

This edition of *Sudan Studies* was originally distributed in hard copy to members of the Sudan Studies Society of the United Kingdom. SSSUK now makes it freely available subject to licence and cordially invites readers to join the Society (see www.sssuk.org).

Sudan Studies content by *Sudan Studies* editors and writers is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported Licence](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/).



SUDAN STUDIES

Official Newsletter of the
SUDAN STUDIES SOCIETY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM
Number 7 January 1990

ISSN – [0952-049X]

CONTENTS

SOCIETY NEWS (7) — by A Trilsbach	2
Second International Sudan Studies Conference	3
AGM MINUTES (5)	4
SSSUK Annual Conference and Symposium	5
Pastoral Economies in Africa and Long—Term Responses to Drought	5
A Re—evaluation of the Resource and Future Water Demand of the Nile	5
The Least Developed and Oil Rich Arab Countries	5
FEATURE (12) Surviving Poverty and Famine in a Darfur Village 2 — R Bush	6
From Argo to Leicester Square — by I Marshall	12
Seen in the Telegraph (Well Translated Bard)	15
LETTER Did the Kushites Flee to the West: A Rejoinder - by W K R Hallam	16
FEATURE (13) Sudan Airways: An Historical Outline — by S Bush	17
CAN YOU HELP? (9)	19
FEATURE (14) Survey of the Sudan Political Service 2 - by A Kirk-Greene	20
CAN YOU HELP (10)	23
BOOK REVIEW (12) An Imperial Twilight - by M Daly	24
BOOK REVIEW (13) The Listening Ebony - by F Rehfish	25
BOOK REVIEW (14) Riding the Desert Trail — by I Marshall	26
BOOK REVIEW (15) Libya, Chad and the Central Sahara - by P Woodward	28
RECENT PUBLICATIONS (7)	30
TAIL-PIECE (5) — by A Casson	32

Unless stated otherwise, copyright of all material published in *SUDAN STUDIES* is retained by the *Sudan Studies Society of the United Kingdom*.



SOCIETY NEWS

By Tony Trilsbach, Secretary of SSSUK and Editor of *Sudan Studies*.

Much has happened since the last issue of *Sudan Studies* was published. Sudanese have witnessed a change of government and new attempts to resolve the Civil War, and at the same time watched a repeat of the 1984 famine crisis unfold in neighbouring Ethiopia. Within SSSUK itself changes have also taken place, although not so dramatically! It is with pleasure that I welcome our new Chair-person, Miss Joan Hall, to the hotseat. As a former MP she has had many formal and informal contacts with the Sudan, and looks forward to encouraging the Society in new directions. Although we welcome her warmly, we also thank the retiring Chairman, Professor Neville Sanderson, for his efforts in helping set up the Society and for having the vision for its initial creation. Also retiring from the committee at the Summer AGM was Dr Gerald Wickens. We thank him too for his contributions to the Society and wish him a happy retirement, not just from SSSUK, but also from Kew Gardens where his long and esteemed ecological and botanical studies of Sudan were based. He is replaced by Dr Mike Hulme, a climatologist from the Climatic Research Unit (University of East Anglia), who has written for *Sudan Studies* on many occasions and contributes regularly to the climate and weather columns of the Guardian newspaper.

Two further major items need to be brought to the attention of SSSUK members. Firstly, I am pleased to announce that we have formally obtained charitable status and secondly, more details are available about the 1991 international Sudan Studies conference (see opposite). Additionally, elsewhere in this issue details are announced of next year's SSSUK AGM/Symposium and other conferences taking place in various parts of Europe.

With specific regard to *Sudan Studies*, may I request more articles for publication. The reservoir is dwindling and I would welcome contributions on any subject matter. One regular feature missing from this issue is 'Current Affairs'. Charles Gurdon has been in Canada and has not been able to write his column for this edition. I get many letters saying how much this item is appreciated and I can perhaps take this opportunity to thank Charles for his efforts and say that many people look forward to further contributions in later issues. As another note on content, I should say that I have several book reviews at present and I have been unable to include them all in this issue. Four are included (the most ever carried in one volume) and another 'bumper crop' can be expected in the *Sudan Studies* Number 8.

Finally, could all members note a change in my address. All future correspondence concerning SSSUK or *Sudan Studies* should be sent to: Dr A Trilsbach, 10 Thornlea, Godinton Park, ASHFORD, Kent, TN23 3JX (Tel: 0233-63-4922).



SUDAN STUDIES: Number 7 (January 1990)

**SUDAN: ENVIRONMENT AND PEOPLE
SECOND INTERNATIONAL SUDAN STUDIES CONFERENCE**

TO BE HELD AT

**DURHAM CASTLE (UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM)
8TH-11TH APRIL 1991**

THE COMMITTEES OF THE SUDAN STUDIES SOCIETY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM (SSSUK - UK)
AND THE SUDAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION (SSA - USA) AND MEMBERS OF THE INSTITUTE OF
AFRICAN AND ASIAN STUDIES (IAAS - SUDAN),

CALL FOR PAPERS AND OFFER INVITATIONS TO PARTICIPATE.

THE SESSIONS WILL BE:

RECENT HISTORY
SUDANESE CULTURE
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
ECOLOGY AND BIOLOGY
'GENERAL SESSION'

ANYONE WISHING TO OFFER A PAPER FOR ANY OF THESE SESSIONS SHOULD SEND AN
ABSTRACT TO THE CONFERENCE ORGANISER BY THE END OF FEBRUARY 1990.

THE CONFERENCE WILL ALSO INCLUDE AN EXHIBITION AND VARIOUS PROMOTIONAL STANDS.

ACCOMMODATION WILL COST ABOUT £120 FULL-BOARD, WITH REDUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS.
FURTHER DETAILS AND INFORMATION ON NON-RESIDENTIAL RATES WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM
THE CONFERENCE ORGANISER AT THE ADDRESS BELOW.

MRS JANET STARKEY
SSSUK - CONFERENCE ORGANISER
C/O UNIVERSITY LIBRARY (PALACE GREEN SECTION)
DURHAM
DH1 3RN, UK.
(091-374-3028 OR 0388-526047)



SUDAN STUDIES SOCIETY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM MINUTES OF THE THIRD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Venue

Sudan Cultural Centre - 31/2 Rutland Gate, London, SW7 1PG.

Date

Saturday 30th September 1989, 12.00-12.15

Introduction

The retiring Chairman of SSSUK, Professor G N Sanderson, opened the proceedings with a formal welcome to participants.

Report of the Secretary and Editor - Dr A Trilsbach

The Secretary thanked those members who had contributed to *Sudan Studies* and suggested new themes for regular features. He appealed for more articles, especially on Southern themes, and also volunteers to review books. He announced the general outline of the 1991 Second International Sudan Studies Conference and responded to some technical questions on some of the logistical arrangements. He also apologised for delays in responding to correspondence but explained that this was due to his changing jobs and moving houses.

Report of the Treasurer - Miss L E Forbes

The Treasurer outlined the accounts (which were distributed on a separate sheet) and commented that the Society's financial reserves were generally healthy. She mentioned that there was a problem of dealing with overseas cheques which was being reviewed. She responded to a question about the large sum in the Current Account and told members that a large proportion of this sum was about to be transferred to a Deposit account. She concluded by confirming the charitable status of the Society.

Election of officers and other committee members

Both the Chairman, Professor Sanderson, and Dr Wickens were standing down and it was announced that their replacements, Miss Hall and Dr Hulme, were elected unopposed. Miss Hall was welcomed formally by those present (Dr Hulme was unable to attend the AGM and had previously sent his formal apologies). The retiring committee members were then thanked by the new Chairman, and the meeting closed at 12.15.



SSSUK ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND SYMPOSIUM - 1990

The next annual symposium/AGM of the Society will be held in London (venue to be decided) on Saturday September 29th 1990. Anyone wishing to present a paper should write to the Secretary (at the address on page 2) by the end of March 1990.

PASTORAL ECONOMIES IN AFRICA AND LONG-TERM RESPONSES TO DROUGHT

A colloquium on this subject is being held at Aberdeen University on the 9th/10th April 1990. Among the themes to be considered are the relationships between pastoralism, drought and historical experiences. Anyone interested in attending or presenting a paper should contact: Jeffrey Stone, Secretary, Aberdeen University African Studies Group, L.10 Link Block, Taylor Building, King's College, ABERDEEN, AB9 2UB, Scotland.

A RE-EVALUATION OF THE RESOURCE AND FUTURE WATER DEMAND OF THE NILE

The Royal Geographical Society in association with the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London) are proposing to hold a one day conference on the Nile some time in 1990. More details are available from Dr Paul Howell c/o The Royal Geographical Society, Kensington Gore, LONDON, SW7 2AR.

THE LEAST DEVELOPED ARAB COUNTRIES AND THE OIL RICH ARAB COUNTRIES: Dependence, Interdependence or Patronage.

An international workshop is being held on the above theme in Dubrovnik (Yugoslavia), between 14th/28th May 1990. Further details are available from the: Inter-University Centre for Postgraduate Studies (IUC), Frana Bulica 4, YU-50 000 Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia.



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

Ray Bush completes his account of famine around El Saiyah village in Northern Darfur.

STRATEGIES FOR SURVIVAL IN EL SAIYAH:

The most important strategy for survival in El Saiyah is based upon obtaining access to cash. During the drought and recovery period this has become so important that we can no longer talk about the Berti being purely sedentary farmers. It is in fact doubtful that the Berti have ever been only farmers. They have always farmed and had access to livestock, especially goats and cows, to compliment the growing of millet. Since the drought of 1984 however, access to cattle and camels has been substantially reduced.

From a random survey of 15 households in February 1987, 14 respondents were found to be dependent upon cash income generated by wage labour either locally or further afield in El Fasher, Mellit or Libya. From a similar survey of 12 households in September of the same year (in which 10 respondents were women) 11 either had or continued to have some access to wage labour or cash remittances from relatives. It was, moreover, not just men who were seeking work or had employment locally or in Mellit. Of the women respondents, 8 had recently worked for wages in Saiyah or Mellit in jobs as varied as wood carrying, hair plaiting, water carrying and weeding.

The intensification of work-seeking by women, and also by men, has been a direct consequence of the drought. Those Berti with large holdings of cattle, camels or goats have historically moved them south for pastures in the dry seasons. Men have also migrated to cash crop schemes in Southern Darfur, notably to Jebel Marra and Habila, for wage work. It would appear that the scale of this migration south from El Saiyah and north to Libya has increased since 1984 and the recurrent low crop yields in Northern Darfur. A result of this increased out-migration has been a greater burden on those remaining in the village. This burden is endured by both men and women, but it is the work load of the latter that seems to have intensified the most. While the women would usually have had help from the men in their family to farm and to prepare the sandy *qoz* soil, women have increasingly found that they are now the *de facto* heads of household responsible for traditional functions within the



family and beyond. In addition, as has been noted, they now seek wage labour within the village or migrate to Mellit.

Both male and female respondents in Saiyah commented on the increased work load of women in the village. Many families lost their donkeys in the drought of 1983/4 and have not recouped sufficient resources to replace them: women now carry water from the *wadi*, by hand. Men have migrated and so it is the women who do all the farming preparation by themselves. In addition, to generate an income during the 'hungry season', women work on the farms of wealthier villagers. In so doing they often neglect their own weeding because of a constraint on the amount of labour which they can mobilise. This important access to cash from farm labour is limited to the rainy season.

A major source in the provision of cash locally, in addition to labour on other people's farms, has been through the development since 1984 of vegetable gardens. These border the *wadi* to the south of the village and provide employment during the dry season when root vegetables are grown for consumption locally. In the rainy season these gardens suffer from extensive flood damage (In 1987 these floods destroyed at least 10 wells). While there is difficulty developing this area because of the continual build-up of sand, there is also a complex, and unclear system of land tenure which operates on this richer alluvial sand.

There are two main types of soil in El Saiyah - *qoz* and alluvial (*wadi*) - and there are conflicting reports as to the availability of this land. Land is allocated by the sheikh who receives as payment from the land user, one tenth crop (tithe). This is seen as legitimate payment for a job which is rewarded by local government. Newcomers to the village apply to the sheikh - in Saiyah it is the sheikh's son because the sheikh is often in Mellit - but not everyone has had *jos* or '*wadi*' land allocated to them. It is unclear whether newcomers have not been given access to land because those applying are seen to have land in the village from which they have migrated, even though that land is of poor quality, or whether the reason for non-allocation is because there is no more land available.

It was a frequent complaint by those migrants to Saiyah that they still had not had land allocated to them, even after three years, however, in one case, a woman respondent had been given some of the sheikh's own land to farm in return for a one tenth payment. People



without access to fertile land in Saiyah, therefore, initially seek access to fertile land on the condition that they will pay for the use of that land in the customary way by handing over one tenth of the crop. This access may be gained where a land owner feels he has more land than he can properly work and so the one tenth payment is clear profit for no outlay while he continues to farm more productive land closer to the village. Alternatively, outsiders or local people who do not have land may get access to land because a 'user' is not working his land and, to enable him to maintain entitlement to it, he employs others to work for him and one tenth payment may again be paid. Land which is not planted in the *qoz* area reverts back to the sheikh, unless it is inherited land (i.e. land given by the father to a son upon marriage).

This pattern of land use and allocation is just one area where there is a discrepancy between the kind of data and information which the LRC EWS monitors and the type of dynamic which is occurring in a village like Saiyah. There appears, for example, to be little recorded data on the socio-economic position of immigrants to the village and yet this group, bordering the main centre of El Saiyah, are clearly the most needy in terms of access to resources and aid from outside. As a 'needy' group, however, it does not necessarily make sense for their plight to be ignored by the Early Warning System (EWS) committee. Unless the village elders do not want any migrants in the village at all, it might well benefit them to include the emergency food needs of these migrants in the returns to El Fasher so that the village as a whole receives more aid. Alternatively, the denial of the migrants' needs might increase the likelihood of that group being willing to sell their labour more cheaply than they otherwise would to access the basic means of subsistence.

Both the issue of the availability of land, and the changing position of women, as occurring in Saiyah (and probably elsewhere too) are important to monitor as part of an EWS. In the case of Saiyah these two issues are at the heart of who gets access to a diminishing resource base and they display also, the often underpinning nature of power relations in the village. These power relations relate both to the role and position of the sheikh and other wealthy farmers and traders in the community and the changing position of women and 'traditional' relations between households in a village beset by a series of 'lean years.



STRAINS IN THE COMMUNITY:

While the present EWS monitors indicators which highlight certain trends in a worsening food security situation, it has not identified two processes which appear to have been exacerbated by the 1984 famine. These are the presence of increased inequality within the village and the breakdown of previous strategies of survival.

Villagers who had the necessary resources, planted a number of times to try and minimise risk of poor harvest in 1987. It was the traders, however, and the sheikh, who, with greater resources and cash to employ labour, planted larger areas. While they did not generally plant a greater area than on previous years, because they were worried that poor rainfall would waste their seeds, these wealthier villagers, about sixteen traders, did employ local labour on their fields.

While the traders in many of the villages of Darfur provide a valuable link between farmers and resources which would otherwise not reach the rural areas, they also exercised considerable economic power in limiting those resources on the market. For example, in the years when cash is scarce village traders cut back on the types of commodities they store and the availability of credit. It is not unusual for traders to complain of poor business and traders in Saiyah are no exception to this. Poor trade here was often put down to inadequate generation of cash locally and many traders refused to store millet in the *souk* because there was inadequate effective demand locally to make it worth their while.

Examples of the *shail* system of credit is now extremely difficult to find in Northern Darfur and it did not operate in Saiyah except between traders and their relatives. *Shail* is a system of credit where (technically) no interest is paid by the borrower: someone in need of grain or other commodities in the *souk* will get them on credit and promise to make repayment, usually against the forthcoming harvest. Since the drought in 1983/4 and the insecurity resulting from non-payment of credit, traders will no longer give credit.

Traders have begun to control the development of the *wadi* garden areas largely by having access to input for the growing of vegetables which others do not have. They may now have gained access to the *wadi* areas through inheritance or, because of their seniority (length of



stay in the village). It is as unusual for the merchants to work the *wadi* themselves, as it is for them to spend much labour of their own on the sandy soils. Instead, the merchants provide the inputs (like seed and cash for the purchase of local wood in the construction of a well) and employ local labour. That labour is usually rewarded by a sharecropping arrangement where up to half the crop can be kept by the actual farmers and the other half is retained by the absent 'suitcase farmers'.

Traders in Saiyah have an ambiguous role in any strategy for rehabilitation. At one time they were held in esteem locally as men of responsibility. It is now not unusual for them to be identified as exploiters of local resources. A previous notion of reciprocity in the village has been seriously eroded.

Although there is a link in the village between the EWS committee members and some traders, a link which was established institutionally with the formation in 1984 of the village drought committee, there appears now to be no formal procedure allowing for the views of traders and the counter views of local villagers to be articulated.

Social tension and the strains in the village have also been felt in other ways. It has already been mentioned how farming activities have intensified for women and that men have more regularly and, it seems, for longer periods, migrated for work further afield than Southern Darfur or Mellit and El Fasher. Numerous respondents, both men and women, commented on the increased burden that women faced in coping with limited access to resources. For one respondent, an elderly woman from a nearby drought-affected village, Lubana, who had migrated to Saiyah three years previously, the burden of trying to provide food for three in the household was intense. Her husband was dead and although she still had land in Lubana its fertility was poor. As yet however, she was still not treated as a member of Saiyah and so was not entitled to petition the sheikh for land. A consequence of her poverty, the succession of poor harvests and pest damage, meant that she was forced to eat the famine food *mukheit*.

Pre-existing tensions and lines of cleavage, between villagers over land, and with traders over credit are exacerbated by drought. The incidence of land disputes, for instance, arbitrated by the sheikh, has grown since 1984 as has been disquiet between women. Before the drought the sheikh informed us that most disputes which he was asked to arbitrate on were over theft



and 'men chasing women'. Now, the majority of cases coming before him for judgement were over land encroachment.

The most widely felt fragmentation of the community however, was seen to be the erosion of activities which gave, especially for men, the opportunity to share issues of general daily concerns. Famine, and now the long period of recovery has meant that families do not have the quantity of food to share collectively in evening meals where men would gather to eat together. Now, we are told by several respondents, you might wait to be called to someone's hut to eat with them but if the call did not come then you stayed at home and would often go without food. Alternatively you may be called but honour would not allow you to go constantly and eat at someone else's table.

Periods of protracted hardship in the village has led to a greater individualism. When resources are scarce and many households live on the borders of starvation, previous patterns of masking that individualism have been eroded. One way in which this has been exemplified is with the almost universal end to *nafir*.

Nafir is the practice of collective help in the fields of someone who has requested it. In return for the labour of others, usually in ground preparation or weeding, the person who called the work party together will prepare a meal. Since the drought of 1983/4 the cost of this practice has been prohibitive for all except the richest families. Moreover, even where meals have been prepared, the absence of meat from the dishes has not been an encouragement for the helpers to participate in an activity which may restrict the labour input into their own farm, just for a meal they can get at home.

Recovering from famine is a long process. Famine has a differential effect on those who are the most to suffer from it and the pattern of rehabilitation is also marked by some groups coping more easily than others. Suggestions for long-term rehabilitation in this part of Sudan, and elsewhere too, need to recognise this uneven pattern of recovery and learn from it.

Dr Bush is Lecturer in Politics at Leeds University.



FROM ARGO TO LEICESTER SQUARE

Iain Marshall gives another anecdotal account of some of his experiences in Northern Sudan.

This particular article is a slight modification from one originally submitted for a travel-writing competition which stipulated the title as 'Hellbound'.

It was 3:30pm on a hot, dusty weekday in the northern Sudanese village of Argo and it was my turn to make the tea. Mohammed Osman had broken into his usual banter about my status as an 'unbeliever' as soon as we'd left the school in which we taught. In his opinion, my atheistic Scottish soul was destined to join the shrieking hordes of other *kaffirs* in Islam's everlasting bonfire. To those of my friends who had feared for my sanity when I left the cold comfort of drench Edinburgh Saturdays for the blast furnace of the Sudanese desert, my tenancy of hell was already an established reality.

Sudan's detractors form a glittering cast of thousands starting with the ancient Egyptians who referred to that part of the world still beyond their ken south of present-day Wadi Half as 'the land of the dead'. Centuries later a passing explorer by the name of Ewart Grogan described southern Sudan as 'God-forsaken' and 'a desolation of desolations'. He felt his journey to be a kind of apprenticeship for existence in the afterlife, taking a consolation of a sort in the words, 'I have passed through it (i.e. Southern Sudan) and now have no fear of the hereafter'. The north did not escape criticism of this sort. The distinguished journalist, G W Steevens, writing at the turn of the century was eloquently damning in his appraisal of the north, describing it as 'a God-accursed wilderness, an empty limbo of torment forever and ever'. Try as they might, commentators found it impossible to conjure up positive images of the 970,000 square miles which constitutes Africa's largest country. Even the Sudanese who are less vituperative about their homeland than outsiders such as General Gordon, who called the country a 'useless possession' have a saying that 'When Allah made the Sudan, he laughed'.

I was not disposed to laughter when I learnt that I had been transferred from my teaching post in Argo to a new one in the remote Nubian village of Abri. My journey began in the cold 6 o'clock morning air some two hours after the most devout had ventured into the mosques for dawn prayers. I had to take a box from the centre of the village to Kerma, a breathtakingly



beautiful village, where a weekly market day meant I could catch one of the Halfa-bound lorries. A box is a Toyota pick-up with two benches for passengers in the back and often has a locally made roof which provides shade for those inside and extra space for luggage or passengers on top. The concept of transport is based on the principle of moving from A to B in Sudan. The comfort of the journey is of little importance. I was not put out when I found myself pinned to my seat with restricted breathing by the presence of two very large Sudanese ladies on either side. People overcome the hardships of such travel by a wonderful act of will. They simply ignored all the signs of pain and irritation.

The box took us through the streets of Argo, passing Arab-style houses constructed of mud bricks and largely left unpainted, giving the impression that they were natural outcrops rising out of the sandy ground. The world of tarmac roads was some 300 miles south in Khartoum. Drivers here lived on their considerable skills, literally piloting their vehicles through the rutted sand. Capsized lorries were not uncommon and a journey in which the vehicle did not get bogged down in deep sand at least once was an almost unheard of rarity. As we slewed through the streets boys would jump onto the back of the truck and hang on nonchalantly with one foot on the back steps and one hand on the rear rail of the roof rack. In four years I never saw one of these exhibitionists come to grief.

By the time we reached Kerma most of my fellow travellers had got so engrossed in conversation with each other that they'd quite forgotten how uncomfortable they were; clutching at seats and rails unthinkingly when the pick-up bounced over rough terrain, threatening to throw us up and slam our heads against the low ceiling which bristled with exposed screws and nails.

Kerma is effectively the gateway to the Mahas region of the north. From Al Ghaba south of Dongola up to Burgaig, which lies between Kerma and Argo on the east bank of the river, the people speak a local language or 'rotana' called Donagla. On Badin Island which sits in the Nile level with Kerma, local people often speak both Donagla and Mahasi, of which the latter is a form of the same basic dialect and extends from Kerma as far north as Akasha, after which yet another refinement of the language known as Halfawi is prevalent. All of these groups stem from the original Nubian language and culture of the region (pre-dating Arabic



considerably) which is dying out in the same way that Celtic culture and Gaelic language has lost ground in Scotland.

I found the place where the lorries began their journey in Kerma on the bank of the river. By this time the sun had begun to beat down mercilessly and it was a blessing that a row of large leafy *neem* trees lined the river bank offering luxurious shade to market goers, lorry drivers and loiterers alike. Behind the trees I could see large, locally-made feluccas ferrying groups of women to and from Badin island, their white patchwork sails hardly unfurled at all as they glided with silent swan-like majesty across the face of the Nile. A clamour rose from a line of sacking shelters in which bands of blacksmiths hammered away sweating copiously from the combined heat of the sun and their fires, which were sustained by young men pumping bellows at their sides.

I located a lorry going to Wadi Halfa and agreed to pay the driver for a trip as far as Abri. I had arrived just in time and could only find a tiny space at the back of the lorry, perched on top of some sheet-metal doors which had heated up like frying pans even in the shade. Sitting high up at the rear of the loaded lorry I could survey the cramped mass of humanity in front of me which was to form my travelling 'family' for the next 26 hours. As we headed out of Kerma into the rocky expanse of lifeless country before the track rejoins the river at the village of Fareig, I was thrown high into the air several times and came crashing down onto the griddle on which I was suffering hellish agony. I thought then I would turn round at the first opportunity and scurry back to the realm of cushioned train carriages and plushly upholstered automobiles. I had been prepared for a country in the grips of dictatorship, famine and civil war but I was struggling to cope with this torture which was normal, everyday and unremarkable, suffered in silence by people who had no alternative.

During the course of that journey I was treated regally by my fellow travellers. A handful of dates extended from the press of bodies; a house in a tiny Nubian village providing tea for the forty of us; countless offers of water from roadside houses; invitations to share travelling meals in tiny mosques, traditionally the place to receive strangers. Such treatment was not given exclusively to me. Some unspoken understanding meant that all present gave each other equal consideration. The Sudanese proverb '*Ar raffig gabl at tarig*' (travelling



companions are more important than the journey itself) has rung resoundingly true on every trip I have ever made in Sudan.

If anything I grew more agitated and ‘hellbound’ on the homeward journey, the further Sudan Airways took me from one of the hottest parts of the world. Heathrow engulfed me and I was again amongst a sea of fixed expressions, cold and uncommunicative; in a world where an extended kindness to a stranger could be interpreted as some kind of assault. I entered the maw of the Underground as I would the portals of the infernal regions. A passenger bumped into me neither hearing nor expecting my muttered apology and below on the platform, the guards were demons wielding the train doors as instruments of torment. I could almost detect a whiff of sulphur as I stepped onto the next train for Leicester Square.

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

SEEN IN THE TELEGRAPH

Well Translated Bard

SIR - Sixty years ago while we sat on a lawn in Khartoum drinking tea and talking in Arabic, my brother proffered the opinion that, of course, Shakespeare was really Sheikh Zubeir, who was an erudite recluse from Taif.

My brother added (generously, I thought): ‘But we must hand it to the British; they made a very good translation of it.’

G. KFOURI. Sudbury Suffolk

This was seen in the Daily Telegraph on 24/8/89 by SSSUK’s new Chair-person, Miss Joan Hall.



LETTER - DID THE KUSHITES FLEE TO THE WEST: A REJOINDER

In *Sudan Studies* No. 5 Peter Shinnie decisively sets aside the theory not only of a physical movement westwards of Kushites after the fall of Meroe but also of a diffusion of Meroitic influences or culture. This rejection is based on the lack of archaeological evidence in the west and our ignorance of events subsequent to the fall of Meroe. It is further suggested that the arguments of A J Arkell, in part supported by onomastics, are flawed, and Dr Shinnie quotes W Y Adam's opinion that the evidence of Meroitic influence from Kordofan and Darfur is speculative and 'probably should not be taken too seriously'. For good measure the Hamitic theory is once more condemned and the 'days when it was thought that 'black' Africa could not have had any serious cultural development of its own' are invoked.

Compared with the Nile Valley there has been very little archaeological activity between Darfur and Hausaland and so the lack of Meroitic artifacts can hardly be termed decisive. Moreover, a fugitive royal family, which is all that Arkell suggested, would have been encumbered with identifiable possessions. Our ignorance of events subsequent to the fall of Meroe likewise proves nothing and, surely, outright condemnation of the Hamitic theory is in danger of becoming a smokescreen which does as much damage as the theory itself. Finally, has any serious scholar ever really suggested that Africa had no culture or history of its own?

There are two issues here. The first is a possible physical Kushite intrusion in the west. That there are many legends in West Africa, and particularly Nigeria, claiming just this proves nothing without independent support. Some of these traditions could indeed relate to a fugitive royal family as proposed by Arkell. To survive, such a body would necessarily have needed an armed escort, perhaps a palace bodyguard. There is little proof for such a migration outside the traditions but the assumption of power by a small well organised hierarchy over a large alien population is credible, given the cases, in the full light of history, of Sheriffian intervention in Songhai and Rabih in Borno.

The second issue is Kushite influence in the west as opposed to physical presence. Here it must be remembered that the successive Nilotic states labelled Kushite by the ancient world endured for over two thousand years. S Adam describes pre-Meroitic Kerma (c.1780-1580 BC) as exerting a profound influence on the surrounding countries. In the same tone J. Leclant writes:

"Westwards,.... (Kushite) influence must have reached Kordofan at least and we can hope for much from explorations carried out across the wide band of the Nilo-Chadian savannah.... Exploration of (Darfur).... should afford us a better understanding of how Egyptian influences were transmitted towards inner Africa through the intermediary of Meroe. The glory of Kush is surely reflected in certain legends in Central and West Africa."

These legends are widespread. They are associated with the well known *Kisra* cycle. This very name, varying as *Kishra*, *Kishara* etc, has nothing to do with the Persian Chosroes who came to Egypt just prior to the inception of Islam, but seems to be derived from Kush. In the language of the Zaghawa, today in eastern Chad and Darfur, but formerly widely distributed throughout the central and western Sudanic zone, the suffix *-ra* means 'people of'. If nothing else these traditions show a transfer or 'reflection', as Leclant terms it, of ideas.

All that can definitely be stated on either side of the question of the Kushites in the west, given the present state of our knowledge, is that: (1) Whilst there is no evidence of a physical movement other than traditions there is no contrary evidence either, and: (2) Traditions in the west show at least a transfer of ideas which indicate a definite awareness of the Kushite epoch. Meanwhile, the debate, it is submitted, continues.

'S Adam, (1981) *The importance of Nubia; a link between Central Africa and the Mediterranean*, in *General History of Africa* (UNESCO), vol.2, p.226.

'J Leclant, *The empire of Kush: Napata and Meroe*, *ibid*, p.278.

W K R Hallam, PO Box 760, JOS, Nigeria.



SUDAN AIRWAYS: AN HISTORICAL OUTLINE

Simon Bush presents a short historical outline of Sudan Airways from 1947 to the present.

From an initial fleet of de-Havilland Doves in 1947 to the acquisition of Boeing 707-320s and 737—200s and now the use of a Tri-Star, Sudan Airways has seen enormous changes in the last four decades and has grown into a major international airline.

The airline began operations and was called Sudan Airways (*al-Khutut al Jawiya al Sudaniya*). It was started with assistance from Airwork Ltd., a British firm of aircraft operators. Initially, the airline was a department of Sudan Railways under the direct supervision of the Railway's general manager. The first routes operated were to Wad Medani, Atbara, El Fasher, El Geneina, El Obeid, Juba, Wau, Kassala and Port Sudan.

The Doves could only fly with a few passengers and were used because of their ability to use unmade landing strips. In the first year of operation Sudan Airways carried 736 passengers and 1,546 kg of freight.

In 1952 the Doves were replaced by seven 28 seat Douglas DC3s (C—47Bs) and the route network was extended to take in Wadi Halfa, Dongola and Merowe. The first international flights began in 1954 to Cairo, Entebbe and Asmara, with flights to Aden, Beirut and Jeddah the following year.

The DC3s served Sudan Airways well, and without loss, until the introduction of three 38 seat Fokker F27 Friendships in 1962, the first airline in Africa to employ the type. As late as 1975, DC-3c 'ST-AJJ' was being used for essential government aerial survey work. The aircraft was sold to Botswana in 1978, where it is still in daily use.

In 1959 a Vickers Viscount V831 flew the airline's first 'Blue Nile' service to London on 8th June. The aircraft flew a twice weekly service on the London-Rome-Athens-Cairo-Khartoum route. At that time Sudan Airways was the first non-British airline to operate from Gatwick Airport (now based at Heathrow), and it is interesting to note that the Viscount flew the highest number of passenger route miles of any aircraft at that time. The aircraft was sold to an American freight company at the end of its Sudan Airways service.



In 1962, with increasing load factors, the airline purchased two de-Havilland DH-106 Comets to replace the Viscount, and the number of destinations was increased with the addition of Benghazi and Tripoli. For the next eleven years the Comets flew reliably over the international network.

By 1973 it became obvious that the airline was going to have to replace the ageing Comets. In the interim Sudan Airways leased two Boeing 707-321s from British Midland Airways (1973-4). The decision on which aircraft to purchase was difficult, bearing in mind the climatic situations of Sudan. Previously Sudan Airways had considered using an Ilyshin ii-62, which was to have operated to Moscow, but this plan was abandoned with the cooling of relations with the Soviet Union in 1970. Finally it was decided to purchase two Boeing 707-320s with a 14 first class and 135 economy class configuration.

With the purchase of the Boeing aircraft in 1974, passenger and freight traffic has expanded with the addition of Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Doha, Dubai, Nairobi, Ndjamena, Riyadh, Kano and Frankfurt to the network. With the purchase of the new aircraft the airline adopted a new logo and colour scheme.

Further Boeing aircraft were purchased in 1975, this time two 737-200s, which operate on regional and domestic services. These aircraft are unique as they are designed to operate in dry areas and also have gravel field equipment which extends with the nose wheel and deflects debris away from the undercarriage.

Today Sudan Airways continues to be a state owned corporation. The total fleet consists of five Boeing 707-320s, two 737-200C, one Fokker F27-200, two F27-600 and four Fokker 50s. A need exists for an airbus-type aircraft for use on high density routes (such as Khartoum-Cairo) and various aircraft, including A300B, are being considered by the airline.

As a stopgap measure the airline has leased a Tri-Star aircraft from Royal Jordanian Airlines. The increased passenger capacity of the Tri-Star is matched by its ability to carry cargo from Europe to Africa. In addition to this increased capacity, Sudan Airways now offers a weekly direct freight-only service to Khartoum using Boeing 707s. The Tri-Star acquired by Sudan Airways gives extended range and is powered by the more powerful Rolls Royce RB-211-



524 engines, especially designed for improved performance at higher altitudes and in hot regions.

Sudan Airways, although being one of the largest carriers in Africa, does suffer from problems associated with all government corporations in the Sudan at the moment. Lack of foreign exchange stifles the new developments that an airline needs. Political interference with the airline in the 1970s and 80s resulted in bad management practices and a demoralised work-force. A new plan was introduced by the airline last year (on forty years of service - making the airline the most experienced in Africa) and has resulted in positive effects on punctuality (especially internal services) and a pegging of fares. Improvements are being made in the management structure, and a new training programme for all staff is taking place. The future of Sudan Airways remains strong, as long as expansion is not too fast and the resources of the airline are used wisely.

In preparing this article, Simon Bush referred to *Sudan Transport*, by Richard Hill (London, 1965), *The World Airline Directory* (1989), and *History, Progress and the Future of Sudan Airways* (Khartoum, 1982). The author also wishes to thank Sudan Airways in Khartoum and London for providing detailed information on aircraft types and technical details.

Simon Bush is a member of the SSSUK committee.

CAN YOU HELP?

Dr Karl Wohlmuth is about to begin a new research project on '*Migration in Sudan with regard to the effects on the roles of women in Western Sudan origin areas of migrants*' The research will last three years and will be based in the Northern Darfur/Kutum area. He is keen to communicate with anyone who has any experience of this subject.

If you can help, please write to him at the following address: Prof. Dr. Karl Wohlmuth, University of Bremen, Bibliothekstrasse, Postfach 33 04 40, 2800 Bremen 33, West Germany.



SURVEY OF THE SUDAN POLITICAL SERVICE (Part Two: THE RESULTS)

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

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

One of the most conspicuous second career conclusions to be drawn from the data so far assembled is the impressive number of ex-Sudan Political Service (SPS) officers who returned to the Middle East or North Africa, either in business (primarily in the oil industry) or in the British Diplomatic Service. While both occupations reflect the quality of men originally selected for the SPS, the latter second career had, I would argue, less to do with the fact that the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan had always been a Foreign and not Colonial Office responsibility than, as in the case of the former second career, with the rare (in the FO circles of the 1950s) skill of speaking fluent Arabic. Having said this, it could be argued that the increased rate of FO visitors to Khartoum in the early 1950s, the appointment of UK Trade Commissioners, and the eventual posting of the nucleus of staff for the first British Embassy there, together did combine to enable informal FO 'talent spotting' and mutual 'getting to know' opportunities. Be this as it may, there is little doubt that the establishment of the Middle East Centre for Arabic Studies in 1944, and the insistence on Arabic as the language of administration in the Sudan paid off handsomely. Thus for, example, H G BALFOUR-PAUL, G W BELL, A R C BOLTON, D C CARDEN, K CORNWALLIS, J S R DUNCAN, D F HAWLEY, N H T LUCE, P R A MANSFIELD, W N MONTEITH, G N I MORRISON, E A PEARSON, J F S PHILLIPS, C J TREADWELL and J P TRIP, were all posted at one time or another to an embassy in an Arabic-speaking country, several reaching the rank of ambassador there. N M INNES became Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman and W T CLARK served as its Development Secretary before going to Amman as UNRWA and ending up as adviser to the Ruler of Abu Dhabi, where H BOUSTEAD was appointed Keeper of the Horse. E G EVANS worked for UNRWA in Jordan, G M HANCOCK was adviser to the ruler of Qatar, E MILLER served as Secretary General to the Iraq Development Board and P CORIAT became commander of the Muscat and Oman Field Force. The oil companies took on another long list, among them R H M



BOYLE, B A CARLISLE, R H DALY, E A V de CANDOLE, G R I DEES, J GRANTHAM-HILL, D LOMAX, B H G MALET, T H B MYNORS, P H C PAWSON, G E C PEASE and M WARD.

A large number, also not surprisingly, felt they had so found their metier in the career of a District Commissioner that what they sought above all was a transfer to the Colonial Administrative Service. These included P P BWCOCK, L M BUCHANAN, F D CORFIELD, G R I DEES, B D DENING, P de ROBECK, J T M DICKSON, P EVANS-JONES, K S FERGUSON, D FYFE, P S GARLAND, J W HANNAH, P P HOWELL, C B KENDALL, J N LAURENCE and J W MEADOWS and many others, with J L H BAKER, H BOUSTEAD, R H DALY, VE F EYRE and R C YOUNG all posted to Aden. A J V ARTHUR made the transition in reverse, as it were, coming into the SPS from the Indian Civil Service in 1948, thus complementing the equally rare transfer of J H DRIBERG from the Colonial Service into the SPS in 1923. S R SIMPSON and C A G WALLIS went into the Colonial Office as specialist advisers, J A HARTLEY and D H HIBERT joined the Colonial Education Service, and W P G Thomson entered the CRO. At least three went the whole hog, if you like, in the Colonial Service, ending up, like SYMES and MacMICHAEL before the war, with colonial governorships (Nigeria: J W ROBERTSON, Aden: W H T LUCE, and Northern Nigeria: G W BELL).

Another sizeable group was those who went into school or university administration. These included D A ANTHONY, H B ARBER, G H F BREDIN, J N GROVER, J N LAURENCE, R F E LAIDLAW, R G McCOMAS, D A PENN and D H WEIR, while Exeter College, Oxford, appointed as successive Bursars between 1939 and 1955 J F P MacLAREN, G H BARTER and B D M DEE. Several, like S G BUDGET, W I CHEESMAN, R L CROLE, M G HANKS, D H HIBBERT, J W SEAMER and J S STEWART became schoolmasters, and a few became university teachers, such as A J ARKELL, C W BEER, C CUMMINGS, P P HOWELL and I H WATTS. T CREED ended up as Principal of Queen Mary College, University of London and A HUDDLESTON as Director of the Royal technical College, Glasgow. T A LEACH became Secretary of the Appointments Board of Bristol University, A E D PENN Administrator of Oxford University's Business School, and J McCARGOW Clerk of the Faculties in the University of Glasgow. Among the professions, too, featured the Church (always a strong tradition in the Sudan), with A J ARKELL, S G BUDGET, K S P



McDOWELL, W N MONTEITH, N E C PUMPHREY and I H WATTS all taking holy orders.

Business (especially personnel management), local government service, British Council and the BBC were other institutions to benefit from this reservoir of talent. Some took up private farming, others insurance, and a few went into politics, of whom at least three (A D DODOS-PARKER, P MUNRO and M WHEATLEY) became MPs, with J O UDAL in the wings at Conservative Central Office.

Unusually, one went on after retirement to qualify as a doctor, W G R M LAURIE. Those in search of all these employment opportunities were, of course, first of all in competition with officers from the Indian Civil Service at the end of the 1940s; again from the Colonial Administrative Service in the late 1950s and the 1960s; and then, throughout the post-war period, from those holding either wartime, national service or regular commissions in the armed forces, quite apart from the normal UK market of job supply and demand. There was often a fine art in deciding what not to apply for at once, what to accept, and what to aspire to at the end of the day.

In the last two 'second careers' mentioned here, such competition was of no importance. One was voluntary work. Here the SPS emerges with a formidable list of 'good works', commissions, councils and committees galore, some public, some parochial, some pastoral, and some private. The other is the popular occupation of writing. Today, any self-respecting bookshelf on the Sudan will have personal memoirs from G W BELL (1983, 1989), H BOUSTEAD (1971), R DAVIES (1957), J S R DUNCAN (1957), K D D HENDERSON (1987), H C JACKSON (1954), J W ROBERTSON (1974) and F G SARSFIELD-HALL (1975), with other genres of learned publications from A J ARKELL, A C BEATON, J H DRIBERG, J S R DUNCAN, J A de C HAMILTON, P P HOWELL, A PAUL, A B THEOBALD and, *magna cum laude*, K D D HENDERSON, H A MacMICHAEL and W P THESINGER. There may be too, that rare volume (in all sense of the word), *Sudan Verse* by K D D HENDERSON and T R H OWEN. Nor are those who married into the SPS to be left out, witness the excellent *Sudan Tales: Recollections of some Sudan Political Service Wives, 1926-56*, edited by Rosemary Kendrick (1987).



CAN YOU HELP? ... The SPS Second Career.' Research Project

A H M Kirk-Greene and Sir G Bell wish to consult former members of the SPS more fully and to extend/update the register of second careers. Specific questions that they wish to address right away are:

1. How can we increase our corpus? We know, for instance, that the 'Blue Book' (see part one of the article, *Sudan Studies*, 6, pp.10-13) has lacunae such as the name of J POOLE, with those of E A BALFOUR and C B KENDALL both omitted from and of B M BEVES mangled in the index (c.f. Henderson, 1987. pp.22, 97 and 99).
2. What do we do about the 'Bog Barons', not all of whom feature in the 'Blue Book', e.g. J F H MARSH and J W G WYLD?
3. What about what K D D HENDERSON has called the 'Northern Barons', like H BOUSTEAD (J J BRAMBLE, G M MOORE and L A DEANE are at least in the 'Blue Book')?
4. What could (?would) the Sudan Pensioners' Association make available to us?
5. Where are the records of the Sudan Service Re-employment Bureau, headed by G Hawkesworth, which operated c.1954-56? Certainly, in general, it did far better work than it did for G W BELL, when in 1955 it offered him the job of managing a soda-water factory in Kano. Two years later he indeed went to Northern Nigeria - as Governor!
6. What should be done about putting in hand a similar data retrieval project for the professional officers (non-SPS)?
7. Finally, what should we do with our 'ultimate' Register of some 300 SPS entries? Obviously one will go to the Sudan Archive at Durham. It will probably be written up as part of the total 'Retirement and Re-Employment' Project. But, might there be a wider interest in making such data accessible to *bone fide* scholars? If so what and how? (see below).

If you are able to help or comment on any of the above points, please write to A H N Kirk-Greene at St Antony's College, OXFORD, OX2 6JF.

THE SUDAN POLITICAL SERVICE

1902—1952

A Preliminary Register of Second Careers

Compiled by G W Bell and A H M Kirk-Greene

The completed 'Preliminary Register' has been published privately. A few copies are available for purchase by Librarians and individual scholars working on the Sudan Political Service, at £5.00 each including packing and postage within the UK (airmail £1.50 extra). Orders should be sent to A H M Kirk-Greene, St Antony's College, Oxford OX2 6JF, with cheques made out to 'Bursar, St Antony's College'.



AN IMPERIAL TWILIGHT

Martin Daly reviews: AN IMPERIAL TWILIGHT, by Sir Gawain Bell. Lester Crook Academic Publishing, London (1989), 267pp. £15.95.

Shadows in the Sand (London, 1984) described Sir Gawain Bell's life and work in the Sudan, where he retired as the senior member of the Political Service in 1954, and in Kuwait, where he was political agent in 1955-57. *An Imperial Twilight* takes the story down to 1989. It encompasses Bell's years as Governor of Northern Nigeria (1957-62) and Secretary-General of the South Pacific Commission (1967-70), as well as missions to Aden and South Arabia, Oman and the Trucial States.

Over half the book (chapters 2-11) concerns Nigeria. Bell's account is personal and mainly anecdotal, the view from Government House when the Governor's role has become more ceremonial than administrative. Bell clearly revelled in the pageantry of the office, but his writing is thoughtful, unstuffy, and spiked with humour. He is best on personalities: Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (pp.71-3), Muhammadu Sanual (pp.81-2), the Attah of Dgala (pp.82-3) and especially Ahmedu Bello (pp.65-70 *et passim*), who indeed dominates the Nigerian chapters as he did the Northern Nigerian scene. The chapter on 'Horses' (pp.85-92) is mercifully brief.

An interesting sub-plot throughout the book is the Sudanese Connection. In Nigeria, Bell's governor-general is Sir James Robertson, his former chief in Khartoum. In Bahrain he encounters Sir William Luce; in Muscat D C Carden; in Oman (on a second mission in 1974) Donald Hawley and Robin Young; and in Umm al-Qawayn he meets Ahmad Ibrahim Diraige of Darfur. Illuminating comparisons are made between the Sudan and later posts, as, for instance, on pp. 111-2, where European officers' relations with each other and with Africans are compared in Nigeria and the Sudan.

While the substance and success or failure of Bell's Arabian and Pacific appointments are certainly conveyed, none held the glamour of Northern Nigeria or the interest of the Sudan: having witnessed an imperial sunset in Nigeria, one's enthusiasm for drawing the curtains in various enclaves and principalities was limited. The breadth of Bell's experience, however, allows him to make informed generalisations on British imperial rule and its critics. These judgements are, on the whole, moderate and should be compared with interesting and sometimes disarming self-criticism (e.g. pp. 130-5, 143-7). One reason for dispute is a tendency of former proconsuls, including Bell, to judge the colonial era largely by its last generation, and of critics to condemn it for its first.

AN Imperial Twilight is a thoughtful memoir by one who has considered the meaning of a life spent in foreign parts. It is both entertaining reading and a useful historical source. The book is well produced and illustrated, and includes helpful maps and biographical notes. Members of SSSUK will be especially interested in this personal record of their Honorary President.

Dr M Daly is an historian of Sudanese and African affairs from the University of Memphis, Tennessee.



THE LISTENING EBONY

Farnham Rehfisch reviews: THE LISTENING EBONY, by Wendy James, Clarendon Press, Oxford (1988), 389pp. £40.00.

The material for this work was obtained between 1965-9 and 1982-3. The fieldwork was carried out in the southern Blue Nile Province. The society which she studies is known as the 'Uduk-speaking people'. This volume is a sequel to James' earlier book *Kwanim Pa*.

The present work concentrates on the religion, super-natural beliefs, healing and *Weltanschauung* of the Uduk. The first part emphasises Uduk moral knowledge as a complex system of ideas which shape their experience and interpretation of the world. The second explains the means whereby the group has maintained its identity in spite of the influence from Nilotic sources as well as Christian and Islamic pressures. The third is very rich in details on the order of diviners (Ebony Men) and their role in maintaining group solidarity. These are of primordial importance in having revitalised traditional Uduk moral ideas and the autochthonous world view.

The book is so rich in important detail that it is not possible here to even briefly outline the very important details and analysis provided by the author. But I should like to congratulate the author for allowing the Uduk to speak for themselves, by quoting *verbatim* many statements provided by informants. Her minute analysis of these quotations is extremely valuable in documenting local beliefs and attitudes. This is indeed a very worthy successor to Sir Evans-Pritchard's work on the Nuer and G Lienhardt on the Dinka.

May I take this opportunity to plead that James, in the not too far distant future, return to the field to carry out an analysis of Uduk 'body language'. This particular means of communication is of great importance in all societies, yet to the best of my knowledge has been almost entirely ignored by social anthropologists. Her most impressive use of texts would indicate that she would be very competent to pursue this field of enquiry.

Farnham Rehfisch has a long association with studies of Sudanese anthropology and ethnography and has considerable knowledge of these issues in the southern provinces.



RIDING THE DESERT TRAIL

Iain Marshall reviews: RIDING THE DESERT TRAIL (By bicycle to the source of the Nile), by Bettina Selby. Sphere Books (Penguin), London (1989).

This competently written account of the author's bicycle trek from the Nile Delta to the river's source at Lake Victoria in Uganda, presents a very typical traveller's log. In one sense it is a book of impressions gathered at speed, which barely scrapes the surface of its subject matter. Such a treatment is perhaps consistent with the transitory nature of the expedition undertaken by the author, but what she lacks in accuracy of detail, she makes up for in her sincere approach and sympathetic appreciation of the hardships endured by those who live in this region.

Just over half of the book covers time spent in Sudan and Bettina Selby dutifully records all the 'usual' things visitors encounter there. The friendliness of the people and their unstinting hospitality are present alongside the obstructiveness and apparent intransigence of Sudan's more fickle bureaucrats.

Opting to follow the Nile route from Wadi Haifa rather than strike out into open desert and slog her way to Abu Hamed along the railway track, the author loads her 18-speed, all-terrain bicycle into a *souk* lorry and enters Nubia through the 'Belly of the Stones'. Alighting from the lorry at an unnamed village (most probably Abri) she moves through Sudan by pedal power for the first time. At Dongola she boards the Nile steamer which carries her upstream to the rail-head town of Karma, after which she takes the train to Atbara, before mounting the saddle once again. Inevitably her momentum is arrested when she comes up against barricades of paper work in Khartoum but she is persistent, and manages to visit Renk, Nyala and gets through to Juba in a small plane piloted by an 'Indiana Jones' clone posing as an aid worker.

The most valuable part of the book is that which deals with the author's experiences in the tragic Southern Region of Sudan. Not only does she paint a haunting picture of local people striving to lead normal lives amidst famine and war; her stop-over in the South gives a rare insight into the life of Juba and the ex-patriot community in that blighted part of the world.

The good intentions of Bettina Selby cannot be doubted. Her respectful adherence to Sudanese dress codes, unlike the semi-naked trippers she meets on the Aswan-Halfa ferry, is the first indication of how receptive and open her attitude to her environment is going to be, and it sets the tone for the rest of the book.



Unfortunately many of her observations highlight the fact that she is taking everything in from her position on a ‘moving platform’, and although insignificant in themselves, the book’s errors are irksome. Had she taken a little more trouble on the southward, Halfa-Dongola leg of her trip, she would have quickly discovered that the stretch of rocky desert, empty save for a single dead tree at its half way point, which she places after the village of Kerma, actually comes directly before that village; the place she was referring to being Fareig. Similarly, a stroll to the prow of the Nile steamer at some time during her three day cruise would have allowed her to quote with authority from the brass plaque there, that the vessel was built by Clyde Shipbuilders in Paisley, instead of simply guessing that the British had “undoubtedly built it”. Anyone who’s paid any attention to her “notorious packs of savage dogs” in Sudan knows that their notoriety stems from gross cowardice when confronted with nothing more threatening than a raised human hand. Bettina Selby’s constant motion denies her the space to set these and other discrepancies to rights and it is tempting to suggest that the whole contrived venture was a pointless waste of energy. Rather, suffice it to say that the author’s admirable conduct in Sudan is an example which future travellers would do well to copy. Her courage must be saluted, not least because she does not bask in self-satisfaction at her own achievement, but the flimsiness of this well- intentioned work must call into question the validity of the ‘short and sweet’ school of travel writing.

Iain Marshall used to teach in Northern Sudan and has written about his own travel experiences, including elsewhere in this volume (Number 7 pp 12-15)



LIBYA, CHAD AND THE CENTRAL SAHARA

Peter Woodward reviews: LIBYA, CHAD AND THE CENTRAL SAHARA, by John Wright, Hurst & Co., London (1989), £23.00.

To most modern readers the Involvement of Libya in Chad seems bizarre and unlikely, explained mainly by the maverick unpredictability of Moammar Gaddafi. While in terms of contemporary international politics there may be much in such a view, a judgement of this kind should not be based on the implied depiction of the vast Sahara as a division which has kept central north Africa and central Sahel from significant contact with the past. This book is an historical overview that outlines these past links.

In a brief opening chapter John Wright considers the growth of the Saharan desert from more fertile days and points out that the pull of trade across the huge expanse is as old as time, especially with the importation of the Arabian camel into Africa. Murzak in Fezzan in particular was something of the Clapham Junction of the trans-Saharan trade routes in ancient times. The second chapter moves on to a discussion of the emergence of desert communities, in particular the Moors, the Tuareg and the Tebu, of which the latter are the most mysterious and most central to the desert, between contemporary Chad and Libya, with their heartland in the remote Tibesti massif. The Tebu were amongst the world's most natural anarchists. They roamed over a vast area dominating the central Sahara and forming a tenuous but lasting bridge between the Mediterranean and Sahel for the last thousand years or so: and their descendants are prominent among modern actors in the recent dramas played out in Chad.

From the Tebu the book moves on to examine the impact of Islam. The early success of the Arab invasion of north Africa, coupled with the existence of the trans-Saharan trading ties, especially by this time in slaves, ensured that the new religion would be carried across as well. The Middle Ages were too the period of the rise and fall of Sudanic states in the Sahel, regulating trade and also adopting the new high culture. In particular Kanem was to emerge as the southern end of a significant trade route with Tripoli; and Kanem was followed by the rise of Bornu in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. However, by the nineteenth century the world was changing with the penetration of Europe into Africa from both north and south of the Sahara. In addition to exploration and commerce there was to become in the end even political ambitions; and while these were less directly focussed on the Sahara than almost anywhere else on the continent, that too finally fell prey to the final act of imperial penetration, the European division of Africa into colonies. But also during the century the



Arab people of Awlad Slaiman, a tribe of warrior adventurers, spread a growing influence south from Libya across into central Chad a direction of movement contributing to the establishment of a minority Arab presence in Chad.

More constructive and significant though was the spread southward of the influence of the Sanusi *sufi* brotherhood, led by the Grand Sanusi. The Sanusi were to dominate the eastern Sahara spreading their influence into Sudan as well as straddling Libya and Chad, and complementing spiritually the trading and religious penetration which was even more skewed to the benefit of the north and the exploitation of the south. Imperialism was to mean first Ottoman suzerainty in Libya and France in Chad (more in 'Chad utile' than the 'Beau Geste' territory of the north); while later the Italians were to invade and brutally suppress Libya as part of the acquisition of *Mare nostrum*. The two later colonial powers also created the problem of the Aouzou strip by their tentative but unratified treaty of 1935.

The whole book thus far presages the post- independence period described in the final chapter, 'Libya in Chad'. For Libyans to look south across the Sahara and covet the beneficial links that could be established there was not something new but historic. True the actual twists and turns of Gaddafi's policies in Chad were new, but the sphere of activity was not. Thus Libya became involved in Chad first in supporting the revolt of the north which brought the men of the desert to power in Ndjamena in 1979 and then intervening even more directly to back one faction. Goukouni Oueddei's against Hussein Habre's. In the end, with Egyptian, Sudanese and American support Habre was triumphant and in 1987 inflicted humiliating defeat on Libyan forces in northern Chad. Since that time the two sides are supposed to have been pursuing peace, but whether it will succeed is an open question. And as John Wright concludes, the people of Chad and Libya have a long history of intimate connections which extend well beyond just being neighbouring states separated by the world's greatest desert.

Peter Woodward is Lecturer in Politics at Reading University, is the Editor of African Affairs and is the Deputy Chairman of SSSUK.



RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Al-Shahi, A. (1988), 'Northern Sudanese Perceptions of the Nubian Christian Legacy', in James, W. and Johnson, D.H. (eds.), *Vernacular Christianity. Essays in the Social Anthropology of Religion Presented to Godfrey Lienhardt*, (JASO, Oxford), pp.31-9.

Anon' (1988), 'Omdurman Tras La Sombre Del Mahdi', *Armas Y Municiones*, Vol.23, pp.28-32.

'Anon' (1989), '(Sudan) Getting There', *The Economist*, (May), pp.82-4.

'Anon' (1989), 'The June Coup d'etat: Fifty Days On', *Africa Watch*, (22 August), 6pp.

'Anon' (1989), 'Sudan: Destruction of the Independent Secular Judiciary; Military Government Clamps Down on Press Freedom', *Africa Watch*, (25 September), 4pp.

'Anon' (1989), 'Political Detainees in Sudan', *Africa Watch*, (24 October), 7pp.

Bell, G.W. (1989), *An Imperial Twilight*, (Lester Crook), 288pp.

Deng, F.M. (1988), 'Dinka Response to Christianity: The Pursuit of Well-being in a Developing Society', in James, W. and Johnson, D.H. (eds.), *Vernacular Christianity. Essays in the Social Anthropology of Religion Presented to Godfrey Lienhardt*, (JASO, Oxford), pp. 157-69

Gresh, A. (1989), 'The Free Officers and the Comrades: The Sudanese Communist Party and Nimeiri Face-to-Face, 1969-71', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 21, pp. 393-409

Hansohm, D. and Wohlmuth, K. (1988), 'East-South and South-South Cooperation: The Case of the Sudan', in Dobozi, I. (ed.), *Politics and Economics of East—South Relations~* (EADI, Tilburg), pp.271-99.

Howell, P, Lock, M and Cobb, S. (eds.) (1988), *The Jonglei Canal: Impact and Opportunity*, (Cambridge University Press), 537pp.

Hulme, N. (1989), 'Is Environmental Degradation Causing Drought in the Sahel? An Assessment from Recent Empirical Research', *Geography*, pp.38-46.

Hutchinson, S. (1988), *The Nuer in Crisis: Coping with Money, War and the State*, Unpub. Ph.D. Thesis, (University of Chicago).

James, W. (1988), 'Uduk Faith in a Five-note Scale: Mission, Music and the Spread of the Gospel', in James, W. and Johnson, D.H. (eds.), *Vernacular Christianity. Essays in the Social Anthropology of Religion Presented to Godfrey Lienhardt*, (JASO, Oxford), pp. 131-45

James, W. and Johnson, D.H. (eds.) (1988), *Vernacular Christianity. Essays on the Social Anthropology of Religion Presented to Godfrey Lienhardt*, JASO Occasional Papers No.7. (JASO/Lilian Barber Press, Oxford/New York), 196pp.

Johnson, D.H. (1986), 'The Historical Approach to the Study of Societies and their Environment in the Eastern Upper Nile Plains', *Cahiers d'etudes Africaines*, Vol.26, pp.131-44.

Johnson, D.H. (1988), 'Sudanese Military Slavery from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century', in Archer, L. (ed), *Slavery and Other Forms of Unfree Labour*, (Routledge, London), pp.142-56.

Johnson, D.H. (1989), 'The Structure of a Legacy: Military Slavery in Northeast Africa', *Ethnohistory*, Vol.36, pp. 72-88.



Johnson, D.H. (1989), 'Enforcing Separate Identities in the Southern Sudan: The Case of the Nilotes of the Upper Nile', in Chrétien, J.P. and Prunier, G. (eds.), *Las Ethnies ont une Histoire*, (Karthala, Paris), pp.234-45

Kameir, El W.M. (1988), *The Political economy of Labour Migration in the Sudan: A Comparative Case Study of Migrant Workers in an Urban Situation*, (Institut für Afrika-Kunde, Hamburg), 127pp.

Lavergne, M. (1989), 'L'économie Soudanaise on Désarroi', *Monde Arabe (Maghreb)*, Vol.124, pp.41-61

Lavergne, M. (1989), *Le Soudan Contemporain: De L'Invasion Turco-Égyptienne à la Rébellion Africaine (1821-89)*, (Karthala, Paris), 638pp.

Prunier, G. (1989), 'Las Partis Politiques Soudanais (Africaines) Depuis La Chute de Nimeiry', *Monda Arabe (Maghreb)* Vol.124, pp. 18-40.

Selby, B. (1989), *Riding the Desert Trail (by Bicycle to the Source of the Nile)*, (Sphere/Penguin).

Smith, I. and Ama, MT. (undated), *A Dictionary of Juba Arabic and Englis* (no publisher stated).

Trilsbach, A. (1989), 'It Never Rains Unless it Pours: A Personal Diary of the 1988 Rain and Flood Disaster in Sudan', *Durham (Adversity Geographical Society Journal)*, Vol.29, pp. 19-24.

Trilsbach, A. (1989), 'The Indirect Effects of Famine on Population: Case Studies From the Republic of the Sudan', in Clarke, J., Curson, P., Kayastha, S.L. and Nag, P. (eds.), *Population and Disaster*, (Blackwell, Oxford), pp.128-36,

Wohlmuth, K. (1989), 'Sudan's Industrialisation after Independence: A Case of Africa's Crisis of Industrialisation', in Islam, N. (ed.), *The Balance Between Industry and Agriculture in Economic Development*, Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of the International Economic Association, (MacMillan, Basingstoke and New Delhi), pp.357-79.

Wohlmuth, K. (ed.) (1989), *Structural Adjustment in the World Economy and East-West-South Economic Cooperation*, Institute for World Economics and International Management (University of Bremen).



CONTRIBUTIONS TO SUDAN STUDIES

The Editor is always willing to receive articles for publication in *Sudan Studies*. The principal criterion for inclusion is relevance to the Sudan. Contributions can be based on formal research, experience, reviews or anecdotes. Each issue should present a balance of articles covering the range stated. Ideally, there should be a broad subject coverage between the sciences and the arts, although this balance varies between issues according to the nature of the contributions received. Anyone who has ever been to the Sudan should be in a position to contribute something. Some items are as few as 50 words, whilst others may be a few thousand (printed in parts). An ideal length is something that can be printed in 2-3 pages of the newsletter.

If you are able/willing to contribute, please write to the Editor at the following address:

Dr A Trilsbach (Editor, *Sudan Studies*)

10 Thornlea

Godinton Park

Ashford

Kent

TN23 3JX

U.K.

(0233-63-4922)

TAIL-PIECE

Arthur Casson offers an anecdotal tail-piece from his times in Sudan

When Bill Clark was D.C. Amadi he dictated a letter for Jona, his clerk, to type. "And on the envelope write, Dr J.F.E. Bloss, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P." "Please Sir, what does M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. mean?" asked Jona. "Member of the Royal College of Surgeons and Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians", answered Bill. "And what does Licentiate mean?" asked Jona. Rather irritated by the delay Bill said, "Oh go and look it up yourself. You've got a dictionary."

Soon the door opened and Jona reappeared. "Please Sir what does it mean to be lewd and subject to the baser passions?" he asked.

Poor Dr Bless - what an aspersion!