

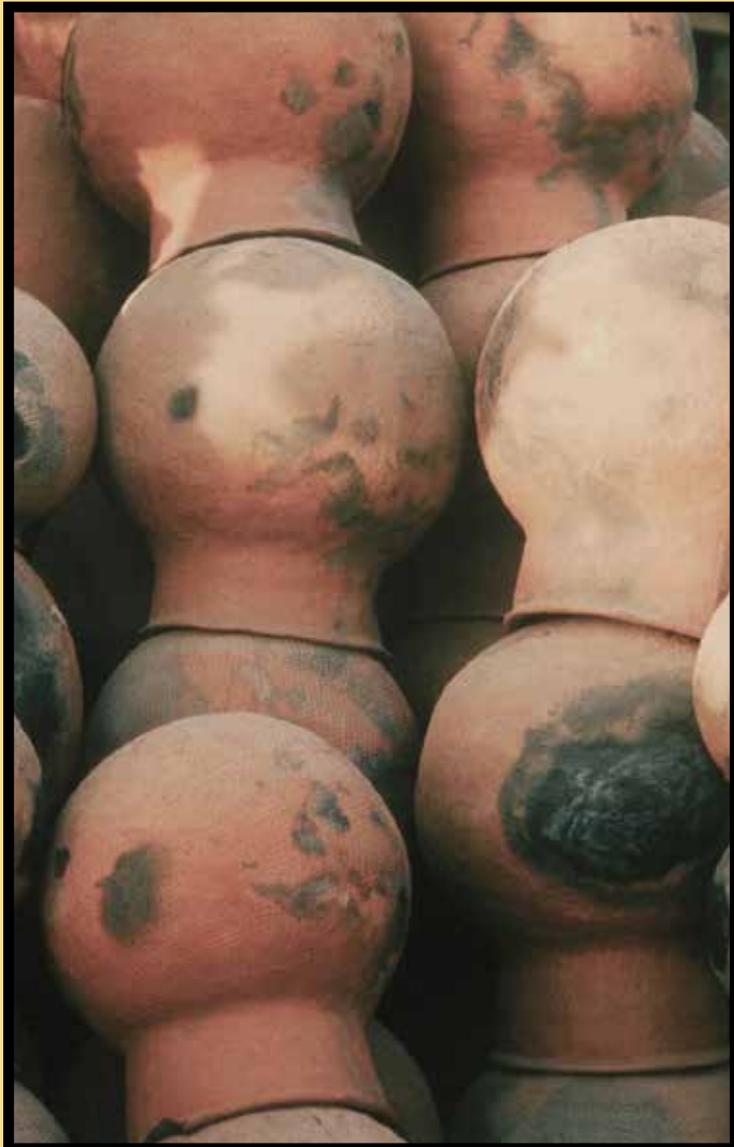


Sudan Studies

for South Sudan and Sudan

Number 58

August 2018





Front cover photograph: Drinking water pots in Kadugli, South Kordofan, in the late 1970's (Credit, Jil Orpen).

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Editorial

We hope that you will receive this issue of *Sudan Studies* (Number 58) just in time for the U.K's summer holiday period. Sadly, our first task is to announce the death of **Paul Wilson**, an old Sudan-hand whom many of our readers will have known and greatly valued.

The first article is a review by **Lutz Oette** of the third issue of the journal *Women in Islam*, in which over a third of the articles relate to Sudan. This issue was launched at SOAS in March; Lutz gives a report of the event, with additional thoughts from our Chairperson, **Gill Lusk**. The following article also focuses on women in Sudan – this time as human rights defenders – and their experiences in contemporary Sudan. This is written by **Nagla Ahmed**, who is deeply engaged in the human rights field in Sudan.

The following three articles all deal with aspects of history in Sudan and South Sudan. First comes the Greek scholar **Antonis Chaldeos** of the University of Johannesburg in South Africa, who gives a fascinating account of the Greek community in Sudan at the time of the Mahdia. Next is an article by the journalist **Peter Martell**, *Hope from History—Keeping the dream of South Sudan alive*, which draws on the stories that he has been gathering from people in South Sudan for the past decade. Despite seeing no easy end to the war that broke out in 2013, he believes the stories of the past can offer hope for the future. The last historical contribution is by **Kuyok Abol Kuyok**, who writes on *The Neglect of the History of Sudan in South Sudan's National Curriculum*.

The final article in this issue is about the South Sudanese diaspora community in Australia, *South Sudanese Australians: Constantly Negotiating Belonging and Identity*, written by **Sara Maher, Santino Atem Deng and Nicki Kindersley** and drawing on their research. It explores how tensions over belonging and identity have intensified in recent years in response to ongoing acculturation stress, overt racism and the community's complex relationship with their homeland and its seemingly intractable conflict.

We have our usual eclectic mix of book reviews. The first is by the respected Nubia specialist **Herman Bell**, who considers the linguistic work of the late Dr **Abdel Halim Sabbar**. This is followed by **Kuyok Abol's** review of the *Jungle Chronicles*, a collection of writings by the veteran South Sudanese journalist **Atem Yaak Atem**, and a review by **Gill Lusk** of **Nasif B.E. Ahmed's** book *Torture in Sudan 1989-2016*. Finally **Edward Thomas** reviews a collection of reports by a former SSSUK Committee stalwart, **John Udal**, about his work in colonial Sudan, *Munich on the Nile: The road to Sudanese Independence*.

We end with the third newsletter from the Durham Archive, written by the archivist and SSSUK Committee member **Francis Gotto**, and a notice about

our annual **Symposium and AGM, which** will be held on September 22nd at SOAS. You are warmly invited to attend and urged to register and pay in advance, so as to receive the ‘early bird’ rate and to avoid disappointment and delays on the day.

The Death of Paul Wilson

We are sorry to have to report that Paul Wilson (1955-2018) died of a heart attack in Bradford on 17th May.

Paul first came to Sudan as an English teacher working for Voluntary Service Overseas in Darfur in the 1970s. On returning to the UK, he founded *African and Oriental Books* and became one of the most prominent booksellers dealing with books on Sudan and other parts of Africa and the Middle East.

He was a founding member of SSSUK and was a doughty Editor of *Sudan Studies* from 1990 to 2001, in the days before computers were widespread and when most of the copy arrived in handwritten form. We hope to publish a full obituary in the next issue.

WOMEN IN ISLAM

SIHA Journal / Issue No. 3, 2017



Al-Turabi and the Women of Sudan

Commitment to Women's
Rights or Political
Ambition?

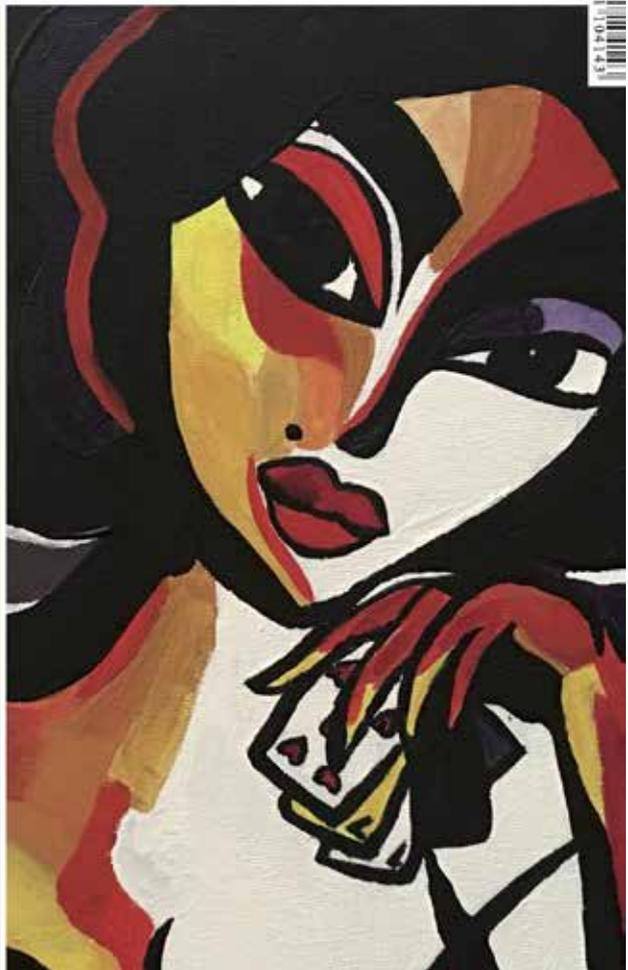
Choosing Engagement over Retreat

Ziba Mir-Hosseini's
Quest for Equality
within Islamic Traditions

Wielding Power over Women's Bodies

The Burkini Ban
in France

DOSSIER: Living with Religious Militancy



An Innovative Approach to Women's Studies in Sudan: A Review and a Report

Lutz Oette*¹

Review of Women in Islam, SIHA Journal, Issue No. 3

Women, when talked about in the context of Islam, are frequently portrayed as oppressed, as deserving pity or intervention to liberate them from their predicament. What is often missing in pertinent discourses is the agency of those who are being talked about and with it, representation of their voices. The journal *Women in Islam*,² published by the Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA, www.sihanet.org), sets a welcome and liberating counterpoint. It invites the reader to learn more about the lived realities of women, their struggles, achievements and lives at particular moments and places in a broader, evolving history. The journal, in its own words:

... explores the complexities of gender relations in Muslim communities in the Horn of Africa and beyond. It engages critically with the conflicting perceptions of Islam in relation to women's human rights and equality. The journal is devoted to providing a space for Muslims and non-Muslims from all walks of life to discuss social, political and cultural challenges associated with the intersection of Islamic religion and gender...

Beautifully painted by Sara Mekki Ahmed, the picture on the cover of the third issue entices the reader to look for more inside and with good reason. Hala Alkarib is certainly right when she writes in the editorial that the issue “appeals to both people's intellect and their emotions.” It offers a wealth of perspectives that engage not only with the challenges facing women in Islam but also their experiences, hopes, dreams and potential. Dr Ziba Mir-Hosseini's opening article sets the tone and motto for the issue, “Choosing Engagement over Retreat”. What follows are over thirty articles that cover an extraordinarily broad range of topics, from the politics of feminism, to the question of women's inheritance, the Burkini Ban in France, film and book reviews, poetry and a dossier: *Living with Religious Militancy*. The reader with

¹ I am grateful to Hala AlKarib and Lynn Welchman for their comments and for being a pleasure to work with throughout. Gill Lusk who attended the launch at SOAS has added comments at the end of this piece.

² *Women in Islam*, SIHA Journal, Issue No.3, 2017, ISBN: 978 9970949625 (<https://womeninislamjournal.com>)

a particular interest in Sudan will find a number of contributions by women and men who have actively taken part in Sudan's life, which reflect on the political, cultural and personal, and which live up to the spirit of engagement evoked by Mir-Hosseini. The issue also proves her view that it "is one of the very few journals that one can find with a progressive and gender-egalitarian interpretation of Islam."

Over a third of the more than thirty contributions in the current issue relate to Sudan. The first is one of several that explore women and Sudanese politics. 'Al-Turabi and the Women of Sudan: Commitment to Women's Rights or Political Ambition?' is compiled on the basis of an unpublished study by Abulkhalig el Sir and it is timely, as Al-Turabi's legacy still looms large in Sudan. While the article finds that Al-Turabi took an interest in women's issues, which seemed in some ways progressive, it concludes that this interest was "motivated by political pragmatism rather than a genuine concern for change and reform". Considering discriminatory laws and policies enacted in the 1990s, Al-Turabi is characterised as a Pied Piper who "incite[ed] women to enter the public realm as a way to generate political gains for the Islamist movement [while] ignoring the unjust social and cultural reality that they experienced."

'Women of Political Islam and the Dialectic of Women's Rights: The Dilemma of Female Political Islamists', by Abulkhalig el Sir, is particularly critical of women who are part of the Islamist movement in Sudan. He demonstrates, particularly by examining some selected writings, how they have failed to challenge discrimination and injustices, such as those evident in the Family Act of 1991, and have been caught up in contradictions or escaped into vague generalisations. Meanwhile, Amal Khalifa Habani's 'Feminism and Politics in Sudan: The State of the Feminist Movement in Sudan' charts the development of the movement since the 1940s, highlighting the difficulties faced and lamenting the diminishing of "space for the feminist movement." Her article is complemented by the voices of four feminist activists, Zainab Badr el Din, Amal Abbas, Samira Mahdi and Intisar al Aqali. While all are highly critical of, if not frustrated by, developments and their experiences as women in the political system, they equally embody the combative spirit of feminist activism in Sudan.

Asir Alsayed's 'A Woman and a Purchased Slave: Gender Biases and Stereotypes in School Textbooks' takes the example of a textbook chapter on Friday Prayers, which includes the Prophet's *Hadith*, "Friday prayers are incumbent upon whosoever believes in God and the Last Day, except for four: a slave, a woman, a minor and a sick person", to underpin his incisive analysis of how textbooks promote a culture of discrimination. Safia Alseddig's "'*Al Adal*' Re-Infibulation and the Obsession with Virginity in Sudan', casts the

spotlight on the pernicious impact of re-infibulation, analysing the sociological dimension driving the practice and calling for fundamental social-cultural change. Aisha al Samani's 'The Tragedy of Seclusion: The Gender Segregated Communities of Hamshkoreib in Eastern Sudan' provides an outsider's glimpse into a largely hidden life in which women are confined to a segregated village for their entire lives in the name of religion.

The journal includes fascinating portraits of people. 'Al-Balabel: An Iconic Sudanese Female Band', by Mohamed el Faki, revisits the story of the "all-female trio ... known as the Sudanese Supremes", inquiring whether their success, status and experiences are, in the words of the subtitle, the symbol of an Ambivalent Society or Fractured Patriarchy. Amani Mohammed el Obeid's 'Saadia al-Salahi: A Pioneer Costume Designer from Sudan: What Clothes Say about A Society' pays a lovingly drawn tribute to Al-Salahi's research and contribution to preserving an important aspect of Sudan's cultural legacy. 'Meeting with the Novelist Leila Aboulela: Negotiating Religious and Class Identities across borders', based on an interview by Lisa Clifford, shows how Leila Aboulela found her literary voice in Scotland and what it means to write about her experiences as a Muslim woman in Europe.

Several pieces relate personal experiences of discrimination, showing how the public and the private are inextricably linked in the broader context of Sudanese gender politics and socio-cultural practices. Souad Alkhider's 'Banned from Playing Football Before I was Born', immediately draws the reader into her childhood dreams, which were crushed by the dictates of a patriarchal society. Even being a well-known journalist, who has clearly found her voice, she confesses to still feeling "restricted and confined" by the price she has had to pay for being brought up as a girl in Sudan. Sara Elhassan's irreverent 'I Almost Got Arrested for Wearing Pants' revisits her near arrest at the hands of the public order police egged on by Sudanese men walking by. The situation prompts her to reflect sarcastically on what she has been told about the virtues of Sudanese men. Eiman Adam's poem, wearing its heart on the sleeve in its title 'Recalcitrance is a cry for freedom', ends with "Servitude is to God. To me, you be what you may."

The journal explores a wide range of issues that concern women living in other countries than Sudan, from female street cleaners in Mogadishu and the difficulties faced by Ethiopian Domestic Workers in the Gulf Countries, to a variety of issues in Iran, Kenya, Uganda, Afghanistan and again Somalia. In combination with thematic articles, such as on inheritance, polygamy and *fatwas*, the writing offers a rich prism of both the lived realities of women (and men) in Islam and broader political, legal, and socio-cultural challenges. The many first-hand accounts are particularly compelling, providing well

written and unique insights and perspectives that one is hard pressed to find elsewhere. The intellectual approach taken by the Journal invariably privileges certain voices. Future issues would be enriched by providing space to reflect on another important dimension: the experiences of marginalised women, in both urban and rural contexts.

Any review would be remiss if it focused only on content and omitted any mention of the rich illustrations. Paintings, drawings and photographs give the journal its unique artistic appeal, and showcase the work of a number of highly talented artists. One particular gem is *Looking Back to Move Ahead: A Photo Story on Women's Dress in Somalia*, which takes the reader back to the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

When I told the Editorial Head, Hala Alkarib, that I was minded to review the latest issue of the journal, she asked me to be highly critical. I must admit, happily, that I failed in this task. As will have become clear from this review, I greatly enjoyed reading it and consider my copy something to treasure. For those interested in ordering a copy, in English or Arabic, further information can be found at <https://womeninislamjournal.com>

Launched at SOAS

Issue Three of the journal *Women in Islam* was launched at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies on 24th March 2018. Hosted by the SIHA network, together with the Centre for Islamic and Middle East Law and the Centre for Human Rights Law, the event was superbly organised by Professor Lynn Welchman, from the SOAS School of Law, helped by Christine Djumpha from the Law office and a group of SOAS students: Zahra Bajwa, Salma Sakr, Matilde Aghdasi, Tashny Sukumaran, Khobaib Abuelmeaza, Odette David and Sugandha Parmar.

The turnout was lower than hoped for, perhaps due to the launch being on a Saturday afternoon, but those who attended were richly rewarded by stimulating and engaging presentations and discussions. The programme included readings of poetry and pieces from the journal by SOAS students, a discussion of women in Islam featuring Ziba Mir-Hosseini and Hala Alkarib, with Lynn Welchman as moderator, which particularly reflected on the challenges of women's rights activism within an Islamic context. This was followed by a screening of the film 'Men as Allies' (available on YouTube). This focuses on men's personal experiences and attitudes to oppression and violence against women in Sudan, and it reflects SIHA's philosophy and strategy of seeking broader social transformation. The film triggered a lively debate on gender relations and the political and social challenges faced by women and men seeking to bring about change.

We hope that future issues of *Women in Islam* will be launched at SOAS. Judging by this year's event, SSSUK members who attend are unlikely to have any cause for regret.

Gill Lusk adds:

The SSSUK Chairperson, Gill Lusk, who also attended the meeting adds:

Two main themes struck me in this excellent meeting. One was that SIHA Editor Hala Alkarib commented that many people, especially in the “ex-Muslim” lobby, criticised the policy of analysing women's and feminist issues or the Islamist ideology from an Islamic viewpoint. Her point, as I understood it, was that in a deeply religious and traditional society, this was the most effective way to debate and to change things. This resonates strongly with my own thoughts on Sudan's very traditionalist society, traditions that like others, former Muslims may need to take into account if they seek change. It clearly resonated with the largely Muslim audience.

The second point is that despite the scores if not hundreds of meetings I have attended over many years where Islam was discussed, this was the first time that I had heard apparently practising Muslims speak so openly against Islamism and that most of these were women, both Sudanese and of other nationalities, and some of them wearing the “*hijab*”. This to me is an important development because it demonstrated defiance towards the Islamists themselves (no doubt there was a government spy in the room: there always is) and also, it was a platform for alternative understandings of the Islamic faith which challenge and usually predate the narrow and exclusivist version that Islamists profess and propagate. That of course brings us back to Hala's point.

* Dr. Lutz Oette is a senior lecturer in law at SOAS, University of London, and director of the SOAS Centre for Human Rights Law.

Defending Human Rights in Sudan, a Daunting Mission

Nagla Ahmed*

Introduction

My personal experience has influenced my path as a human rights defender. There are countless incidents that will always linger in my mind and for the purposes of this article, I will mention a few in order to unveil the atmosphere and barriers in both law and practice that have created a hostile environment for women's human rights defenders in Sudan and affected their ability to operate freely. This is an attempt to shed light on the enduring challenges that Sudanese women human rights defenders face under Sudan's repressive regime and to recognise their significant role and constant struggle against injustice. Sudanese human rights defenders and organisations that are at the forefront of work to promote and protect human rights across Sudan continue to be subjected to outrageous intimidation and face manifold risks to their lives and work as systematic human rights violations are perpetrated against them by the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) and police. They are routinely subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention, daily summonses to the police station and long hours of interrogation. They are often subjected to torture and other ill treatment while in detention, and to unfounded criminal proceedings. These violations are used by the NISS as a means of muzzling their work and silencing them.

While all Sudanese activists face these violations, Sudanese women's human rights defenders suffer more repression and aggression than male activists. They are targeted in almost every conceivable way because of their gender (as well as their cultural backgrounds, political opinions,¹ age and marital status) and are more vulnerable to sexual and physical harassment, rape, verbal abuse, the use of sexist language, and of slurs and slander campaigns. Sudan's repressive and discriminatory laws undermine women and girls across the country and diminish their ability to participate meaningfully in public life.² Despite numerous recommendations by international and regional organisations, Sudan has failed to comply with its international obligations.

¹ Abdel Salam, A.H. and De Waal, A. (editors) 2002, *The Phoenix State: Civil society and the future of Sudan*, Red Sea Press, p. 84.

² Henry, Jehanne, "Sudan's War on Women and Girls", Human Rights Watch, October 2015, at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/10/12/dispatches-sudans-wars-and-girls>

The situation of women's rights defenders in Sudan is lamentable, due to the many challenges they face and it demonstrates that defending human rights there is an exacting and daunting task. The incidents below highlight the entrenched injustice and the normalised gender inequality.

The experience of lawyers defending women in Sudan

In 2006, I represented eight women, who had been arrested and accused of smoking a *shisba* (water pipe) and dressing indecently, before the Central Khartoum Public Order Court. In the courtyard while I was approaching the Courtroom, I saw a police truck loaded with women and men from South Sudan, who had apparently been arrested for brewing and selling alcohol.

I stood stunned with horror at the ill treatment that the police were directing against them. I couldn't just ignore what I saw and angrily asked the policemen to stop their ruthless and inhumane treatment. Instead, the police arrested me and accused me of illegally obstructing a lawful arrest, insulting officials during their lawful duty and wearing indecent dress myself.

It wasn't helpful to tell them at that time that I was a lawyer. I was taken to an office in the same Court building to be transferred to the police station. I was verbally abused and accused of encouraging people to drink alcohol, break the law and commit offences against social morality. They suggested that I drank alcohol too. I presented my Bar Association identity (ID) card to the police officer and told him that I was a lawyer representing my clients before the Court. The officer seized my ID and ordered my release on condition that I came back after the Court session. Nonetheless, I left the Courthouse after the trial and never went back for fear of being arrested. This incident has partially restricted my involvement in defending victims of the Public Order laws before that Court.

Another pivotal incident occurred in 2011. Safia Ishag, an activist from the *Girifna* non-violent pro-democracy movement,³ was kidnapped and gang-raped by NISS agents in Khartoum after taking part in a protest against the government in January 2011. Safia instructed me to take legal action and to pursue her case on her behalf. Two other female lawyers and I went to the Attorney General's office in Bahri (Khartoum North) to submit a complaint against the NISS. The Attorney General refused to register it and insisted instead that it should be registered against an 'unknown suspect'. However, it was filed at East Khartoum Police Station in Kafuri, where I witnessed how Safia was intimidated by the head of the Police Station and by officers who accused her of lying and threatened her if she persisted in pursuing her allegation.

³ Further information about *Girifna* can be found at: <http://www.girifna.com>

On the following day, we wanted to obtain a copy of Safia’s medical report, which had been prepared after the incident. However, we couldn’t make a copy at that time as the officers at the police station were extremely hostile and refused our request. Instead, they asked us to bring Safia in for more investigations. By this stage, she had fled the country and her case became public following the broadcast of her video testimony, in which she detailed her ordeal.

The government was very aggressive and the NISS launched a heavy-handed campaign against anyone who dared to speak up about Safia’s case. Human rights defenders and journalists, who demanded that the government investigate the allegations and bring the perpetrators to justice, were arrested. Five journalists were charged with defamation and publishing false news for writing articles demanding that the government investigate the case and bring the perpetrators to justice. Eight civil society and political leaders who visited Safia’s family to show their support and solidarity were also arrested, interrogated by the police and accused of kidnapping Safia.

Despite the hostile atmosphere, I worked with my colleagues and prepared a claim to be submitted to the Minister of Justice; it was during this time that the NISS arrested me at my office in Khartoum. The NISS confiscated two laptops, all the office work files – among them Safia’s case file and external devices. In this context, it was too challenging for my colleagues to pursue her case in Sudan. Fortunately, her case found its way to justice through a submission to the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights by REDRESS.⁴

Abuse and stigma

Sudanese women’s human rights defenders suffer aggression and repression by individual fundamentalists as well as the state. I recall two incidents that happened to me, the first when a radical Islamist man verbally attacked me during an awareness-raising meeting on women’s rights organised by a community-based organisation in the Mayo neighbourhood of Khartoum. He ordered me to stop talking and shouted at me furiously, saying that I should cover my hair and that I had come there to corrupt their social mores and try to impose “Western culture on our women”. He insisted on ending the meeting and ordered all the participants to leave.

The other incident occurred during my work on the criminal law reform project with REDRESS in Sudan. We had organised a workshop about the

⁴ REDRESS Trust is a U.K. based organisation that works with torture survivors to obtain and access justice through litigation so as to combat torture in all regions of the world. For more information visit the REDRESS website at: <https://redress.org/about/>

importance of community engagement in the law reform process at Wad Elbashir, a camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Omdurman. While I was speaking about the shortcomings in the criminal law and how some provisions were violating our rights, I was insulted by a member of the ruling National Congress Party (NCP).

Many Sudanese women's rights defenders have experienced similar attacks, especially in the rural areas, and IDP camps and centres around Khartoum. Moreover, Sudanese women activists face gender-specific forms of stigma and abuse in response to their work, including smear campaigns and accusations of prostitution; these are particularly directed against women who are advocating women's rights and speaking against the Public Order Law. For example, during Lubna Hussain's trial in 2009, female activists organised a series of protests in solidarity with her and against that Law.⁵ On the day of her trial in the Khartoum North Court, the protestors were not only subjected to police brutality and excessive force and arrests but also faced a slanderous and demeaning campaign by officials and pro-government media that condemned the protestors. A pro-government newspaper, *Al Wifaq*, ran the front-page, bold red headline: 'Demonstrations of Prostitutes and Homosexuals in Khartoum Streets.'

Women's human rights: activists and organisations

Women's rights are generally considered to be a Western idea and against Sudanese culture, social mores and Islam. The work of Sudanese women is often criminalised and restricted; particular targets are those who challenge discriminatory practices and legislation that violates women's rights or those who advocate the ratification of the international Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). For example, a prominent women's rights leader was summoned by the Women's Parliamentary Committee of the National Assembly in Khartoum because of her statement and comments about sexual violence in Sudan to the Nobel Women's Initiative.

Human rights work in Sudan is considered a threat to national security. It is common for the government to portray human rights defenders as "spies" or agents of foreign governments. When arrested, they are usually charged with the offence of 'undermining the constitutional system', 'waging war against the state' or 'espionage,' all of which carry the death penalty or life imprisonment.⁶ An example of this is the case of Jalila Khamis Kuku, who was

⁵ See the *Guardian* report at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/aug/02/sudan-women-dress-code>

⁶ See, Elzobier, A. "Sudan: Criminalization of Human Rights Work threatens

arrested and detained for almost ten months following the broadcast on video of her statement about the dire humanitarian situation in South Kordofan and the suffering of the Nuba people; she spent nine months in security detention without charge and later, her trial was based on unfounded charges.⁷

Being a lawyer is no protection from facing the risk of arrest, intimidation, detention, torture and other ill-treatment. A number of female human rights lawyers have been physically assaulted at police stations while assisting the victims of violations or pursuing legal proceedings. In 2009, three female rights lawyers were beaten and arrested by police at the Alkalala court complex in Khartoum whilst distributing leaflets encouraging lawyers to register and participate in the coming lawyers' association elections. Following an order by a judge, they were released after being interrogated by police but were rearrested on the same day by the NISS and detained for several days. While assisting a victim of domestic violence, my colleague H, a human rights lawyer in Khartoum, was attacked at Khartoum North's Alshamali Police Station by the victim's husband in front of police, who refused to take any action or register a complaint; the police told her 'this issue is a family matter and no one should interfere'.

In June 2017, a female lawyer in Port Sudan in Red Sea State was slapped and beaten by six police officers whilst in the police station following a bail application on behalf of her client. She was detained for almost four days and charged with several misdemeanours: her only crime was that she didn't accept the language they used when they addressed her as "*Ya Mara*" ("Woman").

The rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly are routinely violated by the government. Women's rights organisations face enormous restrictions on their movements, as well as on conducting activities without first obtaining permission from security or receiving project funding without the approval of the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC). The impact of such restrictive measures on women's organisations has in many cases made it difficult to sustain human rights work.

The NISS enjoys vast power and immunity, and this enables it to violate rights to privacy and individual relations, through raids on the offices and homes of women's rights defenders. Violations include the confiscation of their personal laptops and work equipment, searches of their mobile telephones and forcing them to open their personal emails and other social

protection of freedoms", Amnesty International, March, 2017:
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/03/sudan-criminalization-of-human-rights-work-threatens-protection-of-freedoms/>

⁷ Jalila Khamis's testimony is available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmA7pS83EBA>

media accounts, in order to scrutinise and manipulate their personal lives and judge their demeanour.⁸ The NISS often uses information obtained from such searches against the women involved, either to inflict sexual abuse or to extract confessions and information about other people and their work, or to force them to collaborate with the security organisations.

The NISS regularly tortures Sudanese female rights defenders and subjects them to degrading and inhumane treatment during their arrest and detention: one aim is to damage their self-esteem. In 2012, several women's rights activists were arrested during countrywide protests against the government's austerity policy. They faced difficulties with their personal hygiene in prison because despite their pleas, they were not given any sanitary napkins. This was psychologically agonising for many; some were forced to use inappropriate toilets or prevented from using the toilets when they needed them; some were forced to sit in the security building's courtyard, for long hours in hot sun.

Family, social and economic pressures

Additionally, many women's human rights defenders face overwhelming pressure from society and their families in the form of disapproval of their activism or a reluctance to accept their involvement in such work. This is particularly the case when women's rights activists are arrested because of their work. Often, the family imposes great pressure on the woman concerned: in some cases, she faces accusations of bringing shame on her family, particularly if she is arrested by the Public Order Police.

Some women suffer problems with their husbands or partners due to their activism and human rights work, particularly when their husbands are not involved in any activism. A recent example of this type of challenge concerns a female human rights lawyer who was arrested during the protests organised by the political opposition alliance against the price rises last January. After she was released with other detainees in February, her brother asked her to go with him to their family house instead of her own house, since her husband had divorced her because of her activism and detention.

Another challenge that affects and limits the ability of human rights defenders to fully engage in their activism is economic. Women face challenges such as difficulties in accessing employment, denial of opportunities and promotion, and being sacked. These strategies are used in both the public and private sectors and are designed to restrict women's activism.

⁸ See Reem Abbas, "Sudan Government and its Obsession with Pornography" at: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/north-africa-west-asia/reem-abbas/sudan-government-and-its-obsession-with-pornography>

Conclusion

The reality is that violations against women's human rights defenders are occurring every day. This situation is inconsistent with existing laws and official policies, e.g. the National Interim Constitution of 2005, and also with Sudan's international and regional obligations. In the absence of accountability and protection measures, several women's rights defenders have been forced into exile and the deterioration of women's rights and the reduction of open space in which to work freely to defend human rights has led to a decline in the struggle for women's rights.

Despite these challenges, Sudanese female human rights defenders continue to work and fight with audacity and determination against injustice and inequality, facing various forms of both direct and indirect intimidation, and dangers from the government and its security forces, or from the wider society. Through their extended struggle, Sudanese women's human rights defenders have achieved significant triumphs. In recent years, their efforts have led, among other things, to the reform of the problematic Article 149 (Adultery) of the Criminal Law of 1991 and they also succeeded in drawing international attention to the inhumane nature of the Public Order Law.

The need now is to recognise women's rights defenders' important role in promoting and protecting human rights so as to enable them to carry out their work without fear or risk. The Sudan government should enshrine the declaration on human rights defenders in its laws and implement the same.⁹ In addition the Sudan government must reform its oppressive and discriminatory laws in compliance with its international obligations and standards.

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⁹ The declaration on Human Rights Defenders was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1998 and is considered a landmark document in human rights history. It outlines the duties and responsibilities of the state in protecting and respecting the work of individuals, groups and organisations which work tirelessly and put their lives at risk to defend and protect people's rights.

The Greek Community in Sudan at the time of the Mahdia, 1885-1898

Antonis Chaldeos*

Abstract

Political and economic changes in north-east Africa encouraged modern Greek immigration to Sudan in the early nineteenth century. During the 1880s, the Greeks formed a small but thriving community, living mainly in Khartoum, Suakin and Kassala. In 1881, Sudan entered a new era and the Greeks experienced the consequences of that change. Since the Greeks played a significant role in the Sudanese history of that period, it is important to examine how they dealt with the dramatic political changes of the Mahdia. The article analyses the Greek presence during the expansion of the Mahdist revolt and discusses the role of the Greeks during the siege and fall of Khartoum. Finally, it examines their daily life and main entrepreneurial activities during their imprisonment in Omdurman between 1885 and 1898.

The Greek community in the late 19th century

The campaign carried out by Muhammad Ali in 1821 was the trigger that caused Greek traders to move to the south of Egypt.¹ Undoubtedly one of the major areas of Greek entrepreneurship in the second half of the 19th century was cotton cultivation. Most of the cotton harvest was used by local weavers to create clothes for the Sudanese,² whilst the remainder was directed to Egyptian markets by Greek and Syrian merchants.³ In the late 1860s, the commercial activity of the Greeks reached a peak,⁴ as the large Egyptian trading houses intensified their economic penetration of Sudan, especially in Khartoum, Suakin and in cities located near the border with Ethiopia, such as Kassala.⁵ The business of Ioannis Cozzikas, “La Maison Cozzikas”, was the largest trading firm in eastern Sudan and one of the oldest in the country.⁶

Owing to the significant presence of the Greeks in the local economy of Sudan, Greek Vice-Consulates were established in Khartoum and Suakin. The dispersal of the Greeks throughout Sudan increased when they signed contracts for the provision of the Egyptian army; they founded businesses in

¹ Niblock, 1987: 8.

² Newspaper: *The Sunday Oregonian*, 29/12/1907.

³ Schanz, 1913: 136 and FO 403/8, report of the British Consulate in Khartoum, 17/8/1875.

⁴ Niblock, 1987: 9.

⁵ Baker, 1867: 70.

⁶ Natsoulas, 1977: 81.

Kordofan,⁷ Gedaref and El Obeid. In 1881, the majority of Greeks lived in Khartoum where they were involved in the trading sector; except the doctors, Giorgos Veis and Xenophon Xenoudakis. There were six large Greek shops in Khartoum, the largest one belonging to the Greek vice consul Nicos Leontidis and his partner Manolidis.

The Greeks during the expansion of the Mahdi revolt

In March 1883, the Mahdi's army besieged El Obeid. Five Greeks took part in the defence of the city: George Kalamatianos from Samos, Andreas Politsis from Spetses, Dimitris Kakampouras from Lesvos, Pantelis Dimitroulias and Savas Karagiannis from Lemnos.⁸ During the El Obeid siege, many residents left the city to escape hunger, the danger of being taken hostage, or death. One of them was George Stamboulis who was accompanied by his family. The Egyptian garrison of El Obeid was slaughtered and the Greeks, along with two Cypriots and three Italian Catholic nuns, were arrested.⁹ All of them were forced to convert to Islam and change their names to Muslim ones.¹⁰ We should note that the behaviour of the El Obeid conquerors was friendly toward the prisoners.¹¹ They gave them money to buy clothes and houses as well as a monthly allowance of 15 *reals* until they found work. Dimitris Kakampouras, (who changed his name to Abdalla), was appointed the chief representative of the Greeks, while George Kalamatianos, (who changed his name to Galeb), became the messenger of the Mahdi.¹²

By the order of the Mahdi, all of the prisoners were forced to marry, including the monks and nuns.¹³ The Greeks, led by Kakampouras, decided to help the nuns and proposed that the priests, and the Syrian prisoners who were Christians, should marry them. They refused and as a result, three Greeks, Panagiotis Trampas, Kokorempas and Politsis married the nuns. Trampas married Catherine, Kokorempas married Maria Theresa and Politsis married Fortuna.¹⁴

In the summer of 1883, in excess of 8,000 Egyptian troops gathered in Khartoum under the command of William Hicks. The Greek, Gaitanos

⁷ Wilson, 1883: 73, 128.

⁸ Sudan Archives Durham (from now on SAD) 958/5 Special Collections. Scanned copy of an original diary of 1881, in 5 sections by Nicholas Papadam, a member of a Greek merchant family in Khartoum and later a captive of the Mahdi.

⁹ SAD 958/5, *ibid*.

¹⁰ Power, 1885: 75, 76.

¹¹ Newspaper: *The Daily Morning*, 13/2/1885.

¹² SAD 958/5, *ibid*.

¹³ Wingate, 1892: 36.

¹⁴ SAD 958/5; Egmont Hake, 1885: 14.

Dimitroulias followed the Egyptian army as a supplier.¹⁵ Hicks' mission was to relieve El Obeid. In the ensuing battle, the Mahdi's forces gained an impressive victory. Gradually, the Mahdi took control of Kordofan, Sennar, Kassala and Darfur. Having seen the expansion of the Mahdist forces and in an effort to reduce the cost of maintaining a large number of soldiers in Sudan, the British decided that the Egyptian presence in Sudan should be withdrawn. For that mission, Charles Gordon arrived in Khartoum on 18th February 1884, when the majority of the Egyptian army was scattered across the country. In March 1884 the Mahdi's army attacked Slatin who was defending Darfur on behalf of the Egyptians. We should note that there were five Greeks among the Slatin forces.¹⁶ Finally, Darfur fell into the hands of the Mahdi and Slatin surrendered. Out of the Greek defenders, three were killed, Dimitris Tsigadas was captured and taken to Omdurman, and Costas Charalambous was captured.¹⁷ Later, Charalambous married a local woman and had children.

At the same time, the Mahdist forces conquered Berber, disrupting telegraph communications between Shendi and Berber. As the British government wanted to learn more about the situation in Sudan from Gordon, they asked the British Consulate in Egypt to find someone who was acquainted with the area and who could pass through the Mahdi's lines without being arrested. Pantelis Rallis, a Greek trader and member of the British Parliament, sent a message to the branch of his trading firm 'Ralli Sons' in Alexandria, seeking a Greek who would undertake this difficult task. The British promised a reward of £1,000.¹⁸ After a few days, Michael Rallis found John Koutsoukos who had lived in Kassala for more than 20 years in the past, knew the local languages and was involved in the coffee trade.¹⁹ Koutsoukos agreed on two conditions: firstly that he received some money as a deposit in order to buy a few things that were needed for his trip and secondly, that if he managed to accomplish his mission, his story would be published in the major British newspapers with reference to his name and Greek origin. After choosing to travel through Suakin and Atbara, he departed for Sudan. After a month, Koutsoukos sent a telegraph from Port Said saying that he had to return due to the failure of the mission. According to his story, he bought five camels in Suakin, loaded them with goods and followed a caravan that was going to Atbara. However, he was

¹⁵ SAD 958/5, *ibid*.

¹⁶ These were: Dimitris Tsigadas, Kostis Charalambou, Antonios Sarikas, Ioannis Chatzioannou and Machairas. SAD 958/5, *ibid*.

¹⁷ SAD 958/5, *ibid*; Slatin, 1898:382.

¹⁸ SAD 958/5, *ibid*.

¹⁹ Pachtikos, 1933.

attacked by bandits who seized the goods, and killed a few of the merchants. As a result, he was forced to return to Suakin.²⁰

The siege of Khartoum

In 1884, the city of Khartoum had a population of 50,000 people. The European population consisted of Greek merchants and Roman Catholic monks and nuns. However, almost all of the Europeans had left.²¹ Out of the 132 Greeks that used to live in the city seventy had left despite the exhortations of the Greek Consul.²² Gordon was thinking of leaving Khartoum either by moving south towards Abyssinia along the Blue Nile, or by attacking the Mahdi's forces.²³ Eventually he realised that without further military aid he could not do anything other than remain entrenched.

As the Egyptian army was suffering from starvation and several diseases, Gordon faced an extremely difficult situation. He ordered the registration of all the cereals that were located in bakeries and shops and set a specific price for bread. However, after 15-20 days the cost of bread was too high, despite the tariff that was imposed, and there was a significant shortage. Protests followed and Gordon ordered an audit to find the reason for the lack of bread. During the investigation a large amount of flour was found in the house of a Greek, Christos Panayiotou, who was the partner of Ibrahim Bourden.²⁴ Gordon ordered that he be punished. Panayiotou apologised, explaining that he had bought the grain at a high price but that now the selling price was low because of the tariff that had been imposed. That being the case he preferred to store the bread rather than selling it without a profit. After he had been tortured, he was imprisoned, although as a Greek citizen he was supposed to stand trial before the Greek Consul.²⁵ Once the Greek community learned the news, they gathered outside the Consulate. They demanded that the Greek Consul ask Gordon to punish those who had arrested Panayiotou. The Consul reassured his compatriots that he would send a letter to Gordon. Indeed, with the intervention of Gordon, Panayiotou was released.

In September of 1884 Gordon sent the riverboat 'Abbas' down the Nile to meet the British forces that had been sent to reinforce the defence of Khartoum. Colonel Stewart, the British ambassador Frank Power, the French Ambassador M. Herbin, a few Egyptian soldiers, Syrian sailors and sixteen

²⁰ Politis, 1930, volume B': 13-14

²¹ Blunt, 1911:113; Stevenson, 1960: 105; Achilopoulos, 1922: 49; Power, 1885:53

²² SAD 958/5, *ibid*; Power, 1885: 53.

²³ Baring, 1916: 572; Churchill, 1899: 26.

²⁴ Wingate, 1930: 18.

²⁵ SAD 958/5, *ibid*.

Greeks were on board the ship.²⁶ The ship drifted off course near Abu Hamid and all the passengers were arrested and massacred.²⁷

During the siege of Khartoum, the Greek state tried to save the Greeks who lived in the city. In 1884, the Greek Consul in Suez, Dimitris Mitsakis, was sent to King John of Abyssinia to negotiate a Treaty between Egypt and Abyssinia against the Mahdi. Indeed, with the intervention of Mitsakis, King John and Gordon came to an agreement.²⁸ As Gordon noted in his diary on the 21st of October 1884, Leontidis received a letter from Mitsakis informing him that King John was ready to invade Sudan.²⁹ However, this never happened. Although Mitsakis failed to help the Greeks who lived in Khartoum, he managed to help those who resided in Kassala: King John provided them with horses, camels, food and money and they travelled to Masawa.³⁰ One fled to Suakin and became the messenger of the local general commander.³¹

In the summer of 1884 the Mahdi ordered George Kalamatianos to give a letter to Gordon, asking the British General to surrender.³² However, Kalamatianos intended to give Gordon useful information about the Mahdi's army; information that he had been given secretly by the imprisoned Slatin Pasha.³³ Upon arriving at the city walls, Kalamatianos was not allowed to go in, so Nicos Leontidis, Manolis Diakogiannis, George Marinos and Vassilis Georgopoulos were given permission to go out and meet him. Kalamatianos asked Leontidis to help him meet Gordon. He told him that if he persuaded Gordon to give in, the Greeks of the city would be safe. However Kalamatianos did not get to meet Gordon.³⁴

As the siege of Khartoum intensified, Gordon wanted to find a trustworthy person to take a letter to the leader of the expedition that was coming to

²⁶ Budge, 1907, vol. 2: 288; Slatin, 1898: 469.

²⁷ Egmont Hake, 1885: 258; Skotidis, 1908: 16; Prokopiou, 1930: 150; Politis, 1930, volume A': 343; Power, 1885: 117; Royle, 1900: 319; Wingate, 1892: 128; Newspaper: *The Daily Astorian*, 7/2/1885.

²⁸ Skotidis, 1908: 11-12; Prokopiou, 1930: 73, 153; Politis, 1930, v. B':11, note 3.

²⁹ Gordon, 1886:369; Egmont Hake, 1885: 200, 217, 268. For the letters of Mitsakis to Gordon and Leontidis see Egmont Hake, 1885: 450-451.

³⁰ Egmont Hake, 1885: 517, 518; Natsoulas, 1977: 114.

³¹ SAD, Sudan Intelligence Report/ Sudan Intelligence Reports Suakin (1889-1891), Nr. 106 - 17-29/4/1890.

³² Slatin, 1898: 418.

³³ Egmont Hake, 1885: 12-13, 16, 19, 21-22,29, 40, 50, 63, 451; Politis, 1930, v. B': 11; Olympios, 1927: 10; Prokopiou, 1930: 149; Wingate, 1892: 125; SAD 958/5, p. 31-32; Slatin,1898: 418; SAD, Sudan Intelligence Report, Egypt Nr. 36-3/1895, p. 3.

³⁴ SAD 958/5, *ibid*.

help him; at that time it was in Metemmeh.³⁵ Leontidis suggested Manolis Diakogiannis, on condition that he was accompanied by his family of three people. The Greek Consul advised Diakogiannis, that he would be supported by four warships, but since the Mahdi's army was entrenched on both sides of the river, Diakogiannis refused. Then, the Consul suggested George Stamatiadis, who agreed to take the risk.³⁶ Stamatiadis was experienced, having followed the campaign of Abd el Kader Pasha in Sennar, in 1882. Nikos Papadam asked his uncle, Manolis Diakogiannis to accompany Stamatiadis, but Diakogiannis refused. The following day, Stamatiadis left. Seven Greeks were aboard the warships that joined him. When the Mahdi was informed of this movement, he ordered his army to attack the ships at the point between the river and the fortress. George Stamatiadis and six of the seven Greeks were captured and transferred to Omdurman.³⁷

In November 1884 Panayotis Hatzopoulos who lived in Sennar tried to break through the lines of the Mahdi's army in order to enter Khartoum where his family was. He remained hidden inside a wooden box on a small boat with food for ten days and a gun as the boat sailed along the Blue Nile. Just before Geref the boat came ashore and Hatzopoulos was discovered by the villagers. He remained behind the box shooting at the villagers and killed eleven people before losing his life on 15th November.³⁸

In January 1885 54 Greeks lived in the besieged city of Khartoum.³⁹ They remained there at the advice of the Greek Consul, Leontidis. Gordon had asked Leontidis to do this so as not to cause panic within the city.⁴⁰ Leontidis believed in the fighting ability of Gordon's army and he thought that the Greeks should stay in Khartoum to guard their properties.⁴¹ Moreover, he expected that the British forces that had been sent to support the Khartoum garrison would arrive in time.⁴² Apart from the Greeks, there were also 30 Syrians, 17 Jews, 10 Armenians and several Egyptians in Khartoum.⁴³ Leontidis was appointed Deputy Governor and was responsible for the defence of Khartoum.⁴⁴ We

³⁵ Evangelidis, 1925: 48.

³⁶ Stamatiadis and Diakogiannis were both Papadam's uncles. SAD 958/5, *ibid*.

³⁷ SAD 958/5, *ibid*.

³⁸ SAD 958/5, *ibid*.

³⁹ Skotidis, 1908: 16 ; Evangelidis, 1925: 52 ; Politis, 1930, v. A': 344.

⁴⁰ Politis, 1930, v. B': 178-179. A few managed to flee, such as Vekiarellis who left for Ethiopia. Vekiarellis, 1899: 29; Royle, 1900: 376, 377.

⁴¹ Skotidis, 1908: 16; Vekiarellis, 1899: 22.

⁴² Hope, 1886: 322.

⁴³ SAD 958/5, *ibid* - Slatin, 1898: 756.

⁴⁴ Hope, 1886: 322.

should note that Xenophon Xenoudakis, a Greek doctor who had been living in Khartoum since 1876, was one of General Gordon's consultants.⁴⁵

During the siege of Khartoum, the Greeks were enlisted as volunteers.⁴⁶ They formed the "Greek Legion", which served as Gordon's personal guard. Because of their bravery throughout the siege Gordon likened them to the 300 Spartan fighters of Leonidas. As the pressure exerted by the Mahdi increased, Gordon suggested that Leontidis escape on a small steamer. The following day Leontidis called the Greek community together and informed them of Gordon's proposal. They thought that they should escape as quickly as possible. However, the Greek Consul thought that they should stay by Gordon's side and fight. On the 23rd of January 1885, when two Greeks had been wounded, four of the elders of the Greek community told Leontidis that it was time to leave Khartoum. The Consul refused once more saying that he would leave Khartoum only when Gordon decided to do the same. The Greeks were sure that there was no hope and tried to persuade Gordon to escape with the steamer, but with no result. Thus all the Greeks remained within the city.⁴⁷

At dawn on the 26th of January 1885 50,000 *Ansar* attacked Khartoum taking advantage of the very low level of the Nile. The defence by 7,000 Egyptian soldiers collapsed almost immediately. The city was occupied by the Mahdi's men and Gordon was killed. A Greek did manage to hide his diary.⁴⁸ Papadam was an eyewitness and recorded the Greeks' attempts to escape death. Papadam was arrested, while Greeks Manolis Diakogiannis, Pantelis Haralambou and Apostolis Katevenis were tortured in an attempt to force them to reveal where they had hidden their money.⁴⁹ Kalamatianos tried to save a group of seven Greeks who were hiding in a house. He advised them to leave and follow him to Omdurman. He also tried to save a Greek family that was in town. While they were trying to escape they were seen by the Mahdi's men and were killed.⁵⁰ Kalamatianos managed to flee.

⁴⁵ Politis, 1930, v. B': 377, note 1; Vekiarellis, 1899: 10. In Gordon's diary he is referred as the 'Greek Doctor'. Egmont Hake, 1885: 12, 321.

⁴⁶ Wingate, 1892: 133; Vekiarellis, 1899: 31; Olympios, 1927: 13; Politis, 1930, v. A':343; Prokopiou, 1930: 150; Skotidis, 1908: 16; Egmont Hake, 1885: 12-13, 17, 19, ⁴³, 321; Gordon, 1886: 349; Egmont Hake, 1885: 70.

⁴⁷ Prokopiou, 1930: 150; Politis, 1930, v. A': 343-344; Evangelidis, 1925: 51; Wingate, 1892: 134.

⁴⁸ Gordon, 1886: 386.

⁴⁹ Grant, 1886: 154.

⁵⁰ Wingate, 1892: 142.

Of the 54 Greeks who lived in Khartoum, only seven survived.⁵¹ These were, Manolis Diakogiannis and his wife, Nicholas Papadam, Polycrates Varelas, Apostolis Katevenis and the wife of someone called Nicholas. Apart from them (who were all from Samos Island), there was a Cypriot, Pantelis Charalambous.⁵² Most men were killed during the fights near the ammunition depot.⁵³ Among the victims from the Greek community were the Greek Consul Nikos Leontidis⁵⁴ and the doctor Xenophon Xenoudakis.⁵⁵

The Greek prisoners in Omdurman

The Mahdi died shortly after his victory in 1885 and was succeeded by Abdullah ibn Muhammed. Omdurman became the new capital of the state and Sudan experienced a reconstruction period at huge economic cost. Those who survived the fall of Khartoum were forced to convert to Islam, change their names, wear local costumes and get married.⁵⁶ As a result, some Greeks married Sudanese women.⁵⁷ Some Greeks married the Catholic nuns from the dissolved monastery of Kordofan in order to protect them from marriages to Muslims.⁵⁸ The prisoners from Khartoum and the other cities that were occupied by the Mahdi's forces amounted to almost 2,100 people.⁵⁹ They were assembled together in a district of Omdurman that was named Masalma and were registered on the city's list⁶⁰ so as to receive a monthly allowance

⁵¹ Prokopiou, 1930: 151; Gordon, 1886: 405.

⁵² Newspaper: Sudan, 28/5/1932.

⁵³ Grant, 1886: 148.

⁵⁴ Skotidis, 1908: 17 ; Vekiarellis, 1899: 31 ; Wingate, 1892a.

⁵⁵ Politis, 1930, v. B': 377, note 1.

⁵⁶ Prokopiou, 1930: 149, 155.

⁵⁷ These were Kostas Charalambous (Arabic name Ragab), Pantelis Dimitroulias (Abdulah), George Kalamatianos (Gaber), Joseph Savvas, George Kokos, Dimitris Georgiou, Chatzigiannis and others. SAD, Sudan Intelligence Report/ Main sequence, Nr. 60 (25/5-31/12/1898), p. 70-71.

⁵⁸ Politis, 1930, v. A': 343 ; Skotidis, 1908: 17; Vekiarellis, 51-52, 144. Dimitris Kokorembas married the nun Teresa, Panagiotis Trampas (Ahmed) married Victoria, A. Politis married Fortunata, Dimitris Philipou married Margeta and Kostas Anastasiou married Zambetina.

⁵⁹ Apart from the 20 Greeks, there were also 500 Kopts, 1,500 Egyptians, 8 Syrians, 11 Jews, 75 Europeans and some Austrian missionaries. SAD, General military report on the Egyptian Sudan 1891 compiled from statements made by Father Ohrwalder 1892, p. 16.

⁶⁰ SAD, Sudan Intelligence Report/ Main sequence, Nr. 60-25/5-31/12/1898, p. 70-71.

of 30 *kurus*.⁶¹ The Greek prisoners were estimated to number 20 people⁶² who were initially represented by Dimitris Kokorempas.⁶³ Later, three more representatives were added: Savvas Karagiannis, George Kalamatianos and Nikos Manesis.⁶⁴ The prisoners were not allowed to leave the city and everyone was responsible if someone decided to escape.⁶⁵ The punishment for those who attempted to escape was either immediate execution or imprisonment with heavy chains on the legs and poor food.⁶⁶ In the following years, ten Greeks died in prison while their families were placed under the protection of their compatriots.⁶⁷

There were some who managed to escape such as Dimitris Georgiou, who experienced many difficulties. He managed to arrive in Egypt where he recorded his experiences during the siege of Khartoum and the living conditions of the Greek prisoners in Omdurman.⁶⁸ Dimitris Tsigadas⁶⁹ and Kostis Panagou were two other Greeks who escaped along with two nuns.⁷⁰ Gradually, the Greeks of Omdurman started to work in order to survive.⁷¹

Working Greeks

The diary of Nikos Papadam is an important source of information about the Greek presence in Omdurman during the Mahdia. Manolis Diakogiannis worked as a baker and Papadam sold bread on the streets.⁷² Later, Diakogiannis dealt with the manufacture of soap. One day an officer visited him and asked him to go to Khartoum where he proposed that Diakogiannis begin to make soap for the Khalifa. Diakogiannis, who had 200 barrels of caustic soda at his shop, accepted this proposal and asked for a few workers to help him. According to the agreement, he would get 15 shillings a month and oil and

⁶¹ The *kurus*, better known as the *piastre*, was the standard unit of currency in the Ottoman Empire until 1844. SAD 958/5, *ibid*.

⁶² SAD, Sudan Intelligence Report/ Main sequence, Nr. 32-11/1894, p. 9.

⁶³ SAD, Sudan Intelligence Report/ Main sequence, Nr. 32-11/1894, p. 9; Evangelidis, 1925:45.

⁶⁴ Politis, 1930, v. B': 19.

⁶⁵ Slatin, 1898: 358; Wingate, 1892: 205.

⁶⁶ Someone by the name of Kostas, who was from Lemnos, was hung. Vekiarellis, 1899: 104, 108-111.

⁶⁷ SAD, Sudan Intelligence Report/ Main sequence, Nr. 60-25/5-31/12/1898, p. 73.

⁶⁸ Newspaper: *Ora*, 9/1/1889; Newspaper: *The Buffalo Courier*, 20/1/1889; Newspaper: *Corning Journal*, 24/1/1889.

⁶⁹ Grant, 1886: 143.

⁷⁰ SAD 958/5, *ibid*.

⁷¹ Phokas, 1887: 40.

⁷² Wingate, 1892: 205.

soap for his personal use. In the following months, some of his workers suggested to officials that they should take over the factory and dismiss the Greek owner.⁷³ Diakogiannis left but the workers did not make a success of the venture and ruined the cauldron. The Sudanese administration asked Diakogiannis to return to work; he agreed but asked for 20 shillings for every cauldron that he produced.⁷⁴

Papadam left the bakery and worked as a money exchanger before starting a business with fabrics. When Diakogiannis and Papadam had earned enough money, they thought of a way to get out of Omdurman. They found two men with camels and asked them to carry them through the desert to Dongola. The Sudanese asked for 300 shillings to find the camels, to collect the supplies needed and to lead them to freedom. Eventually, they cheated them and left with the money. Another similar effort led to the same outcome leading the two Greeks to give up their escape plans.

Apart from Papadam and Diakogiannis, there is information about another Greek, whose life had a sad end. Joseph Petrakakis (or Perdikakis) was trying to make gunpowder on behalf of the Khalifa.⁷⁵ Once he succeeded, the Khalifa sent the gunpowder to a factory to make cartridges. The Greek earned a lot of money and began to build a luxury home. However, he did not manage to complete it as his powder keg exploded on the 26th January 1891; Petrakakis and one of his assistants, Joseph Angelou died. Another Greek who won the confidence of the Mahdi was Panayotis Trampas. In reward for his services he received a large area of land near the government palace. Later, his wife, a former Italian nun, donated this to the Vatican for the erection of the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Khartoum.

Between 1886 and 1889, the British coordinated several military missions against the Mahdist army but without success. They usually started from Suakin and Greeks were involved as messengers.⁷⁶ During this time, a few monks and former officials of the Egyptian army managed to escape with the help of some Greeks.⁷⁷ All of them recorded their experiences in detail, emphasising the ferocity of the Mahdi's followers. These stories received wide publicity in Britain and influenced public opinion in favour of British military intervention in Sudan.⁷⁸

⁷³ Wingate, 1892: 213.

⁷⁴ SAD 958/5, *ibid*.

⁷⁵ Wingate, 1892: 371; Neufeld, 1899: 177.

⁷⁶ SAD, Sudan Intelligence Report/ Sudan intelligence reports Suakin (1889-1891), Nr. 93-16-29/10/1889 and Nr. 92-1-15/10/1889.

⁷⁷ Neufeld, 1899: 114, 152; Vekiarellis, 1899: 107, 128.

⁷⁸ Churchill, 1902: 99. SAD, General report on the Egyptian Soudan, March 1895,

Conclusion

During the 19th century, a few Greek traders settled in Sudan and gradually became pillars of the local economy. Although they were never numerous they managed to control the crucial trading sector and were close to the Egyptian authorities. In 1881, Sudan entered a new era as the Mahdi inaugurated a revolt against Egyptian rule. The Greeks played a significant role during the siege and fall of Khartoum. Between 1885 and 1898, they suffered the same fate as the rest of the Mahdi's prisoners and settled in Omdurman. However, they managed to cope with the difficulties of imprisonment and gradually integrated into the local economy and society.

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Hope from History – Keeping the dream of South Sudan alive

Peter Martell*

Introduction

Peter Martell is a British journalist who has spent over a decade reporting on South Sudan. For the past two years, he has been gathering stories of the people of South Sudan to write a history; *First Raise a Flag: How South Sudan won the longest war but lost the peace*, published in July 2018. Despite seeing no easy end to the war that broke out in 2013, he believes the stories of the past can offer hope for the future. While the book traces the long history of South Sudan to the current crisis, in this article, he describes some of the more recent events he has witnessed.

Out of South Sudan

It was still cool in the morning so soon after dawn and a low mist hung amongst trees at the foot of the rocky hills. Later, the sun would be blazing fierce but for now, the mothers and children huddled close to a thin fire to boil water and to warm themselves. They had travelled in the night, slipping through narrow footpaths in the wet, high grass, crossing from South Sudan into Uganda at dawn. Now, just a few feet across the frontier, they sat on rocks in the dust waiting for the Ugandan border guards at the Madi Opei post to wake and tell them what to do next.

It was December 2017. The ‘big men’ in suits had flown to Ethiopia and agreed a ceasefire deal, the latest in around a dozen since civil war had erupted four years before, in December 2013. Like all those before, they broke it within hours. So here, people voted with their feet. Over two million people had already fled South Sudan but more kept coming every day. Uganda was the biggest destination, with over a million people arriving with little other than the clothes they wore. In the worst times, thousands crossed each day; at other periods, a handful of people snuck through the bush to escape. At this dawn, there was a tired group of about 20 people from the South, almost all women and young children.

“Food,” the tired lady said, looking up when I asked what she needed most, as she cradled her baby asleep in her arms. “And medicine for my son.” She had run from fighting near her farm, two day’s walk across the border into Eastern Equatoria. I asked what she was called and she pulled out a plastic-covered scrap of blue paper, tatty around the edges. The document, the only

identification she had, was her registration card for the 2011 referendum on South Sudan's independence. "Joyce Otto," she said, as I handed her card carefully back. She stared towards the border and the homeland she had been forced from. Then, with incredible sadness in her voice, she added one more need. "We need shelter," she said. "We need a safe place to live."



Safety in the church: Wounded people are treated by Doctors Without Borders in a makeshift clinic set up in the grounds of St. Theresa's Catholic Cathedral in Juba, where thousands sought shelter after fighting in July 2016. (Credit, Martell).

The group here planned to travel on to find family who had already settled in the refugee camps of northern Uganda. One of several camps, Bidi-Bidi was home to over a quarter of a million refugees from the South alone. Spread across the vast low woodlands, it took hours to drive across. It had become the world's biggest refugee camp.

The Ugandan government had given each refugee a plot of poor quality scrubland but it was enough to build a small hut, to carve out a small patch to plant crops and to start a future. Walking through the winding footpaths through the homesteads, cheeping chicks scattering like balls of fluff in front of my feet: it felt less like a refugee camp of crowded tents and more like a never-ending village. "We are building a new life," said 18-year-old Vicky Akulu, who lived in a one-room hut with her 24-year-old sister. "I wanted to be a teacher but I don't think I will get the opportunity, so I am farming." I sat on the smooth swept floor as she held up her much-prized school uniform, a

patched purple skirt that she had fled in when the gunmen attacked her village of Pajok in April 2017, torching the homes. “This is all we had,” she said. “Nothing more.”



Eyes for the future: a boy in Nasir, Upper Nile, smiles for the camera. (Credit, Martell).

The euphoria of South Sudan’s independence in July 2011 has long gone. Those who have left are sceptical about peace and will not return anytime soon. When the time is ready, if war ends, many will still not go back. They were settling here for the long term. With the great majority of refugees in the camp being women and children, many are creating a new society amongst themselves. “We have learned our lesson,” said Charity Datiro, a tough-built woman digging weeds out of a patch of potatoes circled around her thatched hut in Bidi-Bidi. “It is not easy here but we are safe and we look out for each other.” I watched a young girl lead a blind man with a stick, meandering into the low scrub, puffs of dust kicked up by their feet.

Datiro had escaped heavy fighting around the town of Yei, abandoning her small food stall where she worked as a cook. She had grown up in northern Uganda during the war with Khartoum. Like her, many people here had lived in the Ugandan camps when they ran from the wars of the 1980s and 1990s. They returned to the South with high hopes for the independence of their country. That failed and now they were back. “The problem was the fighting there by the men,” Datiro said. “Women here just want to bring up their children in peace.”

Freedom next time

The last time I visited the thick-walled fortress headquarters of the army in Juba, days after the heavy fighting in the city in July 2016 that left the peace deal in ruins, a flag snapped in the wind from a pole. Dust devils whipped

up the stinging sand from the parade ground. “Victory is Certain,” read the motto on the flag. Except that in this war, there can be no winner. Those in power will fight it out until they are left in control of the country but after the final shot is fired, there will be no glorious end. They will be the last left standing and their triumph will be over ruins, for whatever vision they had of power will have rotted already. Their strength was based on the support of the people and that has now gone. The country is more ruined, more divided, more destroyed and far more desperate than ever before, even than at the end of the great wars with the old enemy in Khartoum.

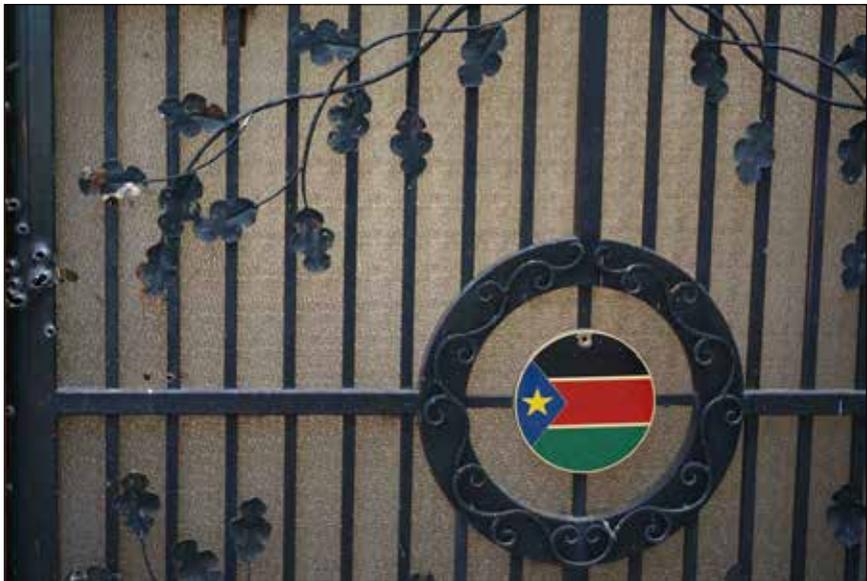
In South Sudan, the stories of gloom are now all too easy to tell. Today, the harder thing is to speak of stories of hope. It was not, of course, always this way. I have heard so many inspiring tales but so often, all one hears are stories of misery. I know I am guilty of that.

I am a British journalist, who has covered both the Sudans since 2006, including being based in Juba as the BBC reporter in 2009-11. I lived in South Sudan during an incredible time and I was lucky to be able to travel all across it. In Juba, I lived first in an oven-like canvas tent that leaked in the rains. Then I moved to a crumbling tin-roof bungalow without electricity or running water, shared with a dozen others. In the day, it served to amplify the hot sun beating down. In the sweats of the night, I’d wake to the thump of plump mangoes hurtling onto the roof thinking it was gunfire. I stayed in some of the dustier corners: decaying hotels, army tents, hospitals, aid agency offices and thatched huts. I was sheltered from the sun in mosques and churches. At times, I slept simply on the ground beneath the moon, the curling smoke from cattle dung fires keeping the mosquitoes away. I travelled by motorbike, by truck and on foot, by battered boat and canoe, by barely-there aeroplanes and terrifying helicopters.

I met leaders and guerrillas, ate with rich and poor, stayed with fighters and farmers. I heard how they saw this land and how they dreamed it could be. The story of South Sudan is not one that takes place in a busy capital city but in the vast, wide lands from village to cattle camp, swamp, bush and jungle. Yet its past has long been determined by a faraway elite. History is so often written by the winners and those outsiders who documented the past assumed that because it was not on paper, it did not exist.

Little changes. Increasingly, security fears mean that many visitors rarely venture much beyond their guarded compounds, except for the briefest of trips. When the United Nations peacekeepers emerge from their base in their blue helmets and flak jackets, they peer out of the slits of armoured combat vehicles. The technocrats who make the decisions on policy and aid sit in Nairobi, Washington or New York. The businessmen who buy the oil, the

politicians who pocket the money or those who sell the guns, drink the profits in faraway luxury homes.



Holes in the flag: the main gate into the presidential palace, riddled with bullets, days after July 2016 fighting. (Credit, Martell).

Those foreigners who do come to South Sudan stay for ever shorter periods. The institutional knowledge and experience shrinks. Even the aid workers have adopted the language of the military and speak of being “on mission in the field”. They cross days off the calendar until they jet back out on leave or the next R&R, the ‘rest and recuperation’ holiday cycle. A rare few say they actually live in South Sudan. This is not a new thing but as perceptions of security decline and so the walls grow higher, the understanding with which foreigners view South Sudan becomes ever narrower. So some of that which I witnessed, I wanted to share. I wanted to give some sense of perspective.

For many who have not visited South Sudan or who come on brief trips, there is often little understanding of the great struggle the people went through to reach the situation today. It was what drove me to spend the last two years researching and writing a book that could bring alive the story of South Sudan from the very earliest beginnings to the troubles now, to explain to a reader who may know little about the land. I wanted to make them care.

Writing the long history

The late Ryszard Kapuscinski’s famous book of Africa reportage, *The Shadow*

of the Sun, is often praised. Yet in his section on South Sudan, he writes that nobody knew how the war began in 1983. It was as though this were a conflict going on since time immemorial. “I do not know how exactly the war began, it was so long ago,” he wrote. “Did soldiers from the government forces steal a cow from the Dinka? Did the Dinka set out to retrieve it? Did shooting break out? Were there casualties? It must have happened something like that.”

“That’s nonsense”, I thought, “people must know”. So I went to see. In Bor, I tracked down the old veterans who were there on the day when fighting broke out in May 1983 and recorded their stories. I had four generals all telling me their stories together and when we finished, realised that there were about a dozen young students gathered around, all fascinated by the war stories which even they had never heard.

Many books can tell you a dozen reasons for the war beginning but I wanted also to know what actually happened on the day it began. Who fired the first shot? How did people feel when they saw the tanks above them in their foxholes? I wanted to gather the stories before they are lost, to bring the history alive.

One man said a dozen tanks attacked them; his comrade, said half that. I pushed the old men: how many tanks were there exactly? Were there six or twelve? “Young man,” one veteran replied with stern authority, smacking down his beer bottle. “If you had been there facing such tanks, you do not remember such details. Next time you are woken in the dark with tanks firing down on you, and then all these years later some *kehavaja* comes and asks you how many there were... We were fighting!”

The generals are now elderly men, proud of their past but struggling in the new nation. Their salaries had evaporated into hyperinflation. Their savings of cattle were killed or stolen in the civil war in 2013, when the town of Bor was razed to the ground. “Look at us, we who fought the longest war,” said General John Chol Mabior, a veteran who fought in Bor in 1983 and who came bearing an X-ray of the bullet still inside his knee cap as proof of his service. “We are forgotten.”

His comrade, Brigadier General Reuben Thiong sighed. He looked quietly into the distance, a sandy track lined with baobab trees, where piglets scratched in burned grass. He had been shot four times – in both arms, in his left leg and in the back – and the bullets lodged inside old wounds ached. Beside him stood the battered metal of an ancient walking frame, its wheels clogged. When the rains came and the town turned to mud, it would be utterly useless. His neighbour’s children scampered around the old man’s home, a simple tin-roof hut. All his seven children have been killed or scattered by the war. He sat alone, staring at the grave of his son in his yard. Was it worth it all, I asked, in

the end, all the fighting? All the pain and loss? He looked at me and held my gaze. “Oh, it was worth it,” he said firmly. “Now we have a country.”

Oldest records

As a foreign reporter, I was also privileged to gain access that many did not have. I was able to cross front-lines to interview those in power and their victims, to travel both to war zones and the extravagant hotels of peace talks. I could open the door to other foreigners, whose aid, money, weapons and diplomacy – deliberately or not – helped sustain the conflict. I gathered the stories of those who had not spoken of them and before they were lost.

The story of South Sudan is not only one of war. Through laying out the long history, I have wanted to show that peace is possible. These are horrifying times today but there have been horrifying times in the past, too and they were overcome. So I have gone back to the very earliest records I could find, paintings in the British Museum that are 3,000 years old. I listened to the memories of British officers, to the tales of the Anya-Nya rebels who fought in the 1960s, including a trip to Tel Aviv to meet the Mossad commander who brought in weapons to equip the guerrillas, and I listened to those in the second round of war after 1983. I was there first hand to report on the key events around independence – from the politics to the violence, to the creation of the national anthem and the first game of South Sudan’s football team. It brings together the stories of people who make up the nation.

I have also been to the very heart of some of the worst fighting in the past few years, watched as the fighter jets fired on towns and felt fury grow as the slow, painful, manmade crime of famine unfolded in 2017, killing thousands of people through deliberate aid blockades.

Yet the story told of South Sudan is, so often, only about recent violence. It is miserable and depressing, and many outsiders become resigned to the belief that this is a land somehow condemned to be at war. I don’t believe that. I don’t believe that at all.

For the grim lists of statistics fail to mention that in the midst of gloomy broad brushstroke assessments, there are children who grow up happy and live life with a smile, men who don’t kill, women who die in peace. There is suffering, yes, but people also live. Parents raise families, go to work, make love, drink and laugh.

Most of all I met ordinary people, the kind men and women who shared their food, offered me shelter and looked after an outsider in their land. I have put together a record of those whom I have been privileged to meet and of what I witnessed. I tried to retell the stories that people were generous enough to share. Then it is also, I hope, something of what I was taught.

The story of South Sudan is not only one of war. I have wanted to show, through laying out the long history, that peace is possible. There have been horrifying times in the past too and they were overcome. I set out not to write a definitive history; that must be told by South Sudanese. It does, however, tell the story of how a nation emerged and of how for a moment, there was hope.

Lessons for the future

So what then can be learned? What hope is there for the future? I wrote a history, not a foretelling of what is to come. Still, some predictions in the short term are easy to make. That the war will worsen and hunger will grow. Famine is likely to return and the threat of genocide remains. People will continue to flee and the refugee camps will increase. There will be new rebel groups as forces fracture – and more killings. The country is broke but there is still oil and even when it has gone, the generals will beg, borrow, or steal more funds to buy new guns. Regional nations will oblige, supporting one side or the other, as they play out their power rivalries by pulling the puppet-strings of leaders in the South for dominance. In return, they will strip out what resources are left. As populations grow and the land dries, Egypt and Sudan will covet the swamps of the Sudd again. As Ethiopia sucks out water from the Blue Nile after damming the flow, the White Nile of the South becomes ever more valuable. When the oil has been pumped out, the water will be next. The great forests of trees will be chopped for timber and charcoal, and the vast herds of wild animals will become a fading memory.

Extra peacekeepers will be promised, and some will come. Charities will call for more cash and newspapers will talk of “unspeakable atrocities.” Leaders will meet again, and diplomats will say the time for words is over, and issue a statement warning of the threat of action. Generals will be sanctioned but like times before, be promoted not punished. Arms embargoes will be issued but the government will find it little challenge to circumvent and resupply. The rebels will take the guns from them.

So there will be a new push for peace, more rebels brought in to negotiations, another deal signed, and it will be broken. There will be talk of justice and papers calling for holistic approaches and all the community to be involved in peace. Few, if any, will provide specifics as to how all that will be achieved. It is easy to point blame, far harder to find solutions that really work. Things have fallen apart so badly that they cannot be simply put back together again. The longer it lasts, the slimmer the chance of peace becomes.

In time, the leadership must change, for all in the end will be accountable to their maker, if not to man. The fear is that the new leaders will be unable to change the course of conflict and one war will be replaced with another.

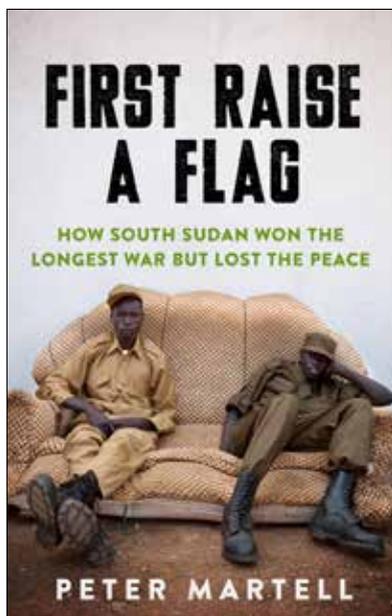
Commanders in combat rarely make good presidents in peace. The big deals crumble. The solution for South Sudan can lie only with the South Sudanese people themselves. Peace is made from person to person, community to community. In the past, it has always been that way.

The story of strength and survival is that of the ordinary people, not the people at the top. Despite the worst of horrors, people pick themselves up, they survive and they build again. In the face of so much loss, despite everything breaking down, in the midst of utter hell, life goes on. War cannot destroy everything. If I have seen a glimmer of hope in documenting the long history of chaos, it is that terrible times have ended before.

Memories of independence night

So I remember the happiest of times, when freedom came at midnight and the people went wild. I think of being in Juba on 8 July 2011, when rule imposed from Sudan's faraway capital was coming to an end. Tens of thousands of people crammed the streets. Cars careered down the potholed tracks of the new country's capital, Juba, hooting horns and arcs of flames spewed out from aerosol cans. Gunfire rattled the hot night with shot after shot after shot aimed at the moon. "We are free! We are free!" screamed mother-of-four Mary Okach, waving a flag around her head, the material swirling. She gave a high-pitched ululating cry of joy: "Bye-bye Khartoum, hello happiness!" She danced holding hands with her sister, spinning in the centre of the main road.

Next to them was soldier Daniel Bol, dressed in green army fatigues and thumping a makeshift drum of an empty cooking-oil can, leaping from one foot to another. "Fifty years fighting for independence and if this is freedom, then this is great," said Bol, a barrel-chested 30-year-old captain who had grown up fighting in war. He bent down to me, offering a beer-soaked bear hug. Down the road came men carrying a giant flag stitched out of bed-sheets in front of a convoy of buses blaring raucous rumba music, the green, red, and black rippling as they danced.



First Raise a Flag:
*Peter Martell's book is published by
Hurst in July 2018.*

An electronic countdown sign mounted on a metal telegraph pole on a roundabout in the city centre flashed out succinct but misspelled messages in red lights: “CONGRATULATION. FREE AT LAST. SOUTH SUDAN.” One car dragged tin cans on strings, carrying a sign on its back bumper that read: “Just divorced.” Dancing at the base of the countdown clock, 67-year-old mechanic Andrew Amum was breathless in the sweltering night of the hot season, panting his words out in euphoria, as cars hooted around him and people sang. “We have struggled for so many years and this is our day,” he said. “You cannot imagine how good it feels.” Like tens of thousands of the millions who had fled war, Amum had come back after decades abroad to celebrate independence and rebuild his long destroyed home. He’d returned from a Kenyan refugee camp in time to vote in the referendum for independence, which saw a landslide 98.83 per cent choose to separate from Sudan. More and more people joined the party on the street, shouting in the darkness at the spreading trees above. “THANK YOU FOR FREEDOM,” the flickering screen now read, with a computer-generated flag flapping alongside.

As the people danced, the faraway voice on the faint phone line I’d hooked up via satellite dish to the BBC’s World Service radio could hardly make out a word I said. The final minutes crept towards the first strokes of 9 July, when after the longest of wars, Africa’s biggest country would become two. Not since the age of empires had a new African nation been so created – and none with such international goodwill. “What is the mood? Have celebrations begun?” asked the calm BBC presenter in London. There was only one possible answer: broadcasting the screams of joy live to the world. I held my microphone up to the crowd. The seconds edged towards the pips at midnight and the countdown clock ticked to zero. The street exploded in cries. “Freedom!” shouted a man in a military smock festooned with ammunition pouches, clutching with one hand the back of a packed pickup truck speeding past, a beer in his other fist. “South Sudan! South Sudan!” Midnight had come and a new nation was made.

A few hours later, my motorbike’s weak headlights carefully picked the way home through the capital’s Hai Malakal district, a series of decrepit bungalows and occasional mud and thatch hut compounds. Only the curious fox-like street dogs seemed awake, the road theirs for now, padding quietly along scavenging for scraps. I followed them on my bike, bouncing down the bumpy, sandy back streets to avoid the worst of the drunken soldiers on the checkpoints posted on the main roads. The night air was cooler, though it was still some time off dawn. Formal independence would be later in the day, when the flag of Sudan was lowered at a ceremony with heads of states, marching bands and military parades. Softly in the darkness the candle stubs flickered. Away from the wild



Independence celebrations: parades in Juba in 2011 as results of the independence referendum were celebrated. (Credit, Martell).

become a city, then a capital, and for me, a home. As I stuffed a bag, the dog that had adopted me ran in circles chasing geckos. The lizards scattered as I peeled a sun-faded map from the wall of my room. It was covered with pencil crosses and dates, tracking the years of battles I had followed all across the country. Reporters are rarely optimistic, for the nature of news means we seek out the most extreme misery. Yet at the bottom of the map, I read a faded quote I had quite forgotten scrawling there long before. It was part of a poem I once heard Seamus Heaney read: “History says, Don’t hope on this side of the grave, but then, once in a lifetime, the longed-for tidal wave of justice can rise up, and hope and history rhyme.”

Perhaps I was naive, but hope is not a bad thing. I was privileged to see South Sudan in the best of times but I have witnessed, too, the horror. I knew the challenges ahead. Still, as I recorded a farewell BBC broadcast under the mango tree in the sandy courtyard, I believed the visions of a people for their new nation could become real.

party, each candle had been lit in a spontaneous, unorganised memorial to the millions of people who had died, placed outside homes on the edge of the track. They offered a more sombre memory of the war’s cost. They were a remembrance of the past and prayers for the future. As I pushed my bike into the sandy courtyard of my tin-roof home, the deserted street outside was marked by a line of glittering flames.

A change for the better?

I think so often of how it could have been. Soon after independence in 2011, I packed up my room in Juba after three years there. I’d still return many times to visit but I said a deeply sad farewell to my friends, to those who had shown such kindness, and to a village that had



New nation: poster in Juba celebrating results of the 2011 referendum. (Credit, Martell).

approaches in Juba. I think of the heat of those days and the parched throat feeling during the long wait for the cool of the rains. I do not doubt that the bloody violence that escalates every year when the grass becomes thin and the cattle grow hungry will occur again this year and in the years to come. Have we seen the worst of the war? Perhaps, but I fear not. I still have hope. The long history of South Sudan has shown that the impossible can be achieved. All does not need to be lost.

*Peter Martell is a foreign correspondent based in East Africa. He has reported from South Sudan for more than a decade, including as the BBC correspondent in Juba for the three key years around independence. For more details, see www.petermartell.com. His book *First Raise a Flag: How South Sudan won the longest war but lost the peace* is published by Hurst, London, in July 2018.

“There are more than enough international experts and advisors in South Sudan telling the country what to do and how to develop; it does not need a reporter to add their voice,” I spoke into my microphone, three days after independence. “But I do have a dream – and that is to come back to visit South Sudan in years to come and see the change for the better; to watch the growth of a nation, a generation of children living in peace and going to school, under a government and an army that serves the people and is accountable to them.” Back then, it was easier to be optimistic. Yet I still have that dream.

As I write this, in a green garden in Kenya, the dry season

The Neglect of the History of Sudan in South Sudan's National Curriculum

Kuyok Abol Kuyok*

Introduction

The question of national identity in the Sudan has been a contentious issue since the inception of the Sudanese system of education in 1957 (Abd al Rahim, 1985). The national curriculum was heavily skewed towards the Middle East, Islam and the Arab world. The history syllabi, in particular, stressed the history of the Arabs and discounted other Sudanese historical perspectives. The dispute over this Arabised history of the country has been at the centre of South Sudan's struggle for freedom.

The independence of South Sudan in July 2011 offered an opportunity for its educationalists to address this problem by developing a broad and comprehensive Sudanese history curriculum. However, challenges within the embryonic South Sudanese education system have resulted in a history curriculum that is focused on South Sudan in the latter half of the twentieth century (Skårås and Breidlid, 2016). This development was primarily the result of a change in the attitude of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) towards Sudan after the death of its leader, Dr John Garang, in July 2005.

The main purpose of this article is to explore critically the neglect in South Sudan of the history of Sudan. I argue that South Sudan's failure to teach a thorough history of Sudan, echoed by a similar indifference in Sudan itself, will be deleterious to preserving a vital Sudanese heritage. It may also undercut future relations between the Sudanese peoples, as each country will exist in ignorance of their shared history. I conclude that despite Sudan splitting into two countries, the Sudanese peoples remain bonded by geography and history as they have been for centuries. The teaching of an inclusive history of Sudan in South Sudan may remove barriers and help to forge enhanced understanding between the Sudanese in both Sudans.

The selective writing of history

The Sudanese education system was oriented towards the construction of an Islamic and Arab nation in the Sudan and it de-emphasised a more inclusive **Sudanese** identity. Sudan derives its name from the Arabic phrase *Bilad as Sudan* (i.e. the land of the Blacks). This term was coined by Arab travellers in the Middle Ages to refer to the black inhabitants of the vast Sahel territory, which included the Sudan (Abd al Rahim, 1985, 231; Holt and Daly, 2000,

1). Abd al Rahim (ibid.) suggests that Northern Sudanese detest the name Sudan as black and blackness are associated with slavery and slaves and are considered demeaning and derogatory terms. Consequently, many (northern) Sudanese of mixed descent or of South Sudanese heritage try to mask their origins, despite their skin complexion.

For example, Abd al Rahman al Mahdi's mother, Aweng, was the daughter of Duang 'Marial' Tong and a cousin of Chief Atiek Atiek (usually misspelt as Awuetiek Awutiek or Chak Chak), of the Malual Dinka in Bahr el Ghazal (Beswick, 1998, 154; Kramer, Lobban and Fluehr-Lobban, 2000, 267). The Mahdi converted Aweng to Islam and christened her *Maqbulu* (which translates as accepted, received, recognised, or admitted!) Her black features were prominently bestowed upon her son (in contrast to the Mahdi's other children) and his descendants, including Al Sadiq al Mahdi, the leader of the Umma Party

(see adjoining photograph).¹ Kramer and colleagues note that Northern Sudanese denied her South Sudanese lineage and accredited it to a Darfuri sultan (Warburg, 2003, 81). This disdain for blackness had practical implications for Northern Sudanese elites, who coined alternative terms, such as *azaraq* or *zaraq* (blue) to describe the **darkness** of their skin and eyes, mention of which is usually made on official documents, such as passports and nationality certificates.



Mabbula, widow of the Mahdi and mother of Sayyid 'Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi with her granddaughters.

The negative associations of the name Sudan led in 1960 to attempts to change the name of the country (Abd al Rahim, 1986, 6), following the example of other Sudanic states in post-colonial Africa, such as Mali [formerly part of French Soudan] and Ghana. It was argued that

¹ Graham F. Thomas collection, Sudan Archive Durham (SAD.747/6/4).

the terms, ‘Sudan’ and ‘Sudanese’ were imposed by outsiders on the people and the land and that they were racist. Subsequently, they considered:

[to] construct alternative forms of designation... expressive of character and experience of the country and its people and more consistent with the values... which they stand for.’ (Abd al Rahim, 1986, 6).

For many northern Sudanese in post-colonial Sudan, Arabism and Islam, rather than Sudan, formed the basis of their identity and commonly shared values. Thus, after the independence of Sudan, the tricolour independence flag was abandoned because of its African-ness and replaced with the current pan-Arab one.² Given Southern Sudan’s African and Christian orientation, many



*The first
Sudanese
national
flag, 1956.*

intellectuals in the North saw the South as an obstacle to their Arabisation and Islamisation agenda and backed her secession (Abd al Rahim, 1985; Copnall, 2014). In fact, some considered the South to be “a poisonous thorn in our (i.e. the North’s) heart” (Copnall, 2014, 43). This accounts for the paradoxical enmity in the north towards unionist southern leaders such as John Garang and William Deng before him. It may also explain the glaring absence of Northern Sudanese leaders during the referendum campaign to decide the future of the South.

Although northern Sudanese attempts to ditch the terms *Sudan* and *Sudani* (i.e. Sudanese) were fruitless, they nonetheless, successfully used the education system to silence the **Sudanese** (i.e. black) characteristics of the nation. The post- independence education system in Sudan promoted an Islamic and Arab view of the nation. Educationalists selectively wrote Sudanese history to suit their pan-Arab and Islamist political objectives, which were shared by successive governments. The educational syllabus highlighted and glorified the history of the Arabs while marginalising historical accounts of the people

²This flag was subsequently adopted by another country.

of Southern Sudan, Darfur and Eastern Sudan. For example, although the people of South Sudan (e.g. Azande, Nuer and Dinka) battled colonialism until the 1930s (Mawut, 1983, 1995; Johnson, 1997), their resistance was hardly acknowledged in the modern history of Sudan.

With the rise to power of the National Islamic Front (NIF) in June 1989, the pursuit of this educational agenda assumed an increasingly aggressive trend. This was part of a programme that was designed to support the government's so-called "civilising mission of Islamisation" (Holt and Daly, 2000, 191). Islamic thought saturated all subjects, including the English language, from primary to secondary school level. An analysis of the content of syllabi in 1996-97, from first-year primary to third-year secondary school, indicated that the Islamic content in the disciplines of Arabic and History varied from 30% to 100% (Chol, 1999, 66). In addition, new history textbooks that were introduced in 1991/92 essentially altered the history syllabus from the 'Coming of the Arabs to the Sudan' to the 'Coming of the people to the Sudan'.

Although in the new syllabi the Islamists appeared not to dispute the incontrovertible historical evidence that the Arabs migrated to Sudan³ with the advent of Islam in the seventh century (Holt and Daly, 2000), the syllabi suggest that all the ethnicities in the country originated from outside the modern Sudan. Thus, although archaeological investigations placed the Shilluk and other Nilotic people in the vicinity of present day Khartoum as early as the second millennium BC (Arkell, 1975, 21), the history syllabi advanced the view that Luo groups such as the Anyuak and Shilluk, as well as the Nuer and Dinka, arrived in their present homes from the shores of Lake Victoria in Central Africa. They similarly suggested that the Azande of Western Equatoria came from the Congo. More significantly, the oblique suggestion is that any contrary assertion, i.e. that some of these peoples and other African groups were the earliest inhabitants of Sudan, is not only distorted but baseless. The perception that all the people of Sudan, Africans or otherwise, appeared from somewhere else to occupy an empty land is tantamount not only to rewriting but to fictionalising the history of the peoples of Sudan. Northern Sudanese attempts to erase the African identity of the Sudanese and substitute it with an Arab and Islamic one was strongly resisted; South Sudan's long struggle for freedom is underscored by its desire to maintain its Sudanese identity.

The neglect of Sudanese history in South Sudan's syllabi

Ideology and politics

In order to accentuate Sudanese identity, in 2010 during the lead up to

³ They travelled to Sudan via Egypt and across the Red Sea.

independence, Dr Riek Machar, the former Vice-President of the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS), proposed the ‘Democratic Republic of the Sudan’ (DRS) as the name for the new country. The citizens of DRS would be called **Sudanese** rather than **South Sudanese**. His recommendation can be traced to the change in the SPLM’s position on unity with Northern Sudan. In the 1980s, the rebel movement espoused the notion of a new united and secular Sudan (Khalid, 1987). Garang, the leader, publicly described his movement’s ideology as ‘Sudanism’, articulated in the concept of ‘New Sudan’.

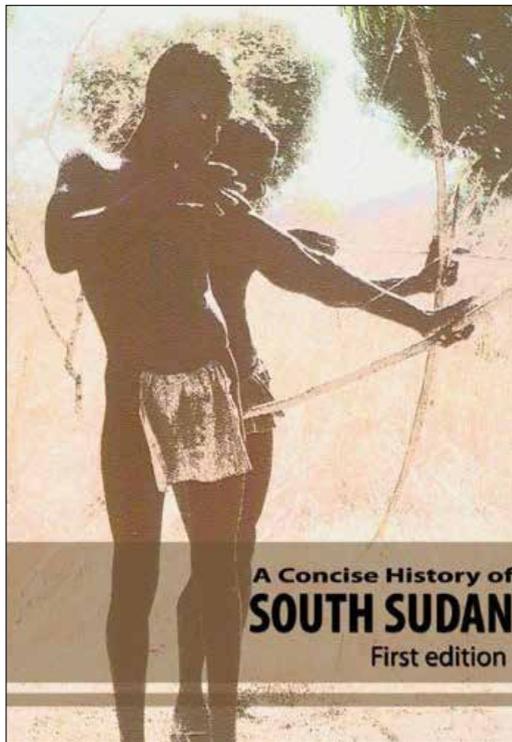
The movement named its headquarters ‘New Kush’, after one of the ancient kingdoms of the Sudan. This name was symbolic and also indicated the educational aspirations of the SPLM; education was seen as a vehicle to preserve the unity of the Sudan and form the basis for creating an inclusive proud nation. The SPLM leader opined that Islam and the Arabic language, as well as African cultures and languages, were integral components of the Sudanese national character. He specifically recognised Arabic as the official language of the country. On this basis, the SPLM’s Education Directorate introduced the New Sudan curriculum in 1998, which was taught in schools in the liberated areas. This curriculum was intended to provide a history of Sudan that would revive its ancient glory and restore its place at the centre of black civilisation.

With the sudden death of the charismatic and unionist Dr Garang, six months after the conclusion of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, the Movement’s political vision changed to a South Sudanese nationalist perspective (Copnall, 2014). Given the deep-rooted nationalism in South Sudan, Garang had faced a mammoth task in converting his compatriots to the principles of a united Sudan and with his death, this vision was abandoned. A significant aspect of South Sudanese nationalism was a strong dislike for the name ‘Sudan’, because of its connotations of Arab dominance in a region that identified itself with the rest of Africa and pan-Africanism. An influential group of Southern Sudanese intellectuals advocated a complete break with the Sudan (Wai, 1981). They suggested ‘Azania’, ‘Imatong’ and the ‘Nile Republic’ as names for the new country. They claimed that until the late nineteenth century, much of South Sudan was separate from Northern Sudan and that it was only European colonialism that had forcefully brought the two distinct parts of the Sudan together.

South Sudan’s national curriculum that was introduced in 2012 (MoEST, c.2013), is significantly different from the New Sudan curriculum in two crucial respects. Firstly, taking a cue from the new political realities, the curriculum either dumbed down or abandoned the history of the Sudan. The syllabi emphasise localism and South Sudanese and African history. Secondly, the new

historical narratives depict Sudan as the enemy: “the Arabs, northerners and the Khartoum government are portrayed in utterly negative terms” (Skårås and Breidlid, 2016, 107). The cover of the history textbook depicts men with bows and arrows and thus appears to extol this aspect of the history syllabus. Although conflict and war have characterised the history of relations between South Sudan and Sudan, their relationship is much more complex than that.

The failure to teach Sudanese history in South Sudan is not just ideological but also due to logistical challenges, including a lack of books and the fact that history is taught as part of the social sciences.



Cover of the history textbook. (Copyright, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Government of South Sudan and the editors).

resource book than a pupil’s textbook. Secondly, it is largely unavailable and inaccessible, particularly outside Equatoria, where most schools continue to use Arabic as the medium of instruction.

Lack of textbooks

A scarcity of textbooks is the main problem facing the delivery of Sudanese history in South Sudan. With assistance from the Norwegian government, a group of researchers produced a history textbook, *A Concise History of South Sudan*, for secondary schools (Breidlid, Breidlid and Said, 2010), published by Fountain in Kampala, Uganda.⁴ The textbook was revised and reissued four years later (Breidlid, Said, Breidlid, Farren, and Wawa, 2014) by the same publisher. This book is one of the major achievements of the educational system in South Sudan. However, this principal history textbook has its own problems. Firstly, it is a volume of 367 pages and as such is more of a teacher’s

⁴ Published with the kind permission of Mr Deng Deng Hoc Yai, Minister of Education, South Sudan.

Thirdly, it seems that the book's production was rushed, as it uses outdated terminology and is littered with historical mistakes and the misspelling of the names of historical figures. One would have expected a textbook to draw on some of the extant historical scholarship about South Sudan but alas, its authors failed to do so (Badal, 1977; Mawut, 1983, 1994; Jal, 2013; Okeny, 1983; 1990, Wai, 1981; Kocjok, 1984; 1990). With the exception of Pogo's (2010) book about the first civil war, there is no reference to any major accounts of the history of Southern Sudan, including those that were written contemporaneously to important events, e.g. Loiria (1969) and Wai (1981). The authors also failed to consider the work of renowned historians such as Richard Gray (1961), Robert O. Collins (1962, 1971, 2012), Douglas Johnson (1997) and John Howell (1978), all of whom undertook serious and extensive research into the history of South Sudan. Most of these historians, particularly the South Sudanese, combined analyses of historical research with oral history in order to highlight significant historical and contemporary events in Sudan and South Sudan.

History taught as a part of the social science curriculum

In South Sudan, history, particularly in primary schools, is taught as part of the social sciences or general humanities curriculum (MoEST, c.2013), which suggests that the subject has not been accorded the importance it deserves. Obviously, teaching a broad social studies curriculum that embodies history, geography and the environment has scholastic advantages, as it facilitates the integration of lessons and the optimal use of meagre teaching resources. However, given the constraints within the education system, teaching history as a component of the social science curriculum has undermined the subject. The paucity of history textbooks compels teachers to improvise. They are advised to interview elders and experts and consult documents to plan lessons. This form of lesson planning may be advantageous to some experienced teachers but for the many untrained teachers, such flexibility is a recipe for indefinite outcomes. This in turn can lead to unstandardised output that presents difficulties in assessment. As has been admitted by some of the educational authorities, in the absence of local teaching resources, most teachers revert to using foreign educational materials from East Africa and as a result, teach African history.

In summary, the national curriculum appears to have undervalued the history of South Sudan and Sudan, while in secondary schools, importance has been given to the history of Africa. The scope of the secondary school history syllabus is particularly narrow. It focuses on teaching about the period of the liberation struggle between 1955 and 2005 (Skårås and Breidlid, 2016).

By giving prominence to localism and African history, the new history syllabus overlooks important aspects of Sudanese history. The steady decline in the status of history in schools could weaken pupils' historical knowledge, which will in turn have serious implications for the two Sudans.

Why does the history of Sudan matter in South Sudan?

Sudanese history in its entirety is a part of South Sudan's heritage and identity, and neglecting it could be detrimental to the formation of its national identity. Also as Sudan was at the centre of ancient black civilisation, its history is part of the world heritage and as such, it is the joint responsibility of Sudan and South Sudan to preserve it for posterity. South Sudanese educationalists should set the historical record straight and rewrite the history of Sudan to address the gap in our knowledge of Sudan's past. History lessons should teach about ancient Sudan, the demise of Old Dongala and Christianity, the Darfur Sultanate, the Funj (i.e. black) Kingdom (1504-1820), etc.

The history syllabi in South Sudan should not skirt difficult questions; teaching children about the involvement of South Sudan in the *Mahdia*, for instance, is crucial. South Sudanese, particularly Dinka, Bari, Fertit and Shilluk, joined the *Mahdia*, from its inception in 1881, where some rose to senior positions within the ranks of the *Ansar* ('Supporters', here, the Dervish army), in order to rid themselves of slavery and the corrupt and vicious Turco-Egyptian regime in Khartoum. The efforts of South Sudanese serving in the *Mahdi's* army exemplify the consistent resistance to colonialism, both Turco-Egyptian and European, that was shown by Southerners. The perfidy of the *Mahdia* state in light of this support represents an early case of 'agreements dishonoured' (Alier, 1990) between Southern and Northern Sudan, as the *Mahdia* state instituted a brutal regime that plundered South Sudan in the nineteenth century. Southern Sudanese had no option but to fight the *Mahdia* in Rajaf, Aliab, Northern and Western Bahr el Ghazal (Gray, 1961; Collins, 1962; Kocjok, 1990).

The history of Sudan is also the history of the perpetual displacement of people and this should be taught to children. For example it is important to include teaching about how the Shilluk lost Aba island, near Kosti, in 1805 and to discuss the historical evidence that suggests that Sennar and Kurmuk were Dinka areas in the past. Children should also be taught about the impact of the 1924 White League Revolution, which was led by army officers of South Sudanese origin protesting about changes in British Southern policy. More importantly, history must teach about the whole story concerning slavery; despite the British colonial government's rhetoric about its abolition, slavery persisted in the Sudan until the 1930s. Furthermore, references must

be made to its appalling repercussions e.g. the depopulation of some places in South Sudan (primarily the tribal areas of the Bongo and other Fertit tribes) in the nineteenth century. It should be asked, ‘What is the fate of the ‘detribalised’ South Sudanese people in Northern Sudan?’; until the 1950s, half of Omdurman’s population were South Sudanese. In short, South Sudan needs to own the history of Sudan, including the history of the Arabs in Sudan. Teaching such a history in South Sudan matters now more than ever before.

Unfortunately, it appears that both South Sudan and Sudan, for their own reasons, seem to countenance ditching any discussion of Sudanese identity and its history. Mohamed Ibrahim Nugud, the late General Secretary of the Sudanese Communist Party, memorably said that while Garang intended to maintain the unity of the Sudan with two systems, the Northern Sudanese leaders and their counterparts in the South created two countries governed by one system (Copnall, 2014, 66); the essence of this single system is forsaking the Sudanese identity.

After its independence, South Sudan urgently sought membership of the East African Community (EAC). South Sudan’s independence and its pivot towards East Africa appeared to accentuate Arab and Islamic identity for Sudan, which turned to the Middle East. These days, a visitor to Khartoum will not miss the prominence of Middle Eastern cultural influences in the city; these are particularly evident in the music and lexicon (in contrast to Khartoum colloquial Arabic). In addition, after the independence of South Sudan, Sudan’s standard time remained with Egypt and the wider Middle East, while South Sudan adopted the East African time zone; South Sudan is therefore an hour behind its northern neighbour. Splitting the Sudan into two different time zones was unanticipated by South Sudanese leaders at the time of independence but it underscores the two Sudans’ divergent identities: **African versus Arab; Sudanese** identity has been jettisoned and this is reflected in the education sphere.

Conclusion

In 1986, Garang delivered a public lecture at the University of Zimbabwe about the New Sudan. Some members of the audience challenged him about the hegemony of the Arabs in Sudan. He responded that there were no Arabs in the Sudan. He explained that the movement had taken the war to the North and liberated village after village and found hardly any Arab communities. The SPLM leader might have been simplistic in his explanation of a complex situation but his fundamental point was that Northern Sudanese were **Arabised** Africans who could live with their fellow South Sudanese in

the same country. Some Northern Sudanese may insist on their Arabism but they will always remain cousins of the Africans in the Sudan. It is true that history remains a problematic subject in both South Sudan and Sudan, as it is key to questions of national identity.

The identity of the Sudanese peoples is much more complex than is mostly appreciated. In a world that is increasingly dominated by populism and nationalism, disputes over history are not peculiar to the Sudanese. Quarrels about historical identities are common in nations with multiple peoples and cultures. Notwithstanding the unresolved issues between South Sudan and Sudan, primarily Abyei and the demarcation of the borders that split the Sudan into two sovereign states, South Sudan's independence should have ushered in an era of peace. It is imperative that the history curricula in South Sudan and Sudan include teaching about their common heritage, so as to build bridges between the two countries.

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South Sudanese Australians: Constantly Negotiating Belonging and Identity

Sara Maher, Santino Atem Deng, Nicki Kindersley*

Abstract

A South Sudanese community has lived in Australia since the late 1990s. Despite this long residence, tensions over belonging and identity have intensified in recent years in response to ongoing acculturation stress, overt racism and the community's complex relationship with their homeland and its seemingly intractable conflict. This article discusses how a 'deficits discourse' (Dumbrill, 2009) which sees refugees as needy service recipients during settlement processes has contributed to the 'othering' of African migrants in Australia. The authors write that this othering is based on recent, sustained racism, including the criminalising of young Africans, especially South Sudanese youth (Chingaibe, 2017). They conclude that despite the othering that South Sudanese Australians experience on a daily basis, there is a growing resistance to marginalisation and exclusion within the community.



The Society of South Sudanese Professionals Australia, planning and consultation day, May 2018. Sara Maher is standing in the first row, fifth from the left (Credit, Nyanbol Deng).

Introduction

At approximately 30,000 people, the South Sudanese community is the largest ethnic minority of a refugee background living in Australia. Migration through humanitarian programmes began in the late 1990s, and peaked in 2004 and 2005, when just under 6,000 people arrived (Jakubowicz, 2010). Those from regions of Sudan – particularly the Nuba Mountains and Blue Nile, which were excluded from the boundaries of the new Republic of South Sudan at independence in 2011 – have also resettled in Australia (Deng, 2017a). The majority of this population now resides in Melbourne, the second largest city (Robinson, 2013).

Like other new migrants, South Sudanese residents have struggled with the challenges of learning the social and legal systems of their new home, which are often in direct contrast to those in their own culture; acculturation stress is most often located within familial relationships (Deng & Pienaar, 2011; Deng & Marlowe, 2013; Deng, 2017b; Deng, 2017a). The challenges that settlement presents to some families have led to family breakdown, including separation or divorce, which are both rare in traditional South Sudanese cultures (Deng, 2017a). Changes of this kind are highly stressful and are a cause of great concern in the community.

Difficulties in families can occur when children begin to question or oppose their parents' cultural practices and drift away from their values (Deng, 2017a). Children rapidly absorb the host culture when they begin to attend school, while parents often lag behind the adaptations of their children. However, there are also external pressures on family life. Deng (2017) describes South Sudanese children being picked on and bullied daily at school and in other public places because of their skin colour and its association with offending behaviour. Children have reported racial abuse by their peers occurring regularly in school settings. Comments such as 'Go back to where you came from' have resulted in South Sudanese parents constantly worrying about their children's safety and wellbeing (Deng, 2017a). Parents reported that their children sometimes asked them why they were different, their questions indicating that they were examining their identity; these are questions that the parents struggled to answer.

As children internalise abuse, they may also fight back against their bullies, resulting in expulsion. Exclusion from school can have dire consequences for young people, both socially and personally. Inadequate education risks long-term unemployment and possible homelessness among other outcomes. Parents can also be conflicted and confused by their children's behaviour, which they interpret as a lack of gratitude by their children for bringing them to safety in Australia. Parents also believe that poor behaviour can bring shame on the family and community (Maher, 2018).

Compounding this reality for families and young people, South Sudanese report the highest levels of discrimination of any migrant group in Australia (Sinclair, 2016). Young people involved in a public brawl at the Moomba Festival in March 2016 were ethnically diverse but the resulting media focus was on those who were South Sudanese, all of whom were labelled in the media as members of the ‘Apex Gang’. Since the Moomba brawl, South Sudanese young people have been increasingly criminalised by the media and political classes. In January of this year, these media and political actors created a social-moral-racial panic: an unverified “crime wave” blamed on African gangs has led to race-baiting in the streets; young people are being further alienated and disenfranchised, and alarmingly, neo-Nazis and white supremacist groups have threatened vigilante action against Africans in public spaces (Knaus, 2018).

South Sudanese Australians are also struggling with the violent collapse of South Sudan. The decades of protracted and destructive civil war that displaced and dispersed South Sudanese as far as Australia have reignited. After a peace agreement, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, ended the Sudanese civil wars in 2005, South Sudan enjoyed just eight years of relative stability before another conflict erupted in December 2013, partly because of political differences within the ruling Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM; Deng, 2017a). Now in its fifth year, this conflict continues to threaten huge numbers of people with famine, dislocation, instability and insecurity. As the South Sudanese Pound (SSP) collapses against the US dollar and inflation escalates, many are increasingly reliant on remittances, which help with food, rent, education and family emergencies, including health care costs and funeral expenses. This situation has placed intense stress on the financial, personal and psychological resources of the diaspora. This pressure on the Australian South Sudanese community is unrecognised in the current climate of #AfricanGangs.

Acculturation Stress and Racism

We know that most South Sudanese Australians are trying to adjust to their new culture but these adjustments are undermined by acculturation stress, which is itself linked to a lack of physical and psychological wellbeing, reduced fiscal resources, social status, and loss of primary traditions and cultures (Deng, 2017a, Deng and Marlowe, 2013). Race-based discrimination prevents employment and other opportunities, particularly for men, and significantly exacerbates acculturation stress (Schweitzer *et al.*, 2006; Colic-Peisker, 2009; Milner and Khawaja, 2010; Abdelkerim and Grace, 2012; Baak, 2018).

Support for South Sudanese, other African and other minority groups has been limited by a lack of understanding of their needs, underpinned by the negative stereotypes and assumptions held by some service providers and

government agencies (Deng, 2017a). Losoncz (2012) challenges the legitimacy of government agency interventions, such as child protection investigations, in South Sudanese family life. The questionable purpose and appropriateness of such interventions is often seen as evidence of a failure to understand or consider South Sudanese culture. A lack of commitment by government agencies to try to better understand South Sudanese culture has created a negative relationship between them and the Sudanese community, contributing to a vacuum in the behaviour management and mentoring of young people (Losoncz, 2012). Colic-Peisker & Tilbury (2003) have suggested that a greater emphasis should be placed by government agencies on the priorities defined by former refugees, for instance, employment and housing. This would be preferable to agencies imposing their models, which may result in former refugees assuming roles of passivity and victimhood (Peisker & Tilbury, 2003).

According to Dumbrill (2009), some problems in service delivery are connected to negative social attitudes toward refugees and migrants and to a discourse in which migrants are portrayed as either passive victims or as threats to national security. This “deficits discourse,” encourages a notion that refugees and migrants are a “burden” to the host community (ibid). These adverse attitudes are reinforced by media reports, which feed the host community with negative news about the new settlers in their environment (Deng, 2017a, Dumbrill, 2009). South Sudanese Australians are aware of and very concerned about this situation (Deng, 2017a).

Discrimination and Negative Stereotypes

Various studies and reports suggest that one in five people living in Australia are the target of racial discrimination (of around 4.6 million inhabitants); often verbal racial abuse, which is the most common form of racism. Nearly half of all Australian residents from a culturally and linguistically diverse background have experienced racism at some time in their lives; seven in ten teenagers have experienced racism and three out of four Indigenous Australians regularly experience racism (Foundation for Young Australia, 2017; Institute, 2017; Scanlon Foundation, 2017; Victoria Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission, 2017; Western Sydney University, 2017).

Negative stereotypes and discrimination, encouraged by some media and political actors in Australia, appear to have an enormous impact on those who are struggling with changes and challenges within their families (Deng, 2017a). Research has shown that discrimination has measurable adverse effects on migrants’ health, economic success, educational attainments and relationships with various authorities and institutions, including the police and the criminal justice system. Discrimination adversely affects subjective feelings

of belonging and wellbeing, with significant consequences for mental health, civic participation and social conduct (Colic-Peisker, 2009; Fozdar, 2009; Deng, 2017b; Baird and Boyle, 2012; Losoncz, 2012).

The media focus on the so-called 'Apex Gang' is an example of how the media in Australia have affected the lives of African migrants. Stories of the Apex Gang dominated the media for much of 2016 (Crane & Cleary, 2016; Smith, 2016; Deng, 2017b). It was named after a street (in which some members resided) in Dandenong, Melbourne's most multi-cultural suburb and home to many South Sudanese people. The media reported the anti-social behaviour of young people as gang activity, which encouraged a negative representation of the whole community (Crane & Cleary, 2016; Shepherd, Newton & Farquharson, 2017). As a result, South Sudanese/African youth who had not participated in anti-social or offending behaviour were suspected of being gang members, simply by being together in a public place. Although there are only a few individuals committing these crimes, given the high visibility of South Sudanese and other Africans in white-dominated public space, the negative consequences for the community are significant. Research about how African, and particularly South Sudanese, migrants are inaccurately and negatively represented by the Australian media has expanded in recent years (Center for Multicultural Youth, 2014; Shepherd *et al.*, 2017) but this research has had little impact on media portrayals.

The vilification of the South Sudanese community in Australia is not new. In 2007 the community was publicly criticised by the then Minister of Immigration, Kevin Andrews, who infamously accused them of failing to integrate into Australian society (Due, 2008). These comments were made in response to the violent death of a young South Sudanese man, Liep Gony, who was murdered in Melbourne by two young white men as he was walking home. An appalling example of victim blaming, Andrew's comments established a benchmark for the vilification of African migrants. His comments, and his refusal to apologise to Gony's family and the community, were widely reported in the media and encouraged further stereotyping and exclusionary practices towards the South Sudanese community and racism toward Africans in general.

South Sudanese residents were again linked to criminality and failed integration in January 2018, when Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton remarked that residents of Victoria were scared to go out to restaurants because of African gang violence. Similar comments by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull also reinforced fears about organised African youth violence (Farid, 2018). Turnbull's statements fuelled community divisions and fostered existing racism and discrimination. However, unlike in 2007, these statements were resisted by the South Sudanese community and other African Australians,

perhaps for the first time. Dutton's comments during the #AfricanGangs Twitter campaign were mocked online as South Sudanese Australians posted images of community members going about their daily life as ordinary citizens; eating out with their families, working the night shift at a hospital's accident and emergency department, graduating from university, shopping with their children and watching sport with their friends – but sarcastically described these activities as examples of 'gang' behaviour. The community's ability to resist stereotyping is a positive sign and using irony and humour to do so suggests an emerging and strengthening confidence.

The failure to address barriers to multiculturalism or the successful settlement of migrants and refugees has led to the alienation of some elements of the Australian community, i.e. mainly South Sudanese and other new settlers. Many South Sudanese or other Africans think that claims to multiculturalism (Australian Government Department of Social Services, 2017) in contemporary Australia are largely hollow and only touted by politicians when it suits them.

South Sudan and Australian diaspora relations

As well as ongoing acculturation stress, discrimination and racism, there is a third element to the daily lives of South Sudanese in the diaspora that is little understood outside the community. A group of South Sudanese, Australian, and British scholars have been studying the impact of the Australian South Sudanese diaspora back home in Juba. The project brought together Monash and Juba universities to study the relationships and transfers between Juba residents and their friends, relatives and extended social networks in the diaspora. These financial and personal support networks are based on trust and mutual knowledge within extended families and kinship networks.

The research underlines how Australian South Sudanese residents struggle to access information they can trust about events in South Sudan. Those in the Australian diaspora are being bombarded by a negative press, public racism and the risk of violence in the streets, and they are also managing family and community ties with people in South Sudan who are caught up in a seemingly intractable conflict. The continuing violence and instability in South Sudan are deeply traumatic and provoke highly emotional responses that are instrumentalised by political partisans on all sides.

The research project

Our research took a holistic approach to the dynamics of the South Sudanese Australian community, looking broadly at their interactions back home in South Sudan – an understudied aspect of their daily lives – and the impacts this engagement has, particularly within the capital city Juba but also on residents

in Melbourne. The project, run by the Rift Valley Institute and involving a research team drawn from the Universities of Juba, Cambridge and Monash in Melbourne, conducted a rapid mixed-method study over five months, mainly in Juba.¹

Participants in the focus groups, consultations, interviews and survey highlighted several interconnected issues facing the global South Sudanese community. The economic crisis and civil war in South Sudan have created a huge demand for emergency support. Sustaining flows of money for food, rent, school fees and medical costs, as well as for associational life and political organisation, places a great strain on the community. They are forced to support more and more people from within their own families and local ethnic groups, breaking down wider community and pan-ethnic support networks. The naturally ethnicised nature



South Sudan Diaspora Impacts research project focus group, November 2017. (Credit, Sara Maher).

of this support is easily politicised in the civil war context, with various sides accusing whole ‘ethnic groups’ of nepotism and favouring their own.

The funds and information that are transferred from Australia to Juba are assisted and often organised by members of the Australian South Sudanese community, who are highly mobile and engaged in political, civil, and humanitarian work within South Sudan. Participants in Juba raised concerns over the manipulation of dual citizenship by this class and specifically their loyalty to South Sudan. They argued that those with dual citizenship, and with the money and ability to travel and access free media space outside South Sudan, had a significant ability to critique the South Sudanese government and engage in factional politics, while also being able to avoid the personal risks

¹ ‘The role of transnational networks and mobile citizens in South Sudan’s global community. A pilot study focused on Melbourne and Juba’
<http://www.riftvalleyinstitute.com/>

of the civil war within South Sudan. These discussions of ‘good citizenship’ have fragmented and divided communities along ethnic lines. Misinformation, anger and trauma related to the current war placed often-highlighted issues – such as hate speech, elite corruption, and allegations that young men are returning from Australia to fight in the war – into a wider and deeper context.

Our research also emphasises the wider issues facing the Australian South Sudanese community, as they struggle to challenge violent and ethnicised rhetoric and define national community and citizenship, in both South Sudan and Australia. The personal and psychological stress of their situation is immense. It is a daily struggle for many South Sudanese Australians as they continue to hear terrible news about their home country, while in Australia, they feel they are being vilified and criminalised. Above all, they feel unwelcome in their second home. This is not new – a survey in 2012 showed that about 90 per cent of Sudanese refugees want to go home, in part because of racism and discrimination (Kerin, 2012). However, South Sudanese migrants cannot return safely to South Sudan at present and are struggling to support families and extended communities in South Sudan that are increasingly dependent on them for their basic survival and the education of their children.

South Sudanese communities worldwide are struggling to manage the immediate burden of civil war, while trying to forge new paths to peace for their troubled nation. This is vital work but it cannot be done in a climate of intense public criminalisation and exclusion, only through a sense of common humanity, intellectual engagement and collective and mental support.

Conclusion

It is clear that successful resettlement and integration are gradual processes and involve social, cultural, political, economic and environmental transformations and orientations. South Sudanese are integrating into Australian society economically and socially and contribute to their new country but many still find their pathways to social and economic inclusion blocked. Policymakers, government agencies, education sectors and settlement support services individually and collectively need to address the issues of racism, discrimination, unemployment and other potential barriers to integration. Employment and education agencies and other service providers would benefit from cultural training to help them understand that, for former refugees and migrants, negative engagement has a profoundly detrimental impact.

Any authority wanting to address acculturation difficulties and challenges must work closely with the affected community and youth to understand the root causes of their problems and try to find amicable solutions. Rather than vilifying the community as a whole, youngsters need support to overcome

some of the underlying challenges that may have led to anti-social behaviour. Imprisonment and talk of deportation on release is not a long-term solution to these challenges and nor is it a humane response to young people caught up in the criminal justice system.

Given the negative media and an increase in abuse towards Australians of African heritage, there needs to be an orchestrated, government-led focus to tackle discrimination and racism as they are serious obstacles, both to their successful settlement and their building of a sense of belonging in Australia. This focus needs to integrate an understanding of South Sudanese Australians' complex transnational and global identity.

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Book Reviews

Abdel Halim Sabbar, **The Toponymy of Ishkeed and the Revitalization of an Endangered Nubian Language**, 2017, ISBN 978-1-9998425-0-5 hardcover.

The book is available from the Centre of African Studies, SOAS.

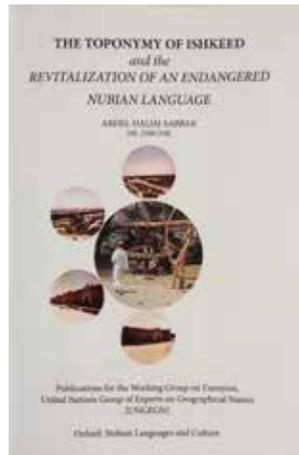
Abdel Halim Sabbar was a doctor of medicine with a thorough and analytical knowledge of his native Nobīn Nubian language. Historically, Nobīn was spoken along the Nile from Kerma in Sudanese Nubia to Korosko (Nubian: *Kurusko*) in Egyptian Nubia.

Dr Sabbar died of a heart condition on 1st May 2017. With him died a wealth of knowledge which can never be recovered. However, four separate articles of his were published between 2010 and 2014 by the Workshop on Exonyms of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN). Thanks to the publishers, the Verlag Dr Kovač in Hamburg, Germany, and the Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography in Warsaw, it was possible to reproduce all four articles together as an interrelated whole in a single volume entitled *The Toponymy of Ishkeed and the Revitalization of an Endangered Nubian Language*. The book was launched at a Memorial Event for Dr Sabbar on 21st October at the Royal Geographical Society in London.

The first chapter of the book has a focus upon the environment of Dr Sabbar's own village and the main features of its toponymic terminology. The central features were the elaborate waterwheels (Nubian: *eskalée*) that had been at the heart of its economy for almost two millennia. Agricultural lands, points of access to the river, the village and its subdivisions (hamlets) were also defined and designated with the appropriate Nubian terms.

The second chapter examines a perceived threat to Nubian identity. In 1964, many Nubians were resettled more than 1,200 kilometres away from their original homes by the Nile to escape the flooding that resulted from the High Dam near Aswan. They discovered that the villages of the new homeland were designated not by their familiar Nubian names but by Arabic numbers. The author's village was called *Qaryah Talattaashir* ('Village Thirteen' in Arabic). It was not called *Ishkeed* (the name of his original village) or even *Maar Dimetusko* ('Village Thirteen' in Nubian).

The third chapter deals with toponymic issues when a local language and a



prestige language were in competition. Champions of a local language often regarded a toponym [a place name, especially a topographically inspired one] in a prestige language as ‘alien’. However, Sabbar commented on a number of exceptions to this tendency. For example, Shaikh Gurneen was considered to be a holy man who had lived long ago. He had a shrine in Nubia before it was flooded in 1964. Shaikh Gurneen (‘two horns’ in Arabic) had a name in the prestige language but that name had become accepted as non-alien by the Nubian-speaking population, who turned to him for help. ‘Alien’ names could be domesticated.

The fourth chapter deals with the importance of accuracy in the collection and analysis of toponyms in the local language. Nubian toponyms could be seriously distorted when they were collected by Arabic-speakers with no knowledge of Nubian. It was important to treat Nubian toponyms with fairness. Distorted names risked breaking the links between the inhabitants on one hand and their environment and history on the other. These links were vital for inhabitants who were speaking languages that were in a struggle for survival. Dr Sabbar was committed to the goal of fairness for his own native language and also for other languages of Sudan and South Sudan.

Just as this book was being launched in late 2017, another article by Dr Sabbar appeared in *Dotawo: A Journal of Nubian Studies* (Access link: http://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/djns/vol4/iss1/1_). It was called ‘Endangered Toponymy along the Nubian Nile’ and gave precise illustrations of the large number of inaccuracies that have resulted from the recording of Nubian toponyms. Thanks to the open access policy of *Dotawo*, it is now planned to include this article in a new and expanded edition of Dr. Sabbar’s book, now to be entitled *The Toponymy of an Endangered Nubian Language*.

The new edition can be supported by the audio visual evidence now being made universally accessible on the SOAS Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR), where Dr Sabbar was pronouncing historic toponyms in the context of Nubian speech. Details on accessing this are provided in the section on Links at the end of this review.

It is hoped that the launch of the expanded edition of Dr Sabbar’s book will coincide with two events in September 2018; *Études Nubiennes 2018*, the International Conference of Nubian Studies held in Paris at the Louvre and the Sorbonne, and the UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms in Riga, hosted by the Latvian Geospatial Information Agency. This will demonstrate the worldwide relevance of Dr Sabbar’s work. It will highlight the importance of collecting toponyms and associated information in the languages and speech of the local inhabitants.

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Links

The SOAS Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR) provides videos of Dr Sabbar pronouncing Nobiin Nubian toponyms in the context of Nubian speech.

Access: Create a user name and password at the following link:

https://lat1.lis.soas.ac.uk/ds/RRS_V1/RrsRegistration

Then access the ELAR SOAS page: <https://elar.soas.ac.uk/>

Click on Endangered Languages Archive.

Click on the blue link to the ELAR online catalogue.

On the catalogue page, write ishkeed in the search box and click search. You should then see a bundle entitled the_village_of_ishkeed. Log in with your user name and password. The video should appear below.

ELAR is also processing a video of Dr Sabbar pronouncing a major list of Nubian toponyms in the context of Nubian speech. It is called nobiin_

nubian_toponyms. These were analysed in Sabbar and Bell 2017. For the written list and commentary on these toponyms, download this online article:
<http://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/djns/vol4/iss1/1>

Acknowledgements

I should like to thank all editors of the four original publications and especially Paul Woodman and Peter Jordan, who were principal editors for the UNGEGN materials. Professor Jordan was in charge of the UNGEGN Working Group on Exonyms. Finally, I am grateful to the editors of the fourth volume of *Dotawo: A Journal of Nubian Studies*.

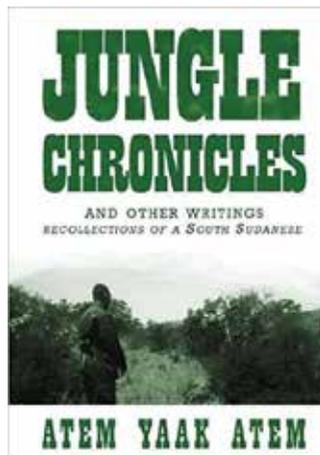
Note on transliteration

Abdel Halim Sabbar was as skilled in writing Arabic as he was in Nubian. His own name was of Arabic origin and might have been transliterated as ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Ṣabbār. However, he considered that the context of Nubian speech did not oblige him to pronounce the Arabic sounds represented by ‘, Ḥ and Ṣ or to represent them distinctively in a Roman orthography. Furthermore, he recognised that Nubian had a five-vowel system with an “e” and an “o” rather than the three-vowel system of Standard Arabic. For vowel length, he used doubling (*Ishkeed* and *Maar*) rather than macrons (*Ishkēed* and *Mār*).

Herman Bell

Professor Herman Bell, PhD (Northwestern) and MLitt. (Oxon.), directed research on Sudanese African languages at the University of Khartoum. He was Sudan Expert with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names. He is now an Honorary Research Fellow at Exeter University.

Atem Yaak Atem, **Jungle Chronicles and Other Writings: Recollections of a South Sudanese**, Africa World Books, Perth, 2017, ISBN 10 0987614185 paperback, £26.



Atem Yaak Atem, the author of this book, is one of a few South Sudanese journalists (Jacob J. Akol is another) that have dedicated themselves to the profession. Even when he was a guerrilla fighter in the bush or Deputy Minister for Information after the independence of South Sudan in 2011, he continued to pursue journalism. After studying Philosophy and English at the University of Khartoum, Atem joined the Regional Ministry of Information, Culture, Youth and Sports in Juba, in 1975. Straightaway he found himself in at the deep end editing the *Nile Mirror*, the weekly newspaper *Southern Sudan* and the *Youth and Sports* magazine. Although he subsequently trained in what was then West Germany and received invaluable editorial support from Mading de Garang (an ex-journalist and the Minister of Information) as well as Natale Olwak, De Garang's colleague in the High Executive Council (HEC) (pp. 200-201), Atem had to learn the trade fast.

Jungle Chronicles and Other Writings: Recollections of a South Sudanese is an analysis of the socio-economic context of South/Southern Sudan and a product of his unwavering journalism. The book is an exceptional one in several ways. Firstly, as its main title implies, it is a composite of articles that Atem wrote at the time when he was in the bush ('Jungle'). He had joined the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) after completing a Master's degree in journalism at the University of Wales. The majority of the 'Jungle' articles were initially published in newsprints linked to the liberation struggle, such as the *SPLM Update*, *Sudan Mirror* and *South Sudan Post*. He also contributed feature articles to Kenyan publications, e.g. the *Daily Nation*, *East African* and *Horn of Africa Vision*. After the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), Atem wrote for South Sudanese newspapers, primarily *The Citizen*, *Juba Monitor*, *This Day*, *The Dawn* and *The Pioneer*, his own paper.

Secondly, the book's organisation makes it reader-friendly. Being a compilation of articles, the chapters stand on their own and this facilitates selective reading. The volume is organised into two thematic sections: society and culture, and war and peace. In the first, there are 34 articles on a plethora of social matters, including education. Notably, there is an article about

social apprehensions in Juba in July 1976 of the ominous Ebola outbreak, widely known locally as 'Green Monkey' disease (pp. 127-129). Others cover different aspects of South Sudanese culture and society, largely Dinka. For instance, the author explores the erosion of cultural and social values (pp. 63-79). As a result, the book has vital educational value, particularly for those in the growing South Sudanese diaspora; my twelve-year-old daughter, who was born outside South Sudan, found some elements of everyday Dinka culture instructive, such as table manners.

War and peace, the second section, has 21 articles. Most concern political trajectories in South/Southern Sudan, such as the 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement, which ended the first civil war and granted self-rule to the South (pp. 352-371). As a Director of Radio SPLA (Sudan People's Liberation Army) in its early days, Atem worked closely with the top leadership of the SPLM, including senior Commanders such as Kerbino Kuanyin Bol, the Deputy Chairman (pp. 261-292); the late Yousif Kowa, a leading commander from the Nuba Mountains (pp. 352-260); Dr John Garang himself and Dr Mansour Khalid, a senior advisor to the SPLM leader (pp. 302-310). He was therefore privy to critical decisions within the Movement, which he cogently examines in his writing.

Thirdly, Atem was part of several SPLM delegations to peace negotiations with the Sudanese government and offers insights into some, including the Al Mirghani-Garang summit of 1988. The quest for peace brought the patron of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), Mohamed Osman al Mirghani, and the SPLM Chairman together. They concluded a peace initiative for the resolution of the conflict in Sudan. However, Premier Al Sadiq al Mahdi's intransigence about supporting the charter emboldened the National Islamic Front (NIF), which overthrew the civilian government in a military coup in June 1989 and torpedoed the peace process. The NIF regime's ascendancy in Khartoum delayed a North-South peace accord for another 16 years. Still on the issue of peace, the book includes an article about the architects of the Naivasha peace accord: 'Garang and Taha, deserve sympathy' (pp. 328-336). Given the unexpected death of the SPLM leader in July 2005 and the so called 'CPA curse' that has afflicted many Northern Sudanese who negotiated the landmark accord, it is important that we extol the role of these major peacemakers. The author, who is in self-exile in Australia, is concerned with the existing political crisis that has beleaguered the new nation. In his post-independence articles, he candidly derides the rampant corruption, especially in the government, which underlies the poor performance of the civil service in South Sudan (pp. 174-76).

The book is an appreciated addition to the increasing literature by some of

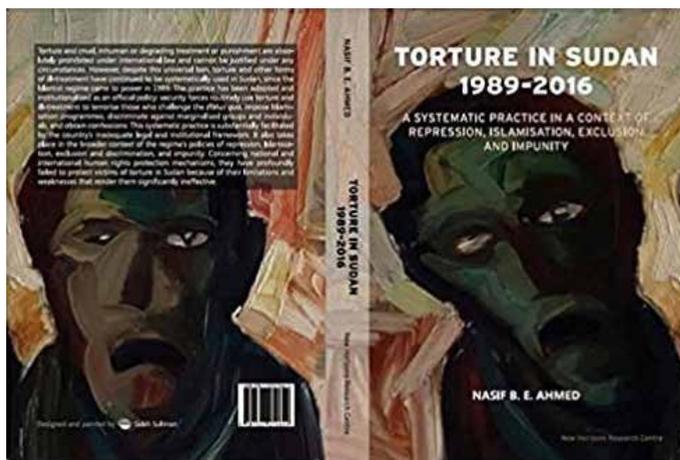
the SPLM's renowned leaders – principally Lam Akol, Peter Adwok Nyaba, James Wani Igga – about their experiences in the liberation struggle. However, Atem's book is atypical in that while other SPLM commentators petulantly adopt rancorous language in their work, he does not do so but rather studiously examines his subjects in a sombre unprejudiced style. Where, for instance, his comrades perceive rivalry and sedition in their adversaries, Atem recognises the merits in others' viewpoints.

Atem was unable to trace copies of his earlier writing in South Sudanese and Sudanese publications, which would have tremendously enriched the book. Despite this, the issues he explores resonate with the contemporary challenges facing the country. There are many problems with South Sudan's social fabric and this book's tone, and spirit of unanimity and reasoning can contribute to rebuilding it.

Kuyok Abol Kuyok

Kuyok is an Associate Professor at the University of Juba's College of Education. He holds a DPhil from the Institute of Education, London.

Nasif B. E. Ahmed, **Torture in Sudan 1989-2016. A Systematic Practice in a context of Repression, Islamisation, Exclusion and Impunity.** New Horizons Research Centre, 400 Platt Lane, Manchester M14 7HJ, 2017, 404 pages, ISBN-978-1-5272-1464-4 £20.00.



The uncompromising title and a grimly memorable cover painted by Salah Suliman set the tone for this solid and well documented work. It should be on the bookshelf of every Home Office official who claims that Sudanese fleeing their country are now safe from ill treatment by their government and of Western officials who maintain that “engagement” with the Khartoum regime will improve human rights while stemming the flow of those daring to escape to Europe.

The writer, Nasif Beshir el Amin Ahmed, leaves the reader in no doubt about his opposition to the National Congress Party (NCP, formerly National Islamic Front), which has ruled over his homeland since its coup of June 1989. Few Sudanese will disagree that:

In Sudan, the Islamist elite has chosen to adopt a violent strategy to deal with all challenges, regardless of their nature: political, cultural, social or economic problems. Tasked with the implementation of this repressive policy, the NISS [National Intelligence and Security Service] has been vested with significantly extensive powers of arrest and detention in pursuance of a broad and ill-defined security mandate. (p. 118)

Dozens of reports by human rights organisations and others (including, in the early years, the United Nations Special Rapporteur, until Khartoum managed to get the UN to abolish that position) have documented atrocities and abuses over the past 30 years. However, apart from the useful reports on

specific aspects of the regime by the Sudan Democracy First Group, little has appeared in English by Sudanese. *Torture in Sudan* tries to bridge the abyss between Arabic and English-language output, an abyss in which much vital information remains hidden.

Thirty years of repression take a long and painful time to document, even the “limited” aspect of torture. Nasif is a lawyer and whole sections of the work are devoted to international law and to footnotes and bibliographies. Sometimes the examination of the theoretical bases of, for instance, the international prohibition on torture, could be usefully summarised. Yet these important references should not deter any reader more drawn to the humanitarian or political aspects of the subject.

That reader may well focus on Chapters Two and Three (of four), which recount some of the history of NCP rule and present useful case studies. Not surprisingly, the writer is overflowing with things he wants to tell us and, in contrast to the *minutiae* of the more legalistic chapters, he sometimes leaps years and people rather confusingly. Some details that could well be in the main text (e.g. some dates) are buried in the extraordinary number of footnotes. These are often things that Sudanese will know but other readers may not. Chapters, though, are well divided into sub-sections and it is not hard to find a particular topic. The author is, for instance, very strong on inclusivity. Exclusion by ethnicity, area, gender, education or religion are aspects of Sudanese politics and society that even some liberal opponents of the regime tend to forget.

To me, there are two particularly valuable aspects to such an *opus magnum*. One is to document specific instances of human rights abuses: detail is often very hard to come by for journalists and other researchers, partly because of the Sudanese security officials’ skill in covert operations and partly because of the lack of a public tradition of documenting names, dates and places – a weakness that the NISS knows well how to exploit. The second aspect is the insight that only Sudanese can provide and there is plenty of that in the book. Sometimes, though, it is hidden by a classic perspective problem: the things that a Sudanese person may deem important are not always the same as those which a non-Sudanese (i.e. most English-language readers) wants to know.

One aspect that non-Sudanese do need to know more about is the Islamist ideology and Nasif provides some insight. How many people, Muslim or non-Muslim, write along these lines?

In the view of the Islamists, the failure of Muslim societies is due to their departure from the straight path of Islam and their following a Western secular path, with its secular, materialistic ideologies and

values. For them, the ultimate objective of state capture is the creation of an Islamic state, hardly amenable to conventional geopolitics, which bestows sovereignty on God and not the state or people. (p. 122).

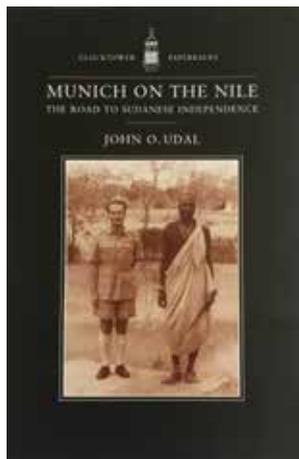
Where this leaves the West's "strategic dialogue" with the gatekeepers of that state is just one question triggered by this thoughtful book.

Gill Lusk

Gill is a journalist specialising in the Sudans and the Chairperson of SSSUK

John O. Udal, **Munich on the Nile: The road to Sudanese Independence**, Norwich: Michael Russell Publishers, Clocktower Paperbacks, 2016, 88pp, ISBN 978 0 85955 329 2 paperback, £14

During the Second World War, the Atlantic Charter – a 1941 communiqué from United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill – recognised “the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live.” Sudanese nationalists – a relatively small group led by the commercial and bureaucratic beneficiaries of colonialism, and clustered around the capital – called on their conflicted British and Egyptian colonial masters to grant them the right to choose their own government. It was wartime and the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium authorities, always dominated by its Anglo half, rebuffed them. When the war was over, Egypt forced Britain’s hand: it sought to reassert its sovereignty over Sudan, basing its claim on its nineteenth century occupation of the country. Britain found itself believing in Sudanese self-determination.



It was a stroke of luck for the Sudanese nationalists. Instead of needing to build a broad-based movement for independence, which might have drawn Sudanese people towards a less-fraught national identity, they just had to play off the mismatched co-domini against each other. They rebuffed Egyptian claims to sovereignty through the new Legislative Assembly, a partially-elected body. In May 1952, the Assembly adopted a Self-Government Statute, which mapped out a path to Sudanese self-determination, led by an elected parliament.

The statute required the Governor General to safeguard the interests of the Southern provinces through a Southern Minister for Southern Affairs. For decades, the Condominium had isolated those provinces from the rest of Sudan, and for contradictory and sometimes inscrutable reasons, deliberately retarded economic and political development there, and deliberately oriented its culture away from that of Northern Sudan. Now the safeguarding of those provinces offered Britain an opportunity to stay relevant.

Nationalists believed that the Southern safeguards were a pretext for continued British interference and fast-moving events were on their side. The Egyptian monarchy was toppled in 1952 and a new revolutionary military regime in Cairo worked with the nationalist parties to rid the draft Statute of its southern safeguards. Southern politicians believed that they were excluded

from these machinations. The process filled many Southern politicians with apprehensions about the place of the deliberately de-developed South in a new, Northern-dominated political order.

But in January 1953, the British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, accepted a new draft of the Statute, which replaced the Southern safeguards with something vaguer. When Churchill, then Prime Minister, found out that the safeguards would be abandoned, he reportedly flew into a rage against Eden “speaking of ‘appeasement’ and saying that he never knew before that Munich was situated on the Nile.” The old Tory imperialists were developing a habit of confusing Egyptian revolutionary officers with Adolf Hitler – a habit which cost the Empire dear when it confronted the Egyptian army at Suez in 1956.

John Udal was a young participant and observer during all these events. The son of a leading British official in Sudan, he joined the colonial administration in Sudan in 1950 and in 1952, was posted to Kodok, a small town on the White Nile which was the capital of the Shilluk Kingdom. In August 1952, a few months after the first draft of the Self-Government Statute emerged, and as the plump dejected king of Egypt set sail for exile in Capri, Udal sent a memorandum to the Civil Secretary calling for yet more Southern safeguards, beginning with a British-appointed Lieutenant Governor and British officials to remain in the South after Sudan’s independence – an Anglo-Sudanese Condominium to replace the Anglo-Egyptian one.

The memorandum went unacknowledged and Udal was troubled with a slight sense of presumption, for submitting his twenty-something’s opinions to the second-in-command in Khartoum. The Southern safeguards were being diluted all the same and Udal’s unease reflected wider concerns amongst the South’s small politically-engaged cadre, who wrote letters to Churchill, Eden and the Governor General rejecting Egyptian-nationalist plans for the South.

Udal centres this short book around his sense of duty and dismay at the unfolding of events: for him, the Southern safeguards might have forestalled the wars which followed. But most of the book is taken up with lightly-edited reproductions of Udal’s memorandum, an eye-witness account of the 1952 installation of a new Shilluk King, annual sub-district reports and his handing-over notes for the Northern Sudanese police officer who replaced him.

The South enjoyed some of the international attention which it received in the run-up to independence some sixty years later. In 1952, Kodok bustled with Egyptian propagandists and Western journalists. Udal’s administrative assistants went off to Khartoum to become legislators and ministers. At the end of 1952, some of this small educated class wrote a memorandum rejecting agreements reached between the Egyptian government and the Khartoum nationalists – with no Southern participation.

Kodok politics was complicated, though. In 1953, when the nationalists and the Egyptians outmanoeuvred the British, the merchants in Kodok celebrated – all the merchants had names suggesting that they came from Northern Sudan. Udal was sick at heart: “Having seen the expressions in the Shilluk faces these last two days, I know I cannot voluntarily leave them, however black things are... It will be pretty grim to have experienced their blind trust, if that trust has been betrayed.” Sudan’s first parliamentary elections took place that year: they were dominated by the contest between parties supporting Egypt and those supporting Britain, a contest which Britain lost spectacularly and unexpectedly. In the South, voters could choose the Southern Front – which took the Shilluk constituency. Turnout there was the lowest in the country, because only elders turned out to vote.

Udal’s reports provide some useful details about a wider set of social changes – consumption culture spreading out from graded roads and bush shops, waged labour emerging in towns and villages, post-war investment in health and education (the sums were tiny but a vast increase on the near-zero spending of the 1930s). They are useful for historians interested in the uneasy and unpredictable interim period which preceded Sudan’s independence and its first civil war, and which presaged the South’s subsequent uneasy interims.

Edward Thomas

Edward Thomas worked for several years as a teacher, human rights worker and researcher in Sudan and South Sudan. He is the author of *South Sudan: a slow liberation* (Zed 2015); *The Kafia Kingi Enclave* (Rift Valley Institute 2010) and *Islam’s Perfect Stranger* (Tauris 2010).

News from the Sudan Archive, Durham

The range of material in the Sudan Archive provides an exceptionally rich research resource for scholars in all disciplines of studies relating to Sudan and South Sudan and to the wider region, with records dating from the 19th century to the present day. We are open to all, so please pay us a visit or get in touch, whether to further your own research, to suggest additional records we should try to collect or to make a donation to the collections yourself. More details can be found at: www.dur.ac.uk/library/asc/sudan/.

Newsletter (January-June 2018)

Two Sudan Archive Visiting Library Fellowships were awarded this term. This fellowship grants a term's research time at Durham to doctoral students. This year the Gordon Memorial College Trust Fund also offered a grant towards the Sudanese fellow's travel expenses. Abdelkarim Altahir, a PhD candidate at the University of Khartoum, has been using the archive to study Anglo-French competition over Sudan's western borders 1884-1956 and its



effect on Darfur. Neval Milanlioğlu, a PhD candidate at Marmara University, Turkey, has been researching Sudan under the Ottoman Administration 1821-1918. It's been a pleasure to have them here in Durham and I wish them every success with their theses.

Recent accessions to the Sudan Archive

Acquisitions of recent publications are not generally noted – but are nevertheless received with deep thanks. Accessions generally remain uncatalogued for a period of time but can usually be accessed on request.

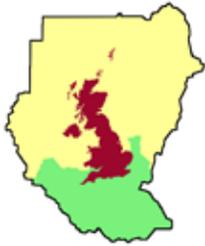
- W. Berridge**, Newcastle University: transcripts of interviews conducted in Khartoum for a Hassan al Turabi project, 2015-2017.
- E. C. Haselden**, (1903-1988), Sudan Agent, Cairo (1945-1953): correspondence between Sudan Agents (Cairo and London) and Civil Secretary, Khartoum, April 1945-March 1953 (3 files); Cairo appendices to Sudan Monthly Intelligence Reports, June 1945-December 1951 (1 file); photo albums.
- *R. L. D. Maunsell**, (1900-1953): research notes and correspondence about

the history of Sudan Government Railways, 1937-1950.

- H. Cross**, Durham University: issues of *Al Midan*, Sudan Communist Party newspaper, published in Khartoum, January-February 2018.
- D. D. Shah**, *Helu-Moor (Bitter-Sweet). Reminiscences of my lucky "13" years in the Sudan, 1953-1965* (2001).
- A. G. H. Masson**, Clerk of Works at Wau (1946-1951): digital copies of photographs and administrative papers.
- Anonymous donor**, 1970s photographs of South Sudan, including of Father Constantino Maria Pitya; Pastoral letter of Ireneus Wien Dud, Archbishop of Juba, 24th May 1979.
- A. Crichton-Harris**, research notes about *Dr John Brian Christopherson (1868-1955), used in preparation of her work *Poison in Small Measure* (2009) and other articles.
- M. A. Hayati**, University of Khartoum: photographs of Sufi tombs, Sheikh Mohammed Sheikh al Ghorashi, a manuscript written by Sufi Sheikh Kamal al Din, and derelict administrative buildings in the Gezira.

* Accruals to existing collections; details of the careers of these persons can be found published in each of their collection catalogues.
(<http://discover.durham.ac.uk/>)

Francis Gotto, Archivist



The Society for the Study of the Sudans (UK)

Annual Symposium and General Meeting

in association with the Centre for African Studies, SOAS

Saturday 22nd September 2018

in the Khalili Lecture Theatre, School of Oriental and African Studies,
Thornhaugh Street (off Russell Square), London WC1H 0XG

Registration will be from 9-10 am and the Symposium will end at about 4.30 pm. Programme details will appear on www.sssuk.org once they are confirmed

Underground: Russell Square, Euston or Euston Square.

Buses: all buses that go along Southampton Row or Euston Road which is a short walk away.

Please book in advance (by 6 pm on 21st September) as we cannot guarantee a place or lunch for those who register on the day. Those who book in advance should still register at the desk when they arrive on 22nd September.

It is simplest if you pay via PayPal (using the button on the SSSUK website), and provide the information requested on the form below to treasurer@sssuk.org if booking for more than one person. Alternatively, send the form and a cheque, made out to SSSUK, to the Treasurer: Adrian Thomas, 30 Warner Road, London N8 7HD, UK.

	Reduced Rate (£) (if booked on or before 19 th September)	Full Rate (£) (bookings after 19 th September)
Conference + Lunch:	15.00	17.00
Students with ID:	8.00	10.00
Conference only:	5.00	7.00

Jane Hogan, Hon. Secretary

SSSUK 32nd Annual Symposium and AGM, 2018: Registration Form

Name.....

SSSUK Member? Yes/No (Please circle)

Address

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No. of tickets required Amount enclosed £.....

Email Date.....

Society for the Study of the Sudans (UK)

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

Enquiries about Society matters and membership should be addressed to:

Adrian Thomas,
30 Warner Road,
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London, N8 7HD
Email: treasurer@sssuk.org

Membership:

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

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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.

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

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Notes for Contributors

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

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

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