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EDITORIAL

From now into 2011 will be a difficult and momentous period in the history of the Sudan with the forthcoming Referendum on the country's future. There are so many groups and countries looking to the results with various degrees of hope or trepidation. I am sure that all members of the SSSUK wish the Sudan well at this time, trusting that whatever the outcome, civil war will not rear its ugly head again. Our next **Symposium** will no doubt be concerned with some of the current political issues and will be held **at SOAS on Saturday, 2 October 2010**. Do please come and take part in some of the debates. **Further details are given elsewhere in this issue of *Sudan Studies* and will be on our website nearer the date.**

One of the most serious political issues in the Sudan relates to the difficulties of converting the Southern SPLM/A into a democratic form of political party and this subject is taken up by **Benedetta de Alessi** in the first article. Benedetta is a postgraduate researcher at SOAS with field experience in Southern Sudan as recently as July 2010. Very recently, the Government of Sudan has decided to redevelop its rail network. Recent developments relating to transport in the Sudan are discussed by **Mustafa Khogali**. Mustafa is on the staff of the Institute for Disaster Management and Refugees in Khartoum. **Barbara Rees's** article is particularly interesting as it is about her father, Captain James, who took part in the Anglo-French demarcation of the western frontier of Sudan in 1922-23. Perhaps surprisingly Captain James and his French colleague got on well together. The fourth article by **Mohamed Babiker Ibrahim** reviews aspects of flood irrigation in Sudan with special reference to the Khor Abu Hahl Scheme in Kordofan. Mohamed lectures in Geography at Hunter College in New York.



This issue also contains three book reviews. The first, by **Adrian Thomas**, the SSSUK Treasurer, is a book about a doctor's recent experience working in the hospital at Abyei. The second book review, by **Richard Stock**, is of a detailed account of the Canadian 'Voyageurs', who worked with Wolseley in the abortive attempt to relieve Gordon at Khartoum in 1885. Richard is an authority on Sudan philately and has made a particular study of British activity in the Sudan at that time. The third review is by **Professor Peter Woodward** of Reading University, a noted authority on Sudan politics. The book concerned was partly written by the late Robert Collins assisted by Millard Burr and is entitled, *Hasan al-Turabi and the Islamist State, 1989-2003*.

As Editor, it is my hope that readers will enjoy the mixture of articles.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

A gentle reminder to members who have not yet paid for 2010. Subscriptions were due on 1st January. Please pay NOW if you have not already done so. Full details can be found on the inside of the front cover.



HAS SUDAN'S COMPREHENSIVE PEACE AGREEMENT SOLVED THE COUNTRY'S PERENNIAL STATE OF WAR?

Benedetta de Alessi

INTRODUCTION

What relationship exists between the objective of the struggle of the SPLM/A and that of the CPA? Can a sustainable peace with democracy now be assured in Sudan? This question is dealt with in this paper. Has the CPA changed the situation since Richard Gray wrote this in 1963?

'One would have thought that the 1955 disturbance, though regrettable, would play a great role in bringing Northerners and Southerners together to face their differences more realistically and to work out a solution acceptable to both sides. This unfortunately has not been the case and the situation continues to worsen from day to day'.¹

The case of Sudan is unusual within the broader category of African states. Sudan is the result of Ottoman Egyptian colonialism by a Co-dominium with Britain.² It is said that the élite then formed has primary responsibility for the violent conflicts in post-colonial Sudan.³ The whole country has never been united or politically stable, due to a long history of socio-economic imbalance and where 'too many agreements' over contested sovereignty have been 'dishonoured'.⁴ Scholars contend that the Sudan's first and second civil wars are similar in some of their causes, in particular in the Government's failure to honour its

¹ Richard Gray in the introduction to Oduho J., and Deng W., *The problem of the Southern Sudan*, London: Oxford University Press, 1963

² See Prunier, G., *The Sudan: a successfully failed state*, in Rotberg, R. (ed.), *State failure and State Weakness in a time of terror*, World Peace Foundation, Cambridge MA, 2003; and Woodward, P., *Sudan 1980-1989: The Unstable State*, London: Lynne Rienner, 1990

³ Ahmed, A., 'Multiple complexity & prospects for Reconciliation & Unity; the Sudan conundrum', in Nhema, A & Zeleza, P.T. (eds.), *The Roots of African conflicts*, 2008

⁴ Alier, A., *Southern Sudan too many agreements dishonoured*, Ithaca Press, 1990



commitment on southern autonomy since independence.⁵ Truth is that the first southern rebellion, Anya-nya, started even before independence in 1955.⁶ In 1956 Southerners were not granted the special arrangements that they had been promised; the first regional government in the South obtained in 1972 under the Addis Ababa Agreement (AAA) was unilaterally and unconstitutionally abolished in 1983 by the late President Nimeiri. The subsequent 'democratic' government proved even less keen in negotiating peace with the rebels, then organised under the SPLM/A flag, and both the 1986 Koka Dam Declaration and the 1988 Sudan Peace Initiative were broken. The Islamic coup of 1989 resulted in further polarization and spillover into other parts of Sudan and abroad. The conflict was no longer a north-south divide and an identity war only, but it also became a centre/periphery struggle (e.g. Darfur and the East). Besides, the 'Islamisation' of the centre changed the pattern of the war which was now fought as a *Jihad*.⁷ Finally the discovery of oil – one of the reasons for the failure of the AAA – added to the intractability of the conflict.⁸ The strong unchallenged powerful central authority of the northern elite has produced what Prunier called '*a successful failed state*'.⁹ For Clapham, that is also '*the virtual impossibility*' to govern a big African State. Understanding power relations between the Sudan central Government and its southern peripheries is crucial to an appreciation of the country's modern political development and the potential of the CPA to solve the historical issue of sovereignty.¹⁰

⁵ Rogier, E., *No more hills ahead? The Sudan's tortuous ascent to heights of peace*, Clingendale Security paper No.1, August 2005; Woodward, P., 'Sudan: the retreat to military clientelism', in *The Political Dilemma of Military regimes*, Croom Helm, 1985; Woodward, P., *Sudan: Political transitions past and present*, Sir William Luce Memorial Lecture 2008.

⁶ Henderson found a link between colonial legacy and probability of civil war in the post-colonies, see Henderson, E., 'When States implode. Africa's civil wars 1950-92', in Nhema and Zeleza (eds.), *The roots of African conflicts*, James Currey, 2008. For an essential account of the Anya-nya struggle see Lagu, J., *Sudan: Odyssey Through a State, from Ruin To Hope*, Khartoum: Khartoum University Press, 2006

⁷ Laremont, R.R. (ed), *The causes of war and the consequences of peacekeeping in Africa*, Heinemann, Portsmouth: NH, 2002

⁸ Rogier 2005 p.2

⁹ Prunier, 2003

¹⁰ For 'conflict and peace' history of Sudan until the signing of the CPA, see; Johnson, D., *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars*, Oxford: James Currey, 2003

AWAKENING POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE SOUTH

In the South there was little sign of political consciousness and no political organization when nationalists in the North began to guide the Sudan towards independence in 1956.¹¹ Southern intellectuals were expelled in 1960 and were never truly able to operate without northern control.¹² The idea of southern nationalism never really developed, even less after the division of the South into three regions. After the failure of the AAA, the SPLM/A emerged under the leadership of John Garang, then an officer in the Southern Armed Forces (SAF): for the first time the rebellion in the South was conceived differently.¹³ The SPLM/A had a clearer political agenda than previous southern rebellions, a more efficient army, a geo-political horizon and support of the northern opposition, united under the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) umbrella with Eritrean support.¹⁴ It was able to incorporate other struggles under the vision of a united 'New Sudan': the SPLM/A's demands went beyond Southern autonomy as they put forward the question of self-determination. That vision however was not understood and not accepted by all. The SPLM/A leadership imposed itself through violent confrontation (both internal and external, e.g. against the Anyanya 2) and maintained a restricted decision making process organised around Dr Garang. Soon, during the struggle contradictions arose around its socialist ideology, and the relationship with the southern population became one of subjection and control.¹⁵ The Nasir split of 1991, where the leadership divided along personality and ethnic lines, in particular against the power of the Dinka, brought those contradictions to the surface. A fierce struggle between the Nuer and the Dinka emerged and thousands of people were massacred within the South. Consequences were contained both due to the internal divisions of the new faction and

¹¹ Markakis J., *National and Class conflict in the Horn of Africa*, Cambridge University Press, 1987: p.51

¹² For the condition of Southerner intellectuals at that time see Oduho and Deng, 1963, Lagu, 2006 and Adwok Nyaba P., *Politics of liberation in Southern Sudan, an insider's view*, Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1997

¹³ For an excellent account of the genesis of the SPLM/A see Adwok, 1997

¹⁴ See Johnson's account in Clapham, C., *African Guerrillas*, Oxford: James Currey, 1998, and in *The Root causes of Sudan's civil wars*, 2003.

¹⁵ See Adwok, 1997

to the organization of the first 1994 Convention of the SPLM/A.¹⁶ The New Sudan vision was reinstated, also through the IGAD Declaration of Principle of 1994 and with Ethiopian support, the SPLM/A administrative structures in the South were set up.¹⁷ The charisma of the leader John Garang and the new international geopolitical environment allowed for the SPLM/A endurance.

With skilled diplomatic moves, in 2002 the SPLM/A entered in negotiations with the Government of Sudan i.e. the National Congress Party (NCP). Parties were aware that the war had exhausted everyone and the only path for peace was towards a settlement. The importance of the contemporary global security context should not be overlooked. The post 9/11 environment created bilateral dynamics between Sudan and the US and the international support for peace talks was massive. The NCP hoped for a reduction in sanctions to maintain and increase its power in the North, the SPLM/A needed international recognition and a strong patron in view of the Referendum. The legitimacy and seriousness of the government to negotiate the peace – also considering the newly erupted war in Darfur – was persistently tested by Garang. As Waihenya reports, the SPLM's cautious pace with the talks, knowing Khartoum's history of dishonoured agreements, conveniently allowed time to get militarily organised.¹⁸ The CPA was signed on 9th January 2005 after thirty months of intense discussions and with a strong international push, especially from the United States. The Parties found agreement on most issues at the core of the conflict, in particular that of sovereignty. The hot 'buttons' of religion, self-determination and resource-sharing were left to the implementation phase: the main objective was to end hostilities. According to Gen. Sumbeiywo, chief mediator of the CPA process for IGAD, the final phase of the settlement was the most difficult.¹⁹ Both parties wanted to extract major concessions in the shortest time possible. Garang capitalized on his increased political stature in Sudan and abroad

¹⁶ Ibid, see also Akol, 1997

¹⁷ Rolandsen, 2008

¹⁸ Waihenya, W., *The mediator: Gen. Lazaro Sumbeiywo and the Southern Sudan Peace Process*, Nairobi, Kenway Publications, 2006

¹⁹ From Waihenya, 2006

to achieve more from the deal, Sumbeiywo admitted.²⁰ It seems however that the Parties had not truly prepared for its actual implementation. The implementation modalities were drafted after arduous effort from the IGAD advisors and only at the last minute before the signature. The tragic death of Dr John Garang, in July 2005, a few days after he had been sworn in as First Vice President of Sudan and President of the Government of Southern Sudan, ultimately affected the capacity of the SPLM to implement the CPA and the New Sudan vision. As Silone (1931) has expressed it:

*'If there is a time in which humanity has to suffer, it is not in war, but after war'*²¹

SPLM/A AND THE COMPREHENSIVE PEACE AGREEMENT

The CPA reflected Garang's idea of transforming Sudan from the centre, of 'conquering Khartoum' - paraphrasing Churchill's description of Kitchener's battle against the Khalifa - by peaceful means. Based on the New Sudan vision under the slogan 'make the unity attractive', the CPA transformed the SPLM/A into a national political party i.e. separated the M, movement, from the A, army. It established the foundation of a modern state based on a federal system of government, composed of the Government of National Unity (GNU), the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) and 25 State Governments. The SPLA became the territorial army of Southern Sudan. In line with Sudanese history, the CPA includes both an option of autonomy for the South: the Referendum for self-determination after an interim period of six years; and an integrative approach to power sharing for the formation of mixed institutions, to encourage 'unity' as a viable alternative. Scholars and practitioners are divided on whether separation is the only means to reduce the likelihood of revived conflict in deeply divided societies,²² or

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Silone I., *Fontamara*, Oscar Mondadori, 1931

²² Kaufman, C., 'Possible and Impossible solutions to ethnic civil wars', in *International Security*, 20, 4, 136-75, Spring, 1996



whether multi-ethnic diversity should be preserved and supported in the name of state sovereignty (as in the case of Bosnia).²³ In very rare circumstances in contemporary peacemaking (so far only Eritrea and East Timor), an agreement moved international boundaries.²⁴ Moreover, being a zero-sum game a plebiscite remains a-political hence it rarely defuses conflict.²⁵ Despite its lack of success, however, it is widely accepted that the demand for autonomy and the recognition for a legitimate sovereignty is the most democratic principle and must remain an option in peace settlements. In the case of Sudan, the inclusion of the self-determination option was a *sine qua non*.

The CPA is unique in being both a power sharing and a territorial agreement. Under its framework, the SPLM/A became simultaneously the main opposition party in the GNU (28%), the guarantor of the CPA as part of the Presidency with the NCP, while being the leader of GoSS (with 70%) and in control of the new territorial army, the SPLA. The implementation is based on the assumption that such transformations would happen. That was a huge expectation from a liberation movement, emerged from a stateless society, whose vision of unity was not widespread, and that based its organisation on a restricted leadership and decision making process. While the CPA carefully explained the transformation of the SPLA, it overlooked the transformation of the SPLM into a national political party.²⁶ As such, the implementation of the New Sudan vision was necessarily problematic, vis-à-vis a skilful NCP, in control of national security, military, political and economic apparatus, and with rocky alliances with the traditional northern opposition.

²³ Darby, J. and MacGinty, R., *Contemporary Peacemaking. Conflict, violence and peace processes*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003

²⁴ The Referendum in Eritrea though has legitimized what was already decided on the battlefield. See Reilly, 2009; also Sisk, T., 'Power sharing after civil wars: matching problems to solutions', in Darby, J. and MacGinty, R., *Contemporary Peacemaking. Conflict, violence and peace processes*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003

²⁵ See Reilly, C., *Peace-Building and Development in Guatemala and Northern Ireland*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009

²⁶ Soderberg-Kovacs (2006) sees as one of the most effective features of the Mozambique peace process of 2006 the transformation of RENAMO since the beginning of the negotiations.

The implementation of the CPA was difficult from the beginning. The mutual mistrust between the Parties revealed itself already in the pre-interim period and the SPLM lost some major post-conflict battles against the NCP. The national Cabinet was appointed with difficulty, as the NCP kept for itself the key Ministries of Finance, Energy and Mining, Interior and Defence. The demarcation of the North/South border in the pre-interim period did not materialise; the committee assigned to make a recommendation to the Presidency on the matter began its work late, it lacked funding and the southern members of the commission felt sidelined. The symbolic issue of the National capital was resolved contrary to the SPLM's wish and Khartoum remained ruled by the *sharia* law.

After the agreement, the SPLM formed Northern and Southern sectors and created the structure for the creation of SPLM branches in all states of Sudan. As a result of the Yei leadership conference in 2007, and in accordance with the spirit of the CPA, the SPLM National Secretariat was moved from Juba to Khartoum. However, the decision making body of the SPLM remained the Political Bureau, as at the time of the struggle, meeting in Juba. Moreover, many former SPLM/A officers who now occupied positions in the new Southern Sudan institutions, were reluctant to work in the North - also for security reasons - starting from the Chairman downwards. As such, instead of strengthening the northern sector to drive the transformation of the movement into a national party, where the ground is more conducive to politics and peaceful confrontations, the movement was run from the South, where the SPLM/A had financial and military advantage. That was not conducive ground for democratisation and openness of a guerrilla movement. The SPLM maintained the control of GoSS, with an emphasis on security (as the division of the annual budget can prove) and the division between the 'M' and the 'A' was blurring. The effect was twofold: on the one hand the SPLM did not become an effective national political party, while maintaining, however, the position within the Presidency. That contradiction emerged in the first elections of the SPLM in the wake of the Convention in 2008, when a substantive number of SPLM

representatives were changed by the people; the SPLM had lost its appeal in its southern constituencies which claimed loudly for separation from the North. On the other hand, the power of the NCP in the North remained untouched, if not strengthened.

The major traditional opposition parties did not endorse the agreement and were left out of the constitutional revision process and of the National Assembly. The idea of the CPA was that the SPLM, which maintains the 28% of GNU, would lead the opposition alliance in the Assembly to contain the 52% majority of the NCP. In contrast, the SPLM's caucus was never reinforced and was led by unfaithful members who were later expelled.²⁷ As such, the SPLM has not been able to affect the constitutional steps necessary to reach the Referendum stage according to the letter of the agreement. In particular, a sound national census, the legislative transformation of some 60 laws, and the reform of national security and law enforcement agencies, in time for the election were not completed.²⁸ In the course of the debate on the preparation of the Political Parties Act in 2007, the SPLM representative in Khartoum once meeting the opposition reminded the 'veto power' that the CPA granted to the NCP and the SPLM. The already shaky relation between the SPLM and the northern and southern opposition was weakened by individual statements of that kind. The gap between the decision making body of the Party in the South and the northern representatives of the party was growing; the preparation of the national population census proved another example. The Presidency took the decision to drop the questions about religion and ethnicity from the census questionnaire towards the end of 2007. The SPLM contested that decision, but its appeal was weakened by the fact that a SPLM representative was present at the time the decision was made.²⁹ Once again, decisions in Khartoum were made without consultation with the Political Bureau in Juba. The issue of the census triggered a drastic move of the SPLM; in October

²⁷ It is the case of Alijo Manoja and Gazi Suleiman, who gained power after the departure of Yasir Arman.

²⁸ For details see *AEC Mid-term report* and *UNMIS CPA monitors*

²⁹ Telar Deng, State Ministry at the Presidency, later on expelled from the Party.

2007, it withdrew from the GNU, reasserting the need for a full implementation of the CPA. It rejoined two months later with a cabinet reshuffle and an agreement on a new road map for CPA implementation. The SPLM had reasserted its position as a national partner and the international community supported the move. After intense negotiations, some ministerial changes to position loyal SPLM members in the GNU and reassurance from the side of the NCP, the SPLM returned to the government. In the meantime the role of the international community was minimised and the Parties negotiated in bilateral *fora* the main questions left open at Naivasha, mainly oil, border and citizenship (the three symbolised in the Abyei issue). Without third parties' control, the NCP easily disregarded the SPLM's claims as the bottlenecks of the CPA remained in the hands of the Presidency where the NCP maintains a major stake. The SPLM in turn insistently made claims towards the principle of self-determination, disregarding the importance of political dialogue in the South (e.g. South-South dialogue) and its development as a national party.

Despite the CPA commitment to 'make the Unity attractive', little has been done in that direction in the past five years by both Parties; the lack of CPA dissemination and a national reconciliation and healing process, together with little legislative transformation, has reduced the sense of ownership of the agreement. As the CPA implementation was lagging behind, the north/south divide became increasingly evident as both Parties invested heavily in security. Politics in Sudan became a war by political means, to paraphrase both Clausewitz and Foucault and the security struggle will in turn solve the issue of sovereignty. As a result of the CPA, Sudan is now dominated by two one-party states, in a relation of security control. The CPA call to make the Unity attractive has become weaker alongside the weak national role of the SPLM.

The SPLM/A was the 'incognita' at the time of the negotiations; until now its strategy, actors and resources have not been fully deciphered. The agreement affected the transformation of the movement and by ignoring that constitutive relation, in return, weakened its own

implementation. The liberal peace agreements that became popular after the Cold War, like the CPA, link the idea of peace to an effective western democracy. As such, they are based on the idea that conflicts shall be 'solved', that domestic variables have a surprisingly weak influence on democratization, and peace must be brought *ex novo*.³⁰ The aim is to end a lasting civil war - too simplistically categorised as 'new'³¹ - and reconstruct war torn societies by promoting 'good governance', human rights, rule of law and developed open markets.³² The emphasis goes on technical short term solutions (i.e. the definition of intricate cease-fire, power sharing and wealth sharing arrangements and proliferation of commissions/committees). In one influential study, Stedman admitted:

'Priority should be given to demobilisation of soldiers and the demilitarisation of politics, which is the transformation of soldiers into civilians and warring armies into political parties. In the absence, civil wars cannot be brought to an end'.³³

Until now however the focus remains on the technical implementation of liberal predicaments (e.g. security reform, market liberalization and electoralism), relatively less complex than the study of relationship and human agencies that the effect of transformation entails. Practitioners read Stedman's call as an invitation to strengthen the reform of the security sector and the 'Ds' of the Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) dogma of liberal peace-building.³⁴ The study of rebel movements in peace-building thus remains marginal. In general, the understanding of rebellion in Africa, remains limited despite its

³⁰ Richards, P. (ed), *No peace no war. An anthropology of contemporary armed conflicts*, Oxford: James Currey, 2005

³¹ Kaldor, M., *New and old wars. Organized violence in a global era*, 2nd ed., Polity, 2006

³² Richmond, O., *The Transformation of Peace*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2005

³³ Ibid: 3

³⁴ On the limits of DDR, see Berdal, M., *Disarmament and demobilization after civil wars: Arms, soldiers, and the termination of conflict*, Adelphi paper no. 303, 1996; Giustozzi, A., 'Bureaucratic facade and political realities of disarmament and demobilization in Afghanistan', *Conflict, Security and Development*, Volume 8, Number 2, June 2008, pp.169-192(24); Marriage, Z., 'Flip-flop rebel, dollar soldier: demobilization in the Democratic Republic of Congo', *Conflict, Security and Development*, Volume 7, Number 2, June 2007, pp. 281-309 (29)

intrinsic relation to an understanding of conflict, peace and ultimately African statehood.³⁵ That mechanical implementation of peace however creates what Adorno called the '*administered state*' in a vacuum.³⁶ The political is reduced to a routine activity which renders the state invisible and decisions are taken out of the hands of the 'sovereign'. Moreover, by creating '*administered society*', state sovereignty remains unchallenged. The demands of a global society supersede those of the local society and state sovereignty at the expense of both. Was the CPA the means to realize the objective of the SPLM/A and the New Sudan vision?

Deng at an early stage of the negotiations realised that the inherent weakness of the CPA was the loose framework for unity with no national consensus.³⁷ In Sudan today, Parties' relations, and military force, will in turn influence the sovereignty issue in 2011. Not differently from other situations, the call for the Referendum in Sudan became an end in itself affecting the course of the agreement implementation at the expense of socio-economic transformation and democratisation of Sudan, let alone Unity and peace. We can reasonably say that a selective implementation of the CPA has legitimised the parties' survival rather than resulting in a sustainable peace in the name of Sudan's interests but has not solved the contested issue of sovereignty. That is a trend common in other places in Africa,³⁸ but that is not a reason to accept it.

Liberal peace agreements have been studied in order to see how they might be strengthened and, especially, how best to conceptualize the period after a tentative peace has been negotiated. Instead of 'solving' the conflict, Rothstein contends that the focus should be on the new set of opportunities that the peace agreements can create.³⁹

³⁵ Clapham, 1998

³⁶ Adorno, T. W. *Negative Dialectics*, New York: The Seabury Press, 1973

³⁷ Deng 2003:82. The instrumental use of constitutionalism is often the backlash to the imposition of liberal predicaments in the new independent African states.

³⁸ Mehler, A. *Not always in the People's Interest: Power Sharing Arrangements in African Peace Agreements*, GIGA Working papers, No. 83, 2008

³⁹ Rothstein, R., *After the peace: resistance and reconciliation*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999

'How can the potential benefits stemming from the process of peacemaking be valued, without letting them freeze into new grievances?'

One of the main criticisms of the effectiveness of peace initiatives in fact is that they entrench the process with the participants of the conflict itself, at risk of reinforcing these actors' conflicting roles (e.g. Israel and Palestine). That often reflects international rather than local opinion.⁴⁰ The idea of success is linked to an effective implementation of the agreement i.e. on the role of international actors for that effect or the implementation of key steps of the agreement. New grievances are overlooked and an overoptimistic view of the process prevails, like the emphasis on having the elections even if 'cosmetic' and problematic.⁴¹ Last elections in Sudan were conducted in a climate of deep mistrust between the Parties; the SPLM withdrew from competition in the North, alongside the opposition, leading to an easy, if still contested, NCP victory. In the meantime, in the South, the SPLM's supreme authority shivered as a result of the decision of some members to run as independent candidates. The Political Bureau decision on the list of party candidates did not find common ground and the party split mainly over personalities. The areas where both the SPLM and independent candidates ran for governorship witnessed major irregularities (detentions, arrests, rigging) and the SPLM finally won in all but one of the Southern states. Some of the candidates got the favour of the population because they re-asserted the importance of separation from the North and eventually this is what the Southerners are aiming at. It seems that the SPLM's call to 'make the Unity attractive' has become an excessive ideal, rather than a positive one.

⁴⁰ The Bosnia-Herzegovina agreement pleased more the international search for solution and goodwill, as later Kosovo independence revealed.

⁴¹ At the extreme is what happened in Rwanda after the Arusha agreement.

CONCLUSION

This study did not wish to judge the political game of the Parties, but to question its validity in relation to the CPA premises, on which the Referendum call is based. The aim is to understand whether the Referendum can be transformed into a positive-sum game and avoid the detrimental cycle of violence and internal splits occurring now both in the South and in the North. Conflict and peace are inescapably sociological; they do not exist in a vacuum but interact with specific historical and social forces.⁴² Why do men rebel in Africa?⁴³ What is the objective of their struggle and can it be achieved through a liberal peace agreement? Those questions have received a level of analytical attention that '*remotely corresponds to their importance*', as Clapham admitted.⁴⁴ It is generally recognised that rebellion in Africa emerges in relation to State power and mainly in the form of guerrilla warfare. Generally marginalisation and relative deprivation imposed by a regime is the trigger and engine; the case of Sudan confirms the theory. If insurgencies have much to tell about African statehood and government as a whole, however, their relationship to a viable solution to those problems is much less clear.⁴⁵ Liberal peace-building in particular ignores that discourse and imposes a de-contextualized idea of peace which has emerged from a liberal democracy. As a result, the majority of conflicts which terminate through those agreements fail in the first 5 years of implementation.

With an appreciation of war and peace as not discrete events, instead, peace agreements should be considered transitional devices to expand the social contract from the elites to the local population. Transitions in fact occur only when rulers will have to negotiate with their citizens for

⁴² Francis, 2008; Richards 2005:4

⁴³ The question is borrowed from Gurr, 1970

⁴⁴ Clapham C., *African Guerrillas*, Cambridge University Press, 1998; Bøås, M. and Dunn, K.C. (eds), *African Guerrillas. Raging against the machine*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007

⁴⁵ Clapham, 1998



the resources to govern.⁴⁶ What does self-determination mean for the Northerners? What for the Southerners? What are the expectations of the North over the South and vice versa? What is the meaning of the 'New Sudan vision' today? The Referendum is a right that Southern Sudanese have fought for in the last 60 years and the opportunity shall not be missed. Priority in the last months before the Referendum should be given to dialogue and reconciliation starting from the leaders, to transform the plebiscite into a positive sum-game. The international community should help the Parties promote dialogue (e.g. South-South dialogue, North-North dialogue) to adapt the New Sudan vision to the post-CPA situation and local reconciliation efforts, with the participation of the very leaders perpetuating insecurity on the ground.

⁴⁶ See Bates, R., *Markets and States in Tropical Africa: The Political Basis of Agricultural Policies*, Berkeley, CA: California University Press, 1984



THE DEMISE OF THE RAILWAY AND AN ERA OF ROAD AND BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION IN SUDAN (1980-2009)

Mustafa M Khogali

INTRODUCTION

Whilst thinking about and writing this paper, the author recalled the days when he was a pupil at Wadi Seidna Secondary School, Omdurman, and had to travel from Dongola to Khartoum, by steamer to Karima and thence by rail to Khartoum. This was a trip that lasted a complete 8 days from a Wednesday morning until the following Wednesday evening. At times during the rainy season washouts could lengthen the journey up to 13 days. Thanks to road transport the journey is now a matter of hours. The failure of the railway network to provide a suitable and timely service led to much frustration, but it was not until 1980 that the policy laid down in 1930, whereby roads were seen as essentially a means of transport of goods and people to the nearest railway station, was finally challenged. It was not until 1986, after a new political regime had taken power that a new policy was put into effect. Nevertheless, the rail network was a vital factor in development in the Sudan and must be examined first.

THE RAILWAY NETWORK (Figure 1; Table 1)

For over 70 years railways were the main means of transport in the Sudan. Their introduction began with the building of some short lines connected with the Anglo-Egyptian invasion which led to the establishment of the Condominium. The first really important line was the single narrow gauge track (1068mm) from Wadi Halfa to Khartoum North. The last day of the Nineteenth Century saw the official inauguration of this line which was mainly for the transport of passengers and equipment. Later on, however, this line and



others such as the ones to Port Sudan (1906) and El Obeid (1912) combined both military and economic purposes.

When the Sudan became a self-governing country in 1954 it had a skeleton railway system of about 3104km of main line. The national government, eager to embark upon a programme of national unity and economic development built 3 new lines: a shorter one from Sennar to Roseires/Damazin for the building of the Damazin Dam; and 2 longer ones first from Aradaiba westwards to Nyala in Darfur, and second southwards from Babanousa to Wau. Thus the length of main line was increased to 4588km. Table 1 shows the development of the rail network from 1898 to 1995. In addition, the railways ran two major river all year services in the Sudan, namely from Dongola to Karima and from Khartoum to Juba with seasonal services to Meshra Er Req and up the River Sobat. It also ran a river service from Wadi Halfa in Sudan to Shellal, south of Aswan, in Egypt.

The impact of this network on the economy, politics and national unity was great:

1. It played a vital role in the economic development of the Sudan, for without the rails such development schemes as the Gezira, where about 250,000 feddans of long-staple cotton were cultivated annually and the crop exported, would not have been possible. Further the railways provided a great incentive to traditional farmers of the savanna regions to combine the production of subsistence crops with commercial farming

2. The rails as a modern means of transport made the mobility of people comparatively easy, and regions served by the railway became, to some extent, integrated with the centre of the country and with other parts of the Sudan. However, regions away from the railway, such as Darfur and the South felt isolated, and that was a source of discontent and had adverse political repercussions.

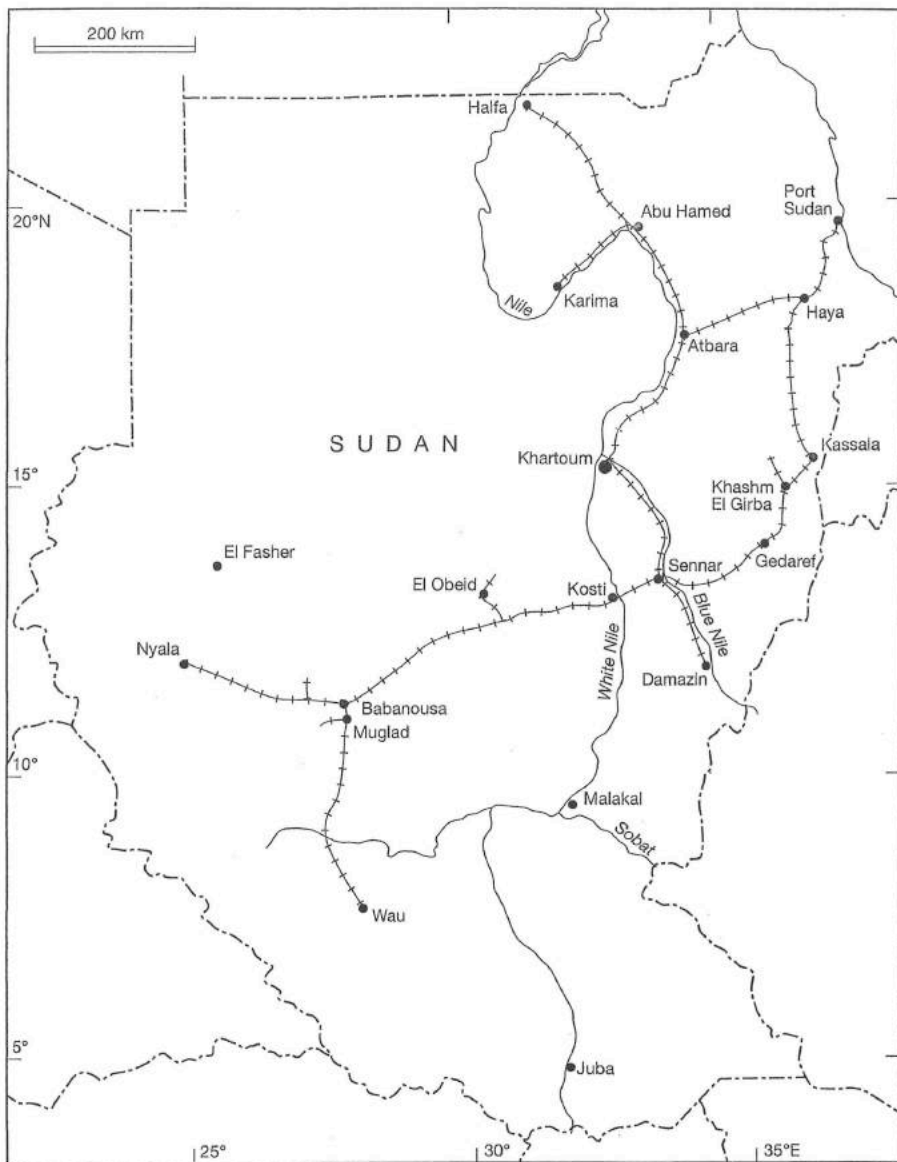


Figure 1: Sudan Railway Network, 2005
[Sennar to Kassala line is currently out of use]

Table 1: Sudan Railways: Date of construction, and length of lines.

	Name of the line	Date of Construction	Length of line, km
1	Halfa - Abu Hamed	1898	350
2	Abu Hamed - Atbara	1898	244
3	Atbara - Khartoum	1899	313
4	Atbara - Port Sudan	1906	474
5	Station No 10 - Karima	1905	222
6	Khartoum - Kosti - El Obeid	1912	689
7	Haya - Kassala	1924	347
8	Kassala - Sennar	1928	218
9	Gedarif - Sennar	1929	237
10	Sennar - Damazin	1954	220
11	Aradeiba - Babanousa	1957	359
12	Babanousa - Nyala	1959	335
13	Babanousa - Wau	1965	444
14	Khashm el Girba - Digheim	1962	70
15	Muglad - Abu Gabra	1995	52
16	Sharif - Oil Field	1995	10
17	El Obeid - Refinery	1995	10

Source : Sudan Railways Records

Table 2: Passengers and goods transported by rail.

Period	Tons (millions)	Passenger (million)
1970/71 - 1974	2.96	3.2
1975/76 - 1979	2.40	2.8
1980/81 - 1984/85	1.44	2.1
1985/86 - 1989/90	0.7	1.1
1990/91 - 1994/95	1.1	0.6
1990 - 1995	2.1	0.3

Source : Mohammed Osman Al Khider

3. The railways played an indirect, though effective, role in delaying the construction of tarmac roads in the days when motor transport began to compete with railways for the transport of goods and passengers. The railway authorities did not like the emerging competition from road transport and succeeded in convincing the Sudan Government of the need to curtail this competition. So in 1934 an Ordinance was issued by the Governor General in Council giving the railways a complete monopoly of traffic from the port to the inside of the country. In practice, that also applied to traffic from inside the country to the port. In effect, the Ordinance prohibited the building of any tarmac roads. Feeder roads to the railway were not prevented but remained as sand, clay or gravel tracks.

4. As a result of their monopoly the railways made reasonable profits, but later the rail system faced great operation losses.

5. The railways encouraged agricultural production, but as time passed and especially after the construction of the railway to Nyala traffic increased to such an extent that the railway could not cope with the quantities of goods to be transported. The main problem arose from the seasonality of agricultural production which led to sharp peaks in demand especially from November to March.

The railway authorities argued that an increase in capacity and facilities might solve the peak demand problem, but it would create surpluses of capacity that would not be used for 6 to 8 months of the year and that would lead to considerable financial losses. That logic was not convincing to businessmen who naturally saw that the money they put into buying crops was tied up for 4 to 6 months of the year as consignments remained at the railway stations or in store during all that time. They also argued that existing railway policy was bound to reduce their ability to compete with other regions inside, or outside, Sudan producing the same kinds of crops. The same kinds of complaints also came from those

engaged in importing goods. Here there were no peak seasons, but the railways singly failed to cope with the quantity of goods at any time of the year, so that goods remained in the port for months causing unnecessary losses and congestion. The Government and the newly formed Railway Authority tried to improve matters but without success.

The reasons behind many of the shortcomings could be summarized:

1. Mismanagement: The World Bank, through the consulting firm SOFREAL, pointed this out as a major factor as far back as 1974, but their report was shelved.
2. Lack of maintenance of rolling stock and other equipment
3. Widespread corruption: The railway authorities, seeing that there were many business demands upon them, realized that it was impossible to serve all at one and the same time and to be fair to all developed a policy of queues: who came first was to be served first and registration books were to be kept at the various railway stations. In practice there was no system of accountability and the door was opened wide for corruption.
4. Frequent strikes: Salaries were low and the trade unions acting irresponsibly creating many delays.
5. Political problems with the USA: Over 80% of the railway equipment was of USA origin and when the USA declared economic sanctions against the Sudan, the railways suffered badly.

With these failures both the Railway Authority and the Government came under severe pressure. Many scholars thought that the problem of transport could be solved by building roads, not



only to serve the economy, but also because roads were looked upon as the sign of a modern state.

ROAD BUILDING

During the first half of the 20th century tarmac roads were built in Khartoum and in a few other towns; outside such urban centres the roads were sand and gravel tracks following the lines that animal movements and humans walking had created. When lorries were introduced they followed such route lines and in spite of such shortcomings they were able to compete with the railways. After the Second World War the number of working lorries increased significantly and discussions began. Notably there were papers by Morrice in *Sudan Notes and Records* strongly in favour of road building. In 1957 the Sudan asked for technical advice from the United Nations. This led to the Campbell Report which suggested the building of 3,100 miles (c5,600 km) of national and provincial roads. Nothing materialized due to opposition from Sudan Railways and because of the economic problems facing the Sudan from 1958 to 1961. In 1964 USAID suggested that two highways in particular should be built: Khartoum to Port Sudan via Wad Medani (to serve the Rahad Scheme); and Khartoum to El Obeid via Kosti. In the end only two short highways were built: Khartoum to Wad Medani (189km) and Khartoum to Geili (33km).

The failure of the railways led to lorry owners breaking the 1934 Ordinance and carrying goods to and from Port Sudan. But plans for a road network did not start until a new Political Regime took over in 1986. The first question asked was how to pay for a new road network? The advent of oil revenues has helped enormously. So far five long highways have been constructed to give the Sudan a skeleton network. These are:

1. The highway suggested by USAID from Khartoum to Port Sudan via Wad Medani and Kassala.
2. Tahady Highway from Khartoum to Port Sudan via Atbara.



3. The Western Ingaz Highway from Khartoum to El Obeid via Kosti and since extended to Nyala with work underway to reach El Fasher. This is now to have a branch from Kosti to Malakal.
4. The Northern Ingaz Highway from Omdurman across the Bayuda Desert to Dongola and Merowe
5. On the easternside of the Nile a highway from Karima to Dongola and Old Halfa with a link to the Khartoum-Port Sudan Highway

BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION

The first bridges were constructed for the railways. They were narrow with side tracks for the use of pedestrians and animals. Later they were made accessible for small cars and light commercial vehicles. The main railway bridges were:

1. Over the River Atbara, 1897;
2. Over the Blue Nile linking Khartoum with Khartoum North, 1908
3. Over the White Nile at Kosti, 1911;
4. Over the White Nile linking Khartoum and Omdurman, 1924.

The main new road bridges (outside Greater Khartoum) are:

1. The new Atbara Bridge to allow Tahady Highway traffic to proceed to Port Sudan;
2. A new bridge at Kosti for the Western Ingaz Highway;
3. Hantoub Bridge over the Blue Nile for the Khartoum-Port Sudan road via Wad Medani and Kassala;

And most recently:

4. Merowe/Karima, 2007;
5. Dongola/Sieim, 2009;
6. Hasaheisa/Gunaid, 2009;
7. Um At Tayour/Karima, 2009.



Greater Khartoum has had a series of new bridges across both White and Blue Niles. Their main intention has been to allow traffic to proceed without having to go through the centres of Khartoum, Khartoum North and Omdurman, thereby reducing congestion:

1. The Armed Forces bridge, Khartoum to Khartoum North;
 2. Shambat Bridge linking Khartoum North with Omdurman;
 3. Al Fetaihab Bridge linking Khartoum with Omdurman, 1985
- And more recently:
4. Al Manshiya Bridge linking Gereif West and villages east of the Blue Nile with Khartoum, 2008
 5. Al Mek Nimr Bridge linking Khartoum North with Khartoum, 2009;
 6. Gazafi Bridge linking Khartoum and Tuti Island, 2009.

Other new bridges are in the pipeline including one to improve access to the new airport which is now under construction.

IMPACT OF THE NEW ROAD NETWORK (Tables 2 & 3)

So far the length of time since the development of the road network has been too short for a full evaluation. Nevertheless, some significant effects can be noted. The railways have clearly lost out badly to roads in passenger traffic. Over the 25 years 1970 to 1995 the number of passengers carried annually fell from 3.2 million to 300,000.

The preference for travelling by road is clear. The modern buses are comfortable, much more comfortable than the railway. The services are frequent and booking is not required and they have stops for refreshments. Bus fares are less than for First and Second Class on the railways and the bus journey time is much less than that by train. For example, the train takes 27 to 30 hours from Khartoum to El Obeid or Khartoum to Port Sudan, whereas buses take only 8 to 9 hours. Similarly, the train takes 5 hours for the journey from Khartoum to Wad Medani compared with just over 2 hours by bus. It is now possible by bus to go as far as Sennar or

Kosti from Khartoum and return the same day. Khartoum to Dongola by bus takes only 5 hours these days compared with the steamer and railway journey of 8 days in the past.

In a similar manner the railways have lost a great deal of freight traffic. From 2.96 million tons on average for 1971-74 to 0.7 million tons average for 1985-90. The increase since then seems to be mainly due to heavy goods connected with oil industry development. Nevertheless, the railway still plays a significant role in the transport of bulky low value items. Road hauliers are much more interested in high value products, especially where the distances are relatively short.

Air transport has also suffered from road developments. Air transport is much more expensive and inconvenient. For example, it costs £S150 to travel by air from Khartoum to Dongola compared with £49 by bus and you have to report at the airport three hours before the scheduled time of take-off. It is therefore hardly surprising that Sudan Airways is in increasing financial difficulties with some of its internal services. The Khartoum to Dongola service used to run 3 times a week, but is now reduced to one a week and this flight is rarely full.

Table 3: Percentage of goods transported by rail, trucks, river and air.

Period	By railway	By trucks	By river	By air
1970 - 1971	74.0	22.9	3.0	0.1
1988 - 1989	11.6	87.5	0.8	0.1
1990 - 1991	10.5	86.3	1.1	0.1
1993 - 1994	23.2	75.6	1.1	0.1

Source : Osman Ibrahim

The improved network of tarred roads has also had an impact on rural land use. In the past farmers were very hesitant over the production of high value crops such as fruit because of fears that it would be ruined because of the poor quality of the roads and

because of the length of time of getting the commodity to the market. Farmers are cautious about change and it takes some time for there to be an impact. Nevertheless, the Khartoum – Port Sudan road has now been in existence for some time and has had a significant effect around Kassala. Here the production of fruit and vegetables has increased significantly for the Khartoum and Port Sudan markets and some business men have constructed cold storage facilities to cope with the expanding production, and for similar reasons there has been an expansion in poultry production. It should not be assumed that this is an isolated incidence. It is notable that in the Khartoum markets you can now find fruit, especially mangoes, from the Nuba Mountains and fish from the dam at Merowe. There are also the first glimmerings of return to the rural areas due to the improved road network as some people can now see that a good living can be made from agricultural production.

The roads have not only increased mobility for social and family events but have also led to increased migration particularly to urban areas. So that whereas the Three Towns, comprising the capital, had only a quarter of a million inhabitants and was dominated in the 1950s by a limited range of ‘Northerners’, today it is truly cosmopolitan with a population of perhaps up to some 8 million including large numbers of folk from the east, west and south of the Sudan.

THE FUTURE

In 2009, it was stated that government policy is to try to revitalise the railways as it is plain that rail transport is the best way of moving bulky products, often of low value compared with weight, over the long distances involved in the Sudan. Khartoum to Nyala is 1404km, Khartoum to Wau is 1500km and Khartoum to Port Sudan is some 900km. One of the reasons given besides the economic was political. In November 2009 there was a meeting in Khartoum to discuss a proposal for a rail link from Dakar to Port

Sudan. This is reminiscent of the colonial plan, which never materialised, to link The Cape to Cairo and Djibouti to Dakar.

So far, the road network is very much a skeleton one. It is plain that many areas are still only served by dirt roads of questionable quality with many often unusable during the rainy season. It is plain that priority needs to be given to road transport serving some of the marginal and often potentially very productive areas such as Darfur, the Nuba Mountains, Ingessana Hills and virtually the whole of southern Sudan.

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ANGLO-FRENCH SUDAN BOUNDARY COMMISSION, 1922-23

Barbara Rees

It was only towards the end of the 19th Century that you find the French and the British co-operating. When Ferdinand de Lesseps was instrumental in the construction of the Suez Canal, Prime Minister Disraeli decided to take shares in the project to facilitate British trade with her colonies in the East. Britain gained a foothold in Egypt and the Sudan at the same time. After the Great War, when European minds were drawn to Africa, Britain and France, with their holdings in Africa, namely French Chad and Ubangi-Shari and the British with the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, needed to establish the boundary between these countries. This led to the establishment of the Anglo-French Boundary Commission. The leader was a Frenchman Colonel Boulnoir with an Englishman, Captain James, as his second-in-command, to survey this specific area.

Captain AC James was commissioned into the Royal Engineers Third Field Survey Company in 1917 and towards the end of the First World War he commanded the No. 6 Observation Group. Colonel Boulnoir was probably picked from a similar Survey Group in the French Army. Captain James wrote two personal diaries during his active involvement with the Commission from 1922-1923. The following extracts are taken from these and give an interesting background to the activities of the whole group as viewed by him.

DIARY No.1

The first diary deals with a section of the Sudan-Chad boundary (Figure 1). The Sudan side was Darfur. The frontier to the north of Wadi Howar, based upon latitude and longitude, had already been agreed. The first trek involved crossing westwards from the Nile



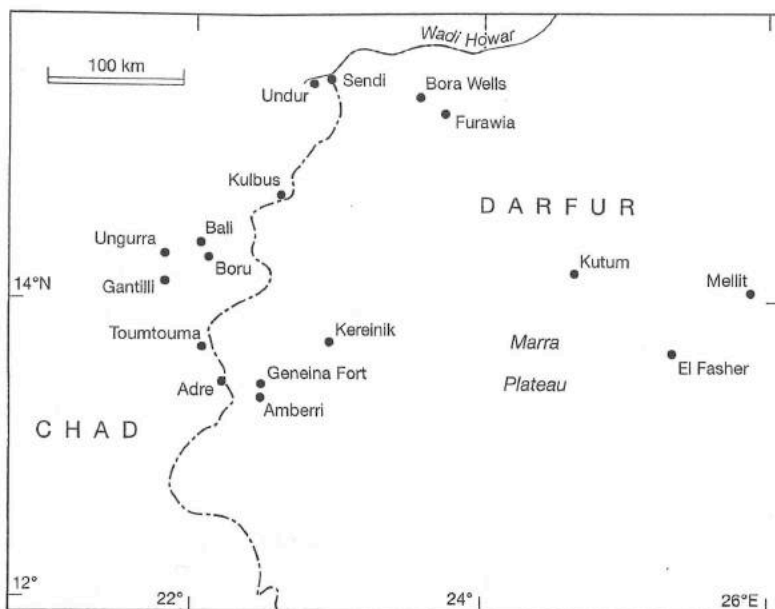


Figure 1: Diary No.1: Sudan/Chad Boundary

area, so on the 2nd January 1922 the Frenchman arrived at Kereinik to meet James and his group and they started work straight away. James took the northern trail while Sgt. Bristow and one Bryce took the south. They appear to have been well supplied. When they encountered local chieftains throughout the whole time they were trekking, they were plied with local produce e.g. eggs and milk, except when James found he was in hostile territory. Couriers were required to enable the two parties to maintain contact. They rode on horses accompanied by a policeman if they were sent on messages. The number of couriers varied and sometimes exceeded 70. When it was a question of taking observations they would climb a jebel or fort and set up the instruments. Even though the countryside was mostly desert the nights were cold and windy.

During the following month, according to James's diary, the group was dispersed along an agreed line, and he was the only European in the area. Jebel Bari was infested with baboons and they were living among the rocks; this indicates that the land was no longer entirely desert but was sparsely covered with vegetation. The method of transport on trek was on camels so the desert still prevailed.

The indigenous people lived in settlements either permanent or transitory and were ruled by a Sultan or Sheikh, and they were generally very co-operative - clearing a place for a camp where James mentions putting up his tent with chair, table and bed (Figure 2). It does not seem from the evidence that any payment was given. He was camped in an area (a wadi) half way to Kulbus and working from 6 am to 10 am - then trekking again until 6 pm. Whilst trekking he met the Sultan "*a most gorgeous gentleman*" who insists on turning him round and is followed by all of his retinue and he watched them put up his tent. The Sultan was given coffee and lime juice, and in exchange he donated milk, eggs, chickens, native food and "*a great big sheep*".



Figure 2: Captain James relaxes after a hard day's surveying

There was however always a shortage of water. James writes that he had visions of great thirst - after 6 hours of trekking his men found water at Sendi where there were three wells and quite a big village. "*Who said this is a waterless country*"- he states but he took no chances and loaded every container with water. They "*found water again at Undur*" –and here ostriches abounded.

By 21st June 1922, at Huror, he is in Nas territory which was French. He had to settle many disputes particularly in this area where he did not receive any local help. The Nas would not provide any workmen or sell sheep. James was told to make them sell, but he decided that as it was French territory this was not possible.

Some night work had to be done as James writes about climbing a jebel at night in order to use a fix from the stars and he and Boulnoir at times had to do much walking over soft sand. He describes some places among the foothills of the Jebel Marra Plateau as green and fertile. In this region the local people declared that they were British and to prove it donated a cow – which immediately ran away! There were times when food was scarce and some rice was on the menu. When there was a Mohammedan festival James says he bought a bull so they could have a feast, but he only allowed his men half a day's holiday.

When he was proceeding westward the country was labelled dull and desolate but when he was on his way back he saw things differently. There is little mention of rain in the first diary, but Mellit we are told was a wonderful place, the centre of which was a large palm grove where he "*saw a mirage this morning a great big lake of shimmering water*". This was the first he had seen since he was out there. Kutum he describes as "*a veritable paradise of green trees hidden away among a range of high mountains*" and "*upon a hill which overlooks a wadi just crammed with date*

palms". Around Nahud, unlike the October weather, was all "green grass and trees".

In the more civilised areas there were Rest Houses. At El Obeid in the Station Rest House there was "white bedroom furniture" and he "saw a train there the first for 9 months".

When they reached Khartoum there was a terrific storm which held them up. From there they took a train and steamer all the way to Cairo.

DIARY No.2

The other survey started in the following October but in the south - a different terrain altogether and was concerned with part of the Sudan border with Ubangi-Shari (now Central African Republic) (Figure 3). Its main aim was to identify for the border the parting of waters draining to the Nile from those to the Congo. Diem Zubeir was a fruitful place yielding bananas, oranges, lemons, limes and pineapples. James was using 75 carriers and a policeman - one of whom had been shot through the leg and was in pain. James himself had fever at the beginning of the operation but soon rallied and wrote of riding through jungle country seeing nothing but blue faced baboons. Here was the start of river country.

The Sultan welcomed them with buglers at Raga. The wound in the foot of the man who was shot remained unattended, so without a doctor available James had to assist in treating it. The only help they received for fever was a large dose of quinine which was mostly administered by injection if there was a medic, but otherwise dealt with by a pill washed down with milk.

In this watery area James mentions being pestered by a small species of fly, but undaunted wrote, "I've found the River Koka and consequently feel like a successful explorer must feel".



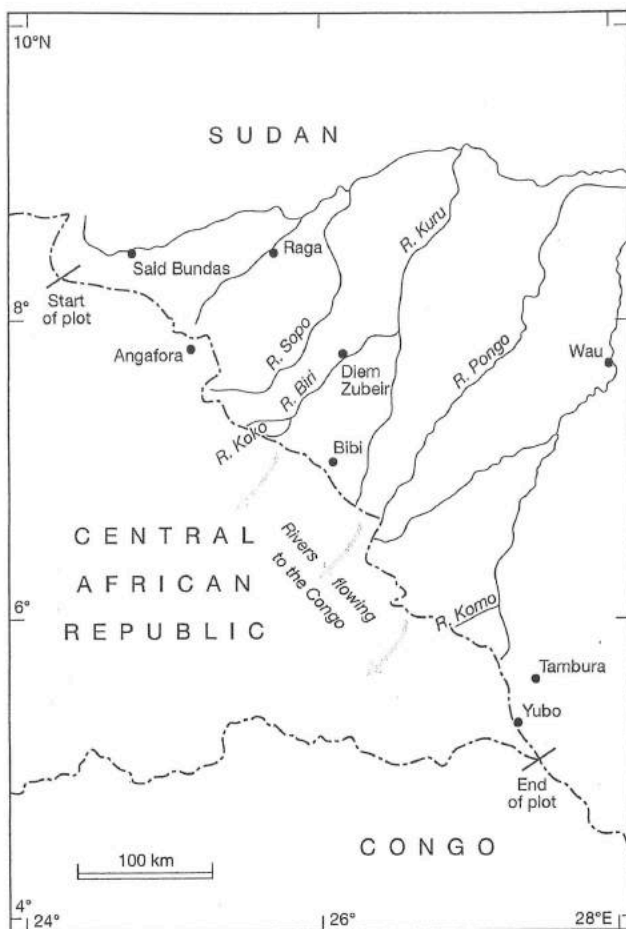


Figure 3: Diary No.2: Nile/Congo water parting

Apparently at this juncture one of his African police ate something that poisoned him and made him mad – so James took his gun from him so that he could do no harm to himself. James carried a gun and shot many animals he saw - such as a wild goose or a gazelle - most of the time then he would be on a horse because he mentions falling off one and spraining his finger. He is near the French Congo at this time plotting the boundary, the whole Sudan side being called Bahr El Ghazal.

“I have found the ridge from which two khors flow - one to the Congo and one to the Nile” - followed by the entry, “I’ve discovered the source of a khor which runs to the river Dyvo in the French Congo – this puts the boundary about 15 miles further East”.

At Angafora Yasum Siff arrives but not Boulnoir, but James sees a beacon about 5 miles away which indicates that Boulnoir has finished, and he does arrive the next day and after breakfast they observe azimuth and start calculations and observe again in the afternoon and compute until 8 pm. After dinner they do latitude observations till midnight, followed by time observations until 1 am – and in spite of the late night James was up early in the morning and did computations all day until James said, *“my head goes round like a spinning top”*.

One minute he is fit and the next has an attack of the fever. Boulnoir becomes ill and James has to do his work but admits he is not up to the astronomical work: he also complains of his *“Noah’s theodolite being the absolute rottenest instrument”*. The work continues during Christmas day but after the New Year he mentions becoming clear of bamboo country. More fever assails him and he takes aspirin and quinine but it does not seem to prevent all the trekking.

In this area he mentions seeing his first elephants and wanted to shoot them but he had made a rule while trekking not to stop and shoot any animal. He was bothered by hyenas near the River Knipi, apparently they were after his donkeys. Here he has one foot in the Sudan and one foot in the French Congo. He actually shot a buffalo grazing in his pathway although it was dangerous. *"A northern climate this – haven't felt really well and fit since I started on the boundary – and I can't do nearly as good days as I could up north"*. Amongst other hindrances James encountered a huge forest fire near the River Pongo.

At Biri there was a Syrian doctor which was lucky because he had succumbed to another bout of fever. Other wildlife that he came across in this area were bees and he came across rhino – *"fearsome looking beasts"*. His ears were bad after being bitten by tse-tse fly and the doctor coped with this injury too. He also made James put on breeches instead of wearing shorts, and a flannel shirt under a cotton one, although this apparel did not prevent him from going down with malaria and dysentery. He had to be carried which he did not like- *"Oh the agony of being carried - it's a nightmare"*. Although he purported to be better, the doctor would not let him out onto the boundary until the following day which was the 4th April 1923. At this date the doctor had to abandon James because Boulnoir required medical attention at once at the Ras Deli. The previous night he had been wakened by a lion 200 yards from the camp and the doctor had a fire lit and fired a round in the direction of the roaring and frightened it away.

There was an avalanche of rain in this area, thunder and lightning which killed two of his carriers. *"Some crack it made"* says James. When he camped near to the existing boundary whether there was a village or not the locals would gather to form a market. *"I've done rather well"* writes James *"6 chickens, a dozen eggs and nearly 30 pounds of flour for my cook and I've got the lot for 5pt and some 4 bottles – good business"*. The surrounding landscape

was really tropical forest with trees covered with creepers. The place was Yubo which he describes as beautiful - like arriving home, complete with gardens, whole roads bordered with flowering plants. So, in the established places there are good habitats and services. Here, he had a bad knee, a suspected tropical ulcer, but he was in contact again with Syrian doctors who showed him the sleeping sickness bug under the microscope and afterwards some of the patients in the advanced stage of the disease.

The boundary was well defined here and they could plot the final map. After all the tribulations he reaches the end of the boundary. On the 11th May the entry in the second diary reads, *"the final point of the boundary! Arrived here at 1pm more dead than alive, but am here that's the main point...six months hard work under almost impossible conditions and yet we've carried it through.."*

Then he sets his mind northwards through Moja and flooded country to Yambio where there was a resident District Officer. He and the other people in the party were invited to a very English house, for a tea, for which they changed into "whites" and on the Sunday they went to church and sang *"Onward Christian Soldiers"* in Zande. James was very impressed by the Sudanese choirboys and their impeccable behaviour.

The watery treks in this Southern area seem to be rewarded with a good night's rest at Rest Houses which made up for being permanently soaked through. *"Only 28 days to Rejaf and the boat"* James writes. On the way Boulnoir and he were "put up" outside Meridi by Brown, the District Commissioner, who had his office there. The final stages of the Commission were thus eased by the welcoming attention of the missionaries and District Officers who smoothed their final passage back to Khartoum.

CONCLUSION

They succeeded in completing the two very different stretches of the Sudan boundary. It is clear that this was not an easy enterprise but through all their trials it seems that Captain James and Colonel Boulnoir got on extremely well as this extract from a letter of 8 April 1923 that Boulnoir wrote to James when both were ill towards the end of the survey near Yubo shows:

"The doctor arrived yesterday morning, thank heaven, for I really did need medical attention after seven days continuous fever. He got the stranglehold on me five minutes after arrival and jammed the old needle into me very hot and very strong – and I welcomed every jab!!

I am a bit better to-day, but Oh my legs! I've never had such pain in them and I can't sleep at night with it. But for the fever pains, I feel remarkably well and thoroughly cheerful....

DON'T HURRY over the sketching for goodness sake..... Work every morning only and have ... a house ready by mid-day and sit in it until next morning.

The doctor seems to think that you want a tent..... I have settled that.... It is only three days from here to Yubo S S C and I can easily risk getting over that without a return of this fever – once at the camp there are so many medicos that it will be the case of hiding from their needle rampant. Daud has therefore offered to send back his tent for you and it goes with this and these carriers....

I am not in the least worried about the work, and the last lap in some ways is really not as bad as I expected. The great thing is to go slow. There is no earthly need to hurry.

Another mail is due to-morrow which I will send on.



Cheerio – keep going – but don't try to be strenuous or I shall be thoroughly cross with you".

After service in the Sudan Captain James left the army and joined the Ceylon Survey Department. He returned to Britain in 1940, rejoined the Royal Engineers and was engaged in air photographic interpretation until retiring in 1946. Captain Austin Challice James was born in 1895 and died in 1970.

[Not all the places mentioned in the diaries could be positively identified, and many marked on the maps are not referred to in this text. Ed]



PROBLEMS OF FLOOD IRRIGATED AGRICULTURE IN THE SUDAN: THE CASE OF KHOR ABU HABL SCHEME

Mohamed Babiker Ibrahim

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture has been the backbone of the Sudanese economy since before the exploitation and export of oil in 1999 with more than 80% of the Sudanese labour force involved in agricultural production (Ahmed 2005; Ibrahim 2008). In 1999 the share of agriculture to GDP was almost half (49.8%) but dropped to 35.3% in 2007. However, since 1999 oil has contributed significantly to Sudanese exports and by 2007 reached 94.8% of total exports (Bank of Sudan 1999; 2007). Before oil extraction and exploitation, the Sudanese economy depended largely on modernization and development of irrigated schemes and mechanized rain-fed agriculture.

All major irrigated schemes in the Sudan, including the Khor Abu Habi Scheme, have been publicly administered through parastatal agencies in partnership with farmers. Besides administration, parastatal agencies such as Sudan Gezira Board (SGB), White Nile Corporation, Nuba Mountains Corporation and Gash Delta Corporation have been responsible for agricultural input and output services. However, for the last two decades Khor Abu Habi Scheme has been subjected to many problems that have adversely affected crop productivity, especially cotton, and decreased its area of cultivation.

The objective of the Khor Abu Habi flood irrigation Scheme has changed over the years. Similar to the objective of Gadaref mechanized rainfed agriculture that began in 1944 (Bascom 1990), the Condominium Government established the Khor Abu Habi Scheme in 1945 in order to make *dura* (*Sorghum vulgare*) available (Barbour 1961; March 1948). Later, besides *dura*, cotton was cultivated in the scheme to produce seeds for the cotton-growing areas of the Nuba Mountains (Barbour 1961).



Accordingly, farmers cultivated cotton as a cash crop and dura as a food crop.

Over the last two decades, besides dura, farmers have added the cultivation of additional food crops such as tomatoes, lubia adasi (*Cajanus zajan*) for subsistence and cash, as well. In recent years and with the improvement of transportation, tomatoes and other vegetables grown at Khor Abu Habil are sold at weekly village markets and town markets of East Kordofan District (*Mahaliyat* Um Ruwaba) (Ibrahim 2010). At the beginning of the millennium, the objective of the Scheme changed. The policy and objective of Khor Abu Habil Scheme is now directed to increasing food security and poverty eradication in rural areas of the Sudan. In response, in 2003 the area of cultivation was increased through rehabilitation of Er Rahad section which has been allocated completely to the growing of food crops.

FLOOD IRRIGATION AND ITS PROBLEMS

The need to increase food production and alleviate poverty in the semi-arid areas of developing countries has encouraged agricultural planners to harness seasonal rainwater to cultivate floodplains and beds of seasonal streams (Ghebremariam and van Steenberg 2007; Tesfai and Stroosnijder 2001). These types of cultivation are called flood irrigation (Barbour 1961; Kirkby 2001; van Steenberg 1997), spate irrigation (IFAD 2010; Tesfai 2002; Tesfai and Stroosnijder 2001) and flush irrigation (Barbour 1961, Kirkby 2001) and involve wetting arable land before cultivation (Teskai 2002). The importance of this type of cultivation has increased in recent years, especially with the challenges imposed by climate change on small farmers (Adger et al 2003; IFAD 2010; Leichenko and O'Brien 2002).

Flood or spate irrigation is practiced in many parts of developing countries. In Eritrea, the seasonal stream (*wadi*) water is diverted into large basins and left to soak up to two meters deep in the soil for the cultivation of sorghum (Teskai and Stroosnijder 2001). Ghebremariam and van Steenberg (2007) found the risk with spate irrigation is high, because the flood water is not equally distributed throughout the system.

In most cases farmers do not use fertilizers because of the nutrient rich sediments brought by the annual flood water (Tesfai and Sterk 2002). On the other hand, one of the main problems of spate irrigation is the accumulation of sediments in the fields that causes the rise of the field level which, in turn, does not allow the entrance of the flood water into the fields (Tesfai and Sterk 2002). Accumulation of sediment has forced some farmers of eastern Sudan to abandon their increasingly elevated fields (Niemeijer 1993)

In the Sudan, there are three types of flood irrigation: (1) diversion of flood water from a seasonal *khore* (stream) such as Khor Abu Habil through canals and then into basins that encompass the farms; (2) flush irrigation that occurs at deltas such as those formed by the Gash and Baraka seasonal streams in the northeastern parts of the country. The Gash flood water is controlled through canals that irrigate farms (Kirkby 2001). Since Baraka flow is irregular and has no permanent channel, it is difficult to build canals to control its water (Allan 1948). Therefore, Baraka's flush irrigation water is left to spread over land covered by flood water which is different from one year to another; and (3) in the northern part of the Sudan, the River Nile overflows its banks and fills depressions called *ahwad* (basins) through canals. These flood waters remain in these basins for 30 days, and then return to the river through drainage canals (Allan 1948). In general, flood irrigation constitutes 14% of irrigated agriculture in the Sudan (Mehari et al 2007:116).

Flood irrigation schemes in the Sudan, similar to other forms of irrigated agriculture, have experienced a number of problems and a decline of crop productivity since the early 1990s (Ibrahim 2008; Kirkby 2001; Narayanamurthy et al 1997). For example, the Gash Delta has seen a shrinking of the area of cultivation and degradation of the physical environment (IFAD 2010; Kirkby 2001). In eastern Sudan, Kirkby (2001) found that sedimentation of fields through flood water poses a great problem as it causes the rise of the field level and impairs the rate of infiltration. He mentions that the average accumulation of sediment is around 40mm per year. Accumulation of sediment in the Gash Delta around Kassala has forced some of the farmers to abandon fields raised

by the deposition of sediment (Niemeijer 1993). Khor floods are characterized by high spatial and temporal fluctuation. In some years flood waters fall short of plant needs (Barbour 1961; Wallach 1988) and in others it comes in excess to the extent that it overflows its banks and causes damage to nearby villages and infrastructure such as the flooding that took place at Khor Abu Habil in 2007 and in the Gash Delta in 2003 (Ibrahim 2010, IFAD 2010).

KHOR ABU HABL

Khor Abu Habil originates in the Nuba Mountains of Southern Kordofan and is one of the largest seasonal streams in the Sudan (Figure 1). Located between latitudes 12° 15' N and 13° 00' N and longitudes 30° 30' E and 31° 15' E it occupies an area of 26,792 m² (State of North Kordofan 2007). It flows eastward and drains into the sandy soil and dunes near the town of Tendelti. In exceptionally higher floods it flows beyond Tendelti and drains into the White Nile (Yam Consultancy & Development 2003). High floods in Khor Abu Habil are associated with flood hazards to neighboring villages and the destruction of infrastructure and earth dams (IFAD 2010; State of North Kordofan 2007).

Heavy clay soil is the dominant soil type at the bed and flood plain of Khor Abu Habil. Rains fall from June to October and averages near the source range from 500mm at Dilling town to 400mm downstream near Um Ruwaba and Tendelti. Floods of Khor Abu Habil occur from July to October. High floods increase sediment transport rates that causes siltation of the khor bed, the canals and basins. This reduces the capacity of the fields to hold more moisture for irrigation which eventually reduces crop productivity.

The area is mainly inhabited by members of the Gawamma tribe. There are other groups of people living in the area namely members of the Bederia and the Falata tribes. They are distributed over a number of villages of the Khor Abu Habil Scheme (mainly Semeih, Allah Kareem, Al Udayyat, Al Za'afaya, Al Tibna Hassan, Al Tibna Abdallateef and Qoz Shaw). The main occupation of the inhabitants is cultivation of the

flood irrigated lands supplemented by cultivation of the rainfed agriculture on the *qoz* (sandy soils). The *qoz* land adjacent to the Scheme is characterized by small plots and land fragmentation. Farmers cultivate millet (*dukhn*), dura, sesame and *karkadi*. In recent years, rainfed cultivation has suffered from increased rain variability and low productivity (State of North Kordofan 2007).

Material for this paper was collected as part of another study carried out in East Kordofan in January 2010. This study depends mainly on secondary sources and group interviews with a number of Khor Abu Habi farmers. In addition, the author personally interviewed the Director of Agriculture at Um Ruwaba Town.

KHOR ABU HABI AGRICULTURAL SCHEME

The scheme was established in 1945 by the government of Sudan to make use of the seasonal flood of Khor Abu Habi to cultivate dura by the local inhabitants of the *qoz* north of the scheme. At the beginning it covered an area of 8,000 to 10,000 feddans (Barbour 1960:161; March 1948). The scheme followed the tenant and partnership system that applied at the Gezira scheme between farmers and the government (Barbour 1960). Traditionally, similar to other irrigated schemes, the Khor Abu Habi Scheme was administered by the government which is represented by the scheme administration located at Semeih village. It was responsible for financing agricultural operations (only cotton cultivation) at the Semeih section. These operations included the costs of weeding, opening of canal gates and distribution of seeds (*tagawi*). With the adoption of the liberalization policy by the government in the early 1990s, the administration no longer provides these services. Instead, farmers must depend on themselves to borrow money from local banks through the recently established institutions of the Association of Water Users. Banks will give loans only for the growing of cotton. The Khor Abu Habi scheme is divided into sections, the Semeih and the Er Rahad. The first one was established near Semeih village, and the other near Er Rahad town (Figure 1).



Semeih Section

Semeih Section covers an area of 13,000 feddans. The length of the main canal that drains from Khor Abu Habi is 14 kilometres long and is connected to 13 subsidiary canals that irrigate the basins. The area of the basin ranges between 30 and 60 feddans, and there are five to 12 farms (*hawashat*) in each basin. Each basin is separated from other basins by an earth bank one metre high. Since Er Rahad section has not functioned since 1949, therefore when reference is made to “the scheme” it is only the Semeih section (State of North Kordofan 2007).

Usually, irrigation of the scheme starts in July until August when flood waters enter the basins. The basins have banks one metre high that allow irrigation water to rise to a depth of 70 to 80 centimetres. The water will be kept for two weeks and then passed to the neighboring basin. The basin, which comprises many *hawashat* (farms), will be left to dry before cultivation of cotton, dura, tomatoes, lubia adasi (*Cajanus zajan*) and other vegetables begins (State of North Kordofan 2007).

Both closed and open crop rotations are practiced at Khor Abu Habi Scheme. Closed crop rotation is only practiced at the Semeih section, while the other was dominant in the Er Rahad section. Semeih section (closed crop rotation) is divided in two parts. One part involves the growing of cotton and farmers can cultivate crops of their choice on the other. They usually grow dura, tomatoes, lubia adasi. On the other hand, in the open crop rotation system, farmers are given the choice to cultivate their farms with crops other than cotton and many cultivate the same crops as their neighbors who practice closed crop rotation.

Before the beginning of the flood season, farmers of the Semeih section and the scheme administration agree on the area allotted for cultivation of cotton and the one which will be cultivated with other crops. Prior to 2008, the two parties agreed that 8,000 feddans of the Semeih scheme should be cultivated with cotton and the remaining 5,000 feddans could be cultivated with farmers’ choice which is usually dura, tomatoes, lubia adasi. Since 2008, both parties have agreed that the land of the Semeih scheme should be divided into two halves; one half must be cultivated

with cotton and the other with crops of the farmers' choice. Based on this agreement, the newly-established Association of Water Users (farmers) will borrow money from banks, namely Sudan Agricultural Bank, to finance all operations of cotton cultivation only. All costs of cotton cultivation will be deducted from the sale of cotton. The remaining profit will be enjoyed by the farmers.

As can be seen (Table 1), a remarkable increase in cotton production took place in the years 2004 through 2006. This was the period when a national rehabilitation programme was initiated to enhance agricultural production. This programme primarily financed the production of cotton, cleared the silt deposition in the canals, and paid for the cost of weeding and pesticides. The programme continued until 2007, however, productivity of cotton decreased in that year because the high flood caused significant damage to the canals and the basins of the Scheme. In the last two seasons, with the lack of credit, farmers cultivated more than 90% of the Scheme with tomatoes which has a favorable sale price in the cities between El-Obeid and Kosti as well as in all east Kordofan villages.

Er Rahad Section

The Er Rahad section has the same system of canalization as the Semeih section. The main canal that drains from Khor Abu Hahl extends for six kilometres. The scheme covers an area of 6,000 feddans. For unknown reasons, production of crops at the Er Rahad section ceased in the year 1949. As part of the national rehabilitation programme, the Er Rahad section started again in 2004 with a reduced area of only 200 feddans (State of North Kordofan 2007). The area increased the following year and has become 1,728 feddans divided into 864 *hawashat*. Each *hawasha* is two feddans, which is approximately one third of that of the Semeih section (State of North Kordofan 2007).

Unlike the Semeih section, the system of cultivation in Er Rahad was based on open crop rotation where farmers were given the option of cultivating crops of their choice. Therefore, dura, tomatoes, lubia adasi were cultivated by almost all farmers. Dura was cultivated annually as

their staple food and lubia adasi as an important component of their meals during the month of Ramadan. Tomatoes and the surplus of dura and lubia adasi were sold in the market as a source of income. However, the rehabilitation programme lasted for three years and, because of the lack of finance and environmental problems, Er Rahad section ceased producing crops once again.

Besides the old system of agricultural production, a new system of rainwater harvesting has emerged as a result of the construction of 13 earth dams across the Khor in the period 2000-2004. Storage of water behind the dams has increased farmers' income through cultivation of vegetables, making water available for nomadic groups through most of the summer period and increased ground water levels (Ibrahim 2010).

PROBLEMS OF KHOR ABU HABL SCHEME

Khor Abu Hahl Scheme is rife with financial, administrative and environmental problems which have adversely affected productivity and hampered its main objective since the early 1990s to the present. This has resulted in low crop productivity. A study carried out by the State of North Kordofan in 2007 mentioned that average dura productivity for the period 1970-1980 was 12 sacks per feddan and now has been reduced to 3 sacks per feddan. For the same period cotton productivity was reduced from three kantars/feddan to one kantar/feddan (one kantar equals 100 lb). As a result, many farmers have either abandoned cultivation or rented their lands to agricultural laborers.

One of the biggest problems that face farmers of Khor Abu Hahl Scheme is financial support and a lack of credit. The Nuba Mountains Agricultural Corporation was established in 1968 to provide administrative and agricultural services to the farmers of the Khor Abu Hahl Scheme. In 1992, with the adoption of the free market and privatization policy by the Sudan government the partnership system was changed (Elamin and El-Mak 1997; Elhiraika and Ahmed 1998) and the parastatal agencies abolished. In turn, the cost of agricultural operations became the responsibility of farmers. However, the new

system gave the farmers more freedom to choose the crops they want to cultivate.

Accordingly, farmers of Khor Abu Habil have formed a union called the Association of Water Users in order to borrow money from financial institutions. The Association was able to secure loans from lending institutions such as Sudan Agricultural Bank under the grantee of the District (*Mahalyiat*) of Um Ruwaba Farmers' Union primarily to finance cotton. However, due mainly to siltation of the canals, high rainfall variability and weeds, farmers suffer from low productivity.

On many occasions the return on the sale of cotton is far less than the cost of production. For this reason, many farmers were unable to repay their debt and consequently, they either abandoned their farms or rented them to sharecroppers (*tugondi*). In some cases, these farmers end up in prison. *E'sar* (hardship) is becoming increasingly common in the Sudan and applies to farmers in all kinds of agriculture who borrow money from banks and are unable to repay their debts. For this reason, the Sudan Agricultural Bank and other lending institutions refused to finance cotton cultivation at Khor Abu Habil Scheme for the seasons 2008 and 2009 and when cotton cultivation ceased cultivable land of Semeih section dropped 23% from 13, 000 feddans to 10,000 feddans.

Another problem pertaining to cotton production has arisen from the marketing procedures for Khor Abu Habil cotton. Before the introduction of liberalization and privatization in the early 1990s, the government owned General Corporation for Sudanese Cotton was responsible for the financing and marketing of the cotton of Khor Abu Habil Scheme. Since the application of privatization farmers must market their cotton through intermediaries from the Gezira Scheme, who buy unginned cotton at reduced prices. These intermediaries constitute a functional monopoly whose low prices keep some of Khor Abu Habil farmers in permanent debt. Farmers would avoid *E'sar* if they had direct access to local and international markets and could sell their cotton at favorable prices.

Khor Abu Habil Scheme suffers from a number of environmental problems. These include high siltation, weed infestation and fluctuation

of the Khor flood. Usually, the annual flood of Khor Abu Habil is accompanied by heavy silt and sediments. When it enters into the basins and is left for 15 days, the silt and sediments settle in these basins and canals. In the past the Nuba Mountains Corporation was responsible for desiltation and clearance of the main and subsidiary canals. After the abolishment of the Corporation, and because of the lack of financial support and equipment, the Scheme administration was unable to do the job. Therefore, for years silt has accumulated in the basins and canals to the extent that in some places the water storage capacity has been reduced significantly and in others, low flood water cannot enter into the *hawashat*. In turn, infiltration and retention of flood water in the soil cannot support full growth of crops. On the other hand, insufficient soil moisture has significantly reduced crop production. For this reason, the Scheme authority is thinking seriously of introducing supplementary irrigation through the pumping of the *khore* water into the fields.

The Scheme is also suffering from high infestation of weeds, namely seida (*Cyperus spp*). It has become a problem to the extent that weeding represents the highest single cost of farming at Khor Abu Habil Scheme. Therefore, it has become more profitable for farmers to hand over their overgrown seida infested fields to sharecroppers (*tugondi*) than to cultivate them themselves.

One of the main goals of the Scheme when established in the mid-1940s was to raise the standard of living of the farmers in the area. Besides low crop productivity and environmental problems, the villages of the Scheme suffer from the lack of social services. Safe drinking water represents a major challenge to the inhabitants of the Scheme (State of North Kordofan 2007). Education and health services at these villages have never shown signs of improvement. However, in other irrigated agricultural schemes in the Sudan such as the Gezira, Sudan Gezira Board during the golden era of the Gezira Scheme in the 1950s and 1960s, contributed significantly to the improvement of social services to tenants and their families (Ibrahim 2008).

CONCLUSION

The rich soil and seasonal flood of Khor Abu Habil in the southern part of North Kordofan State encouraged both the Condominium and National Governments to establish an agricultural scheme to improve the standard of living of the local people. The scheme somehow fulfilled its objectives for the period 1945-1992 when the partnership system between the farmers and Sudan Government was implemented in a satisfactory manner. With the application of liberalization, free market policy and privatization by the government in 1992, the parastatal agencies that were responsible for finance and administration of all kinds of agricultural schemes were abolished and Khor Abu Habil Scheme was no exception. Hence, the Scheme has suffered from financial and environmental problems that hinder cultivation and reduce crop productivity.

As a result of the unsuccessful experience of the Khor Abu Habil Scheme, a new comprehensive plan of development is required to fulfill the objective of food security, eradication of poverty and increasing standard of living of the inhabitants of the Scheme. The experience of the rehabilitation programme in 2004 -2006 increased production substantially (Table 1). The new plan should consider intervention by the government to provide finance and agricultural inputs and outputs.

In addition, the plan should also consider making use of the whole area of Khor Abu Habil. As suggested by previous studies, the cultivable area could be increased up to 60,000 feddans. This could be done by the use of flood water during the rainy season and ground water in the dry period (Ibrahim 2010). This will keep farmers busy the year round and will eventually increase their income and standard of living.

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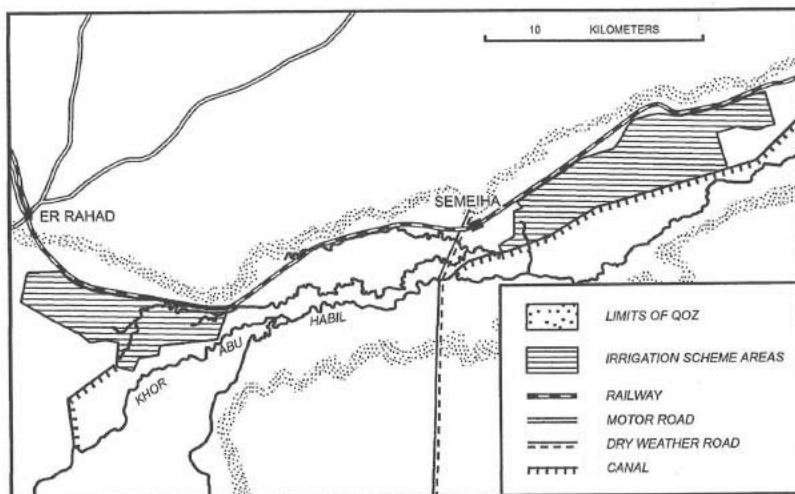
Table 1: Production of Cotton at Khor Abu Habi Scheme 2001-2009 in Kantars

Year	Total Production/kantar	Average Prod. /feddan/kantar
2001	5,000	3.0
2002	3,000	3.5
2003	No cotton cultivation because high flood caused great damage to canals	
2004	3,500	4.0
2005	7,000	4.7
2006	12,000	6.0
2007	2,500	4.0
2008	No cotton cultivation because there was no credit	
2009	No cotton cultivation because there was no credit	

Source: State Ministry of Agriculture, Um Ruwaba June 2010



Figure 1: Khor Abu Habi Scheme



Source: Barbour (1961)

BOOK REVIEW

James Maskalyk, **Six months in Sudan: a young doctor in a war-torn village**, Canongate, Edinburgh 2009, 340 pages

ISBN 978 1 84767 276 6

Abyei. It is not a place many people have visited, but this vivid account by James Maskalyk, a young Canadian doctor who worked for six months at the hospital in Abyei, brings the town and its problems vividly to life.

The hospital was run by Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), an organisation which specialises in providing medical services in hazardous and challenging situations. The overseas staff of MSF sent to Abyei – administrators and nurses as well as doctors – mostly stayed for six months or less. Only the Sudanese doctor and nurses provided continuity. In James Maskalyk's book the hospital lurches from crisis to crisis – a measles epidemic, TB cases, traffic accidents and the occasional invasion by angry and demanding troops. There are inevitable tensions with the local community, which always expects more than the hospital can provide, but somehow the staff cope and there are even small improvements. The book gives a good insight into how an NGO like MSF operates. The structure is fragile but when the field staff really begin to feel overwhelmed MSF's training and management support systems do hold things together.

James Maskalyk wrote a blog to try to convey to friends and relations what his life in Abyei was like. Writing was one of the ways in which he coped with the difficulties of life there. Parts of the blog are included but most of the book is freshly written. It still has a real immediacy – one is very conscious of the staff's emotions as the hospital copes with each crisis. It is very hot, the tukl where James lives is full of insects, his bed is uncomfortable, the food is monotonous, there is no alcohol and only the occasional cigarette to help him relax. And yet, amidst the suffering and poverty there are moments – watching children playing in the light of the setting sun

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or seeing a new mother's smile – when he feels a sense of peace and fulfilment.

James Maskalyk works hard to make his text reflect the realities of his assignment. There are echoes of Hemingway in his short sentences and laconic, down-to-earth style. Sometimes he becomes disjointed, mimicking his own state of mind; he is still not sure what really matters to him in life. His success in capturing the flavour of MSF's work in Abyei has been widely recognised and his book is one of five shortlisted for the prestigious 2010 John Llewellyn Rhys prize, awarded for a new publication by an author under thirty-five years old.

This is not a book to read if you want to know more about the politics of Abyei. James Maskalyk had only six months there and he had to work flat out as a doctor. He admits that he had little time to find out about the social and economic background of his patients. He regrets not learning more about local customs, but in some ways his ignorance is a good thing, helping him to stick to the MSF policy of not judging or taking sides.

When James returns to Canada you realise that the book is as much about his responses as it is about Abyei itself. He had already worked in South America, Cambodia and Southern Africa, but Abyei was the most demanding and searing of his postings. The challenge for him was to see if he could cope and use his skills effectively in circumstances so different from those in Canada. He finds it difficult to readjust when he gets home, and to explain to his Canadian friends his feelings about war-torn, impoverished Abyei, and the people he met there. He dreams about a time when Abyei moves to the other end of the spectrum, and obesity becomes a problem there as it is in the west, but he knows how unlikely that is.

Although so much of the book is about the author's own feelings, and about how MSF operates, James Maskalyk does have an important message. Even in today's interconnected world he feels that it is all too easy to regard places like Abyei as being almost on a different planet. He insists that the suffering people there are no

different from the rest of us; they are entitled to the same consideration as those who are more fortunate, whether in Sudan or elsewhere, and the same efforts to bring them safety and justice as well as medical care. We can only hope that these hopes will be realised over the next few years, and that Abyei is not destined for continuing conflict because it is situated so close to a contested border.

Adrian Thomas



BOOK REVIEW

Carl Benn, **Mohawks on the Nile: Natives Among the Canadian Voyageurs in Egypt 1884-1885**, Natural Heritage Books, Dundurn Press, Toronto, Ontario, Canada 2009, 278 pages including appendices, notes, bibliography and index.

ISBN 978-1-55002-867-6

Published in Canada and available from Amazon at \$27.26 in hardback.

During the weeks following his appointment to command the expedition to relieve General Gordon besieged in Khartoum, Lord Wolseley was absorbed in the detailed planning needed to ensure a rapid ascent of the Nile. The success of the operation depended upon a self reliant force being able to meet a strict timetable. To achieve this objective it was necessary to transport troops, supplies and munitions by boat for long distances up the Nile under difficult navigational conditions caused by the numerous cataracts.

Indigenous boatmen, although familiar with the river were thought to be unreliable, slow and not entirely trustworthy. Wolseley, recalling his experience in the Red River Expedition of 1870 when Canadian boatmen were employed to transport men and equipment under similar conditions, decided to recruit a force of 'Voyageurs' to carry the Expeditionary Force up the Nile to Khartoum.

Thus the participation of 'Canadian Voyageurs' in the Nile expedition of 1884-85 is well known to historians whether the focus of their interest lies in military, postal, Sudanese, Canadian or Iroquois Confederacy history.

This book is a well researched and detailed account of one aspect of that event – the part undertaken by a single group of the 'Voyageur' contingent – approximately 60 men from the Mohawk nation. It is a

bold venture which succeeds because the author's narrative places a narrow subject accurately within the overall 'Voyageur' contribution to the expedition and also in context with Sudanese and First Nation history.

The structure of the book is clear and logical. The introduction sets out the terminology used throughout the text and the author explains the use of standard Canadian English and the replacement of certain words no longer in common use. Egyptian and Sudanese names follow the spelling used by the Sudan Archive at Durham University.

Five chapters of approximately 114 pages comprise the first section. It is devoted to the author's narrative and analysis of the Mohawks' part in the expedition and commences with the initial request from London for a contingent of 'Voyageurs' to be formed for service on the Nile, the response of the authorities and the despatch of the Contingent. Subsequent chapters contain a detailed description of their work during the expedition, their return to Canada, an analysis of the Mohawks as workers and, lastly, a discourse on their role as allies.

His research highlights the rivalry, perceptions and prejudice which inevitably exist when different groups or nationalities are brought together in a common enterprise. Contemporary reports, memoirs and even letters frequently include comments by individuals of one group about the performance, contribution, worth, or ability of another group. The author has examined these issues sensitively, objectively and entertainingly. The result is a balanced assessment leaving the reader to conclude that although some 'Voyageurs' were found wanting the Mohawks were hardworking and skilled boatmen, highly regarded by those responsible for officially evaluating their contribution.

The author's decision to include the contemporary accounts written by two 'Voyageurs', Louis Jackson *Our Caughnawagas in Egypt*, and James Deer *The Canadian Voyageurs in Egypt*, is a welcome addition to the text and their accounts are found in appendices 1 and 2. Original

copies of Jackson's publication are rare, being confined to archives and libraries, whilst Deer's was privately printed for him and fewer original copies probably exist. Other appendices consist of additional primary texts on the role of the 'Voyageurs', an annotated roll of the Mohawk 'Voyageurs' with much new information, the strength of the contingent, distances in Egypt and the Sudan relevant to the expedition and a useful chronology of events.

A comprehensive notes section is included enabling the reader to readily identify the sources used in the text. This is followed by an extensive bibliography which illustrates the depth of research undertaken by the author. He draws on all the established texts *Stacey, McLaren, Brackenbury, Butler, Colville, Grant*, also the Canadian Archives and the excellent Sudan Archive of Durham University Library.

The index is thorough and carefully prepared with a concise explanatory note about the abbreviations and symbols used in the listings. Contemporary illustrations are chiefly taken from photographs in museums, the Library and Archives of Canada, and the efforts of artists for the *Illustrated London News* and *Graphic* newspapers.

This book is a fascinating and readable account of an extraordinary event, Mohawk involvement in a Victorian military campaign, explained by objective commentary and analysis without the approach adopted by revisionist historians who simply judge a historical event by today's standards. It is recommended to both specialist and general readers.

Richard Stock



BOOK REVIEW

J Millard Burr and Robert O Collins, **Sudan in Turmoil: Hasan al-Turabi and the Islamist State, 1989-2003**, Markus Wiener Pubs, Princeton, 2010.

About the time he officially retired from the University of California at Santa Barbara Bob Collins remarked to me that he 'didn't want to cut grass': he was to spend his later years neither cutting grass nor letting it grow under his feet. In fact, Bob went on researching, writing and teaching right up to his recent death. In this book he is joined by his long time collaborator on a number of his projects, Millard Burr, a former relief coordinator for Operation Lifeline Sudan. This book is a follow up to an earlier one about Turabi, *Revolutionary Sudan*, published in 2003 by Brill in The Netherlands, which had a short print run and was beyond the pocket of many readers. Now published in paperback, this book makes the content of the earlier one more widely available and also has an additional chapter taking the story up to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005.

Starting in 1989 Turabi was to seek to build on his remarkable success in developing the Muslim Brotherhood/National Islamic Front. It was not that notable as a political party winning only a modest vote in 1986, the last multi-party elections before the Islamist coup of 1989, but it was the success of its entryist strategy with regard to the State that caused such a surprise. With hindsight it had started after National Reconciliation in 1977 but its extent and discipline was largely unnoticed: it had in effect carved out a secretive state within a state during the 1980s. The success of its camouflage was nowhere more clearly seen than in the error Egypt made in its early recognition of the new regime, only to regret it when the truth dawned. (Not everybody, however, was duped: a former minister rang the morning after the coup to warn me: I was later banned for most of Turabi's years as the *eminence grise* of the Islamist regime.)

Bob's history was always less concerned with political thought and ideology or historical theory than with deeply researched historical narrative, written with vim and vigour to create a fast-moving and gripping account of the unfolding events and this book is true to that tradition. The first two chapters are concerned primarily with the regime consolidating its power internally and externally. Internally that involved initially security, cracking down on as many of its potential opponents as it could reach and building a new Peoples Defence Force. It was to be the start of the most repressive record by any of the governments of Sudan since independence. Externally it was to be the start of building relations with an array of dubious regimes, groups and personalities, at least from a Western perspective, including the very contrasting figures of Osama bin Laden and Carlos the Jackal.

Under Turabi's powerful influence the Islamist project was to unfold throughout much of the 1990s, and it is his role in these developments that takes up the bulk of the book. The introduction of a new Islamic constitution was to be at the core domestically, together with an over-ambitious attempt to create Sudan's new Muslim man and Muslim woman. It was to be supported by the Islamisation of the economy, and attempts to crush the SPLM/A in the south. Internationally, it was to lead to Turabi becoming a roving ambassador for Islamism, including pronouncing the end of the nation-state in London and appearing before a Congressional committee in Washington. He also embarked on making Khartoum the unlikely centre of the radical Muslim world setting himself up as the Secretary General of his new Popular Arab and Islamic Conference. In all this the basic driving force for Turabi was his overwhelming self-confidence and knowledge that in his Islamist vision the ends always justify the means.

However, in the later chapters we see the beginning of the end. Many see it starting in the attempt to assassinate Egypt's

President Mubarak in Addis Ababa in 1995 which Turabi's Delphic utterances appeared to justify. Sudan then stood not only isolated but also threatened as anti-Islamist African neighbours, backed by the USA, gave sustenance to the SPLA. At the same time there was a new temptation for many in the regime in the form of money, with the willingness of China and other Asian countries to invest in Sudan's oil while sanctions and risk kept Western majors at bay. In the same year in which oil exports started to flow, 1999, Turabi sought to challenge Beshir from the former's new position as Leader of the parliament, only to have his hand called and end up in prison. (Turabi has been in and out of prison for decades and once told me that it was only there that he had time to read.)

Collins and Burr think that was essentially the end for Turabi, but perhaps the jury is still out. Once released from prison again he was back in politics and eventually leading the Popular National Congress into the elections of 2010. Events so far in 2010 suggest that the South will vote for separation in 2011, and, if that happens, future historians will see Turabi as one of the main authors of the demise of the state established in 1956. But it will also open a new era for what is now northern Sudan, including the National Congress Party's ideological emphasis on re-asserting its Islamist character; if so Turabi has had no peer within the Islamist movement and may yet make another recovery even if less powerful than in the 1990s. It would though be in a domestic role rather than the challenger of the international order as in his boundless ambition in the 1990s.

The book ends appropriately with an 'Afterword' and 'In memoriam' from one of Bob Collin's many students, Ahmed Sikainga, now a well established academic in his own right. It is very fitting, for many students benefited from Bob's teaching and his books: he will be long remembered by those who knew him, as well as continuing to be widely read by those who never had that privilege.

Peter Woodward

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of London)**

On

Saturday, 2nd October 2010

In

Khalili Lecture Theatre, 09.45 to 16.50

**School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
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