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SOCIETY NEWS

Regular readers of *Sudan Studies* will by now have noticed that there have been some changes to the format of the newsletter. Each of the previous five issues has generated comments about the content and presentation of the material and these are now being acted upon: a modest investment has provided a variety of alternative fonts; more 'longer' articles are included, and the space between the lines has been widened. Hopefully these changes result in an interesting, stylish, and more easy to read newsletter. Please write to me if you have any comments about the changes or other aspects of *Sudan Studies*.

Many of the main points of Society News are highlighted elsewhere, but can I draw your attention to a few here

- the subscriptions are due for renewal and these should be paid immediately.
- The annual Symposium/AGM is scheduled for the Sudan Cultural Centre on Saturday September 30th.
- The second International Sudan Studies Conference is confirmed for April 1991
- Nominations are called for two positions on the SSSUK committee.
- More articles are required for *Sudan Studies*.

At the time of writing it appears that SSSUK is virtually assured of charitable status. Most of the negotiating with the Charity Commissioners has been completed and the treasurer hopes to confirm registration by the time of the September AGM.

Finally can I emphasise that I am no longer based at Durham. Until I can give a following address, correspondence for *Sudan Studies* and matters of general administration should be addressed to the Assistant Editor 'Sudan Studies' (Miss H. F. Wood) c/o St Aidan's College, University of Durham, Windmill Hill, Durham City, DH1 3LJ. Subscriptions and financial matters should be addressed to the Treasurer 'SSSUK' (Miss L E Forbes) c/o The Library, University of Durham, Science Laboratories, South Road, Durham City, DH1 3LE. The respective telephone numbers are (091) – 374-3273 for Assistant Editor and (091) 374-3014 for the Treasurer.

SUDAN NOTES AND RECORDS

A number of SSSUK members have approached the Secretary and Treasurer with respect to obtaining back issues of *Sudan Notes and Records*. Bearing these comments in mind, the Secretary would welcome hearing from anyone who has:

- a reasonably complete run of back numbers which are no longer required
- an interest in purchasing back numbers in hard copy or microfiche
- any knowledge of the whereabouts of unwanted runs of back numbers



FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES AND SYMPOSIA

SSSUK CONFERENCE AND SYMPOSIUM - 1989

THIS WILL BE HELD AT THE SUDAN CULTURAL CENTRE AT RUTLAND GATE ON SEPTEMBER 30TH THIS YEAR. THE FORMAT WILL BE SIMILAR TO THE SYMPOSIA HELD IN 1987 and 1988, BUT THE COMMITTEE IS GOING TO REDUCE THE AFTERNOON SESSION BY ONE PAPER TO ALLOW THOSE ATTENDING TO DEPART EARLIER - THIS DECISION FOLLOWS A NUMBER OF PROBLEMS WITH TRAIN CONNECTIONS WHICH WERE EVIDENT LAST YEAR, ESPECIALLY FOR MEMBERS ATTENDING FROM PLACES OTHER THAN THE SOUTH EAST.

ANYONE WISHING TO PRESENT A PAPER ON THE THEME OF *LIFE AND SOCIETY IN THE SLOAN* SHOULD WRITE TO THE CHAIRMAN (PROFESSOR SANDERSON) BY THE END OF JUNE: HIS ADDRESS IS: 2 ALDER CLOSE, ENGLEFIELD GREEN, EGHAM, SURREY, TW20 0LU (0784-33018).

SECOND INTERNATIONAL SUDAN CONFERENCE - 1991

FOLLOWING THE SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE HELD IN KHARTOUM IN JANUARY LAST YEAR, IT HAS BEEN AGREED THAT A SECOND ONE SHOULD BE HELD IN 1991. THE CONFERENCE IS BEING ORGANISED BY SSSUK, SSA (USA), AND THE INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN AND ASIAN STUDIES (UNIVERSITY OF KHARTOUM). SSSUK IS ACTING AS HOST AND THE PROVISIONAL ARRANGEMENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

THE VENUE WILL BE DURHAM CASTLE WITH DATES CONFIRMED AS MONDAY 8TH APRIL TO THURSDAY 11TH APRIL. THE THEME WILL BE *MAN AND HIS ENVIRONMENT IN THE SUDAN*. AN ALL-INCLUSIVE PACKAGE OF ACCOMMODATION (IN DURHAM CASTLE), MEALS, CONFERENCE FEE AND SUNDRIES IS BEING ORGANISED AND EXACT PRICES SHOULD BE ANNOUNCED BY THE END OF THIS YEAR. THE ORGANISERS ANTICIPATE THAT THIS WILL BE A HIGH PROFILE CONFERENCE AND INTEREST IS ALREADY BEING SHOWN FROM A NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS ALREADY APPROACHED. IT IS VERY MUCH HOPED THAT MANY SSSUK MEMBERS WILL BE ABLE TO ATTEND, INCLUDING MEMBERS WITH 'CONDOMINIUM' EXPERIENCE. THE ORGANISERS ARE HOPING THAT MANY SUDANESE WILL BE PRESENT AND FUNDING IS BEING SOUGHT TO PAY FOR AS MANY AIR FARES AS POSSIBLE: IF YOU KNOW OF ANY SOURCES, COULD YOU PLEASE LET THE TREASURER KNOW (ADDRESS OPPOSITE ON PAGE 2).

SUDAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE - 1990

THE 1990 SSA CONFERENCE IS BEING HELD IN LEXINGTON (KENTUCKY) IN MID APRIL, ALTHOUGH EXACT DATES ARE YET TO BE CONFIRMED. MEMBERS OF SSSUK ARE REMINDED THAT THEY ARE ABLE TO ATTEND THE AMERICAN MEETINGS ON A RECIPROCAL ARRANGEMENT WHICH EXISTS BETWEEN THE

TWO SOCIETIES. ANYONE REQUIRING FURTHER INFORMATION SHOULD WRITE TO THE SECRETARY (VIA THE ASSISTANT EDITOR OF SUDAN STUDIES - ADDRESS OPPOSITE ON PAGE 2) - SEE ALSO PAGE 19 FOR A SUMMARY OF THE 1989 PAPERS.

NOMINATIONS FOR COMMITTEE

As a result of resignations at the next AGM by Professor Sanderson and Dr Wickens, nominations are called for candidates to stand for the posts of Chairman (one post) and as a member of the non-executive committee (one post). Nominations should be sent to the Secretary (via the Assistant Editor of *Sudan Studies* - see page 2) by the last day of August, in order to be acceptable according to the terms of the agreed SSSUK constitution.



THE GEZIRA SCHEME THE INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNT SYSTEM SEVEN YEARS ON

Pauline Rose presents an account of recent changes on the long-established Gezira Scheme.

The Sudan Gezira Scheme covers over 2 million *feddans* (nearly half of the irrigated land in the Sudan) between the Blue and White Nile, south of Khartoum. From 1912/13 until 1980/81 it was run by a joint account system which was a tripartite sharecropping arrangement between the Government, Sudan Plantation Syndicate (replaced by the Sudan Gezira Board in 1950), and the tenants. Following the advice of the World Bank Rist Report in 1966 and other similar studies, in 1981/82 there was a switch to an individual account system, based on individual land and water charges. The purpose of this change was to increase a farmer's production by "building-up the sense of initiative and responsibility of the farmer" (Rist, 1966), by linking his income to his productivity.

Under this new system land and water charges are given a fixed rate per *feddan* for each crop; the farmer is accountable for all his production, whereas under the former system share-cropping only applied to cotton production, so many farmers channelled their efforts into the production of other crops. However, this system of fixed land and water charges discriminates in favour of farmers with better quality land and soils. Internal factors which affect the crop, such as weather conditions, diseases and pests, are not taken into consideration and so could cause a serious reduction in the farmers' income. Under the previous system such effects on the farmer would be ameliorated by all three parties sharing the burden in cotton.

The percentage of land and water charges to total costs appear to have decreased from 1981/82 to 1986/87. The land and water charges per *feddan* for cotton are about double that for other crops, although this has the lowest figure for the percentage of total costs at 9.28%, which implies that cotton production is much more expensive per *feddan* than is the production of other crops. The implications of this are referred to later.

Although during the years that the new individual account system has been operating there has been some fluctuation in yield (which may partly be due to external factors), it does appear to have fulfilled its main objective: all the farmers in Bourtubeil village, in central Gezira, believed that their production had increased.



However, this change of system was not the only factor affecting production, for example, there was the Rehabilitation Programme financed by the World bank and other donor agencies. The first stage (1980/81) was granted US\$33.5 million for machinery, equipment, spare parts and similar items for immediate relief. This helped to arrest further deterioration which was being experienced in the second half of the 1970s due to shortages and delays in the supply of inputs and deterioration in maintenance (particularly of the irrigation systems). The second stage (1982/83 until 1990/91) aims at modernising the Scheme, and provides an investment of US\$365 million. Also, the significant devaluation of the Sudanese pound, which has occurred on several occasions since 1981 as part of the Stabilisation Programme, has meant a net nominal gain expressed in domestic currencies if international prices did not fall. However, this policy has meant a significant increase in the cost of imported inputs, such as fertilisers, pesticides and machinery for the farmers to bear.

The increase in costs of production have not been met by higher prices, which are set by the Government at the beginning of the season for cotton and wheat. The Union of Farmers noted that the price of wheat increased by 10.3% compared to last year, whilst land and water charges increased by 26.5% in addition to the increase in imported inputs, which may lead to bankruptcy for some farmers. In addition to this, the price of imported wheat is kept artificially low due to its exemption from the devaluation, which makes locally produced wheat appear uncompetitive. This situation is considered to be serious by the Union of Farmers, as wheat is a strategic item of food and yet the country is importing large quantities. There has been a general recognition of the shortage of wheat flour along with the problems of transportation from Port Sudan, which has created severe bread shortages in the capital.

Since the introduction of the Gezira Scheme, cotton has been the major export earner for the Sudan and has thus been a valuable source of hard currency. However, from the recent experience of the farmers, an ever increasing amount of hard currency is having to be recycled for the purchase of imported inputs. It has also been noted that over-dependence on cotton production has created difficulties in Sudan's Balance of Payments, especially during the last season due to a fall in world commodity prices. Cotton production has traditionally received a comparative advantage in the Sudanese economy, but now perhaps the gains are being outweighed by its additional costs. Cotton production is more costly per *feddan* than other crops: not only does it require a



larger proportion of input per *feddan*, but its collection is also labour intensive and so a large amount of seasonal labour is generally required; higher prices in the market in 1988 meant that labour demanded higher wages and so the farmer had to pay £S5 per basket, compared with £S3 the previous year, which has greatly increased his wage bill.

Farmers in Bortubeil village have found it to their advantage to switch from the production of extra long staple cotton, which requires a lot of attention and is more prone to pest and disease problems, to the shorter *Shambat* variety, which is easier to produce and, under the individual account system, provides the farmer with greater returns. However, a shortage of seed has led many of them to switch from the production of cotton to other crops in some cases.

The most serious argument against the individual account system is the effect it has on equality. Under the joint account system all farmers received equal shares, but under the new system farmers receive profits according to their yields, which relate not only to work and effort, but also to soil quality, pests and diseases. This is likely to accentuate the gap between rich and poor farmers, since some are in a better position to deal with such problems. The accumulation of private capital at the expense of the other farmers is also encouraged and there is likely to be less cooperation between the farmers since they are now only interested in their own production.

In the past few years it has been noticed that there has been an increase in the proportion of absentee landlords, as land owners are encouraged to leave their land in the hands of wage labour (traditionally from Kordofan, Darfur and Nigeria). The absentee landlords are likely to exploit the wage labour as they are only interested in their own profits. It is also expected that land will gradually be concentrated in the hands of a few large land owners as the smaller ones are unable to keep up with the modern techniques and so are dispossessed. Although there is a set limit to the size of farm holdings, farmers have noted that some have been able to transfer land into their hands by buying it under other names.

The experience of the last seven years has shown that the individual account system has fulfilled its objective of increasing productivity, thanks to its effect on incentives, although it is clear that productivity has also increased in these years due to the other factors mentioned, such as the Rehabilitation Programme. The composition of output appears to be changing under this system, and it has been suggested that it may be



appropriate to aim at self-sufficiency in wheat. The increase in efficiency has been at the expense of equality and it is expected that inequality will continue to increase as the richer land owners continue to consolidate their land holdings and rely more heavily on wage labour.

The Rist Report suggested that the production of other crops, in addition to cotton, should increase so that the foreign exchange earnings or savings they can bring about should improve the Balance of Payments. It may also be advisable for the Government to encourage the production of wheat because importing it uses up scarce hard currency. The individual account system is able to offer incentives to wheat production by lowering the proportion of land and water charges for wheat as well as increasing the price at which farmers can sell it.

Research for this article was conducted during the Spring of 1988.



PEACE IN SUDAN GROUP

The *Peace In Sudan Group* was launched at a meeting of Friends of Sudan in London on November 30th 1988. The Group brings together a number of people who have lived and worked in Sudan, and who are deeply saddened by Sudan's civil war, the harm it is doing to the entire nation and the tragic waste of life it continues to cause.

The *Peace In Sudan Group* is voluntary and non-partisan. Individuals join on a strictly personal basis, not as representatives of political, religious, or charitable organisations. The Group is not affiliated to any institution or movement, nor is it a fund-raising agency.

A peace process has been initiated in Sudan and has received enthusiastic popular support across the nation. The *Peace In Sudan Group* exists to cooperate with the Sudanese people in facilitating a peaceful, lasting end to the civil war, to open up avenues that may allow the different sides to the conflict to reconcile their differences, and to help promote a climate that will be conducive to reconciliation.

The Group does not support any side in the conflict, nor seek to apportion blame to any individual or faction. The Group believes that the continuation of the war can only lead to further national suffering, to further loss of resources for development and to tremendous harm to Sudan's position in the international community.

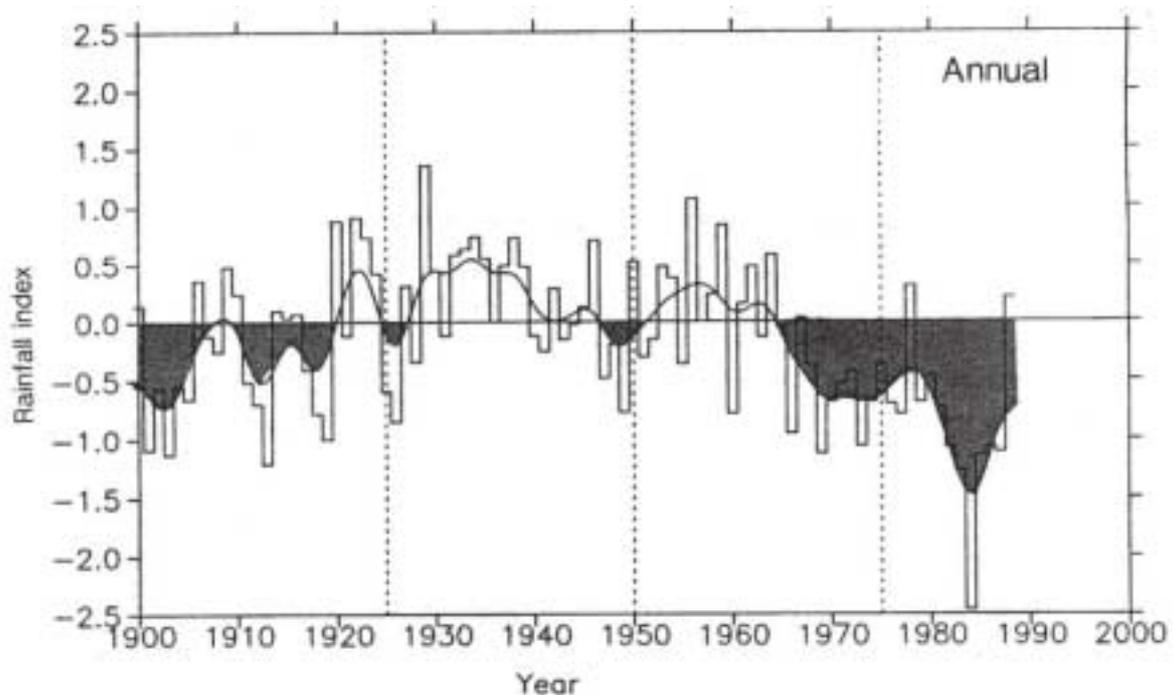


RECENT RAINFALL IN PERSPECTIVE

Mike Hulme contributes to the series of environmental updates.

The following diagram shows normalised annual rainfalls for central Sudan since records began. Statistical terms such as *normalised values* and *standard deviations* may not be familiar to all readers of *Sudan Studies*, but the main point to note is that values above the line are wetter than the average for the last 80 years and those below the line are drier. Two features of recent concern are shown clearly on the diagram: the dry (famine) year of 1984 is shown to be much drier than any other year recorded this century, whereas the wet (floods) year of 1988 is shown to be only marginally wetter than the century average - what was different about that year was the structure of the Wet season, with fewer but much heavier showers than hitherto experienced. For a fuller explanation see the article by Hulme and Trilsbach (*Weather*), which is mentioned in the reference list at the back of this issue.

Dr Mike Hulme is a researcher at the Climatic Research Unit (University of East Anglia, and also writes a regular weather and climate column in the Guardian.





SURVEY OF THE SUDAN POLITICAL SERVICE

Part One: THE PROJECT

A H M Kirk-Greene (with assistance from Sir Gawain Bell) begins a two part survey of the retirement and re-employment of Britain's Overseas Administrators in the Sudan Political Service.

This paper describes and seeks support for a section of a research project in progress. The overall project sets out, firstly, to compile the 'second career statistics and data relating to Britain's former overseas civil services who, typically, found their careers prematurely terminated at independence; secondly, to assess, or at least estimate, the socio-economic impact of these additional - often unusual - skills in post-war Great Britain; and thirdly, to examine what such a study of often premature retirement might indicate about the kind of men and women originally recruited for a life-time service in overseas civil services - a career opportunity which no longer exists and which may soon seem as archaic and as inexplicable to younger Britons as that of, say, the lamplighter, ostler or mercer.

DEFINITIONS AND PARAMETERS

Several of these concepts stand in need of further explanation. 'Britain's Overseas Civil Services' here means the former Indian Civil Service (ICS) and possibly the Indian Political Service (IPS), Sudan Political Service (SPS) and Colonial Administrative Service (CAS - later HMOCS), some members of which have raised doubts about the accuracy of the neater shorthand of 'imperial civil services'. At this stage, the enquiry is limited to Administration and does not yet extend to the record of the professional or technical services, e.g. the respective agricultural, education, forestry, legal, medical, police or public works departmental staff, etc. In due course it must do so.

By 'second career' is primarily meant the salaried (i.e. excluding voluntary work) employment secured by these former officials after they had retired. While, in general, this relates to 'premature retirement' from a would-be career service, in the case of this particular section of the Project (the SPS) the research is likely to be extended so as to take in officials whose careers were not only cut short by independence but also those who retired, under the normal conditions of service, in the period 1919-39.

'At Independence' subsumes an element of elasticity. The ICS came to an end on 14 August 1947, with a drastically reduced British recruitment to its permanent and pensionable cadres after 1940. The Sudan became independent on 1 January 1956 but virtually all the SPS had



already departed by the end of 1954, with the exception of the four who were retained on the Governor-General's staff. Contract terms had largely replaced pensionable ones from 1945, and in 1947 the distinction disappeared. SPS recruitment totally ceased with the appointment of the last three probationers in 1952 (F J Sidwell, P A R Withers, B U Beyes). While the Colonial Office closed in 1966, and there are today a handful of members of the former HMOCS serving overseas governments (notably in Hong Kong or in short-term posts), the terminal date is most conveniently taken to be the moment when recruitment on permanent and pensionable terms came to an end, commonly two to four years before national independence, for example Nigeria (1956), Kenya (1960) and Tanganyika (1959).

The ICS section, which was initiated by the present writer in 1982, has since been handed on to Dr Ann Ewing, author of a Cambridge Ph.D. thesis on that service. The CAS section is still at the data collection stage, though the present writer has published two pilot pieces ('The Diaspora of the District Officer', *West Africa*, Feb 6 and 15, 1982). The SPS section, in which the present writer has been notably reinforced by the collaboration of Sir Gawain Bell, has now reached the stage of being exposed to this preliminary public discussion. In this paper, we shall not be paying any attention to the second and third objectives of the overall Project described earlier, although comments, reflections and ideas on them will be welcome by the compilers.

COLLECTING THE SUDAN DATA:

The material has been compiled from four principal sources:

- i) Replies to a questionnaire sent to former members of the SPS through the courtesy of their dining club and with the necessary fair wind from one of its moving spirits, Dr P P Howell, under cover of his circular letter of 30th April 1983. A weakness of this source is that it is conspicuously short of the post-war entry.
- ii) An examination of the post-career details listed in the privately printed 'Blue Book' (Sudan Political Service, 1st ed. 1930, reprinted 1956), being a summary record of nearly 400 officers who served in the SPS between 1899 and 1952. A limitation of this source is that it is not complete, for example it includes only those whose appointments were confirmed at the end of the two probationary years; short-term contract officers are not included; and there are acknowledged to be several involuntary oversights.



- iii) A scrutiny of the relevant volumes of Who's *Who* and *Who was Who*, and of the obituaries appearing in *The Times* and, most extensively, in the *Sudan Church Review*. This source has its own built-in weakness in that not everybody attained sufficient eminence to warrant inclusion or notice, though the last named is admirably wide-ranging.
- iv) A consultation of a number of recent works which have a predominant interest in the personnel side of the SPS, namely the two books, *Shadows in the Grass* (1983) by R O Collins and *The British in the Sudan: The Sweetness and the Sorrow* (1984) edited by R O Collins and Francis M Deng; the two articles 'The Sudan Political Service and the British Public School System' by J A Mangan, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 15, 4 (1982), and 'Servant or Saboteur? The Sudan Political Service during the Crucial Decade 1946-56' by D Sconyers, *British Society for Middle East Studies*, 14, 1 (1988); and a monograph, *The Sudan Political Service: A Preliminary Profile*. (1982) by A H N Kirk-Greene. A vulnerability here is that in a number of respects they depend heavily - some more than others - on item (ii).

To date, the product is the tabulation of some 200 names in accordance with the format shown in the appendix. To these details, however, my colleague, Sir Gawain Bell, is currently adding information culled from (iii) above; date of death, taken from his own scrupulously maintained copy of (ii) above; honours awarded; and further details under the final column, based on personal knowledge. We confidently expect our final corpus to approach 300 entries - not a negligible proportion, when one recalls that in the whole of its fifty-six years of existence, the Sudan Political Service recruited less than 400 officers on permanent and pensionable or, after 1947, on long contract terms.

Two further points need to be made. In common parlance, the 'second career' concept is logically applied to those persons (in this case Britain's overseas administrators) who joined one of the three services listed earlier, with the legitimate expectation of making it their career. In the CAS this conveniently meant serving to the age of 55 (in the British Diplomatic or Home Civil Service retiring age is a rigid 60, and in British Universities it is 65 or, until recently at Oxford and Cambridge, 67). In the SPS, however, retirement age, that is to say with full pension benefits, could be as low as 48. This was done deliberately so as, *inter-alia* to allow an officer, should he wish, to retire to the UK still young enough to embark on some



sort of recognisable second career. As we can already tell from our preliminary findings, even before the Second World war quite a few took advantage of this unusual concession.

In our data we have not drawn a distinction between a second career or a voluntary early retirement on the one hand and, on the other, involuntary retirement or premature loss of career, though of course the columns showing age, date of entry and date of retirement enable probable identification of which circumstances it was. Nor, in establishing our subsequent profiles, will it always be convenient to differentiate between a single second career or a series of further jobs, although again the details can be derived from the last column.

This article will continue in the next edition of Sudan Studies with a summary of the preliminary findings.

APPENDIX

Name	Year of Birth	School	University	Date of Joining	Date of Retirement	Last Rank Held	Post-Retirement Occupation
Hawley, D. F.	1921	Radley	New College, Oxford	1941 (Legal Dept. 1947)	1955	Chief Registrar of the Judiciary	HM Diplomatic Service, 56-81 (Dubai 58; Cairo 62; Baghdad 68; Ambassador/High Commsr. Muscat 71; Malaysia 77). Adviser, Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank 1981. Chairman of Ewbank Preece Ltd 82. Council member, Reading University 81. Author.
Henderson, E. D. D.	1903	Glenalmond	University College, Oxford	1926	1953	Provincial Governor	COI 1953. Secretary of Spalding Educ. Trust 53 Vice Pres., World Cong. of Faiths 66. Author
Hibbert	1905	Radley	Worcester College, Oxford	1928 (Educn, 1929)	1954	Director of Education	Headmaster, Portsmouth G. S. 54-65. Director of British Solomon Is 66-70. Establishments Officer, S. W. Electricity Board 55-56. Farmer, Co Kildare, 56-.



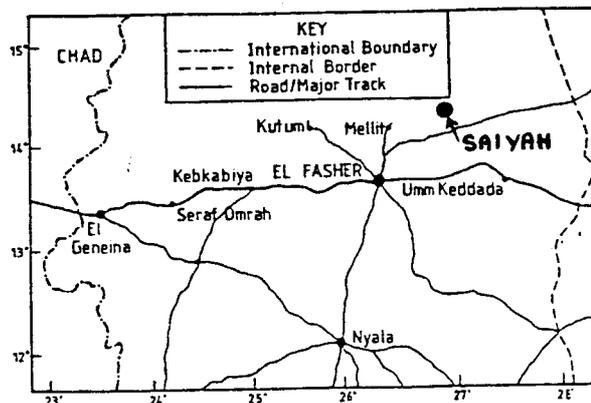
SURVIVING POVERTY AND FAMINE IN A NORTH DARFUR VILLAGE (Part One)

Ray Bush begins a two-part assessment of the effects of famine around El Saiyah village in Northern Darfur.

The literature and research on famine and food security in Sudan is voluminous. Little work, however, has focused on the strategies adopted by rural dwellers to cope with hunger and distress and the consequences of those strategies for the local community. This brief paper traces the consequences of surviving poverty in a Northern Darfur village and links it to the attempts, in 1987, of a local NGO to assist in relieving distress caused by famine. The argument is that Famine Early Warning Systems (EWS) and other forms of outside intervention must recognise the dynamic structure of local 'coping' mechanisms. To ignore them, as previous Darfur Workshops on Relief and Rehabilitation have tended to do, is to neglect one of the more hopeful and positive results of a period of 'lean years'.

FOOD INSECURITY IN RARFUR:

Rainfed agriculture in the province of Northern Darfur is an extremely difficult way to secure livelihood especially in the area north of Kebkabiya (see Figure).



Sustained yields of millet, the province's major food crop, requires a minimum of 400mm of rainfall. Despite being relatively drought resistant, the cultivation of millet after 100 days still

requires rain which will soak to a depth of two feet at regular two week intervals. When in 1984 only 41% of the thirty year monthly average (1951-80) rainfall fell in El Fasher this marked the culmination of a series of early warning, that persistent rural poverty had increased the vulnerability of many rural dwellers so that they were now unable to fight off famine.



An impending crisis had been signalled earlier with larger than usual patterns of migration from Northern Darfur to the south and south-east into mechanised schemes in Kordofan and still further afield to the Central Region.

Despite these indicators and the presence of displaced Darfurians in Omdurman, President Nimeiri refused to recognise an emergency.

Save the Children Fund (UK) estimated that between 50-150,000 deaths were due to starvation in Darfur in the period 1984/5. A United Nations report in August 1984 suggested that as much as 24% of Darfur's total population of three and a half million were 'seriously affected' by famine. One of the many villages which was seriously affected by famine was El Saiyah about 32 km north east of Mellit, populated mainly by Berti, numbering some 800-900 in the village and up to 6,000 in the village council area of 29 villages. The Islamic Relief Agency was the first to establish a feeding centre in Saiyah for 8,000 in 1984. Nevertheless, this assistance was not enough to prevent an increase in recorded death rates for the village from three a month before the famine to an average of 15 a month for 1984.

By November 1985 the village had an additional 5,000 migrants from neighbouring famine affected villages while those strong and fit enough migrated from Saiyah to find work in El Fasher, Mellit or even Libya. This access to cash was probably the major lifeline which saved people from death through starvation: remittances from relatives working nearby or in neighbouring countries supplemented access to food aid and enabled many families to purchase additional food at the new increased prices.

Like much of Sudan, Saiyah received better rains in 1985 but they were still inadequate for the growth of good millet. The rainy season ended early in 1985 for Northern Darfur which led to crop failures. In 1986, an OXFAM/SCF post-harvest survey reported yields in north east Darfur of 11-38 kg/ha compared with an average for Darfur in the period 1960-1970 of 250-650 kg/ha. Unlike 1985 and 1986 the structure of rains in 1987 took a different form. Hitherto, the pattern of rainy seasons in Sudan had been for their premature end. In contrast, while the total rainfall in El Fasher by mid-September 1987 was the highest since 1970, the bulk of that rain fell in the month of August. By that time farmers had already planted when the rains first appeared early



in May and after others, who had the resources, had planted as many as five times because of the early lack of sufficient rain for the millet to germinate.

There is a considerable variation in the microclimates of Northern Darfur between areas like Um Keddada and Saiyah. While no accurate rainfall data exists for these locations variations in millet and livestock prices do give an indication that continued poor rainfall - and other social and economic factors - continue to create lean years.

PREVENTING A FUTURE FAMINE WITH AN EARLY WARNING SYSTEM:

The Sudanese Red Crescent now operates a famine early warning system for much of Northern Darfur. It was established in April 1986 and shares two crucial dimensions with other small scale EWS. First, for its success in predicting famine it relies extensively upon information supplied to it by informants. Second, we might delete the term famine from the EWS because in effect, the information sought by such procedures is as much concerned with monitoring non-famine indicators as it is with famine *per se*.

The Red Crescent EWS has become well established at the local village level where data is collected and information sought on a range of agro-socio-economic issues. There are, however, a number of shortcomings which might diminish the validity of that information. For example, it is likely that while the main currency of the EWS is information then the structures and channels through which that is gained must be constantly monitored. If they are not, the ability of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to fully understand the shifts in village profiles will be hindered and so too will strategies for rehabilitation.

The Red Crescent EWS in North Darfur is co-ordinated by district officers in the province capital, El Fasher, while data is monitored by a field officer in Khartoum. Each participating Red Crescent branch committee completes weekly returns to the El Fasher office indicating rainfall and planting patterns, livestock and grain prices, wage rates and population movements. While there are considerable advantages to the collection of this data at the village level by local participating villagers, there are also a number of areas where biases and inconsistencies in data collection may occur.

The Red Crescent committee in Saiyah is an extension of the drought committee initiated during the 1984 famine by the teachers and traders in the village. The first



function of this committee was to give information to NGOs during the drought and it was chaired by the village medical assistant. The committee of the new Red Crescent branch in Saiyah was established following a general meeting of all the men that could attend in the rural council area of Saiyah. From a low turn out 'responsible and loyal men' became members of the 18 man committee if they were nominated and there were no objectors. This committee meets twice a month with the facility for an emergency meeting if necessary. The secretary of the committee, a local teacher, completes each week the typed forms supplied by the Red Crescent in El Fasher and he classifies households into high, medium and low income families.

The exclusion of women from the committee might not be surprising in an Islamic environment: there are nevertheless exceptions to it. In another village, Kebkabiya, a woman was a significant and senior member of a drought committee often encouraged to protest the village plight at local government level where the men felt embarrassed or otherwise reluctant. The absence of women from the committee in Saiyah and therefore, significantly from the formal information channels through which data on changes in the fortunes of households is transmitted, does not now reflect the important position of women in the community. As a consequence of the drought, and increased male migration, women are often *de facto* heads of household, and exercise considerable decision making influences in their own right.

From a random sample of fifteen households in February 1987 eight were headed by women and from another sample in September the same year, ten out of twelve were headed by women. Despite the increased frequency of women as heads of household since the drought, usually because husbands have migrated for work, they remain excluded from the Red Crescent committee. The reason given for their exclusion by the committee secretary was that the work was too strenuous: "committee members may be called upon to put out fires, distribute grain and transport relief supplies to neighbouring villages." It was impossible for women to do these committee chores because the woman's place was in the home and looking after children.

The Red Crescent decides upon the amount of relief to distribute according to the severity of the weekly reports which are compiled monthly when transport allows the presence of the Khartoum monitor to visit El Fasher. There are difficulties, however, in the collection of reliable information about the changes in the life chances of individual



households. There are few safeguards in how information on villagers' conditions is assessed, and there is no mechanism or channel for complaint by village members concerning the needs assessment procedure and the assessment of individual food needs. This lack of safety mechanism to ensure more thorough exchange of information is seen particularly as an issue by migrants into Saiyah who are still perceived by many as 'outsiders'.

Despite the difficulties experienced by migrant families into Saiyah and the more general possibility of personal antagonism between village members to colour the impressions gained through the EWS, and notwithstanding either, the non-representation of women of the Red Crescent committee - at a time when as we will see, women's work is intensifying - the Red Crescent EWS has proved invaluable as a guide to shifts in local terms of trade and social conditions of rural producers.

The EWS has carefully monitored shifts in the economic processes of employment and therefore local entitlements to food. It has also, although not in a quantitative way, kept a close watch on variations in the microclimate of Northern Darfur and in damage to crops from pests. The clear advantage of the EWS employed by the Sudanese Red Crescent is that it is village based. This has clear advantages over the methodology employed by agencies like UNDP or USAID where 'windshield' observations alone might be used to forecast crop growth or a combination of this and satellite imagery. A common fault, however, with each of these EWS is that while at least the Sudan Red Crescent EWS does try to recognise the economic and social character of the villages which operate its system, it still does not adequately take account of the changing nature and local transformation of communities which has been set in motion, or in some cases exacerbated, because of recent drought and famine.

Despite the important local character of the EWS which the Sudan Red Crescent coordinates we need to understand the way in which local villagers, in areas where there is an EWS, have tried to cope with recent 'lean years' and what strategies for survival they have employed. An assessment of these strategies is important because it will help to illuminate further the way in which channels of communication, so important for the efficient running of an EWS, become obscured. It also helps us see more clearly the way in which social and economic divisions in the community have become exacerbated. This has happened because recent famine and 'classic' notions of



integrated communities within Northern Darfur need to be recast to recognise the disintegrative impact which food insecurity has had, and continues to have in the long and slow period of recovery.

In the next issue of Sudan Studies Ray Bush looks at survival strategies in El Saiyah village and the strains on the community. Dr Bush is lecturer in Politics at Leeds University.

8th SUDAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE RHODE ISLAND 1989

The 8th Sudan Studies Association Conference was held at Providence (Rhode Island) between 13th and 18th April this year. The theme was *The Role and Responsibility of the Intellectual to Sudanese Development* - the local organisers were Richard and Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban.

The panels were as follows:

- Panel 1: Education in the Sudan
- Panel 2: Perspectives on Sudanese Literature
- Panel 3: Sudanese Politics and Ideology
- Panel 4: Sudanese Politics: the current crisis
- Panel 5: The Anthropology of the Sudan
- Panel 6: Sudanese History
- Panel 7: Constitutional Crisis: legal issues
- Panel 8: The Problem of the Southern Sudan
- Panel 9: Nationalism and Notable Intellectuals

The panels were supported by a number of films, a debate and excursions to places of local interest.

A detailed list of papers presented in each of the panels and other information about the conference can be obtained from the SSSUK Secretary.



SUDANESE STUDIES IN GERMANY

Jörg Adelberger summarises the proceedings of a symposium on Sudan Studies held in Germany last October.

In Nieder-Ofleiden, a small village 80km north of Frankfurt, a symposium on Sudanese studies in Germany took place on 22nd and 23rd October 1988, organised and sponsored by the Association for International Scientific Communication (AISC). Its purpose was to bring together scholars from different disciplines working on Sudanese topics or having an active interest in the Sudan, in order to promote communication between them and encourage future cooperation. In addition, it was considered necessary to discuss the pros and cons of founding a *German Sudanese Studies Association*.

The participants were scholars from the humanities - mainly Anthropologists, but also students of Islam and linguists. The presence of Professor Rolf Herzog, one of the most prominent figures in Sudanese studies in Germany, was much appreciated by his younger colleagues.

The following papers were presented:

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| U. Braukämper | <i>Prospects for Ethnographic Research and Documentation in the Sudan</i> |
| F. Rheingans | <i>Current Research on the Sedan at the University of Bayreuth</i> |
| R. Rottenburg | <i>The Notion of 'Akkreszenz' in Modern Ethnography - the case of the Lemwareng-Nuba</i> |
| H. Langenbahn | <i>The Problem of Development in Traditional Agriculture - the case of the Ingessana</i> |
| S. Reichmuth | <i>Genealogy. Dating and Historical Consciousness - the case of the Shukria</i> |
| B. Streck | <i>The Discovery of a Secret Vocabulary and the Socio-Linguistic Problems of Research Among Nile Valley Gypsies</i> |
| R. Husmann & C Meier | <i>Migration, Tribal Sports and the Wrestling Matches of Nuba People in Khartoum</i> |
| H. Müller | <i>Ethnography, Civil War and the State of Research on the</i> |



Topotha

T. Zitelmann

Political Boundaries, the Strategic 'Hinterland' and Frontier-Crossing Mobility between Ethiopia and Sudan

Ethnographic films by B. Streck and R. Husmann on recycling techniques of the Halab, slides taken by U. Braukämper on the new exhibition of the Ethnographic Museum in Khartoum, and a film from the 1960s on wrestling in the Nuba Mountains were shown.

In the general discussion at the end of the meeting it was decided to prepare a publication containing the papers listed above and further ones by other participants, should they be offered. After some debate the participants eventually came to the unanimous conclusion that there should be no separate *German Sudanese Studies Association*, besides the societies already existing in Great Britain, France and the USA. The disadvantage of such an association would lie not only in the danger of national separatism, but also in the formal and legal obstacles which would have to be overcome. The objectives of such an association could be attained without a high degree of institutionalisation. It was therefore decided to remain an informal interest group, and to organise similar meetings approximately every two years with administrative support from the AISC. In order to maintain and foster international communication it was decided that scholars should be urged to join either SSSUK or the SSA on an individual basis.

Jörg Adelberger can be contacted at the Institute of Historical Ethnology at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, FRANKFURT, West Germany.

CURRENT AFFAIRS IN SUDAN

Charles Gurdon continues his series on contemporary political and economic issues in the Sudan. The column is based on reports prepared for the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), but the author stresses that this column presents a personal viewpoint and does not necessarily reflect the views of EIU, SSSUK or anyone else.

THE POLITICAL SCENE:

The signing of an agreement on November 18th 1988 between the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and the rebel Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) marked an end to the political stagnation which has characterised Sudan since the overthrow of former



president Nimeiri in April 1985. The logjam was broken and since November the pace of political activity has been very rapid.

There were huge and joyous demonstrations in the streets of Khartoum when DUP leader Mohamed Osman al-Mirghani returned from Addis Ababa. A few days later there was a National Islamic Front (NIF)-organised demonstration against the peace agreement but it was poorly attended and was physically and verbally attacked. These events surprised the Prime Minister, Sadiq el Mahdi, and he was eventually forced to give his half-hearted stamp of approval to the Addis Ababa peace accord.

By contrast, the NIF refused to support the accord and its leader, Dr Hassan el-Turabi, said that his party would leave the government if plans to reintroduce Islamic *Sharia* law were suspended. Three NIF MPs from Darfur, who supported the peace process, disapproved of their party's opposition and decided to resign the party whip and sit as independent MPs.

Sadiq tried to hijack the peace process by insisting on pre-conditions and preliminary talks with the SPLA rather than simply endorsing the DUP-SPLA accord. He was caught between hard-line NIF opposition to any compromise and the wish to take the credit, which actually belonged to the DUP, for a political settlement.

On December 21st the Umma Party and NIF majority in parliament voted in favour of the Prime Minister's motion authorising him to go ahead with arrangements with for the convening of the national constitutional conference on December 31st. The DUP, left-wing and regional parties voted against the motion because it stopped short of actually endorsing the DUP-SPLA accord.

In December the government alleged that there were two attempted *coup d'Etat*, This gave the government the excuse it needed to impose a state of emergency on December 28th, which was followed by an increase in the minimum wage but also major price increases. This immediately provoked a wave of riots and demonstrations with hundreds of riot police being deployed in Khartoum, Wad Medani and Atbara.

After three days of demonstrations and a wave of public sector strikes the Cabinet eventually revoked the sugar, but not the petrol, price increase. Despite this, the demonstrations continued for a fourth day when two people were killed and perhaps a



hundred were injured. The demonstrators shouted slogans against the NIF's 'religious merchants' and also shouted "*don't give in Abu Dijin*", which was a reference to Mohamed Osman al-Mirghani's nickname.

The calls worked and on December 28th the DUP's patience finally ran out. It resigned from the government in protest at both the economic policies, which had led to the riots, and the refusal of the other coalition members to endorse its peace accord with the SPLA. This led to wholesale cabinet and administrative changes.

Eventually on February 1st a new coalition government was formed with the Umma Party taking ten portfolios and the NIF eight, with four going to token southerners and one to a Nuba. Its composition immediately provoked the resignation of the Minister of State for Finance, Dr Ibrahim el-Tigani el-Tayeb. More importantly, the Defence Minister, General (rtd) Abdel Magid Hamed Khalil, eventually resigned in mid-February in protest at the government's failure to support the DUP-SPLA accord. This signalled the inevitable collapse of the government. Despite Khalil's past links with former President Nimeiri, he is widely respected as a 'soldier's soldier' and someone who was largely untainted by the corruption of the latter part of the Nimeiri era. He is probably the most able man in the country and the only one who could lead it out of its current morass of problems. Without him the government quickly degenerated into a bunch of squabbling politicians that it actually was.

The day after his resignation, the army's commander-in-chief, General Fathi Ahmed Ali, delivered an ultimatum, which had been signed by 150 officers above the rank of colonel, to the Prime Minister. It gave the government one week to accept the DUP-SPLA peace accord and to form a broad-based government.

The Prime Minister procrastinated and tried to fudge the issue by playing for time. Eventually, after Sadiq's usual brinkmanship, the agreement was signed by 48 political parties and trade unions on the night before he had threatened to resign. Although the army's ultimatum forced him to reach the agreement, in some ways it is a victory for Sadiq el Mahdi because he has remained in power.

A new broad based government was sworn in to office on March 25th. The 23 strong Cabinet includes members of Umma (8), DUP (6), Communist (1), Sudan National (1)



and southern parties (4), with two seats going to the trade unions and the Defence Minister being independent.

THE CIVIL WAR:

While the politicians squabbled in Khartoum, the SPLA intensified its campaign and won a number of important military victories, including the capture of Nasir on January 26th. Like the temporary loss of the northern Sudanese towns of Kurmuk and Geissan in Blue Nile Province in late 1987, the fall of Nasir was a psychological body-blow for the army and the government. The Prime Minister called on the people to provide food and other material and moral support for the army, and pledged that the government was committed to liberating every inch of territory seized by the rebels which it has failed to do. Although the capture of Nasir was important, it was not the only SPLA victory. In late February and early March it captured the three strategically important towns of Torit, Nagichot and Nimule in eastern Equatoria. Torit had been under siege for months and the population had fallen from 20,000 to 7,000 because of death from starvation.

FMIINE AID AND REFUGEES:

It has been estimated that over 250,000 people died in southern Sudan last year as a direct and indirect result of the civil war. The aid agencies are, therefore, determined to ensure that sufficient food aid gets to the regions to avoid a repeat of last year's problems. The World Food Programme (WFP) estimated that 530,000 displaced civilians would need food in 1989 but admitted that this number was likely to be an under-estimation. Hopefully the formation of the new government will soon produce a ceasefire and an end to the misery of the southern civilian population. If it is not there then it can be expected that things will deteriorate during the oncoming rainy season when the SPLA has the military advantage and food aid cannot get through to the besieged towns.

THE ECONOMY

Before the November meeting of the Club of Paris creditors, the government unveiled its long-awaited Economic Recovery and Development Programme (ERDP) for the four year period ending in 1992. It focuses on changing the structure and management



of the economy. Its goals include sustained economic growth of 4%-5%, reduced inflation, less reliance on foreign aid, the ability to meet the country's basic food requirements and meeting the people's basic needs.

The response to the ERDP at the Paris meeting of November 29th, which was attended by representatives of ten Western countries; the EC; the IMF; the UN; and six Islamic, Arab and African development funds, was generally favourable. They pledged \$300 million of emergency assistance to cope with the after-effects of the devastating floods and indicated that further substantial aid could follow if the government undertook a comprehensive economic adjustment programme and if there was a ceasefire in the civil war.

Besides the \$300 million, the World Bank and the government were confident that an additional \$66.5 million would be provided by Japan and two Arab development funds. The combined total of \$366.5 million and the government's own contribution of \$41 million would provide the \$407 million that the World Bank's mission has estimated will be necessary to finance the reconstruction of the country after the floods.

New debt statistics from the World Bank's 1988/9 debt tables show that the estimated total debt rose from \$9,568 million in 1986 to \$11,126 million in 1987.

OUTLOOK

The new government of national unity has agreed to the terms of the DUP-SPLA agreement: the freezing of plans to introduce Islamic sharia law, the abrogation of all military pacts, lifting the state of emergency, and the calling of a ceasefire in the civil war. However, the fact that Sadiq el-Mahdi is still Prime Minister is not encouraging. Throughout his office he has seemed more interested in staying in power than in what he could do in office. He has avoided most major issues, thereby allowing the already perilous political and economic situation in Sudan to deteriorate markedly since he came to office in April 1988.

It is unlikely that the formation of a government of national unity will persuade the SPLA to accept an immediate ceasefire because its victories have got the army on the run. It will want to win as much territory and as many towns as possible so that it can come to the negotiating table with a stronger hand. The SPLA will therefore continue to



apply maximum military pressure right up to the last moment when a ceasefire comes into effect.

Once it has settled in, the government's next step will be to prepare the way for the proposed constitutional conference. It will probably be a repeat of the 1965 Round Table Conference which sought, unsuccessfully, to end the first Sudanese civil war. The SPLA will play an important role and, together with other southern and regional participants, will try to reduce the power of the *Khartoum clique* who they feel have misruled the country for so long. They will be pushing for a greater degree of autonomy and a larger share of development funds for the peripheral regions.

Assuming that the conference is a success, and this is by no means certain given the chaotic state of the Sudanese political scene, it should lead to a negotiated end of the civil war. Although virtually the whole country is sick of war, the negotiations will probably be long and difficult. The participants will represent the whole spectrum of political views from the left-wing secular parties who favour a more federal system of government, through the traditional ruling families which will not want to lose their power, to the right-wing NIF which will insist on an Islamic constitution and legal system for northern Sudan if not for the whole of the country. However, although it has been strained to breaking point in the past five years, the Sudanese peoples' capacity for reconciliation means that an end to the war is possible, but only just.

When the political settlement is finally worked it will almost certainly create a federal structure for the country which will give all the regions, and not just the south, a large measure of autonomy. The Addis Ababa Agreement will probably be the model but not the blueprint for the new settlement. Darfur and Kordofan might well insist on becoming the semi-autonomous 'Western Region', while an 'Eastern' or 'Northern' Region are less likely. Whatever its formal structure, the peripheral regions will insist on a fairer share of the development funds. Given that there is oil in Upper Nile and South Kordofan, as well as gold and other minerals in the Red Sea Hills, there does seem to be a case for a more equitable division.

In recent years the resolution of Sudan's chronic economic problems have been totally peripheral to the government's priorities of maintaining power, ending the war and



introducing Islamic sharia law. This was illustrated perfectly in December when the government withdrew IMF-imposed price increases when riots and demonstrations threatened its political security.

Despite the seriousness of Sudan's economic situation there is almost a feeling that it cannot get any worse and that the resolution of its political problems must take priority. It is therefore unrealistic to expect that there will be any progress towards the imposition of the austerity programme until after the new government is in place and the country is moving towards an end to the war.

If a political settlement to the civil war is to succeed, it is imperative that the international community, which includes the West, East and Arab world, provides Sudan with generous and sustained financial assistance. This should take two forms: assistance in rebuilding the war torn areas and a significant measure of debt relief.

If Sudan is to become, and remain, politically stable it is essential that the debt burden is lightened. At such a politically sensitive time it will be impossible for the new government to impose radical austerity measures on the population. Experience has shown that governments which have tried, such as Venezuela, Algeria, Egypt and Sudan, have sparked off riots which have sometimes overthrown them, as in the case of Sudan in April 1985.

On the secondary market, Sudanese debt is worth only about 2% of its face value and it is unrealistic to believe that most will ever be repaid. Although it was very limited in scale, the decision of the Midland Bank to give its Sudanese debt to UNICEF showed that there are ways in which the debt burden can be reduced. The alternative is that, just when the civil war is ending, there will be riots, demonstrations and political instability in northern Sudan which will, no matter what its composition, eventually overthrow the government.

Charles Gurdon is a researcher in geography at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) of the University of London. He also prepares quarterly political and economic reports on Sudan for the Economist Intelligence Unit.



A WELL AND A BUCKET

Iain Marshal recounts a memorable episode about the pitfalls of trying to conform to Sudanese daily routines.

Despite a year in the north already under my belt, my ‘Sudan skills’ were still very poor in some areas. A case in point was my laborious technique for drawing water out of the well in the grounds of Merowe mosque. Faced with the ‘*bakra*’, a contraption made out of welded iron spars which resembled a large skeletal cotton reel fixed over the mouth of the well, I would attach the handle of my bucket to the rope and feed it centimetre by centimetre into the black hole.

The mosque well was a focal point for small children who were sent to get water. These children would usually transfer their water into my bucket, totally ignoring my protestations; sometimes I would reach the well alone and the children would catch me in the middle of my clumsy pantomime. On these occasions the young water carriers could sit back and enjoy the spectacle and I could practice my Arabic on them while I coaxed my prize out of the abyss.

An embarrassing incident at the well forced me to learn the Arabic word ‘*jardal*’, which means bucket. I had for several weeks been acutely aware of the gulf in style which existed between my timid approach to the art of drawing water and the bold, ‘all or nothing’ method of the local infants. The boys and girls of Merowe would throw the bucket and rope into the gaping maw of the well, letting the take-up reel spin freely as the rope was paid out. At the last moment a childish hand was applied to the axle in the manner of a brake, slowing the hurtling bucket to a stop just before it crashed into the water.

Inevitably, the day came when I felt irresponsible enough to try this flamboyant technique for myself. My bucket was already in free-fall when a small boy appeared on the scene in time to catch the finale. Judging that the bucket was near its destination, I grabbed the metal axle intending to stop its movement. I was unprepared for the searing heat of the metal bar which was exposed to sunlight all day long, and leapt back from the well-head as if I’d received a jolt of electricity. I could feel the critical eyes of the boy drilling into my back as I went up to the slack rope and began rewinding. It was with little surprise and supreme embarrassment that I reached the end of the rope to find nothing more than the bucket’s handle attached there. The boy rather pointlessly tried to comfort me with the words, ‘*ta’al bukra*’, (come back tomorrow).

My mortification was only complete when the shop-keeper, who later taught me the word ‘*jardal*’, followed me down the row of shops to listen in on my transaction with another merchant, so anxious was he that I got my pronunciation correct when I bought my replacement.

Iain Marshall spent four years teaching in various schools in Northern Province and now works at the Vietnamese Centre at East Molesey, Surrey.



A CATHOLIC SUDAN

Sarah Van de Weyer reviews: A CATHOLIC SUDAN: DREAM, MISSION, REALITY by McEwan, D. Stabilimenlo Tipografica Julia s.r.l. – Via dei Granatieri, 39 – Rome (1987)

This is a fascinating history of the Roman Catholic Mission to the Sudan from the 1840s to the First World War. Using information from letters in archives in Vienna, Rome and Verona, the author traces the complex interweaving of the political aspirations and rivalries of European powers, the idealism of the Roman Catholic missionaries backed by ordinary Christians in Europe, and the economic and social realities in the Sudan.

Three factors stand out in this history. Firstly, the inhumanity of the slave trade (there are some short, rather gruesome accounts); secondly, the sheer muddled thinking and ill-considered actions in the first two decades of the mission, which resulted in about forty five missionaries dying within a few months of going to the Sudan (with only a hundred converts); thirdly, the Austro-Hungarian Empire's attitude to the Sudan may have contributed to Christianity being accepted in the south. The Austro-Hungarian government did not want the Sudan as a colony but it did want political and economic influence there, and to exclude other European powers. To this end it used the mission, establishing and supporting it, until one of its leaders, Bishop Daniel Comboni, steered the mission into an independent course. The result was a Christian presence that was uncompromised by European power and politics.

In the words of the author it is 'an incomplete *study because it presents by and large only one side of the story*' - the side of the leaders of the Apostolic Vicariate of Central Africa and the Austrian ambassadors in Khartoum that protected it. However, it is complete in that the side of the story presented is full and detailed, leaving the reader with a vivid impression of a few of the characters and forces that have affected the Sudan. It is clearly written and is a valuable book for students of this period of Sudan's history.

Sarah Van de Weyer is a member of the Community of Christ the Sower, at Little Gidding, Cambridgeshire.



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GEOLOGY IN THE SUDAN

Professor Dr G Franz is compiling a directory of all geologists who have worked in the Sudan. If you are a geologist and have not yet been contacted by him, please write to him at the address below, giving the following information: name and address of institution through which your geological work is conducted; year of research; areas of the Sudan where the study has taken place; and the main geological themes investigated.

His address is: Professor Dr G. Franz, Technische Universität Berlin, Sekr. EB310, Straße des 17 Juni 135, D-1000, Berlin 12.

SSSUK SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

Members of SSSUK should receive a subscription renewal form with this volume. The committee would be grateful for prompt renewal as SSSUK runs on a shoestring budget; reminders cost both money and administrative time and we would like to keep the need to do this to a minimum. For administrative reasons we are requesting that cheques should be paid in either £ sterling or \$US ONLY - under no circumstances can cheques written in Fr French be accepted as the transfer costs are greater than the values of the cheques.

TAIL PIECE

John Voll has written pointing out that during the Second World War, the Sudan *Monthly Record* published amusing items - he offers SSSUK this extract from No.166 (February/March 1943):

“5220. ...extracts from a Rationing Officer’s mail bag are appended: - (i) From a foreign resident who wished to explain that as a result of the return of his family he was giving up café-life and starting house keeping at home: - ‘I require a whiskey ration as my family has returned. Hitherto I made little messes in the street; now I propose to make a big mess in my house.’”

More offers of Tail-pieces or other articles for publication in Sudan Studies are requested by the Editor - please send your contributions as soon as possible please to the address listed on page 2.