Conservative former Africa Minister, whether he will seek to change Whitehall policy remains in question.

Even limited recent APPG activism doesn't please the Sudanese regime. The *Sudan Vision* article, penned by the vocal and ubiquitous long-time Embassy Spokesman, Khalid el Mubarek Mustafa, and entitled 'Comment on an Unfair Report', declares in its first paragraph: "The Sudan is so pivotal, geographically and politically in the region, that there are now two All Party Parliamentary Groups at the British Parliament that keep track of its latest developments. One, with impeccable credentials, is chaired by Lord Sheikh, the second which issued this report is headed by Mark Dorkin [sic] MP (with the messianic Baroness Cox whose DNA can be traced on all pages [sic]) as a Vice Chair." The article didn't mention that the group "with impeccable credentials", confusingly called the Associate Parliamentary Group for Sudan (without "and South Sudan"), was founded only last year in June 2016. It focuses explicitly on trade. Co-chaired by Lord

Mohamed Sheikh, a Tory Peer, it does not include South Sudan in its remit but it does include Lord Qurban Hussein and Lord Nazir Ahmed of Rotherham, along with ex-Liberal Democrat Peer Jenny Tonge, a long-term advocate of engagement with Khartoum. In a *Sudan Vision* piece entitled 'The British Elections and the Sudan' on 8 July 2017, Khalid el Mubarek again took a swipe at what he called "an anti-Sudan APPG", meaning the one which issued the Report here under consideration. To call non-Sudanese critics of the Khartoum regime "anti-Sudan" is one of its regular tactics. Never mind that most of its critics are Sudanese.

Most interestingly, the *Sudan Vision* article comments that the UK-Sudan Strategic Dialogue was "the result of cooperation between the Sudanese Ambassador to London and his British counterpart in Khartoum". Hitherto, the 'engagement' had always been portrayed as a Sudanese initiative. The British Ambassador to Sudan, Michael Aron, is a warm enthusiast of active engagement, including boosting commercial ties. Indeed, in his blog on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) website on 1 September 2016, Aron described Darfur as a 'Green and Pleasant Land', a reference to British poet and painter William Blake's description of England, made famous in the hymn '*Jerusalem*', and one that took many readers aback. A couple of months later, Amnesty International was accusing the Khartoum regime of using chemical weapons last autumn in its war in Darfur.

A look at the Report

The Foreword of the APPG Report begins well: 'UK policy in Sudan should be guided by the Sudanese people's pursuit of lasting peace, inclusive democracy, and shared economic prosperity.' The starting reference to the 'Sudanese people' rather than 'the Sudan' suggests the commitment to democracy and human rights that permeates the Report but also a willingness to challenge the Sudan government that does not. The chapters are replete with sporadic skirmishes but not the overriding analysis that would be harder for the London government and other advocates of engagement to ignore. It is as if the writers don't want to cause offence or stray from the diplomatic parliamentary path. Given the British government's superior weight, that takes that path to the *status quo*.

Yet the Foreword goes on:

> this report seeks to influence and inform the UK Government's engagement with its Sudanese counterpart, bringing together Sudanese civil society activists, international NGOs, UK Government officials and independent experts to discuss not only our necessary political relationship, but also how we renew our connection with Sudanese culture and society. Above all, we urge the UK Government to engage more broadly and deeply in Sudan, building on a long history of close people-to-people links.

This wise advice may resonate loudly with Sudanese democracy activists and with friends of Sudan but it will not make the FCO lose any sleep. Officials can truthfully claim that they already talk to "civil society organisations, international NGOs ... and independent experts". Indeed, they also talk to Sudanese oppositionists. Sadly, numerous members of all these categories regularly lament that they are not being taken seriously in Whitehall and that their concerns are not really heard. With budgets slashed and jobs under constant threat, and with thought, energy, time and money to be gobbled up for years to come by the huge and incalculable impact of leaving the EU, Sudan is likely to slide further down the FCO's long "to do" list. Instead of being seen as meriting deep and extensive analysis, it has become a problem to simplify and contain. The British government has expended some resources lately on assessing its South Sudan policy but far fewer on its policy for an equally needy Sudan.

"Unmistakable strategic shift"

Like most reports these days, this one starts with an Executive Summary, a device for those who can't find the time or energy to read the whole work. The APPG is not afraid to jump in at the deep end. "The initiation of the 'UK-Sudan Strategic Dialogue' in March last year, as well as active participation in European Union engagement with the Government of Sudan, marks an unmistakable strategic shift in UK policy towards Sudan. The UK Government is moving from the 'stick' to the 'carrot', altering the balance between criticism and cooperation to bring about behavioural change from the Government of Sudan and to secure its own interests in the region." It swims on strongly: "This change in approach warrants scrutiny; President Omar al-Bashir remains the subject of an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court, conflict and instability continue in Darfur and the Two Areas, and the rights of opposition activists across Sudan are routinely violated."

Of course, it is not only "opposition activists" whose rights are "routinely violated": anyone suspected, rightly or wrongly, of saying and sometimes simply of thinking anti-government thoughts may be arrested or otherwise harassed. The Summary goes on to acknowledge that "a determined and vibrant civil society is signalling a strong popular demand for change," mentioning last year's campaign of civil disobedience. Later in the Report, the authors mention that this campaign was "prompted" by "the killing of 200 unarmed democracy protesters in September 2013".

Human rights versus peace

Some might think it worth mentioning that the security forces, predominantly the ubiquitous National Intelligence and Security Service, shot those demonstrators in

cold blood. This was not even a case of clashes getting out of hand on either side: it was a calculated tactic by the NISS, one long used against civilians in Darfur and other conflict areas and also on the streets of towns in Wadi el Nil.

The government gun is regularly deployed and always implicit in any "routine" harassment of civilians. Rarely are these violations the acts of undisciplined soldiers or security goons: they are tactics to keep the population in thrall. Lawyers and journalists drew attention to this, so the British government quietly reined in its "human rights training" for Khartoum's armed services – which included ordinary police and the feared paramilitary Central Reserve Police (Abu Tera) – launched under the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that led to South Sudan's Independence.

This is also a broader reminder that Britain, as Sudanese people often sadly note, has not fulfilled its obligations as a sponsor of the CPA – a member of the "Troika" with the United States and Norway. The CPA makes many provisions for human rights and "fundamental freedoms", and Sudanese understood that if such freedoms were allowed to flourish once again, that would be the end of NCP rule. The CPA also said of the National Security Service (NSS), hitherto seen primarily as a brutal enforcer though also of course spying on the population and the government itself: "... its mandate shall be focussed on information gathering and analysis". With the Troika, other Western governments, the United Nations and the African Union all concentrating on the future of South Sudan, the NCP was able to put its efforts into holding on to power in the face of possible Southern Independence and the new power of John Garang de Mabior, leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and soon to be national Vice-President, for three short weeks until his death in a helicopter crash in July 2005.

Along with African and other Western governments involved in the CPA, Britain focussed on peace in South Sudan and it neglected the north, where the NCP regime was busy trying to compensate for its loss of the south by consolidating its hold on the north. With the negotiations still under way in Machakos, Kenya, the UK's then Special Representative, Alan Goulty, was asked at the SSSUK annual Symposium in 2002 about the issue of democracy in Sudan: "You have to make sacrifices to get peace", he replied.[2] That was a view held by other key governments, too, and democracy was duly sacrificed.

Steering well clear of serious internal change, the regime was able to pursue business as usual in that aspect of the CPA, adding the word "Intelligence" to the name of the NSS but certainly not embarking on "human rights and fundamental freedoms". Changing its name from National Islamic Front to National Congress Party in 1999-2000 had convinced many outsiders that it had changed its spots, so

[2] Quoted in 'Getting away with it', *Africa Confidential* Volume 44, Number 13, 27 June 2003.

why not do the same for the NSS? Twelve years later, no government or United Nations' body has openly challenged this failure to rein in the security thugs' enforcement powers; indeed, Western officials, including some British ones, smile meaningfully about the "intelligence cooperation" between the two governments, which they claim has "saved lives on the streets of London" or New York, an unverifiable claim to say the least.

Unpacking "Extremism"

On "strategic engagement", the APPG Report's Executive Summary rightly notes that, "This change in approach warrants scrutiny;" and the Report itself proceeds to scrutinise in some detail. The detail is necessarily restricted by space but Islamism gets far less space or depth than many might think it merits. This lacuna is foretold in the Summary, in a key section that needs some unpacking. Quoted in full, it runs:

> **On extremism**, submissions urged caution upon international partners in cooperating with the Government of Sudan. Shorn of ideological legitimacy, the National Congress Party is forced to draw credibility from their tolerance of extremist groups internally, while also self- portraying as an 'island of stability' in a chaotic region. Recent reports of intelligence sharing and the Government of Sudan's proactive steps to tackle Islamic State internally are welcome, however international partners should remain conscious of the political contingency of this cooperation.
>
> Meanwhile the consistent repression of students, academics and universities, crackdowns on independent civil society organisations, and restrictions on the media prevent the open debate which will be the long-term remedy to extremism in Sudan.

The authors justifiably draw attention to the fact that "submissions urged caution upon international partners in cooperating with the Government of Sudan." However, caution is easy to claim, especially for diplomats who excel in it, and greater explanation is needed of why "international partners" (partners?) should tread carefully. In this single paragraph beginning "On extremism ...", three sentences stand out as questionable and bear further examination, for they sum up much that is wrong, not just with this Report but in Western approaches to Islamism, both in Sudan and more widely. They are, "Shorn of ideological legitimacy, the National Congress Party is forced to draw credibility from their tolerance of extremist groups internally ..."; "Recent reports of intelligence sharing and the Government of Sudan's proactive steps to tackle Islamic State internally are welcome ..."; and "Meanwhile the consistent repression of students, academics and universities, crackdowns on independent civil society organisations,

and restrictions on the media prevent the open debate which will be the long-term remedy to extremism in Sudan."

To be sure, this is only a Summary and 'extremism' is a theme that gets its own Chapter in Part Two. The problem is that if the basic assumptions are shaky, the conclusions will also be doubtful. It therefore seems important to raise these queries early on, for Islamism cannot be dismissed so lightly: it was the driving ideology of the NIF's coup in 1989, it lies at the core of the regime it created and therefore it also permeates Sudan's multifarious crises since then, from human rights atrocities to mass emigration and people-trafficking.

The ideology cannot be detached from what it has created. And what it has created is not only an attempted totalitarian system in Sudan itself, with its accompanying brutal security state, but a key and nowadays more covert role in an international and operational network that includes terrorist action, financing, and military and doctrinal training. Its tentacles stretch around the world but are most obvious currently in the conflicts in Libya, Nigeria and Somalia, among others. What the world's decision-makers see, though, is Sudan's largely trumpeted contingent in the Saudi Arabian coalition in Yemen, fighting rebels backed by Sudan's once closest ally, Iran. The West and Arab governments see that as 'containment', a way of achieving (to use a phrase I once heard publicly used by the former head of the Government Communications Headquarters), 'enough security', while not tackling the fundamental issues. That is why Britain and the United States could welcome the Muslim Brotherhood when President Mohamed Morsi briefly came to power in Egypt in 2012. Iran has not publicly protested against Sudan's 'betrayal', which suggests that a tactical deal was well coordinated between the two governments.

Questionable assertions

Firstly, "Shorn of ideological legitimacy, the National Congress Party is forced to draw credibility from their tolerance of extremist groups internally ...". This suggests that the NCP once had "ideological legitimacy" but has since lost it. No Sudanese I have ever listened to, except for the handful of Islamists, attributes any legitimacy at all – moral or legal – to President Omer's regime. From Day One, 1 July 1989, people routinely accused it, in a familiar and oft repeated phrase, of "using religion for political ends" and that accusation persists. Corruption was extant from the start, using public money and land for the benefit of the party and/or for personal gain, otherwise known as 'state capture'. The regime enjoyed no golden age of "Islamic purity" and Sudanese with a deep knowledge of the Muslim faith and its theology talk about this in great detail and with great feeling.

The idea that the regime could "draw credibility from" its "tolerance of extremist groups" is frankly weird. Credibility in relation to whom? Naturally, the

regime juggles different factions, including manoeuvring around their conflicts. Yet "tolerance of extremist groups" suggests that it is not itself "extremist", i.e. that its claim to have "changed" (leaked and said privately rather than publicly announced) is actually true. This trend began around 2000, when the NIF (previously the Islamic Charter Front and then the Muslim Brotherhood) became the NCP, conspicuously sidelining its founding father, Hassan Abdullah el Turabi. The trend of course accelerated with his death in March 2016.

Many an observer, including official ones, has given the impression of thinking that the loss of a key inspiration and organiser meant the end of the elaborate, security-based system that the party (under its various names) had so carefully built up over decades. However, this was not Romania without Ceaușescu as Eastern Bloc Communist systems crumbled. This was an Islamist regime – the world's first modern Islamist regime claiming Sufi affiliation – in an era when Al Qaida (nurtured in Sudan by the NIF) was still thriving, Da'ish ('Islamic State') was going from strength to strength, and jihadism was spreading like wildfire across the world. It seems unlikely that the NCP regime decided to buck the trend. The APPG Report indeed warns of the regime's tactical strength and this realisation could well be applied more firmly to understanding its ideological strength: the NCP always thinks both strategically and tactically, and is expert at making tactical compromises for strategic ends. Even the reduction of party power in favour of the presidential military-security nexus doesn't change that: it's just less subtle sometimes.

Spooks understand each other

Or do they? The apparent widespread Western assumption that military and security officers "understand each other" may be a rash one, especially when dealing with their more ideologically driven counterparts, however professional they may appear. "Recent reports of intelligence sharing and the Government of Sudan's proactive steps to tackle Islamic State internally are welcome ...", says the APPG Report. But are they, even from a Western security perspective, let alone a human rights one? For one thing, the two halves of this sentence are very disparate. Let's start with "intelligence sharing". Is this a two-way process, as the statement implies? That would be truly alarming.

There is no space here to detail Sudan government involvement in past terrorist attacks, described, including in court documents in the public domain, from the first World Trade Center bombing in New York in 1993 to the East African US Embassy bombs in 1998. That is what is supposed to have stopped under Western pressure. Nevertheless, less 'spectacular' international involvement by Khartoum persists. Arms monitors have found Sudanese manufactured ammunition with a short custody chain with Da'ish fighters in Iraq, for instance. Medics and other students have travelled to Iraq and Syria to join Da'ish, and to Nigeria to Boko

Haram after doctrinal training in Sudan. That ammo was made in Sudanese government factories; those recruits were trained in Sudanese colleges. No one can leave Sudan to fly to Turkey (a main route into the Middle East for jihadists and an ever closer ally of Sudan) without a government exit visa. Many of these young jihadists are diaspora-raised Sudanese or Africans from across the Sahel Belt but they are not maverick individuals who circumvented the regulations, they are government sanctioned. That rather begs the question about the government's steps "to tackle Islamic state internally".

Open debate as a remedy for extremism.

The Report is self-evidently right to oppose the repression of academics, civil society, the media and free speech more widely. Such freedoms are all prerequisites of an open, healthy and creative society, and even if periods of such freedoms have sometimes not lasted long in Sudan, they are held dear in the memory of today's political and social leaders, many of them forced by that same repression into exile. It is impossible to forget the crowds marching through Khartoum in the Intifada of April 1985 shouting, 'Westminster! Westminster!' Would they still see Westminster as a symbol of freedom and democracy today?

Suppression of freedom reaches into every corner of life, damaging society in areas way beyond the conventional realms of politics or economics. For instance, on 29 June 2017, the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) suspended Sudan from membership because of government interference in the Sudan Football Association's elections. Vice-President Bakri Hassan Salih cancelled the 'interference' but not before the country's two top teams, El Merrikh and El Hilal, had become ineligible for African club competition and two sports newspapers, *El Zaeem* and *El Zawiya*, had seen their print-runs expensively and intimidatingly seized by security officers for writing about the suspension. If this is what can happen to soccer fans, it is clear that politicos are in constant danger. The APPG lays great stress on government oppression of civil society and the role which that society may play in change.

What next?

The Conclusion of the APPG Report begins: 'Ultimately, discussions around specific policy areas cannot be disentangled from the broader question of whether the UK-Sudan Strategic Dialogue is an effective vehicle to achieve the UK's stated goal of "a Sudan at peace with itself and its neighbours, meeting the needs and aspirations of its people."'

That raises the question: 'Is anyone interested in whether it is "an effective vehicle" and if they are and it is not, what will they do about it? The Report rightly notes that Khartoum has "little incentive" to change its ways and that by embarking

on the 'Dialogue' policy, London has given up important leverage options. That being so, what should Britain and other governments be doing? And what should Sudanese and Sudan campaigners be doing?

There are many potential stages and policy options between the Western military invasion that once seemed possible and today's seemingly heartfelt and uncharacteristically incautious embrace. So warm is the Western hug that when British film-maker Phil Cox and his Sudanese-American colleague Daoud Hari were detained in Darfur last winter, they were held for two months in shackles and tortured, with no Western protest even after their release. Those who care about human rights or are concerned about Sudan's future more broadly could do worse than read the APPG Report before deciding on their own policy.

*Gillian Lusk is a writer on the Sudans. She has just retired as Associate Editor of *Africa Confidential* and is Chairperson of SSSUK.

Memories of Mo

Jillian Osman

When Gillian Lusk asked if I could contribute to recollections of dear Mo, I readily agreed, for what could be easier than putting pen to paper in remembrance. What I had originally thought would be a straightforward task has proved to be extremely emotional. The passages of time can dim some memories, but others remain vivid and take form so readily.

My story of Mo begins fifty odd years ago, London in the "swinging sixties". My late husband Dr Osama was someone who in those days loved nothing better than starting the weekend off in a corner of one of the pubs in Bayswater, Paddington, Swiss Cottage or the particular favourite, "The Spaniards Inn" in Hampstead. We had no mobile phones to communicate with, but in no time at all our corner would be filled with Sudanese writers, artists, surgeons, physicians and so forth, Mo was an integral part of these gatherings.

Whoever had money that week bought the rounds, and once pleasantries had been exchanged, conversation would begin. Our corner would start to resemble an orchestra warming up, everyone talking and chiming in at once, all offering different opinions on how the Sudan should be governed. Cigarette, cigar, and pipe smoke swirling all around. Hands moving rapidly for emphasis, quick burst of intense argument, voices rising to a crescendo but never out of temper, more in desperation to prove an ever more debatable point of view. The evening debates would always be interspersed with jokes and satirical poking fun at the establishment figures, almost a precursor of "Have I got news for you". Mo's laughter would ring out, and conversation would have to slow down to allow him time to recover. Whatever differences arose, at closing time the group departed as brothers, largely in part due to Mo's infectious laughter and infallible good humour.

I recall one occasion when Mo invited us to his home for dinner to meet Rose, the children and his larger-than-life mother-in-law Elisabeth Lutyens. Mo had surpassed himself: he had prepared one of the best meals of Sudanese food I have ever tasted. Everything laid out on a large trestle table and Mo saying, "You must eat Jillian, you are too thin to get pregnant". I was blown away by his culinary expertise and hospitality, not only was he a ceramicist, a potter, a storyteller par excellence, here was a man whose skills as a chef would have taken him far. Even more amazing, Mo told me he knitted the children's jumpers, self-taught and knitting without a pattern.

When my daughter Nada was born, we lived near The Camden Arts Centre, where Mo was a tutor in ceramics. He would wave me in, if he saw me passing.

This was the first time I had seen a potter's wheel and unformed clay, Mo spoke about pottery and ceramics so eloquently and engagingly, and I was completely enthralled. He encouraged me to enrol for a term; alas my good intentions to attend never quite came to fruition due to the constraints of work and a small child; a missed opportunity to be taught by a true artist, and a sad regret for me.

In the mid-70s, we went to live in Khartoum, and so over the years our paths crossed less and less, but news of Mo and his family and works would filter through to us from London, and we always felt nostalgic when we heard of him.

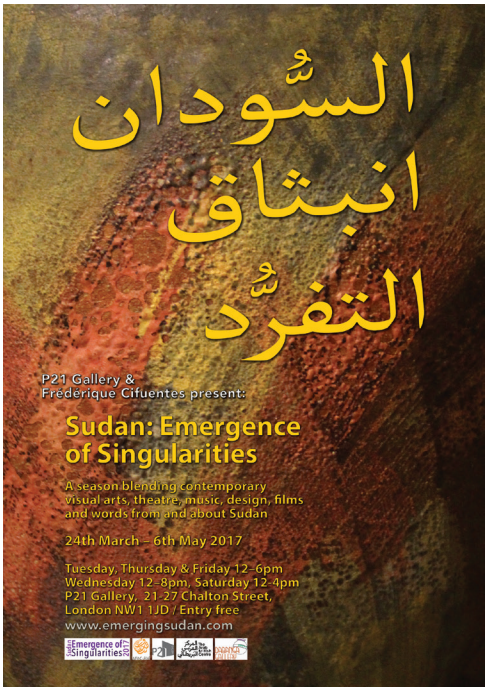
We met up again after a thirty-year gap; I was by then living in Wales and had come with my daughter for a weekend visit to London. I am humbled to say that it was the same irrepressible, irreplaceable Mo who greeted us at the door, beaming, bubbling over with laughter, expressing his joy at seeing us. The years melted, and it seemed as if we were resuming our conversations of yesteryear. Mo and Rose were as hospitable as ever they had been, and Mo gave my daughter and I some of his Sudanese recipes. I mentioned how much we missed the Sudanese *jibna madafara* (plaited cheese) and Mo immediately said I know just the place where we can get some, I will take you there. Before leaving the house, Mo showed us around his studio and so very kindly gave us some of his pottery as a gift; these are truly treasured by us.

We ended up at a delicatessen selling our longed for cheese, and Mo's expression of delight at our sight of the *jibna* is something that makes me smile whenever I think of it. We spent a couple more hours together reminiscing, and Mo took us to meet his son, and told us about the artistic tradition carrying on in the family. That precious afternoon was the last time I saw Mo.

In November 2016, my daughter and I went to Sharjah for my sister-in-law Kamala Ibrahim Ishaq's art exhibition. It was Kamala, a friend and contemporary of Mo's, who had first introduced my husband and I to Mo some 50 years ago. Therefore, it was fitting that it was through Kamala that we were able to renew our acquaintance with Mo's work. The exhibition on "The Khartoum School: The Making of the Modern Art Movement in Sudan", included a room dedicated to Sudanese ceramic artists. To see Mo's work so beautifully displayed was overwhelming, his creativity and genius shone for all to see. Tears of joy to behold the beauty of the work mingled with tears of loss of Mo, a beautiful soul, loved by all who had the privilege to spend time with or know him. Mo took very little out of this world and gave so very much to it.

Sudan: Emerging Singularities: A Review

Raphael Cormack*



From 24th March to the 6th May, the P21 Gallery in King's Cross, London, hosted an exhibition called *Sudan: Emerging Singularities*. It was billed as the first exhibition of contemporary Sudanese art in London. As such it was a rare chance for a British audience to engage with Sudan and its culture in a different context from the political roundtable that they are more accustomed to. "Artists and intellectuals," the publicity says, "are the best source to understand the social dynamics of a country." That is a statement that could well be questioned but this exhibition shows that art can at least offer a different way to understand the social dynamics of Sudan.

The exhibition brought together a wide range of examples of Sudanese cultural production. One of the great strengths of *Emerging Singularities* was the diversity of works displayed and the expansive definition of what can be included in an art show. There were, of course, paintings by artists such as Kamal Ibrahim Ishaaq and Mohammed Abdalla Otaybi. There was a film installation by the Sudanese Film Group (*Jama'a al-Film al-Sudani*). A number of exquisite pots by Mo Abarro were highlights of the exhibition as a whole.

The most interesting parts of the exhibition, however, were the things that one would not traditionally expect to see in a gallery. Alongside the paintings and ceramics were examples of the long tradition of filigree jewellery making in Sudan. The interior design of Akram Fathi and photographs of his work by the curator Frédérique Cifuentes were an extremely welcome addition to the P21 Gallery. His gaudy interiors of upper-middle class homes in Khartoum might not meet some people's conservative definition of what an art show ought to include but here it stands out as one of the most interesting sections of the exhibition. One piece of his, a rose shaped curtain-rail, was even for sale.

Mo Abbaro's pots (Credit, Frédérique Cifuentes).

A rose shaped curtain rail by Akram Fathi, (Credit, Frédérique Cifuentes).

If the goal of the exhibition was to use culture to understand the social dynamics of the country, then the photos of these wealthy interiors are one of its great successes. These palatial rooms in walled off mansions, decorated with over-the-top kitsch and (mostly) empty of people say something powerful but intangible about the country's elite. Taking an intimate look at the interiors of people's home the photos display a mix of wealth, violence and disturbingly lifeless figures, with its absences speaking as loudly as what is present. I came away thinking Akram Fathi (in Cifuentes' photos) was a highly developed Marxist critic with a mischievous streak.

Photos of Akram Fathi's interiors, (Credit, Frédérique Cifuentes).

In addition to the exhibition itself, *Sudan: Emerging Singularities* was also accompanied by a cultural programme that showed the same commitment to varied content. As well as panels on culture and literature there were theatrical performances, talks about silver jewellery and a cooking masterclass with Omer Eltigani, the author of the cookbook *Sudanese Kitchen*. Copies of books on Sudan, including the collection of essays, stories and poems *I Know Two Sudans* were on display.

I attended the screening of two short Hussein Shariffe films that were also part of the cultural series. The first film was the atmospheric, artistic and haunting *Dislocation of Amber*. Set in the old port of Suakin and with the singer Abd al-

The second short was an adaptation of a Jean Rhys short story called *Tigers are Better-Looking*. This film, set in London with a cameo from Malcolm McDowell, was a more fast paced, intense interrogation of exile and displacement.

The members of SSSUK will, no doubt, have been happy to see such a rich programme of cultural events and an exhibition with so much Sudanese material on display. Members will also be excited, that Cifuentes is trying to make this season of Sudanese culture a more permanent feature of the London year. We must all hope with her that it turns out to be so. If it does, there is much that could be done to build on the positives of this first exhibition.

Whilst the breadth of media and artistic inspiration was, without question, a positive of this exhibition, I felt the lack of a guiding thread running through the show. A stronger curatorial voice and a way for the visitor to navigate the exhibition would have made it easier to engage with the work as a whole. As it was it was a little too disparate, as if each section had been franchised off to a certain artist. This is not helped by the P21 gallery as a venue, which does not feel the right place for a show like this. It has more of a feeling of a place displaying public art on the ground floor of a New York skyscraper than an art gallery in London. The layout of this exhibition seems to work against a comprehensive viewer experience.

Hopefully, Cifuentes' project of bringing Sudanese culture to London. will continue to develop in positive and exciting ways. This exhibition and the events that were part of it form a solid base on which to build further. The members of SSSUK can rightly have high hopes for the future of Sudanese culture in the UK.

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News from the Sudan Archive, Durham

Francis Gotto

The range of material in the Sudan Archive provides an exceptionally rich research resource for scholars in all disciplines of studies relating to Sudan and South Sudan.

A brief history and description of the collection

The Sudan Archive was founded at Durham University in 1957 to collect and preserve the papers of former officials, soldiers and missionaries who were in Sudan during the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium period (1899-1955). There is also a significant amount of Mahdiya material as well as papers relating to the military campaigns of the 1880s and 1890s, while in recent years the scope of the Archive has extended to the period after 1956 and now contains material about South Sudan and Sudan up to the present day. The Archive also holds substantial numbers of papers relating to Egypt, the Arabian Peninsula, Palestine, Transjordan, Syria and African states bordering on the Sudans.

In addition to more than 1,100 boxes of official and personal papers, (correspondence, reports and memoranda, trek notes and diaries, letters home, etc.), collections may include a variety of records in other formats, such as photographic images (more than 50,000 prints, lantern slides and 35 mm slides), 155 cine-films from the 1920s to the 1960s, sound recordings, more than 1,000 maps, 750 museum objects and a large amount of rare printed material. Most of the material is in English, with a small amount in Arabic. Parts of some archival collections (Wingate, Beasley), maps and official Sudan Government publications can be accessed online, while all other archival material is made freely available to researchers at Palace Green Library in the heart of Durham city.

Newsletter

As *Sudan Studies* is such a good forum for reaching a number of different communities with an interest in the Sudans, many of whom will also have an interest in the Sudan Archive, it has been decided to experiment with a regular short news item in each issue of the journal. This will report significant accessions to the Archive and also some related events at Durham University. If this article prompts you to visit us or get in touch, whether to further your own research or to suggest additional records we should try to collect or to make a donation to the collections yourself, then it will have done its job.

https://www.dur.ac.uk/library/asc/sudan/

Recent accessions to the Sudan Archive

Items marked with an asterisk are accruals to existing collections; details of the careers of the people concerned are published in each of their collections' catalogues (http://discover.durham.ac.uk/). Acquisitions of recent publications are not generally noted – but nevertheless received with deep thanks!

The following lists of accessions and events cover the period July 2016 to June 2017.

Captain Arthur Hugh Alban Alban (1891-1982), Sudan Political Service 1921-1952 (Mongalla, Upper Nile, Gore): photographs, Sudan and Ethiopia.

Bishop Camillo Ballin: Ph.D. thesis (Pontificio Istituto Orientale, Rome, 2000, rev. 2012) *The Christian community in Sudan in its Islamic context, with special attention given to the era of the Mahdist revolution (1881-1898).*

***George Booth** (1923-2003), forester: photographs of Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kurdistan and Northern Iraq.

***Thomas F. G. Carless** (1897-1984), Sudan Political Service 1922-1946: correspondence and photographs, 1920s-1940s.

Anne Cloudsley (d. 2012): photographs and documentary films *Women of Omdurman* (1985) and *Oyoland and Nsukka* (1981).

Professor John Cloudsley-Thompson (1921-2013), University of Khartoum zoologist, and Anne Cloudsley (d. 2012): photographs from travels in Sudan, Nigeria and Ethiopia, 1960s.

Professor Wendy R. James: documentary film *Orphans of passage: The Uduk between Sudan and Ethiopia.*

***Sir Harold MacMichael** (1882-1969), Sudan Political Service 1905-1934: 1930s letters from Ethiopia; draft letter to Lord Curzon concerning deteriorating political situation in Sudan, 13 June 1922.

***Jack Mavrogordato** (1905-1987): photographs, [1944 x 1961].

Rev. Dr. Marc Nikkel (1950-2000): papers and photographs, 1987-2000; Ph.D. thesis (General Theological Seminary, NYC, 1988) *The outcast, the stranger and the enemy in Dinka Tradition contrasted with attitudes of contemporary Dinka Christians*; offprints.

Diana Rosenberg: personal papers, chiefly concerning education in South Sudan 1950s-1990s.

***Edwin G. Sarsfield-Hall** (1886-1975), Sudan Political Service 1909-1936: military uniform sketches, [1935 x 1975].

***Carol Sarsfield-Hall**: correspondence, photographs, and other papers relating to Sudan; the return to Sudan of artefacts collected by E.G. Sarsfield-Hall; Moral Re-armament, 1985-2006.

*__John (Ivan) Semevsky__ (d. 1980): 7 hand puppets made of ambatch (balsa) wood and textiles, and a theatrical curtain, [1940s].
Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel James Sillem (1859-1914): 1898 correspondence.
*__Sir Gilbert Falkingham Clayton__ (1875-1929): correspondence and some papers; flask, 1898-1919.
Jesse A. Zink: Ph.D. thesis (Emmanuel College, Cambridge University, 2015), *Christianity and catastrophe: Sudan's civil wars and religious change among the Dinka.*
Egyptian Army List (1912; 2017 facsimile).
Sudan medical journals and offprints, 1960s-1970s.
Dinka (Pada?) New Testament [1976].

Past events
Conference: 'The ethnographic archive: history, anthropology and the Sudan Archive Durham', 26-28 September 2016. Organised by postgraduates associated with the History Department, Durham University.

Exhibition: 'A forgotten campaign: the Anglo-Egyptian conquest of Darfur in World War I', Oriental Museum, Durham, 11 November 2016-20 March 2017. Photographic exhibition by Dr. Chris Vaughan, Liverpool John Moores University, of material from the Sudan Archive.

Workshop: South Sudan Museum Network, workshop 1. South Sudanese collections and their histories, 5-6 July 2017. Organised by the SSMN (https://southsudanmuseumnetwork.com/), led by Dr. Cherry Leonardi (PI) and Dr. Zoe Cormack (Co-I).

Display of archives and objects: visiting group of Stanford University undergraduates (studying abroad at Oxford), under the direction of Dr. Sebabatso Manoeli, 10 April 2017. Visits from other visiting groups are welcomed, by appointment.

Conference: 'Sudan Studies'. A one-day interdisciplinary conference for postgraduates and early career researchers working on any subject but with a focus on Ancient Nubia and modern Sudan, 13 May 2017. Organised by postgraduates associated with the Archaeology Department, Durham University.

Sir William Luce Fellow: the 2017 Fellow was Dr. Eddie Thomas, whose paper *Growth and Inequality: four decades of transformation in Sudan* will be published soon (https://www.dur.ac.uk/sgia/imeis/lucefund/visiting/).

Sudan Archive Visiting Library Fellow: the inaugural 2017 Fellow was Martin Ochaya Lino Agwella, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Bradford researching

indigenous peacemaking in South Sudan. A call for the 2018 Fellow will be circulated in October at the beginning of the next academic year.

The significance of the Sudan Archive is enhanced both by growing its collections and by increasing and widening its use – through your research and engagement. The Archive is open to all and with time, more and more of its records will be made freely available online. You are very welcome to get in touch or to come and visit us in Durham. My contact details are below.

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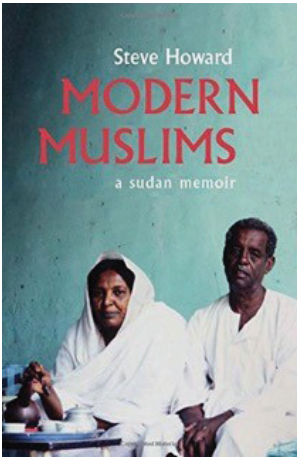
Book Reviews

Steve Howard, **Modern Muslims: A Sudan Memoir,** Ohio University Press, 2016, ISBN: 9780821422311 paperback, £22.99



Steve Howard describes the account of his experiences with the Republican Brothers in *Modern Muslims: A Sudan Memoir* as a 'personal story framed by social science convention' (p. 31). Out of his concern to avoid placing his companions in this movement into an 'academic box' (p. 8), Howard refrains from adopting a conventional scholarly framework. Readers expecting a rigorous engagement with the literature on social and religious movements in the Middle East associated with scholars such as Asef Bayat and Guilain Denoeux will thus be disappointed, yet this text is a rewarding read for all kinds of other reasons. There are a number of insightful reflections on the struggles of a sociologist trying to reconcile the personal and the academic – and happily, these challenges are explored through the author's own heartfelt prose more than post-modern jargon. He has evidently reflected in great depth on the suggestion of one Republican Brother that 'you just joined us in order to study us' (p. 198).

For the most part, the book is focused on the period in between 1982 and 1985, when Howard was in Khartoum undertaking the field research for his doctorate (which was not related to the Republican Brothers themselves). He is therefore able in his final chapter ('A Modern Muslim') to provide an insider account of the most fraught and most eventful period in the history of the movement, encompassing the Republican Brothers' protests against the introduction of President Nimeiri's arbitrary Sharia code in 1983, and their leader Mahmoud Mohamed Taha's subsequent trial and execution in 1985. Howard argues that Nimeiri's declaration of the 'September Laws' was the issue that forced the Republican Brothers to abandon their apolitical stance, maintaining that the threat that Nimeiri's distortions of Islam posed to Sudan's cultural diversity and unity convinced Mahmoud Mohamed Taha that they must enter the political fray. The author was himself arrested during the crackdown on the Republican Brothers and his discussion of his treatment at the hands of Nimeiri's security services offers some insight as to the means by which the Sudanese government attempted to deter members of the public from embracing Republican ideology.

There are many other useful passages in this book. Chapter 2 has some careful reflections on Mahmoud Mohamed Taha and the Republicans' complex relationship with Sudanese Islam, demonstrating that he both drew on and challenged

existing Sufi practices. Chapter 3 explores the author's experiences of day to day life as a member of the Republic Brother movement. Chapter 5 does a good job of exploring the means that the movement used to disseminate its religious and intellectual message – through poetry, through prayer, through hymns, through book fairs and in recent years via the internet. The Republican Brothers' conflict with Sudan's Islamic Movement is discussed here, albeit rather briefly. The controversial question of Hassan el Turabi's alleged responsibility for Mahmoud Mohamed Taha's death is alluded to but not covered in depth.

Chapter 4 ('A Women's Movement') will be of particular interest to those interested in histories of Sudanese women. The author mostly manages to avoid falling into the trap of portraying Mahmoud Mohamed Taha as a Qasim Amin-style 'father of feminism', although the Republican leader is quoted at one point describing a man's wife as 'his corresponding part, the manifestation of his self outside himself' (p. 125). Nevertheless, the voices of the movement's women – including Mahmoud Mohamed Taha's daughter Asma – come across strongly in this part of the memoir, and there is a lengthy discussion of the Republicans' progressive views on marriage.

The standard academic accounts are still Edward Thomas' *The Perfect Stranger: The Life of Mahmud Muhammad Taha, Muslim Reformer of Sudan* (London: IB Tauris, 2010) and Mohamed A. Mahmoud's *A Quest for Divinity: A Critical Examination of the Thought of Mahmoud Muhammad Taha* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000). This text does challenge Mohamed Mahmoud's account on one important point, however, criticising the author's observation that Mahmoud Mohamed Taha set back the emancipation of women by campaigning against the arrest of a woman for the practise of "pharaonic" circumcision. Howard maintains that to condemn Taha for apparently defending this practice is to misunderstand the nature of his approach, which focused on 'taking a stand against colonial imposition of cultural authority and for improving the status of women through education so that they might speak up on their own behalf against such "dangerous traditional practises"' (p. 24).

I picked up only one minor error – perhaps, given the author's concern that too much attention has been devoted to the less liberal forms of Islamic activism, his mistaken claim that the Wahhabiyya emerged in 'nineteenth century Arabia' (in fact it was the eighteenth) is understandable. Overall, this was an enjoyable read and a useful first-hand account of some of the Republican Brothers' most crucial years.

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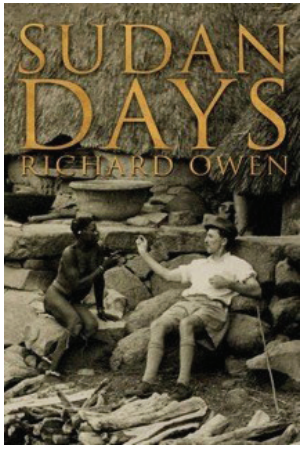
Richard Owen (Edited by Duff Hart-Davis), **Sudan Days 1926-1954, A Memoir by Richard Owen,** Matador, 2016, ISBN 978 178 5890 246, paperback £15



This book was originally written in 1962, some eight years after Richard Owen's retirement from the Sudan in 1954. He died in 1982. In 2015 his family decided to publish his original text, together with excerpts from his letters chosen by Hart-Davis. The attitudes and language in the book may seem out-dated with its views of 'the white man's burden' and his 'mission to civilise', nevertheless the vast majority of Sudan Political Service (SPS) senior officials held such views. Owen explains the evolution of government policies, especially after World War II as it endeavoured to prepare the country for self-government.

The book is autobiographical but not chronological, being composed of a series of 'essays'. In his Introduction Owen describes the numerous difficulties including isolation and poor communications. Nevertheless he enjoyed the freedom of the life and the joy of finding out about the lives of the people. One of the challenges he faced was understanding their traditions, especially those associated with the supernatural. It was something about the people that made him and his fellow officials begin to love the country. Many of us who have served more recently in Sudan have developed the same love of the country and its people which has led us continuing with our interest and becoming members of SSSUK.

Owen joined the SPS in 1926. His first posting was as Assistant District Commissioner (A/DC) among the Dinka in Bahr El Ghazal; and in 1928 he was posted to Geteina and Ed Dueim in White Nile Province. This transfer was from what he describes as a 'primitive' society to a more civilised and advanced northern Sudan. He writes that while both parts of the Sudan had a wide-ranging ethnic complexity, the north had Arabic and Islam as unifying factors. The South lacked any similar pattern of cultural unity.

From 1932 to 1936 he was posted to Sinkat in Kassala Province among the nomadic Beja, which he enjoyed in spite of "their tendency to procrastinate". He cites a serious dispute between two sections of the Hadendawa: he had managed to get the parties to agree a solution, but they soon returned having chosen to settle it in a year's time. Like many other DCs he spent some time in the Civil Secretary's office in Khartoum (1936 to 1939), to gain experience of the central administration. There he learnt how essential it was to see things from the point of view of the [illegible] Official, Sudan Home and Railway, who sometimes felt forgotten by the centre.

During World War II he was posted to Kordofan with responsibility for the Nuba Mountains. There he regained his affection and empathy with the African peoples of the southern provinces. The Nuba created problems, when the administration attempted to re-settle them on the more fertile land around the foot of their hills. This initiative was largely a failure since it was their old enemies at the foot of the hills that had originally led the Nuer to move to their hill fortresses. Another complication was the 121 different dialects spoken by, and only understood by, the inhabitants of each hill-top community.

In 1946 Owen returned to Bahr El Ghazal as Deputy Governor, and then Governor from 1948 until his resignation in 1953. It is clear that he found the Dinka and their customs (especially their love of cattle) a challenging but exciting experience; as independence approached their problems weighed heavily upon his conscience.

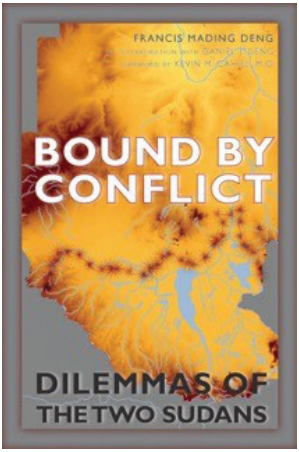
Owen's resignation in 1953 lay in his disapproval of the failure by Her Majesty's Government to negotiate a special arrangement for southern Sudan after independence. He expressed his feelings in a 'Note' written in 1952 included here as a postscript in the book. The nub of this is worth quoting:

Many of us felt that a black, non-Muslim, backward South could never hope to amalgamate in one independent country with an Arab, Muslim advanced North, and that the right solution would be to tack it onto Uganda or get HMG to declare a Protectorate or at least to appoint a British Lieutenant-Governor and run it separately.

The creation of the separate states of Sudan and South Sudan in 2011 reminds us of what Richard Owen wrote in 1952. Overall the book is a fascinating account of the experiences of one member of the SPS in the second half of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium. After his Sudan service Richard Owen went on to serve in Uganda.

Jack Davies

Francis Mading Deng, **Bound by Conflict: Dilemmas of the Two Sudans**, 2015, Fordham University Press, 2015, ISBN: 9780823270781 paperback, £15.99



This book is a convincing analysis of the undesirable, yet seemingly inevitable, relationships that exist within and between the two Sudanese nations. It appears to be a reflection on, or continuation of, the theme of his earlier work *War of Visions* (1995), in which the hybrid African-Arab Sudanese, who dominated the country's centre, advocated and attempted to enforce a vision of Arab culture and Islamic religion as the national identity. In the later years of the rebellion against this Arab-centred vision of the Sudan, an alternative vision emerged, spearheaded by the then Southern Sudan-based Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and its leader John Garang, asserting a national identity for the whole Sudan based on "full equality, without discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, culture or gender."

As explained in *War of Visions*, numbers were very important in the calculations that propelled the SPLM's vision. While the centre, advocating an Arab and Islamic-centred identity for the Sudan, could account for not more than 30% of the population, the periphery, which included Southern Sudan, Darfur, the Nuba Mountains, Eastern Sudan and the Nubian far north, carried the overwhelming majority. Khartoum, John Garang and the author all knew these facts.

The theme from *War of Visions* was continued in another book by the same author, *Sudan at the Brink: Self-determination and National Unity* (2010), that was published before *Bound by Conflict*; a book which, according to the forward of the book under review, "outlined the past, the present and prospective future of conflict in the country, united or divided". Although *Bound by Conflict* was published well after the country was divided in 2011, it nevertheless also outlines the past, the present and the future relationship of the by now two countries, which are locked in a state of conflict both between them and within their own borders; the vision of John Garang and the SPLM being the currency propelling those seeking justice within and across the borders of the two countries. These are the issues the author sees as the 'Dilemmas of the two Sudans'; issues that the two nations find difficult, if not impossible, to extricate themselves from.

From negotiations through to the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed in January 2005, and the 6.5 years of Interim Period, followed by the secession of South Sudan from the Sudan, no one was better

placed at the centre of events than the author, who as a result is able to give the reader an unrivalled analysis of the issues involved. Although Khartoum thought of him as a confidant of the then Southern rebel leadership, he was nevertheless trusted for his trademark optimism amidst chaos and his extensive diplomatic outreach. Even today, the author still sees a better future for Sudan and South Sudan, provided they first achieve peace within their borders. For similar reasons, the Southern leadership could not have found a better ambassador to act as a go-between with Khartoum as well as the International Community: Mading Deng simply fitted the bill.

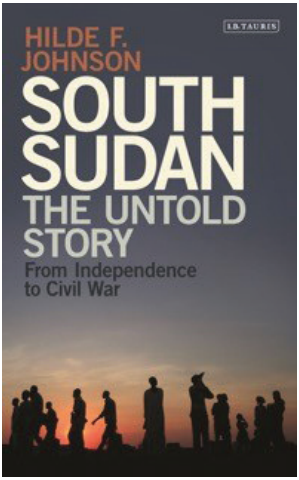
Apart from a four-page Forward by Kevin M. Cahill, M.D, of Fordham University, and the Introduction, at just over 200 pages *Bound by Conflict* is neatly divided into seven chapters. The first five provide an overview of the crisis between and within the two countries, their overlapping conflicts and the safeguarding of the CPA under the then Khartoum-based Government of National Unity (GoNU) and Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS).

Chapters six and seven deal with the issues of 'Internally Displaced and Refugees' and 'Allegations of Genocide and Mass Atrocities'. These issues became the concern of the United Nations and the author, who was then the South Sudanese Ambassador to the UN, had to state the case for the government he represented when they came up in the Security Council and other UN forums.

How did the Ambassador handle himself on behalf of the government and the nation he represented? The reader will find the 12 statements that he put before UN bodies appended to this book and they are instructive and revealing of the author's ability diplomatically to represent his country at the UN. In my opinion, these appended speeches add immense value to the book, which I should say is a must read for anyone interested in the recent past and the way forward for South Sudan.

Jacob J. Akol

Hilde F. Johnson, **South Sudan: the Untold Story**, I.B. Tauris, London, 2016, ISBN 9781784536442 hardback, £17.



If it is unfair to judge a book by its cover, what about by its title? One of the disappointments of Hilde Johnson's latest book is just how little 'untold' it offers to followers of South Sudan. This is Johnson's second book: *Waging Peace in Sudan: The Inside Story of the Negotiations that Ended Africa's Longest Civil War* (2011), recounts the story of the negotiations that led to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), at which time she served as Norway's Minister of International Development.

When she returned to South Sudan in 2011 as the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General in the newly mandated UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), Johnson's responsibilities shifted from peace maker to state builder, and manager of a bureaucratic, billion-dollar peace keeping operation.

The first chapters of this book tread familiar ground, relying heavily on the work of other scholars and authors, including Alex de Waal, Cherry Leonardi, Christopher Clapham, Eddie Thomas and James Copnall. It is necessary context but not an original contribution to knowledge and it underscores Johnson's relative distance from South Sudanese affairs from 2005 to 2011. The book really begins three chapters in, by which point Johnson has returned to South Sudan. Chapter Four, recounting Jonglei, is a worthy case study and perhaps the most interesting part of the book. For example, in speaking about violence between the Murle and Lou Nuer peoples, Johnson explains the perceptions of many other South Sudanese that the UN took sides and was pro-Murle in its actions, views that persist and remain relevant today.

Yet, overall, there is relatively little new in this work. The reader gains limited insight into what it meant to lead this most unusual of UN missions. Most key incidents prior to the December 2013 political crisis (for example, the shooting down of an UNMISS helicopter in December 2012) are dealt with in passing detail. Throughout the book, Johnson returns to a repeated theme: the limitations of the UN to respond to almost any crisis in South Sudan, in a damning indictment of the failings of the international community's primary means of engagement with the world's newest country.

Speaking about violence in Jonglei in December 2011, Johnson writes that the incidents "showed with stark clarity that [UNMISS] lacked the resources needed to implement its mandate to protect civilians – by being outnumbered 10 to one by

UNMISS was, made it close to impossible to succeed … We seemed to be set up for failure" (p. 112). Later, that [UNMISS] "was in a perpetual mobility crisis" (p. 125). "Our military capabilities were wholly inadequate," (p. 104). And about the attack on the Protection of Civilians site in Bor in April 2014, "due to unfortunate delays in response [by the UN] at least 51 people … were killed in the attack, most of them within the UNMISS compound,' (p. 219).

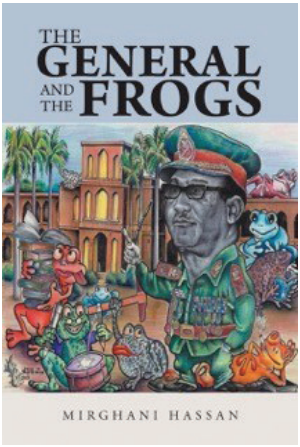
Despite serving as Head of Mission, Johnson curiously seems to situate herself outside of responsibility for these failings, whether in persuading the South Sudanese elites to moderate their behaviour, in ensuring the UN bureaucracy in New York provided the resources necessary to do the job or in fulfilling the most basic task of a UN Special Representative: to manage the Mission and its personnel effectively, and take corrective action when things don't work.

The reader of any political memoir hopes the author will reflect sufficiently on their own role in events. Johnson does recognise some of her limitations: "not surprisingly, my public statements against hate speech … had not had any impact," (p. 107); and, "… I personally had clearly failed to stop the fighting and contain the violence [in December 2013]," (p. 192). She concedes that she was often unable to speak with and address hard line elements in the regime, which had real implications, as she observes about President Salva Kiir's decision-making process: "no decision seemed final and one seldom knew what 'policy' really was," (p. 148). Sadly, though, after three years of leading UNMISS, she continues to confuse knowledge of the South Sudanese elites with understanding. After recounting a litany of failures, Johnson still insists, towards the end of the book: "I knew the South Sudanese very well, from way back," and yet expresses surprise at the "depth of intransigence" political elites demonstrated (p. 288).

One cannot be too harsh about the hastily added epilogue and the too rosy prediction that the 2015 peace agreement meant "the country has likely been saved from fighting," (p. 297). Johnson's proposal that reconciliation within and reunification of the governing Sudan People's Liberation Movement is "imperative" is also highly problematic and an over simplistic solution (p. 302). But the book is largely a missed opportunity: from this ultimate insider, the reader leaves the text without much further insight into the workings of the UN in general or UNMISS in particular, let alone the politics of the South Sudanese in these tragic years.

Aly Verjee first went to Sudan and South Sudan in 2005. He was chief political analyst for the European Union Observation Mission to Sudan in 2011, a senior researcher at the Rift Valley Institute until 2014, senior political advisor to the IGAD mediation for South Sudan in 2014-15 and deputy and then acting chief of staff of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) from 2015

Mirghani Hassan, **The General and the Frogs,** iUniverse, Bloomington, Indiana, 2014, ISBN 978-1-4917-1745-5 paperback, US $15.95



On the face of it, this novel by a Sudanese writer is a highly interesting and readable narrative about the lives of a lively and interesting group of Khartoum University students during the early seventies, with a focus on their trials and tribulations under the Nimeiry regime. What sets this group apart, and consequently the core theme of the novel from that of its immediate scene and theme, is the author's decision to endow its members with extraordinary intellectual powers and a humorous bent, thus creating the basic conditions for the portrayal of a vibrant intellectual scene, that is as captivating in its readability as its thought-provoking depths.

This difficult task is admirably achieved by the author's ability to combine sarcasm with an exquisite sense of humour, a vast pool of knowledge, and an exceptionally strong command of the English language. See-sawing from the heights of frivolity to the depths of serious analysis and vice versa, the author draws on material from philosophy, literature, the sciences, and general knowledge. He deals with subjects such as religion, Sudanese character and also individual personalities, particularly that of the hapless General of the title, who is the main target of the author's searing sarcasm.

The novel is narrated by a young man called Adulmoneim, who on his first night at the university falls asleep on the lawn, but is jerked awake by the hundreds of croaking frogs of the title. The closely-knit group of students of which he becomes a part, are nicknamed "*Les Misérables*", indicating their exhilarating mixture of satire and intellectual agility. The principle characters lead a student's life of hard work, although this doesn't prevent them pursuing love and other youthful pursuits, some religiously sanctioned and others not. While each member of the group is able to reach far into his own academic specialisation (sociology, law, zoology, psychology etc.) they are also able to reach out to the disciplines of others; and all are involved in periodic student clashes against the regime.

The members of the group come from all parts of Sudan, their names and desperately poor backgrounds receive the same sarcastic and knowing treatment that characterises the rest of the novel. Thus, one is the son of a bone-setter, another a seller of milk that has been adulterated with water and a third the son of a deaf blacksmith. As for names, Taha is given the nickname "Taha Kant tell the time because the fascination with the German philosopher Emanuel Kant's,

Critique of Pure Reason is so encompassing that he has to be constantly reminded of the time. The indefatigable communist in the group, Yasin, is referred to as "Shamu", which is the name of the most tragic character in the most tragedy-ridden Indian film *Mother India*, because of his wretched looking appearance. The narrator himself is referred to as "The Wild Orphan" a reference to an Allen Ginsberg poem on account of his family being so poor that it had to sell its only donkey to send him to the university following his father's death.

The author's secular and liberal views, show most clearly in his description of an evening of heated discussion organised by the Campus Secular Society (dubbed the 'non-prophet entity') on the subject of the "Origin of Man". The defender of the secular position in the debate concludes by referring to a similar debate between Thomas Huxley and Bishop Samuel Wilberforce in which the former said that, "natural selection did not mean selecting from a menu, but that if he, Huxley, had the choice, he would have preferred to descend from a family of apes than have bishops for ancestors."

British readers will be particularly drawn to the novel as some British historical characters are woven into the narrative in a playfully fictionalised manner. Thus Churchill resumes calmly lighting his cigar and jotting notes for his book, *The River War*, after using his Mauser pistol to shoot an *Ansari* who lunges at him after the end of the Omdurman massacre. The sterility of the Sudanese General who is the subject of the novel mirrors that of General Gordon who, "as he spread King James's Bible on his big lap, waiting excitedly for his native murderers he called on God, give them O Lord, what wilt thou give? Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts."

The novel gives the largely muted voices of those contemporary Sudanese who seriously extol the virtues of British colonization, an equally muted venting through the boozy tongue of a member of *Les Misérables*. During a night out he forcefully tells each of his similarly intoxicated friends what the fate of their families would have been like were it not for the British, so the narrator, for example, would have been the son of a dead nobody instead of a dead railway man.

The novel ends on a sombre note, exemplified by the horrible death of one of the group's members at the hands of the security services; it seems to admit that the dictatorship has succeeded in extinguishing the dreams and aspirations of the Sudanese as represented by their youth. In this sense, the novel's portrayal of the group's university life is a portrayal of what Sudan's public life could have been if it had not been blighted by successive dictatorships.

However, a different but complementary diagnosis of The Sudanese malaise is possible i.e. that the seemingly everlasting and increasingly totalitarian Sudanese regimes are the product of an original sin, as it were, committed and perpetuated by all Sudanese intellectuals of all modern generations and all ideological hues. The

precedent set by the Independence-movement generation of non cooperation with British rule for a gradual progress to democracy, as evidenced by total rejection of the Legislative Assembly, was elevated by the succeeding generation into a fiercely anti-West attitude set in the stone of the leftist wave of the fifties and sixties, only to be elevated still further by those of the seventies to the realm of religious conviction. This being the case, democracy as a culture, the main stay of a viable democratic system never took root in Sudanese political culture and the gate was thrown wide open for military intervention. The Sudanese intelligentsia failed to see through colonialism, old and new, and discover the driving force behind it as a by-product of the Age of Enlightenment, which freed the individual from the influence of his primary affiliations and religious dogma, enabling him to be the corner stone of democracy and consequently strong societies and countries. In the absence of a (Sudanese) Age of Enlightenment, the only course open for establishing democracy was, and is, a gradual learning process from the Western experience through striking the right anti-/pro-West balance.

Finally, we should ask what is the attraction of Vienna for Sudanese writers? Mirghani Hasan, remarkably a lawyer by training, is one of at least four authors who have chosen to live there. At the present time, notable Sudanese writers living in Vienna include Tariq Eltayeb, Jamal Mahgoub, Ishraqa Mustafa and more recently Baraka Sakin.

A. Aziz Hussein Alsawi

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Sudan Studies

Sudan Studies – ISSN 0952-049X – is published twice a year by the Society for the Study of the Sudans (UK). Views expressed in notes, articles and reviews published in Sudan Studies are not necessarily those held by the SSSUK, the Editor or the Editorial Board. Articles are published to promote discussion and further scholarship in Sudan and South Sudan studies.

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

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