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SUDAN STUDIES: Number 30 (April 2002)

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SUDAN STUDIES

Number 30 April 2003

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SUDAN STUDIES SOCIETY - UK

The Sudan Studies Society - UK was founded in 1987 to encourage and promote Sudanese studies in the United Kingdom and abroad, at all levels and in all disciplines. SSSUK is a registered charity (no. 328272). Membership of SSSUK, is open to anyone interested in the Sudan.

General enquiries about Society matters and membership should be addressed to:

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Membership

Anyone with an interest in the Sudan, general or specialized, is welcome to join the SSSUK. Membership is by annual subscription payable in January each year. Current subscription rates are:

Individuals:

- * in UK £10
- * in Europe Euro 20
- * elsewhere \$32

Institutions:

- * in UK £18
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- * elsewhere \$48

N.B. The dollar subscription rates take into account the bank charges incurred in converting to Sterling.

Members receive two issues a year of *Sudan Studies*; the right to a reduced rate on copies of the Society's occasional papers; the right to attend the joint Annual General Meeting & Symposium and other occasional meetings organized by the Society; early details of the triennial International Sudan Studies' Association Conferences.

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EDITORIAL

Here, with the customary apologies for late arrival, is Number 30 of *Sudan Studies*. Once again, the principal reason for delayed publication has been the lack of material (though I must also admit that a rather heavy work-load at the end of term held things up further). Let me say, once again, that the remedy for this lies in your hands: send in material, encourage others to do likewise. This is not exclusively a publication for professional academics: as long-standing readers will be aware, we welcome a variety of contributions.

This number contains an index for the complete run of *Sudan Studies* to date. I very much hope that this will be of use to readers. For those who do not possess a complete run of issues, I am happy to say that we have copies of most back numbers available, and the Hon. Secretary will be happy to supply these at a modest price!

Justin Willis

Hon. Editor



**CROSSING BORDERS:
SUDAN IN REGIONAL CONTEXTS**
6th International Conference of SSA, SSUK and IAAS
July 31st - August 2nd, 2003
Georgetown University, Washington, DC

The fact that Sudan shares borders with nine countries (Chad, Libya, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Zaire and Central African Republic) has allowed for the movement of people across the borders, and it has influenced cross-border cultural and political interaction. The nature of such relationships influences both the border zones and the country at large, particularly when wars and crises over natural resources occur along political boundaries. In addition, relationships between Sudan and its neighbors are not merely limited to border areas, but such influences could transcend borders such as in political, social, and economic trends.

The Sudan Studies Association (SSA) seeks proposals that address various issues (past and present) related to the relationships between Sudan and its immediate neighbors, pertaining, for example, to issues in history, politics, culture, belief systems, literature, and relevant fields. SSA welcomes proposals not only from Sudan specialists, but from experts on neighbouring countries as well.

Abstracts of proposed papers (150-200 words) should reach the Conference Organizer on or before May 1, 2003. A preliminary program will be announced on May 15, 2003. Late proposals for papers will be considered only if space is available. Proposals and paper abstracts submitted earlier will receive preferential treatment in scheduling. Acceptance for presentation will depend on the quality of the abstract and the judgement of the program committee.

All abstracts for papers and panels should be sent and received by May 1, 2003 to: Dr. Ali B. Ali-Dinar, African Studies Center, University of Pennsylvania, 650 Williams Hall, Philadelphia, PA, 19149, USA.

E-mail: aadinar@mail.sas.upenn.edu (Fax 215-573-7379, Phone 215-898-6610)

Program Organizer: Ali B. Ali-Dinar, African Studies Center, University of Pennsylvania, 650 Williams Hall, Philadelphia, PA, 19104, Phone 215-898-6610, aadinar@sas.upenn.edu

Sudan Studies Association website: www.sudanstudies.org



THE SUDAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
RESEARCH SOCIETY
Registered Charity Number 1005966

The SARS annual international colloquium, **RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK** IN SUDAN, will be held on Thursday, 8th May 2003, in the Stevenson Auditorium, at the British Museum, London. The morning session, organised under the auspices of the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums in Khartoum and the International Society for Nubian Studies, will be devoted to the Fourth Cataract region which is soon to be inundated by the construction of a new dam at Hamdab. Dr Salah ed-Din Mohammed Ahmed, field director of the Merowe Dam Archaeological Salvage Project, will talk about the scale and impact of the dam's construction on the region, on the timescale for construction and on the measures being taken to study the region prior to its inundation. This will be followed by papers delivered by Drs Henryk Paner and Derek Welsby on their current work in the region, which will highlight both its importance for our understanding of the cultures which flourished in the Nile Valley and the potential for further discoveries. The afternoon session will be devoted to preliminary reports on other recent work in Sudan including papers on Kurgus, on inscriptions relating to Nubia at Sehel Island and on the pharaonic desert routes in North-Eastern Sudan.

On the morning of Friday 9th May there will be a meeting at the British Museum which all who are interested in participating in the Merowe Dam Archaeological Salvage Project are urged to attend. Dr Salah ed-Din Mohammed Ahmed will provide further details of the project and detailed maps and air photos will be available for examination. It is hoped that during this meeting firm commitments will be made to undertake archaeological survey and excavation in the threatened region. Time is very short. Construction of the dam will begin in March 2003 and already the access roads, railway and townships to house the construction team are nearing completion. The inhabitants in the area of the dam will be relocated later this year and the whole area inundated within the next seven years.

Further details of the Merowe Dam Archaeological Salvage Project can be found on the internet at www.sudarchrs.org.uk

For correspondence: The Honorary Secretary, The Sudan Archaeological Research Society, c/o Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan, The British Museum, London, WC1B 3DG. Telephone (0)207 323 8500/8306, Fax (0)207 323 8303, E-mail SARS@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk, Website www.sudarchre.org.uk



THE SUDAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY (SARS)

By John Alexander

This society was founded eleven years ago in London after a meeting in the British Museum called by Vivian Davies, Keeper of Egyptian (and now also Sudanese) Antiquities, which brought together those in Britain who were interested in understanding the Sudanese past, and our knowledge of it by new research. It has proved very successful for it has attracted over one hundred members, has supported twelve major field projects, published seven volumes of research material and an excellent annual Bulletin entitled 'Sudan and Nubia'. The financial support needed for this research and the equipment to carry it out has been raised from a number of sources: charitable foundations, notably The Bioanthropology Foundation; museums, notably the British Museum; the British Academy and other learned societies and individual patrons. It has throughout operated in the Sudan under the auspices of the Sudan National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums with the support of its Director-General Mr Hassan Hasein Idris. This short account of its activities has been put together from the illustrated lecture given to our society last year by the SARS' secretary Dr D Welsby, from the publication *Uncovering the Ancient Sudan: a decade of discovery* (Welsby and Davies 2002) and from my own experience as vice-chairman for ten years.

Vast as it is, the Republic of the Sudan is only the eastern part of the sub-saharan savannahs and sahel which stretch across Africa to the Atlantic ocean. Whilst the name 'Sudan' is used in many contexts and languages to refer to the whole of the savannahs, the name is used here only for the Republic. The Nile Basin is the only region of it in which the Society works. It has also limited



itself geographically to the main Nile valley and regions close to the river north of the Khartoum/ Omdurman region, and chronologically to the last 10,000 years although human communities have existed there much longer.

As in most countries in the world, archaeological evidence has in recent years been much threatened by destruction. In the Nile Valley modern agriculture, a larger population, increased need for water, new roads, and other constructions are destroying the evidence unless field projects archaeologists record it first. For this reason most of the field projects of the Society, have been close to the Nile and the main new motorways which have been built around it (Fig 1). 'Rescue Archaeology', as it is called, is a priority and in Africa the Republic of the Sudan is leader in demonstrating how to do it. This is by detailed surveys followed by analysis of the surface material found and then by selective trial excavations. For this reason the surveys carried out by the society may be considered first; there are seven of them while four more have been supported financially.

The most significant so far is the North Dongola Research survey (fig 1) which in 1993-96 concentrated on the right bank of the Nile. It located over 450 previously unknown settlements and cemeteries from different periods within the last 8000 years on the flood plains between the present river and the desert plateau. Of the greatest interest were the 150 dating to the early Kerma period.

The sites were found along old, now dry, channels of the Nile for the river has changed its course many times. In the earliest Kerma phase (pre 1900 BH/ 2500 BC) it has been shown that round wooden huts, and even, at the state capital Kerma, a wooden palace, owed little to northern influence and were in a southern tradition common to the sub-sarahan savannahs.



Two other surveys along the line of the new motorway linking Khartoum and Atbara took place in 1993-94 and 1997. In 1993-4 on the line between Bagrawiya and Atbara 170 new archaeological sites were located, mostly from the 3rd millennium BH/BC onwards. Ten sites which would be destroyed were excavated, the most important being at Gabati where there was a cemetery of the later Kushite Empire (about 750 BH/ 100BC) only 40 Kms north of the city of Meroe, the capital of the Empire. A second survey in 1997 uncovered, with the help of the road-designers (the Studio Technico Italiano Progettazioni) the Shirian esh-shimaal road through the Bayuda Desert which follows the Wadi Magaddam. In this remote area 192 new sites of many periods were located confirming that before 6000 years ago this region was not desert but savannah.

Another kind of threat to archaeological material has developed at the Fourth Cataract where a dam at Hamdab will inundate 170kms as far upstream as Mograt Island. The Society has been one of the few institutions to respond to the Sudan National Corporation's appeal to carry out survey and excavation in this difficult region. It began a survey in 1999 on the west bank between Amri and Kirbekan and is continuing it in 2002-4, a team being in the field whilst this report is being written.

Two other kinds of expeditions also produced important results. At Kurgus, south east of Abu Hamed (Fig 1), in 1998 and 2000 a joint Society and British Museum team restudied the inscriptions incised on the great quartz rock and a neighbouring cemetery and fort. The rock was shown by the inscriptions to have been the political boundary of the Egyptian empire in the 18th dynasty 3500 years ago. The second at Jebel Umm Rowag between Dal and Amara in 2001, studied the rock drawings and debris of about 150 years ago on its summit.



Other surveys, not initiated by the Society but providing important new evidence have been aided financially and by the loan of equipment; in the 3rd Cataract region the Sudanese/British Mahas Survey, just south of the Fifth Cataract the Berber-Abidiya project a Sudanese/Canadian one, and south of Khartoum along the White Nile to El Dirwa a Sudanese one.

Besides surveys two major excavation programmes have been supported. Beside the Blue Nile near Khartoum the excavations at Soba East, the urban capital of the Kingdom of Alwa (or Alodia), a successor state to the great Kushite Empire, were undertaken in 1982-6 and 1989-92 by the British Institute in Eastern Africa, the 1992 season being directed by Dr Welsby. This cast light on the only urban complex within the Alwan state and seems to have been at its greatest extent in its christian period (about 0 BH/600 AD to 300 AH/900 AD). Its results have been published in two monographs (Welsby and Daniels 1991 and Welsby 1998). A second long-term excavation is also underway at Kawa in the Dongola Reach. This was a major urban centre for nearly two thousand years and seems to have been at its largest extent in the early Kushite period (c.2000 - 1500 BC). Work so far has shown that excavation of the buildings as well as a large cemetery one kilometre east of the town give a rare opportunity to study the physical as well as the life styles of the inhabitants.

As can be seen the Society has been very active in the Sudan but it has not been inactive in Britain where the importance of the archaeological evidence from the Sudan is becoming better known. This has been acknowledged in the British Museum by the inclusion of 'Sudan Antiquities' in the title of Mr Davies' department and the holding there of exhibitions and an annual series of the Society's seminars reporting on recent fieldwork of not only the Society but also that of many foreign scholars. Officers and members of the Society have also addressed meetings of the Sudan National Archaeological Society in Khartoum.



As well as a website and a developing library in London, open to members, SARS has also been entrusted by his son with the original drawings, photographs and models of Suakin made in the 1940s by Mr J.-P. Greenlaw, then Director of the School of Design in Khartoum. These were made before the beautiful buildings of this small Ottoman island-port were so sadly allowed to fall into ruins.

More information about the Society can be obtained from Dr Welsby, Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan, The British Museum, London. WC1 B3DG. Tel: 0207 323806.

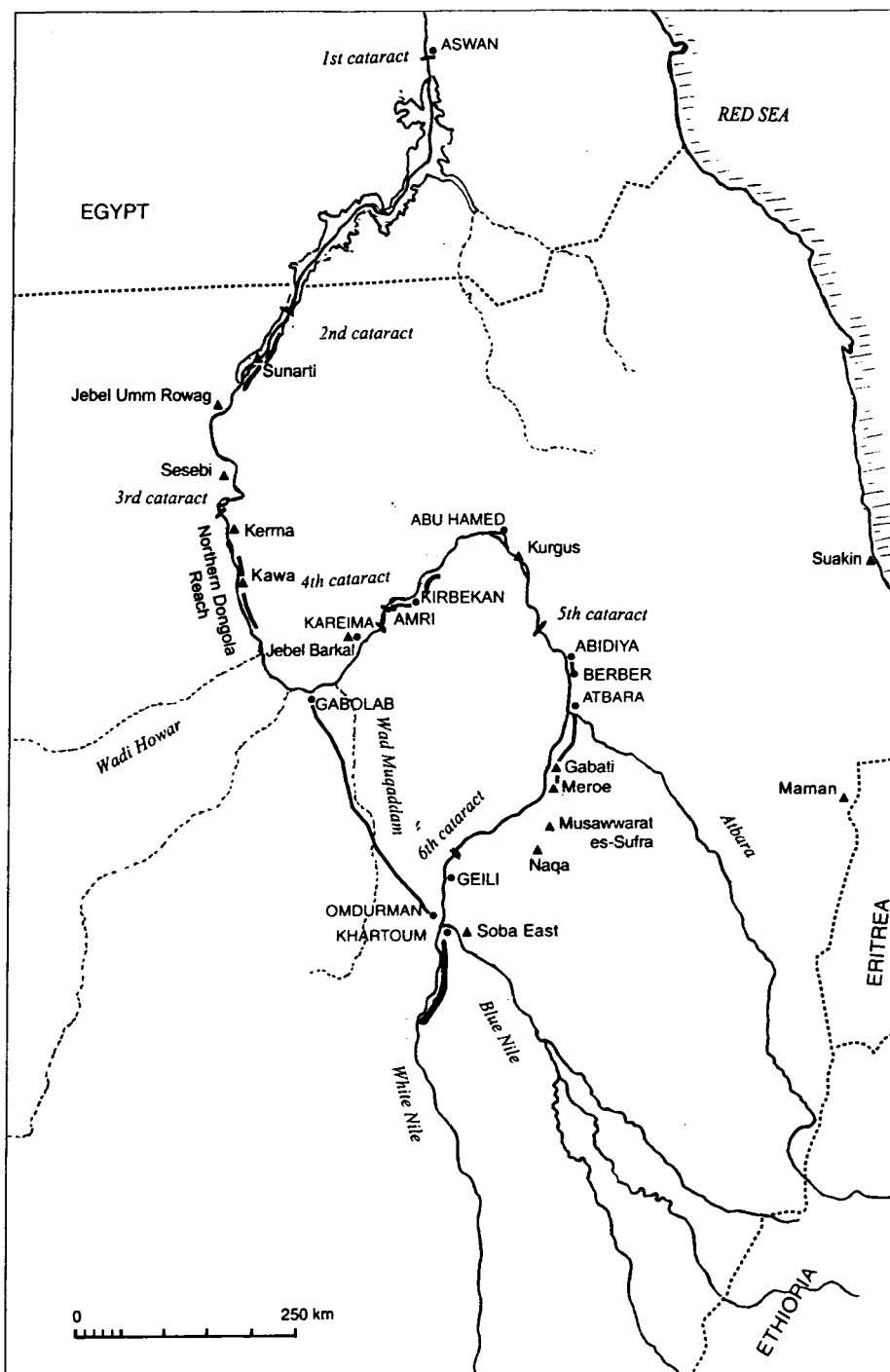
E.mail: SARS@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk.

The society's website is <http://www.sudarchrs.org.uk>

I am grateful to SARS for permission to include the map published by them.

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FEEDING HAMESHKOREB

By Michael Medley

When I heard, last October, that the Sudanese opposition had recaptured the holy town of Hameshkoreb, I decided to try to go there. I had been an aid worker in the territory held by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) along the Eritrean border until the previous May. Hameshkoreb was a constant point of reference – it gave its name to the district where we lived – but the town itself was beyond the military lines at that time.

The setting had induced in me a fascination. The landscape demands to be thought of as prehistoric. Neither ‘hills’ nor ‘mountains’ is an adequate label for the bare lumps and heaps of rock that sit on the plain. Some of these lumps are astonishingly smooth, great puce-coloured domes. Many of the heaps seem to be the splinters of plate tectonics; they end up in ridged humps reminiscent of stegosaur backs. There is a Jurassic air, too, about the branching doum palms that surround the courses of the wadis. Away from these, the most conspicuous vegetation is scattered acacia. Rain falls only a few times each year, usually in July or August. Last year, as in much of the Horn of Africa, it hardly rained at all.

For more than five thousand years this region has been inhabited by the Beja people. I adopted a romantic identification with them. One day, after a breakfast of goat's meat and camel's milk, Sheikh Suleiman Ali Beitay gave me a set of clothes in the local style. The *jelabiyya*, or long white shirt, is similar to the one usually worn in central Sudan; just a little shorter, falling to the calf



rather than the ankle. More distinctive are the waistcoat over the top and the trousers beneath which are literally baggy, the type of bag being maybe one for a trolley-load of linen. My feet fumbled to find the holes in the two corners. A great advantage of this costume is that you can comfortably sleep in it when overcome by the heat.

Travellers used to assume that the Beja are Arabs, but in fact they were present long before the Arabic expansion into Africa. Their language is altogether different. My companions liked to explain that *bedaweeet* is spoken from the chest rather than the tongue and lips, perhaps implying that it is a vehicle for sincerity rather than sophistication. This fits in with their story. During the last millennium the Beja territory was progressively appropriated by outsiders who came trading, preaching, taking over the gold mines, creating towns and agricultural schemes. In these places many of the Beja adopted Arabic language and practices. Some were completely Sudanized, assimilated to the dominant culture of the state. Among those who were not, the politics of separate identity came to be articulated by the Beja Congress, a party formed in 1958, soon after Sudan's Independence. After the military coup that brought the present government to power in 1989, the Beja Congress was outlawed along with all other previously existing political associations. Since the mid-1990s it has been organised as an armed resistance movement.

During my time as an aid worker there, a quarrel grew up between Sheikh Suleiman and the leaders of the Beja Congress, a quarrel in which I became implicated. To explain what it was about, I need to say something about the Sheikh and his family. He is much venerated in the local population and beyond. His father, Sheikh Ali Beitay, had received visions of the Prophet,



telling him to make the nomadic herders live together, and construct mosques in their settlements. They were already muslims, but had a reputation for being so only nominally, unwilling to accept the elaborate strictures of foreign teachers. The message that Ali Beitay preached was relatively simple: worship God regularly and co-operate with your neighbours. It seems the people responded with enthusiasm, although the government – under the British and then after independence – was for a while suspicious. The Beja, after all, was Kipling's Fuzzy-Wuzzy who had been roused so devastatingly by the religious call of the Mahdi against the forces of imperialism and modernity just a couple of generations earlier.

'E rushes at the smoke when we let drive,
An', before we know, 'e's 'ackin' at our 'ead;
'E's all 'ot sand an' ginger when alive,
'An' e's generally shammin' when 'e's dead.

Ali Beitay founded the town of Hameshkoreb to be the centre of his religious network. It was built around a large *khalwa* or koranic school, which in time came to attract students from distant parts of Sudan and even from other countries. Sometimes the students brought contributions, but it seems that to a large extent their upkeep was arranged by the Sheikh, using revenues from the *zakat* religious tax paid through the mosques he had built. Sheikh Suleiman succeeded his father in 1978, and over the years expanded a range of business ventures running alongside the core activities of a religious leader. It is said that he succeeded in obtaining substantial gifts for the running of the *khalwa* from donors in the Arabian Gulf.



These operations were of course disturbed when insurgency began in the region. The opposition first captured Hameshkoreb – and held it for five months – in 2000. Sheikh Suleiman decided to stay and give his support to the NDA. The latter, delighted to incorporate his prestige, invited him onto its leadership council, alongside the likes of Mohamed Osman al-Mirgani of the Democratic Unionist Party, and John Garang of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army. The Beja Congress was perhaps one of the less delighted members of the alliance. Until that point it had been in charge of most matters relating to the indigenous local population (as opposed to the soldiers imported to the area by the other parties). In theory this remained the case. But they now needed to accommodate an enormously revered traditional leader. One approach to this problem was to arrange for the election of Sheikh Suleiman’s eldest son, Mohamed Al-Tahir, as *muhaafiz* or commissioner of the civil administration, under the loose supervision of a Beja Congress official.

When I arrived to set up the aid programme for an American NGO – only partly aware of this background – I formed a close relationship with Mohamed Al-Tahir. Our aim was not only to deliver relief and social services, but to do so through the local administration, and in a way that encouraged democratic accountability. I asked to attend assemblies of a council of elders that he organised every two months. These elders were, in principle, representatives of all the villages in the area. At the assemblies, sitting on chairs before a mass of cross-legged patriarchs, my colleagues and I would report on all the supplies we had brought, and seek approval for our plans. They would profusely thank us for working with them, and, through the day periodically shifting their formation to keep in the shade, request us for items of assistance in every constituency. Most desired were medical drugs (both for humans and animals),



strong poison like DDT to kill predators on the herds, and the drilling of wells. When two of the village representatives were blown up by a landmine on their way to the meeting, we were earnestly advised not to let this deter us.

Mohamed Al-Tahir received many of our relief supplies and organised the distributions, using the trading lorries of his father. The project of which I was most proud was a sudden response to the arrival of some hundreds of families displaced from the government-held area. The cause was apparently a combination of flash flooding and police harassment. I brought cash to the *muhaafiz*, who sent his assistants to find local makers of the long reed mats that the rural Beja use for making their homes. Within a comparatively short time there was a pleasing transformation of a rag camp into a settlement of Sydney-opera-house-shaped *hawaadich*. A long handwritten list of the recipients was presented, complete with their thumb-prints. When I tried to match a few of the names with particular dwellings, I could not obtain much additional satisfaction. Men never stay in the home during the daytime, and women are not supposed to be seen by strangers, let alone spoken to.

Another scheme – a pilot – involved the provision of a television set with a video player and a small generator. It was designed to be taken round the villages, displaying programmes to promote good nutrition and hygiene practices as part of our wider health programme. We also wanted to show how, in much of the world, women can live respectable and active lives in public. The first tape we obtained turned out to be an attack on the traditional practice of cutting out parts of the genitals of young girls and sewing up the vagina. I was afraid this might be an unacceptably radical message, but Sheikh Suleiman and his son let it be widely known that they supported it.



In November 2001, a senior official of the Beja Congress came and informed me that the party had relieved Mohamed Al-Tahir of his duties as *muhaafiz*. I said I'd understood that his mandate had come through a popular election, not an appointment from above. Well, this was true, but his term of office had expired. New elections would be held shortly. Oh, and he had been abusing relief supplies by distributing them only to communities that supported his father.

Since August it had been apparent that Sheikh Suleiman was not following the NDA's political line. He had proposed a ceasefire and the creation of a neutral zone over much of the Beja area. He himself – rather than the NDA or the Sudan Government – would administer the zone. He is said to have held private meetings to discuss this plan with Government representatives. The Beja Congress accused him of self-seeking and high-handedness. He insisted on the contrary that he was pursuing the best interests of the population. My impression was – and remains – that the majority of the local people supported him, but it is true that I had been spending most of my time in the orbit of Mohamed Al-Tahir and might not have been exposed to a representative group. There were rumours that Sheikh Suleiman tried to mount a coup within the Beja Congress by appealing to those of its soldiers that were sympathetic to him. But the military chain remained unbroken, the NDA was unmoved, and the Sheikh was eventually left with nowhere to go except back to the Government-held part of Sudan. My friend Mohamed Al-Tahir followed him.

So our little model of liberal democracy collapsed. The Beja Congress told us it would be better if in future we, the foreign aid workers, were to decree where



and how the relief should be targeted. Public decision-making tended to result in too many active antagonisms. If we did not know enough about the patterns of need in the local community, they themselves could help us.

From other directions too there were pressures for change. The NGO was in trouble because it was trying at the same time to sustain an operation in the Government-held part of Sudan. The Khartoum office complained of hints that the authorities would take punitive action if we did not close or drastically modify our activities on the other side of the battle-lines. Our training and equipping of local people to administer services was said to be tantamount to a strengthening of the opposition movement. (On the other hand, when I had been in Khartoum in May 2000, I had found the organisation paying Ministry of Health employees consultancy fees at a rate orders of magnitude higher than their official salaries.) Even more debilitating was the low absolute level of funding for the project. We did not have enough money to make much impact through relief. More than three quarters of the budget was needed for staff salaries, equipment and running costs. This was in accordance with the proposal that the donor (the United States Agency for International Development, USAID) had approved. But we were the only international NGO with field staff in a district containing perhaps a hundred thousand people. And among these, according to our survey, one percent of under-five-year-olds was dying each *month* from the familiar combination of undernourishment, dirty water and disease.

In frustration, I took my cue from Sheikh Suleiman and Mohamed Al-Tahir, and left the scene. Unlike them I found a welcome from the Beja Congress when I wanted to return for a visit. I said I was intending to do some research for an



article that would make more people understand the condition of the Beja. Hameshkoreb – which had been in Government hands during my previous stay – would make an interesting focus. By now I had learned that a new aid agency had come into the area, one apparently more lavishly funded than mine had been. The town with its *khalwa* was being fed by Samaritan's Purse International, a Christian organisation from the USA. There was something odd about this. The president of Samaritan's Purse is Franklin Graham, son of the legendary evangelist Billy Graham, and now a powerful figure in his own right. Franklin was chosen to preach at the presidential inauguration of George W. Bush. He is noted for his clear-cut views about religion. 'The Koran provides ample evidence that Islam encourages violence in order to win converts and to reach the ultimate goal of an Islamic world', he writes. Like Sheikh Suleiman he continues the work of a charismatic father, but his outlook appears to be much more confrontational.

Hameshkoreb as you approach it is a satisfying place to behold because it is quite dense and you can clearly see the boundary of the town and the desert. All the buildings are single-storey. The mosques are very simple; there are no domes or minarets. Only a grand mosque built with money from the Gulf rises above the general level, looking like a small cruise liner. Inside it, though, the concrete is naked and dusty. The community prefers to pray on the sand and to make its central place of worship an immense shelter of thatch supported by two or three hundred doum trunks. Although the town was built as recently as the 1950s, much of it – the residential district – is a tangle of narrow passages between mud walls. The souk also is labyrinthine. Between these parts and the government buildings is a maidan in which the Sheikh has been known to arrive by helicopter. A gap of about a quarter of a mile separates the town from the



tomb of Ali Beitay. As with most of the resting-places of holy men in northern Sudan, the sarcophagus is enshrined in a cubic edifice with a pointed dome. If you walk there, before reaching the slightly elevated area of the graveyard you first have to trudge across the soft sand of a broad wadi, and here your breathing must be through slightly pursed lips to keep out the smell and flies as this is a convenient place of defecation for the students.

Latrines are little known in these parts. Generally speaking there is so much empty land that this is not a great problem; but Hameshkoreb contains perhaps fifteen thousand people (including, I was told, twelve thousand students) in a narrow area. The flies bothered me. There is great scope for disease in this tightly packed population. When I walked in the town, I was surrounded by scores or hundreds of men and boys; more boys than men, it seemed, and most of these originally from Darfur on the far side of Sudan. Many pressed forward, wide-eyed and smiling, but there were some at the back with dull, listless expressions, and who knows how many lying in the houses. As for girls and women, they have an enclosed quarter, a town within the town, and I did not catch a glimpse of any.

I went to the kitchen of the main refectory and was staggered by it. Porridge was brewing in three wok-shaped pans, each one of them more than a metre wide and mounted on its own mud-walled stove like the crater of a volcano. When the mixture began to thicken, the cooks stood all round it, singing, pushing the stuff back and forth with spatulas that were all too obviously the former branches of trees. Then it was poured into a flat trough four or five metres long – a stone tray lined with ceramic tiles – where it set hard enough to be cut into cubes. The cubes were heaped into a hundred aluminium serving-



bowls, and a thin sauce poured over them. Each bowl was eventually delivered into a circle of seven or eight young students. This is what becomes of some of the sorghum provided by USAID through Franklin Graham.

Samaritan's Purse refrains, as far as I can see, from actively preaching Christianity in eastern Sudan, although the declared purpose of its relief activities in general is a pregnant one: to share God's love through Jesus Christ. Meanwhile, Graham agrees with the NDA's wish to see the destruction of the present regime in Khartoum. I have a timid sympathy with that view, and a more confident conviction of the value of things like democratic institutions and at least approximate equality for women. There is a heady pleasure in being able to mix the pursuit of lofty ideals and grand strategies with the friendship of such people as the Beja. It is a strange reversal by which the forces of international hegemony have, little more than a century later, found in them an ally against Islamic fundamentalism. We are not the first to have formed a somewhat patronising admiration and affection for them on the way to our goal.

So 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Soudan;
You're a poor benighted 'eathen but a first-class fightin' man;
We gives you your certificate, an' if you want it signed
We'll come an' 'ave a romp with you whenever you're inclined.



DR. J.B. CHRISTOPHERSON APPRECIATED – AT LAST

Ann Crichton-Harris

Dr. John Brian Christopherson (1868-1955), a specialist in tropical medicine, still has a significant reputation in Khartoum. Curiously, in the rest of the world as one researcher put it, “a veil has been drawn over his name.”¹ As Dr. Christopherson’s great niece - he had no children - I remain one of his closest living relatives.

In my initial research for a biography of Christopherson I came across a web site² with a short history of the Sudan Medical Service. Here I learned that someone had recently installed a plaque on the wall of what was originally Khartoum Civil Hospital – opened in 1909 – the hospital where Christopherson did his investigative work and in 1917 discovered the cure for Bilharzia (schistosomiasis). Soon thereafter I was invited to go to Khartoum for the unveiling of the plaque and to be part of a symposium on schistosomiasis. 'Schisto', as the medics call it, is still second only to malaria as a serious disease in Africa.

The symposium was an all-day event on February 19 of this year, organized by the Sudan Medical Specialization Board (SMSB), which now occupies the hospital buildings. The symposium - the programme of which is reproduced below - lauded Dr. Christopherson for his visionary work in medicine and his notable medical breakthrough. Professor Abdel Rahman, the President of the

¹ Susan Kenyon, Unpublished manuscript.

² *Bulletin of the Postgraduate Medical Studies Board*. Vol. 1 Issue 3. May 2001



SMSB, had made the arrangements. HM Ambassador to Sudan, William Patey, was on hand to unveil the plaque, and an assembly of other distinguished dignitaries and physicians attended.

It was, of course, a lovely sun-soaked day and the cream coloured walls of Christopherson's hospital gleamed with light. The tall elegant arches and windows in this solid, high-ceilinged building with quietly whirring fans and cool stone floors gave one a wonderful sense of stepping back in time. Prof. Abdel Rahman's spacious office was once Christopherson's operating theatre. The long room where the talks were held was the original men's ward where his bilharzia patients were treated.

In 1902, when Christopherson arrived, Sudan was a difficult place to work; there were few suitable buildings for a clinic and only half a dozen western medical practitioners. Christopherson came directly to Sudan from the Imperial Yeomanry Hospital in South Africa where he had been a surgeon in the Boer War.

In 1903 he successfully contained an outbreak of smallpox in Omdurman and in consequence was much lauded by both Wingate, the Sirdar, and Lord Cromer, the British Agent in Cairo. When any important figure fell ill it was Christopherson who was recommended for consultation or second opinion. It was also Christopherson who fought tenaciously and usually unsuccessfully, for better pay for Sudanese staff and for his servants, and for decent living conditions for the Matron of the hospital. He had an abiding interest in indigenous medicine, and enjoyed learning from the local doctors.



Christopherson was also a friend of the legendary Slatin Pasha, something which stood him in good stead when he was captured in Serbia in the First World War, and along with his Red Cross unit, was released in consequence of this friendship. The more information I find, the more the life of this highly skilled and educated doctor becomes a paradox. He was a man who for many years held the best medical credentials, FRCP and FRCS, in Sudan.

I spoke in my talk of the administrative blunder made in 1904 when both Christopherson and a Dr. Crispin were individually offered the post of Director of the Medical Department, and both accepted. Christopherson was preferred and the resulting tensions permeated the life of the medical department in Sudan for many years.

The accolades for the brilliant scientist, the ‘man of vision,’ as described recently in Khartoum, contrast sharply with the reports of Christopherson in works by Daly and Bell, and with the spiteful comment of Wingate’s civil secretary, P.R. Phipps, that he should be ‘got rid of.’³ In this atmosphere, Christopherson must often have felt he had his back to the wall. Even his important achievement, the cure for bilharzia, was challenged by a Dr. J.E.R. McDonagh who wrote indignantly to the *Lancet* saying he had been first to use antimony successfully for bilharzia. Naturally Christopherson was quick to defend his work as original and independent of anyone. His papers were accepted for publication in all the major medical journals, and many colleagues

³ Martin Daly, *Empire on the Nile* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 260; Heather Bell, *Frontiers of Medicine in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan 1899-1940* (Oxford, 1999) p. 66.



are on record as standing behind him. Dr. McDonagh had not taken his work further, but he continued to complain and be a thorn in Christopherson's side.

Christopherson always felt understaffed and underfunded; usually circumspect, he must have been considerably pushed when he wrote in 1908:

I do not pretend to be Napoleon but I am doing my best with what I can get and sometimes, when [Dr.] Waterfield is away and I have to be Physician, Surgeon, Director – Medical Inspector – do operations many big ones at K.C.H, Quarantine specialist, Sanitary Specialist for the Provinces write reports –frame regulations for Pension Examinations, revise Hospital regulations – answer letters, receive telegrams- count the drugs and instruments and generally turn my hand to anything either professionally or officially- I feel that I am doing the Collar work and that someone else is doing the Parade work.⁴

This last was a crack at Andrew Balfour, director of the Wellcome Laboratory on the Nile.

Christopherson's differences with Balfour stemmed from a disagreement over the naming of a spirochaete, an argument which Christopherson won, and in winning, lost some personal ground in that little African outpost. It was an argument mentioned by Christopherson's friend Manson-Bahr, in his obituary as “ a battle which resounded throughout the deserts and filtered down the

⁴ Christopherson to Said Shuqair Pasha in 1908, undated but presumably about mid June, Sudan Archive Durham 494/11/2.



Nile...It was indeed a battle-royal...” yet Christopherson’s nephew remarked that he thought it all rather a ‘damp squib.’

For reasons not yet fully understood, Phipps' continued personal vendetta towards Christopherson, as seen in his private letters to Wingate, led to his bringing a formal enquiry into Christopherson’s professional behaviour. That the doctor was cleared shows that Phipps was still not able to win, in spite of his efforts to keep doctors who might be biased in favour of Christopherson, off the committee.

Christopherson had many loyal friends. N.R. Udal, formerly Assistant Director of Education, wrote to *The Times* at Christopherson’s death “of his unfailing kindness and gentleness in dealing with the sick and ... his great medical skill.” He had a close family; he had many admirers, particularly among the local Syrian, Egyptian and Sudanese medical staff. It may have been that his attitude towards the local staff contributed to his problems with the Sirdar’s ‘court’; and his differences with Sir Andrew Balfour undoubtedly cost him a post years later at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Balfour was director there when Christopherson returned to London in 1919.

I have been fortunate enough to be entrusted with approximately two hundred letters written by him to his wife. They wrote to one another almost every day they were apart, whether it was during the First World War - when Christopherson was Secretary for the Committee on Medical Establishments in France - or after 1919, when after retiring from the Sudan Medical Service he



became a consultant in Devonshire Place (next door to Harley Street), London and only travelled to his country estate on weekends.

While in Sudan he seemed to live an embattled life, but while he had enemies, he also had many admirers as the letters, both in the archive at Durham and in the family collection, show. He was later nominated for a Nobel by professor of surgery Dr. George Wherry, of Cambridge University and proposed for a Fellowship in the Royal Society by Sir Ronald Ross. Neither came to anything. He was awarded a C.B.E. in 1919, having already received the Queen's South African medal for his war service there; he was also decorated with the Serbian order of St Sava, the Order of the Nile, and the Order of the Medjidie. Yet, in spite of this his name is rarely found in those stories of life on the Nile in Wingate's time. Even a recent book entitled *Bilharzia*⁵ mentioned him only once in the text and failed to put his name in the index.

February 19 in Khartoum was a step towards recognition for this scientist doctor. I like to think that my upcoming biography, provisionally entitled 'The Man Who Found the Cure: J.B. Christopherson and Bilharzia', will finally establish for him a significant place in the history of medicine.

⁵ John Farley, *Bilharzia: A History of Imperial Tropical Medicine* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 97.



PROGRAMME
SUDAN MEDICAL SPECIALIZATION BOARD:
SYMPOSIUM ON SCHISTOSOMIASIS
19TH FEBRUARY 2003

Introduction

Prof. Abelrahman Musa

Christopherson Memorial Lecture:

'The evolution of anti-bilharzial chemotherapy'

Prof. Mamoun Humeida

'Dr J.B. Christopherson rediscovered'

Ann Crichton-Harris

'Hepatic Schistosomiasis'

Prof. Ahmed Mohammed ElHassan

'Immunological impacts of schistosomiasis'

Dr Nasr ElDin ElWali

'Non-surgical management of portal hypertension'

Prof. Suleiman Saleh Fedail

'Surgical management of portal hypertension'

Prof Shawgi ElMasri

'Urological aspects of schistosomiasis'

Prof Abd ElRaouf Sharfi



SUDAN'S PEACE PROCESS

By Peter Woodward

The path to talks

The last time I wrote about Sudan peace talks in *Sudan Studies* was in November 1998. I concluded that brief article by reference to the general conditions thought necessary for negotiated settlement of civil war. Looking back it appears that it was not the content of the negotiations that had changed between the talks in Nairobi in 1998 which failed to solve the conflict in Sudan, so much as the circumstances that brought the situation to more closely resemble the thinking on general conditions likely to be needed for negotiating peace (Deng and Zartman, 1991).

An obvious and important point is the military situation. General thinking suggests the need for some kind of military deadlock; but it is hard to know how much weight to assign to this factor. There have been the usual dry season advances by government forces, but in the past these have normally been reversed by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in the rainy season. *Africa Confidential* recently made the point that with the help of oil revenues the government has been increasing its military hardware; but the article pointed out that the SPLA was also militarily stronger (*Africa Confidential*, 43,15). This would suggest that both sides may be more capable of fighting, though it does not indicate which way the balance of strength might go: without enhanced expectations of victory the calculation on both sides might remain that although there could be fluctuations in fortunes on the battlefield, the overall likelihood remained one of military deadlock. At the same time it was initially acceptable to both sides that no formal cease-fire was established as a pre-condition for



talks. Such an agreement would itself have involved negotiation and calculation of advantage, and at the outset of the talks it appeared that the SPLA in particular was concerned that with a ceasefire, the government forces would be able to re-arm with the flowing oil revenues. (In the event the holding of talks with the war continuing was to prove a problem, as will be seen.)

If politics is war by other means, then on that front too there seemed something of a deadlock. The government's hopes of rallying anti-SPLA southerners through the 'peace from within' of 1997 appeared to have sunk in northern sands; in addition to which the National Congress, the ruling single party, had itself split with Turabi's faction having broken away after which it even flirted with the SPLA. At the same time, while the SPLA seemed stronger for the reconciliation with the former breakaway faction of Riek Machar, its relationship with the northern parties in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) was not altogether smooth with concern about the latter's capabilities, especially once former prime minister Sadiq al-Mahdi and his Umma supporters had quit the NDA to return to Khartoum (though not into the arms of the government).

Deadlock alone is hardly sufficient: it helps if conflict still involves some degree of pain to the parties involved. Oil appears to be a vital factor here. While most reserves so far found lie in the south, and the government stands accused of using force to access it, there are limitations. At present several of the main actors in the oil sector are from Asia and are technically somewhat limited, as well as having gained access on easy terms as a result of being willing to disregard the conflict. Some concession areas cannot be developed under present military conditions; while at least as importantly European oil majors are reluctant to be involved during conflict (Lundin Oil having made that clear), and American majors are denied by US sanctions which are likely to be lifted in the event of peace. Thus while the government is benefiting from oil, the situation of present operators is vulnerable, and larger and more efficient



operations remain checked while conflict persists. As for the SPLA it must be amongst the most aware of the cost of conflict to the people of the south, especially since its leader, John Garang, wrote his PhD thesis on the region's economic development. There is also the danger that with rising oil revenues the government may be in a position to strengthen its military capabilities. Thus there are reasons for both the major combatants to see potential advantages for their own positions if peace is achieved.

Much criticism has been made of the unrepresentative character of the participants, and few would claim that either the government or the SPLA properly represent the people of Sudan especially in the light of the continuing political divisions briefly alluded to above. Indeed one of the attractions of the Egyptian-Libyan initiative, which some feared might obstruct the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) process, has been that it called for more inclusive talks, something like a national conference with many parties included and little sign of any laid down agenda in advance. The northern parties, inside and outside, were particularly attracted to this formula, which appeared to mirror the path to regime change in some other parts of Africa, including neighbouring Chad. Yet there is also a case for the IGAD process, involving as it has done from the outset only the main armed protagonists: the process was already in existence and it had generated the longstanding Declaration of Principles (DOP), which had been accepted by both sides in 1997, around which further negotiation might prove possible. It also meant that instead of a plethora of voices there would be two sides. The main problem here was whether the sides themselves were sufficiently united to negotiate? The SPLA seemed in a stronger position once Riek Machar's movement had re-united with the SPLA mainstream in January 2002. The government side appeared in danger of greater factional division, though it was noted that the out of power Turabi faction had twice made agreements with the SPLA, so reducing the impact of an anti-agreement Islamist reaction. While



other voices such as those of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and the Umma Party have not been heard in the talks, they *have* been heard all around them, and deliberately so. This was partly because the initial agreements such as the Machakos Protocol of July 2002 spoke in terms of inclusiveness, participation and democracy, all of which offered opportunities for others to stake their claim as the peace process developed; and partly because the international interlocutors, especially the Norway, UK, US Troika had made it clear throughout that as far as they were concerned the end result was not to be a carve-up of Sudan between the government and the SPLA.

As well as being united there needed to be an agenda which had sufficient elements of overlap for negotiation to take place. This was where the DOP played a part. The IGAD involvement in Sudan had been around from 1994, but had seemed destined to achieve little after successive failures. It had, though, spawned the DOP in 1994, to which the Sudan Government had broadly signed up in 1997. It is arguable if the outcome of the first round of talks fulfilled the DOP points, as will be seen, but those points did provide some kind of starting point for the negotiations that took place. In the end there were compromises on both sides which produced easily anticipated criticisms: only time will tell whether those criticisms were correct, or whether the compromises were a necessary way forward.

There have been accusations that Britain and the US in particular pressurised the two sides into the initial agreement on issues of principle. Irrespective of the degree of pressure, the international role was vital since divisions on the conflict amongst the international actors would have made agreement far less likely. The IGAD partners - especially Britain, Italy, Norway and the US - were important in facilitating the talks, but so too were the full IGAD members themselves and the common front they took. At the same time international diplomacy by the IGAD Partners helped to downplay the Egyptian-Libyan initiative, seen in some quarters as having been essentially a spoiler.



The first stage of moving towards talks was of course never easy, but its conduct was in many ways a textbook operation.

The Machakos Protocol, July 2002

The representatives of the government and the SPLA spent five weeks at Machakos in Kenya. The venue was chosen in order to ensure a degree of privacy and the international media was kept at a distance. Some stories filtered out nevertheless, but neither side was able to make use of the media in such a way as to significantly effect the outcome of the talks. At the same time the facilities, while adequate, were not intended to be so luxurious that there might be a temptation to prolong the proceedings unduly. As for the sessions themselves, the two sides were not negotiating directly, but meeting with intermediaries, who did not perceive themselves as mediators. However there were a number of papers and expert presentations intended to help to develop and clarify the thinking of the two sides. Central to the actual process of the talks was General Lazarus Sumbeiywo, the Kenyan chairman on behalf of IGAD, who was generally seen as having played a vital role. While IGAD was at the centre of the process, international observers were also present and endeavouring to help the process along wherever possible: indeed *Africa Confidential* described the talks as ‘driven largely by the USA and the UK’ (*Africa Confidential* 2002, 43, 15). The first two weeks were described as difficult after which some form of rapport was achieved. But progress still



proved slow and it is alleged that it was as time was running out that international pressure was deployed particularly strongly to produce the protocol.

The protocol itself was plainly a compromise, centred on what had long been the major obstacles of state and religion on the one hand and Southern self-determination on the other. Since seizing power in 1989 the self-styled Islamic government of Sudan has sought to create an Islamic state, including the introduction of a new Islamic constitution. The SPLA for its part has long called for a secular state for the whole country if it is to remain united. The protocol stated that ‘Nationally enacted legislation having effect only in respect of the states outside Southern Sudan shall have as its source of legislation Sharia and the consensus of the people’. The South was to ‘have as its source of legislation popular consensus, the values and the customs of the people of Sudan including their traditions and religious beliefs, having regard to Sudan’s diversity.’ The SPLA has long taken a principled stand going back to the DOP that if Sudan is not to be a secular state then the South must have the right to exercise self-determination, including the choice of secession. Self-determination is a very ambiguous right, often claimed but by no means always recognised: it requires recognition by either or both the international community and the state from which secession may take place if that choice is made. In Sudan’s case the regional body, IGAD, had proposed the arrangement in 1994, the government had effectively accepted it in 1997. (In the region, the right of self-determination



had been recognised for Eritrea, and had led to its independence in 1993, but it had been denied to Somaliland after the collapse of the Somali state in 1991.) The protocol allows in effect for six years and six months from a comprehensive agreement until an internationally monitored self-determination exercise. In addition to agreement on these longstanding issues of principle to both sides, there was also a framework set to tackle major practical issues including: a six month pre-transition period to be followed by a six year power-sharing transitional government; the sharing of oil wealth; the precise forms of government for the interim period; security arrangements; and a comprehensive ceasefire.

The signing of the protocol predictably produced varied reactions. On the part of those involved in the five week process there was a feeling of achievement, and probably a degree of relief. Among observers there was surprise: the leaks from Machakos had for long suggested that no agreement would be reached, and indeed it was only in the last few days that a breakthrough was achieved. Some were sceptical about the outcome, generally seeing it as a victory for the government (*Africa Confidential*, **42**, 15), while others felt it was open to different interpretations (Johnson, 2002, p.179). However the majority of opinion was of the view that though there were limitations in the protocol it was, in the words of the South Sudan Democratic Forum, 'a step in the right direction' a view also expressed by the Sudan Civil Society Forum meeting in Kampala in October 2002.



Memorandum of Understanding, November 2002

From the signing of the protocol there was awareness that its real purpose had been to get beyond the major issues of principle on which previous talks had regularly foundered. Once that was achieved there would be a need to get down to serious negotiation. However, the earlier decision not to stop the war during negotiations nearly prevented the resumption of talks at Machakos, for between the protocol and the next round of talks, which were scheduled to start on 12 August, fighting intensified. In the south the SPLA took Torit, following which the government mobilised rapidly to re-capture it. Though the start of the next round was delayed, by 17 October the two sides agreed the cessation of hostilities during the talks (an agreement later renewed until 31 March 2003). There was still disagreement concerning the flare up of fighting in the east where the government claimed a continuing right to resist alleging that Eritrea - a neighbouring state rather than a domestic player - was involved. The way was then open to get down to talks once more, which were to last until 18 November.

The Memorandum of Understanding that was signed on 18 November 2002 was a much less spectacular document than the earlier protocol. Instead of big breakthroughs the memorandum indicated that the parties had got down to details, but that their work was far from complete when the talks were halted ahead of the Kenyan elections. The brief document included the establishment of a government of national unity in the transitional period, during which there



would be free and fair elections for a bi-cameral national legislature. In addition both in the legislature and in other branches of government there was to be equitable representation of ‘the people of the Southern Sudan’, including senior levels. There were also various points that were agreed ‘in principle’ including ‘sharing resources and natural resources’. But clearly much more remained to be done as the careful analysis of Justice Africa (14 December 2002) revealed.

One of the most pressing issues still unresolved was that of the border areas of Nuba Mountains, Southern Blue Nile and Abyei, with regard to which the views of the inhabitants should be at least as important as the differing positions of the government and the SPLA. Also pressing was that of the distribution of resources, with the government’s starting position being 10% for the Southern Sudan. That position also anticipated a national government and a Southern government, but, in the light of the experience following the Addis Ababa agreement of 1972, there is also room for consideration of a national government, and regional governments in the North as well as the South. Related to that is the question of Khartoum as a national capital with a secular character, rather than part of ‘the North’ with its agreed Islamic laws. The need for a completely new national constitution is also unresolved, and with it the meaning of what the memorandum called ‘a collegial decision-making process within the Presidency’. Possible bases of agreements on these and other topics have continued to be provided by the international community, and in particular delegations from both sides left for informal seminars in Washington in



December that helped to maintain the momentum between the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on 18 November, and the next round of talks in Kenya that were scheduled to start on 15 January.

Memorandum of Understanding, February 2003

There were fears that the new round of talks might be de-railed by fresh outbreaks of fighting in the South. Both sides blamed each other, but the main accusation was that government-backed militias in Western Upper Nile were impeding deliveries of relief to the area, and indeed driving out the local community from an area of oil development. However international pressure was once more important in addressing the problem: both sides would be more open about troop movements and there would be free access for an international Verification and Monitoring Team. Agreement was also reached on allowing the people displaced in the fighting to return; relief arrangements were improved; and work on a controversial new road through the oilfields was suspended. Eventually talks proceeded, this time in the Nairobi suburb of Karen. The talks themselves made steady progress, and it was notable that the parties negotiated directly, with less reliance on the international observers (Goulty, 2003). Progress was made on a number of fronts, but it was agreed that no details would be released. It was announced though that a joint commission was being established to look in detail at the division of the oil wealth; while on power-sharing there was progress on the drafting of the constitution for the



interim period; and there was agreement on the need to hold a new census. However a number of matters were still outstanding, including issues regarding the presidency and the National Assembly; as well as the border areas of Abyei, the Nuba Mountains and the Southern Funj. Further talks were scheduled to begin on 1 March.

Conclusion

Sudan's peace process thus far has consisted of negotiations between the two main warring parties, with no other direct Sudanese input. Much therefore remains dependent on relations between them. Both appear hard headed and with considerable mutual suspicions, but at the same time progress has been made and their ability to engage with one another appears to have improved rather than diminished since the start of the first Machakos meeting. Against that the strains on the substance of negotiations are likely to increase the more they really address in detail issues of all kinds.

Talks have largely been driven to this position by the commitment of the international contributors to the process. The clear wish of President George W. Bush to see the war ended has contributed much, especially to the American and British efforts. At the same time Bush has backed that up with sticks and carrots. Most obvious has been the Sudan Peace Act in the autumn indicating the penalties to be imposed on the government should it not continue to negotiate seriously; yet at the same time the SPLA has also been warned that aid



to areas of the South under its control are also dependent on the peace process. However pushing the parties to agree is far from the end of the process of peace making: the IGAD Partners' Forum Planning Process will also have to keep working on an internationally-supported long term framework in which a much wider representation of Sudanese society is involved than that which has been directly involved thus far.

There are certainly those in Sudanese society generally who wish to be involved, and they are vociferous in demanding peace. It is they who have suffered most, certainly far more than those behind the contending armies. Fearful though the government and the SPLA may feel of being out-maneuvred by the other side, both must also wonder about the consequences of failing to agree on peace and trying to return to the path of war. When all is said and done in Kenya, it is ordinary Sudanese who may prosper or perish as a result of the outcome of the peace process and who therefore have the greatest stake in its outcome.

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