

SSA

NEWSLETTER

A PUBLICATION OF THE
SUDAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

نشرة جمعية الدراسات السودانية



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VOLUME 14: NO: 2 (1994)

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The Sudan Studies Association is an independent professional society founded in the United States in 1981. Membership is open to scholars, teachers, students and others with interest in the Sudan. The Association exists primarily to promote Sudanese studies and scholarship. It has a cooperative relationship with the Institute of African and Asian Studies, University of Khartoum. SSA works to foster closer ties among scholars in the Sudan, North America, Europe, the Middle East and other places.

ISBN 0899-3785

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FROM THE EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Greetings to all of you for a pleasant, productive and recuperative summer. Finally, after a most invigorating sabbatical, a large portion of which was spent in Cairo where I was hosted by AUC, African Studies Department and gave several lectures, I have nearly settled down to my usual routines here at Vassar. Classes begin September 1st, but I can be reached by mail, telephone or Fax until late July and early August, when I will again be out of the country for about three weeks. Miss Boyd will know how to contact me from around August 15th.

Please send us any articles, letters to the editor, book reviews (see the list of books available for review in this issue) or other pertinent information which you would like to reach our members. **It would be very helpful if you could send reviews and letters on discs.** As you can see, we are attempting to continue the expansion of ideas and concerns which appear in the Newsletter.

When we held our first annual conference at Fordham University, Lincoln Center, New York in the Spring of 1981, we were a small, but dedicated group of scholars and friends who had determined that discussion of and study about the Sudan is academically necessary and scholarly sound. We are a comfortably small group still, thus annual conferences tend to present an historical, cultural and political review - state of the art - or over-view within the boundaries of a friendly atmosphere. Our Third International Conference made history as the largest North American meeting dedicated to a single geographical area. We seek new members and encourage cooperative scholarship in every discipline.

STATEMENT OF BOARD POLICY ON FREE EXPRESSION

"The SSA values the diversity and free expression of opinions as essential to a meaningful and healthy discourse.

Following the events of the Third International Conference at Boston, it affirms that opinions expressed by conference participants at panels, meetings and special events are those of the individuals and not those of the SSA."

* * * * *

DEAN NANCY S. DYE GOES TO OBERLIN AS PRESIDENT

The Association wishes to thank Dean Nancy S. Dye of Vassar College for her unwavering support for the association over the past two years, starting with the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the Association and continuing with assistance to this Newsletter to the present. We congratulate her on her appointment as the new President of Oberlin College and wish her well in all her endeavors there.

* * * * *

BOSTON, 1994

The "Third International Meeting of Sudan Studies" was held at the Colonnade and Mid-Town Hotels in Boston, Massachusetts, Wednesday April 20 - Saturday, April 23, 1994.

The Conference was sponsored by the SSA, The African-Asian Institute, Khartoum University and SSSUK. Generous funding from the Ford Foundation (with the gracious assistance of Dr. Kristina Davis, Cairo Office) enabled us to host Dr. Mahasin

Hag as Safi, Director of the African-Asian Institute, Khartoum University, two other prominent scholars from the Sudan and two Sudanese scholars who are affiliated with the "Center for Sudanese Studies" in Cairo, and with the office of African Studies at AUC. Generous assistance for other foreign participants was gratefully received from Oxfam America, the Carter Center, The Sudan Studies Society of the UK and the United States Information Agency.

The collaborating host institutions; Rhode Island College, Boston University, Northeastern University, the National Center of Afro-American and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts established a working cooperative precedent, which will be difficult to follow and which we will not easily forget. The program design and layout was generously contributed by William Aho. The Conference logo and poster was designed by FATima Martin.

This most successful of conferences was preceded by conferences in Khartoum, Sudan in 1988 and in Durham, England in 1991. A core of us, both here and abroad, have been privileged to attend all of these Conferences. Rarely does a single country association receive such prominence and international support; perhaps it is the Sudanese ethos which attracts that support.

It was especially exciting to see the participation of the "Nubian Club" of Boston and the "Nubian Institute of Northeastern University." Indeed this was the first time that there has been such extensive participation in Sudan Studies activities by the African-American community; such perception and political awareness must be attributed to the foresight of the Conference organizers, Drs. Carolyn Fluehr and Richard Lobban. Their latest news tells us that the "Nubian Institute," which originated under the leadership of Dr. Ron Bailey, chair of the African-American Studies Department at Northeastern University, has been re-funded - for its second year - by NEH. The Institute's uniqueness increases its cultural and scholarly

importance. For more information, contact Dr. Ron Bailey at Northeastern University's African-American Studies Department.

The Boston Conference opened with the "Sudan Exhibit" at the "National Center of Afro-American Artists." The works of the Sudanese artist, Rashid Diab were featured and curated by SSA's Salah Hassan.

There was a special complimentary luncheon at Northeastern University, honoring Sudanese Artists, including Khalid Kodi. The luncheon was sponsored by the African-American Artist in Residence Program.

The Boston Museum of Fine Arts sponsored and hosted a reception and special showing of its first-class Nubian exhibit. The young African-Americans, from the Nubian Club, who attended, were surprised to see so many scholars - from different ethnic groups and countries - in one place, all interested in Sudanese culture and history.

The "Bradford Morse Distinguished Lecture," at Boston University, featured the internationally acclaimed Sudanese writer Tayeb Salih, who is to be honored in August at the seventeenth annual festival in Asilah, Morocco. Tayeb spoke on the "The African Writer and His Search For National Identity." His very insightful, witty and penetrating lecture kept his audience engrossed while he related the development of his own conscious awareness as an Arabic-speaking, African writer to the international cultural tensions and contradictions generated by the period of European colonialism and African writer's cultural and political identity; discussion of that impact was peppered by Tayeb's reference to the not too pleasant task of trying to get clearance and the papers necessary for him to reach Boston from England in time to give his talk. It was very fulfilling to watch this consummate artist, who is one of, if not the most important, culturally and artistically influential of contemporary Arab

authors, participate in whichever panels he attended. Some overly-literate critics have questioned Tayeb about the seeming "lack of political ideas" in his writing. All of the conference attendees should now better understand Tayeb's assertion that the individual's political ideology and activity can never be defined simply by the person's overt participation in political parties, etc. His call was always for a sense of compassionate moderation so that the Sudan could become the country its ancient and contemporary potential portends.

At the request of the Conference organizers, Drs. Carolyn Fluehr and Richard Lobban, Rhode Island College and SSSUK sponsored the attendance of Ustaza Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim whose deceased brother Salah Ahmed Ibrahim was honored by the Mahrajan in Asilah Morocco in 1993. Ustaza Fatima is the first Third World Woman (a Sudanese) to become President of the "Women's International Democratic Federation." Ustaza Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim presented a stunning and powerful talk concerning "Women's Strategies for Survival and Empowerment During Crisis in The Sudan."

Dr. Mahasin Abdel Gadir Hag al Safi, Director of the African-Asian Institute, Khartoum University was the Thursday afternoon luncheon speaker. Dr. Mahasin's lecture on "Current Research in the Sudan" is printed in this issue of the Newsletter. She generously offered that the next International Sudanese Studies Conference could be hosted, in three years by the African-Asian Institute in Khartoum.

The annual Friday evening banquet was held at the Colnade hotel. Bona Malwal, from the Sudan Democratic Gazette, in London, was the guest speaker who rendered a powerfully, provocative plea to the audience; the topic of his talk was "Self-Determination is not Incompatible With Unity."

The Conference topic History, Polity And Identity in a Time of Crisis gave maximum allowance for coverage of topics as

diverse as Sudanese Health and Environment Issues," and its panel paper "Application of Traditional Medicine," to The Sudan And Its Survival As a Nation: "A Question of Unity And Self Determination." (See Newsletter Vol. 14, #1 for a complete listing of the program.) Paper abstracts and some papers are still available from the Conference organizers, FACLOBBAN@RIC.EDU OR FAX (401) 456-8379.

It is important to note that lack of funds and political difficulties in the Sudan prevented at least ten more distinguished Sudanese scholars from attending the Conference; there were no attendees from al Ahfad or Omdurman Ahliyya Universities. All of our Sudanese sisters and brothers sent their deeply sincere friendship through their colleagues from the African-Asian Institute. Mostly out of concern and friendship for the Sudanese, Sudanists from the States, the Sudan, Egypt, Israel, England, Norway, Japan, Uganda and France attended a most auspicious event in Boston, 20-23 April.

The political role and place of The Sudan in Africa is not unnoticed; indeed its presence is palpably felt by the current and former U.S. government administrations. There was a panel workshop on USIA Programs in the Sudan, chaired by Nabeel Khoury and Adnan Siddiqi, USIA Country Officers for Sudan. A pre-Conference, informational session on the Sudan was hosted and chaired by top representatives of the Atlanta based, Carter Center. President Carter is deeply concerned with how the U.S. Government can play a positive role in initiating and supporting Peace efforts in a deeply troubled Sudan. The Carter Center remains in touch with the SSA executive board.

Most importantly, the Conference organizers, Drs. Carolyn Fluehr and Richard Lobban, along with their local arrangements committee, must be awarded our deepest praise and gratitude, for their gracious and responsible ingenuity brought together an

unusually compatible contingent of international Sudanist scholars and activists.

If any of our members believes that I have omitted important aspects of the Conference, please write to me and I will make those emendations in the next issue of the Newsletter.
EDITOR.

CURRENT RESEARCH IN THE SUDAN:WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

The Gordon Memorial College was inaugurated in 1902. Two years later the need for research into the Medical field was realized and hence the welcome Research Laboratory was founded in 19004, followed by the Agricultural Research Laboratory.

This effort of Research in the Medical field was further enhanced by the foundation of the University of Khartoum in 1956, following the independence of the country. The University of Khartoum now includes thirteen colleges, eleven Institutes and Post-graduate Centers. The University harbors around five thousand post-graduate students.

In 1970 the National Council for Research was founded. Later in 1991 it was developed into the National Center for Research to cater for Economic and Social Development in the country and to conduct Scientific Research in relevant fields to serve the needs of society and to plan for developmental projects.

According to the sources of this centre, Research Projects completed in the different centres of Research in the Sudan in the period 1983-1985, in the Social Sciences, amounted to 16.7% and in the Humanities 3.7% of the total research done in the country. In the period 1985-1988 5% of the research was done

in the social sciences and 10.4% in the humanities. In the period 1988-1993 the Social Sciences scored 20.5% and the Humanities 7.9% of the total of the research conducted in the country. Compared to research in Agriculture, for example, which scored 49%, 68.6%, 60% respectively, the Humanities and Social Sciences were not high in research priorities of the country.

With regard to the type of research and titles of interest to researchers in the Sudan in the period 1985-1994 in the area of the Humanities and Social Sciences, it was obvious that increasing interest is shown in the subject of population studies. The Economic and Social Research Council established a unit for population studies; the University of Gezira also established a population studies centre and University of Khartoum has since 1985 been active in population research.

Connected with this is a considerable interest about research in the area of Demography. A seminar on population policies, its nature and strategies which was organized by UNFPA and ILO was held in Khartoum on 21-23 June, 1988. It showed that Sudan not only has one of the highest population growth rates, estimated at 3.1 percent a year, but it is also undergoing initial demographic and epidemiological transition.

The seminar threw some light on the position of the labour market, the data needed for better information on employment planning and focused on the question of man power planning generally in the Sudan.

The papers also reflected on and evaluated the extent to which population related variables are accounted for planning for the sectors of education and health in the Sudan.¹

¹Sudan Science Abstracts Vol 13, 1993, National Council for Research.

Another area where research is directed in the Sudan , connected with the issue of population, is the question of migration. A Regional Conference on Migration in the Sudan was held in Khartoum in the period 1-5 May 1991, again organized by the National Council for Research in collaboration with the National Population Committee. This Conference studied recent patterns and trends in population movement in the Sudan and their effects on urban growth. The Conference dealt considerably with the issue of women's migration, especially analyzing the changing conditions to which southern Sudanese women have been subjected after their forced migration.²

The problem of disaster management was also a subject for the attention of research on Sudan. A National Seminar of disaster prevention and management in the Sudan was convened in Khartoum in the period 17-19 March 1990, which discussed the role of Mass Media with respect to famine, floods, desertification and disaster management in Agricultural and livestock sectors. The proceeding of the seminar was published by KUP in 1991.

A number of seminars and papers were also written with regards to the question of Food Aid and famine in Darfur and the southern regions from 1989, etc.

Women's studies ranged high among research priorities on Sudan. Besides the various seminars and papers presented in this issue, a workshop on women's studies in the Sudan was held in Khartoum 7-9, February, 1989, focusing on documentation activities and discussing the position of women in the Diplomatic field, Sudanese women in History and Historiography, women in Production, and women in Political and Economic participation.

The Institute of African and Asian Studies of the University of Khartoum devoted special issues of its Bulletin of Sudanese Studies, Vol, II, 1/2, 1991 to Women's Studies, reflecting particularly on the importance of studying the cultural dimension with regard to the role of women in Development. Recently a workshop on the Documentation of Women's Studies, its problems and constraints, was convened by the unit of Women's Studies of Ahfad University College, in the period 22-23 March 1994. The Seminar focused on the use of information technologies to make up for the information explosion in Women's Studies.

The Southern Sudan problem was the centre of Research interest, both inside and outside Sudan. A Series of academic conferences and publications focused on the civil war and management of crisis in the Sudan, the issue of the displacement of Southern Sudanese, with special emphasis on the social, economic and political consequences, as well as patterns of displacement, and policy considerations were studied.

The issue of Arabicization is another area of concern in academic research. A series of seminars, workshops and conferences were convened in order to assess the experiment of teaching in Arabic, at the different levels of education with particular reference to Higher Education. These conferences and seminars addressed themselves to the issues of the availability of sources, trained staff, comparison of the experiences of other universities in the Arab world, e.g. Syria, Iraq, the Maghreb, etc. Recently, on 25 January 1994, a conference on Arabicization was convened by the Higher Commission for Arabicization founded in September, 1990, in collaboration with the Arab Academies. This Conference was attended by more than fifteen leading members of these academies and discussed issues of Arabicization in the Arab world and launched a number of encyclopedias in the different fields of knowledge.

A number of seminars and conferences were also convened on the subject of Islam and the Islamization of Knowledge. A conference was convened on the Management and Control System of Banks: The Case of Islamization in Sudan. A number of theses and dissertations were also completed by students on this issue. The Islamic University of Omdurman convened a conference on 22-Systems. This conference discussed issues of Diplomacy, International Relations and the Concepts of Was and Peace in Islam.

The University of Gezira established an Institute for the Islamization of Knowledge. The Institute convened a Conference on the Islamization of Knowledge in the Friendship Hall Khartoum, during the period of 2-4 February, 1994, in which thirty two papers were presented on Research Methodology in the Islamization of Knowledge in the various fields, such as philosophy, sociology, economics, natural sciences, technology, education, medicine, history and politics.

The University of Khartoum being the most prominent of Sudanese Universities in Academic Research and being the main body which provides guidance for planning and development in the country, convened a seminar on 23-24 June 1992 on the promotion of Academic Research in the University. The Seminar discussed the problems and constraints in the way of promotion of Academic Research in the University.

It was estimated that the percentage of published theses compared to the approved is poor due to lack of funding. It was estimated that Sudanese researchers could only produce 13% research per year in the period 1982-88 compared to the internationally required average of 2 researches per year. The budget approved by the government for academic research for the period 1990-91 was only..15% of the overall local production,

compared to 2% in the Arab World and 2.8% in the Western World.³

One of the main problems facing research in the Sudan, besides the question of funding is that of scarcity of human resources, as a result of the migration of qualified personnel to the Gulf States and Western Europe. The rate of brain drain is estimated to be as high as 40%⁴ in 1984 and that drain has recently increased to an alarming degree.

Another negative factor could be attributed to the policy of accepting increased numbers of students to the University in the period 1990-94, which involved staff more than usual on teaching to the detriment of research.⁵

Other negative elements related to the issue of scarcity of funding include the decreasing chances for training researchers. If we take computers, for example we find that only one set is available in the Sudan for 20.00 people, compared to 1 set for 2.000 people in the Arab World and one for every 100 people in the developed countries.⁶

³Faisal Taj al-Din "The State of Academic Research in Higher Education" Omdurman, the National Council 12-15, 1993.

⁴Ahmed Mohamed al-Hasan "The State of Academic Research in Higher Education", Omdurman, the National Council 12-15 June 1993.

⁵Faisal Taj al-Din, opus cited, P. 15

⁶Ibid., p. 15

The international organizations ceased or considerably decreased support for Academic Research in Universities and National Centres. The Sudan is a member of most organizations such as the United Nations, OAU, The Arab League, etc. Since 1960, the Ford Foundation, (IDRC (Canadian) and Rockefeller Foundations have contributed generously to the effects of research, particularly to the University of Khartoum, through the training of staff, students, funding research projects and providing infrastructure for research in the different departments of the University. The Ford Foundation has, of all other organizations, contributed positively till now to promoting Sudanese Studies, with regard to the study of Languages, Folklore and Culture in the Institute of African and Asian Studies, University of Khartoum and Omdurman Ahlia. Germany and Holland gave some support, but have recently considerably cut their aid in this area. The University of Bergen has since 1981 tied itself with an Academic program with the University of Khartoum, expanded in 1988 to include, besides research aid to the University of Khartoum, the Public Record Office. This aid was recently phased out.

Adding to the above is the lack of co-ordination between the different Institutions with regard to research projects and hence, it has affected considerably the positive analysis of research results.

REFERENCES

1. The seminar on Academic Research in the University of Khartoum, 23-24 June 1992.
2. Seminar on Documentation and Research Methodology in the Humanities and Social Sciences, Institute of African and Asian Studies, University of Khartoum 15-17 December, 1991.
3. Workshop on Sudanese Studies, Mohamed Omer Beshir's Memorial Centre, Omdurman Ahlia, 25-27 May 1993.

4. Conference on Islamization of Knowledge, University of Gezira, 2-4 February 1994.
5. Workshop on the Documentation of Women's Studies, its Promotion and Constraints: Ahfad University College for Women, 22-23 March 1994.
6. Conference on Arabicization, Higher Commission for Arabicization, Khartoum, January 1994.

The Above Address was presented by Dr. Mohasin Abdel Gadir Hag al Safi at the Thursday luncheon of the third International Conference in Boston.

BUSINESS MEETING OF SSA'S 3rd INTERNATIONAL MEETING, BOSTON, APRIL 21, 1994.

1. Call to Order. President Muhammad I. Shoush called the meeting to order at 10:30 p.m. He praised the organization and content of the Conference and expressed regret that ill-health had prevented him from assisting more in its preparation. He specifically thanked Drs. Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban and Richard Lobban, Dr. Ismail Abdulla and Drs. John and Sarah Voll. He presented the Volls with a plaque for distinguished service to the Association.
2. SSSUK. The representative from SSSUK, David Lindley expressed his thanks for the Conference and briefly described the activities of the SSSUK, which holds an annual general meeting, a one-day topical seminar each September, and published two issues of the newsletter yearly.
3. IAAS: Dr. Mahasin Abdel Gadir Hag al-Safi, director of the Institute of African and Asian Studies, University of Khartoum

reported on the Institute's efforts to promote Sudanese studies and to assist new centers and universities in the Sudan.

4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS' REPORT: Dr. Sarah Voll presented the Treasurer's report (attached). Dr. John Voll's membership report is also attached. The Directors' reports were accepted with a vote of thanks.

5. NOMINATING COMMITTEE: As noted in the minutes for the Board meeting, the nominating committee has prepared a slate of candidates which will be submitted to the members for a vote as soon as possible. (prior to the publication of this issue of the Newsletter, the candidates list has been voted upon)

6. SSSUK/SSA-US DUAL MEMBERSHIP: The Business Meeting supported the suggestion from SSSUK and SSA-US, whereby the treasurers in each country will collect dues for the other society and transfer the amounts en bloc on a yearly basis. A US-based scholar who wishes dual membership would pay \$52 to SSA of which \$22 would be transferred to SSSUK; a UK-based scholar would pay L31 to SSSUK of which L23 would be transferred to SSA.

7. REPORT ON THE NEWSLETTER: Dr. Constance Berkley agreed to continue as Editor for two years. An ARABIC ARTICLE may be included in each Issue, with the assistance of Dr. Ismail H. Abdulla. A motion was passed to thank the Dean of Vassar College for her financial support for the Newsletter.

8. REPORTS ON CONFERENCES:

a. 1995 CONFERENCE: Dr. Ann Lesch reported briefly on preliminary plans for the May 4-6 Conference at Villanova University (Philadelphia); details will be mailed to members by September.

b. 1996 CONFERENCE: Members were urged to suggest locales for this Conference (see Board minutes).

c. FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 1997: Several options were discussed for the Fourth International Conference, notably Bergen, Cairo, Khartoum and Rabat. Participants expressed a preference for an accessible and inexpensive locale which has a strong indigenous Sudan Studies Community. Drs. Kasfir, Lindley and Mahasin al-Safi will contact Center directors and decide on the locale by late 1994.

9. AUDITOR: The members agreed to delegate to the President the decision on appointing a CPA to audit the records before they are transferred to the new Executive Director.

10. SUDAN-AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATION, INC.: Dr. Lee G. Burchinal reported that a container with 8000 books and journals will be shipped to the Sudan in June. Report attached, including a list of the kinds of books that are sought by SAFE) He also noted that the Ahfad Journal has just published issue #10, reflecting ten years of continuous publication.

11. Due to the late hour, discussion was tabled on Dr. Ismail H. Abdalla's proposal for a learned journal and on the SSA's Human Rights contacts.

12. NEW BUSINESS: There being no new business, the meeting adjourned at 11:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann M.Lesch,Secretary

1994 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

The meeting of the 1994 Executive Board of the SSA was held in Boston on Saturday, April 23, 1994, 12:30-2:00 p.m.

The meeting was attended by the members of the Board present at the SSA 13th Annual Conference, namely:

Muhammad I. Shoush, president
 Nelson Kasfir, incoming president
 Robert S. Kramer, board member
 Ann M. Lesch, secretary
 Constance E. Berkley, editor of newsletter
 John Voll, co-executive director
 Sarah Voll, co-executive director

Absent Board Members:

Victoria Bernal
 Salah Hassan
 Lidwiens Kapteijns
 Muhammad al-Nur
 Mohammed I. Khalil

Visitor: Malik al-Khair Balla

Minutes

1. Membership: Dr. John Voll reported that the membership is relatively stable at 165-175, including 39 life members and nearly 30 student members, whose memberships are heavily subsidized. He noted the extra costs involved in sending reminders to members to pay their dues and noted the importance of establishing a set-aside endowment fund.

SSA CURRENT MEMBERSHIP (as of 19 April 1994)
 Members who have paid dues for 1993 and/or 1994

(Comparable numbers from 1993 report in [brackets])

	Paid-up 1994	Paid only '93	Total
Life members	37	- -	37[35]
Regular	34	38	72[67]
Student	17	25	42[40]
Other Individual	3	5	8[7]
Institutional	8	4	12[12]
Totals	99	72	171[161]

Exchanges

Ads or announcements will be placed in newsletters of relevant associations (ASA, AHA, APSA, MESA) in order to solicit new members. Email may be used to contact graduate students.

2. Financial Report: Sarah Voll explained the 1993 financial report and the cash balance as of March 1, 1994. The latter reflects the substantial outlay prior to the International Conference in Boston. The Board approved the following motion: to increase the dues for life members from \$200 to \$400; that resolution will be submitted to the business meeting in May 1995 for approval. (See attached Financial Report)

3. The Board affirmed the action by the Business Meeting to establish a mechanism for dual membership for SSSUK and SSA/US, whereby the treasurers in each country will collect dues for the other society and transfer the amounts enbloc on a yearly basis.

4. Election to the Board: The nominating committee (Sarah Voll, Nelson Kasfir and Lee Burchinal) has nominated the

following persons for the 1994 Board; mail ballots will be sent by the outgoing Executive Directors. For President, Ahmed al-Amin al-Beshir; Executive Director: Maik al-Balla; members: Ismail Abdalla, Marilyn Fetterman, Samuel Laki, and John Voll. As soon as this election is complete, the President will appoint a new nominating committee; the next election will be complete by the May 1995 Conference.

5. Newsletter: Dr. Constance Berkley will continue as editor for two more years. The board asked Dr. Kasfir to write to the Dean at Vassar College to express the SSA's appreciation for Vassar's financial support for the newsletter (and implicitly to encourage Vassar to continue that support).

6. 1995 Conference, Villanova: Dr. Lesch noted the preliminary arrangements for the May 4-6 Conference and sought suggestions for speakers and themes. A specific call for papers will be mailed in the early fall. Members suggested that more emphasis could be placed on cultural and literary subjects and that lunch-time speakers be included, who would provide anecdotal reminiscences of their work in Sudan. The Board, noting that banquet and other speakers do not represent SSA, agreed that President Shoush would draft a policy statement for ratification by the Board.

7. 1996 Conference: No specific proposals have been received for host institutions. Board members will approach likely host institutions in Washington, D.C., Ohio, Indiana, Toronto, etc.

8. Transfer of SSA Files: The Board approved reimbursing the Volls for renting a vehicle to drive the SSA files and other SSA materials from their office to the office of the incoming Executive Director.

9. The Board voted to thank Drs. Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban and Richard Lobban for the excellent arrangements for the international conference.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann M. Lesch
Secretary

**SUDAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION
1993 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT**

CASH BALANCE DECEMBER 31, 1992 \$ 5,700.73

INCOME

Membership:	
Dues	\$ 3,586.00
Postage	100.00
Contributions	129.00
Book Orders	49.50
Conference:	
Registration	895.00
Meals	1,080.00
Interest	139.04
Miscellaneous	0.00

TOTAL \$ 5,978.54

EXPENSE

Publications:		
Newsletter	\$ 1,223.98	
Khartoum Proceedings	600.00	
Conference:		
Meals	1,473.17	
Other	166.27	
Secretariat:		
Mailings	537.23	
Other	20.00	
President	0.00	
Miscellaneous	0.00	
		<hr/>
TOTAL		\$(4,020.65)
<u>CASH BALANCE DECEMBER 31, 1993</u>		7,658.62
CD (at 3.45%) - AS OF 12/31/93		2,432.51
		<hr/>
TOTAL NET WORTH		\$10,091.13

SSA 1994 ELECTIONS

President M. I. Shoush announced at the annual business meeting in Boston (April 1994) that the annual election by mail ballot would take place following the meeting. He also presented the names of the people who had been nominated by the nominating committee at that time and their names were placed upon the mail ballot. On 10 May 1994 the co-Executive Directors sent ballots

for the 1994 election to all "members in good standing" at that time. The instructions were that the ballots should be returned by 30 June 1994, the length of time allowed by the SSA constitution for a mail ballot.

**CALL FOR PAPERS: SUDAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION
CONFERENCE**

The Fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Sudan Studies Association will be held from 1 p.m. on Thursday, May 4 through Saturday, May 6, 1995, at Villanova University. The Conference, sponsored by Villanova's Center for Arab and Islamic Studies and Africana Studies Center, has the theme of Conflict and Conflict Resolution in the Sudan. Papers are welcome on a wide variety of topics in all fields--including history, literature, archeology and rural development--and may also consider neighboring countries in the Horn of Africa. The deadline for paper and panel abstracts is 31 December 1994. They should be sent to Professor Ann M. Lesch, Associate Director, Center for Arab and Islamic Studies, Villanova University, 800 Lancaster Avenue, Villanova, PA 19085; tel.: 610-519-7712 or 7325; fax: 610-519-7249; e-mail: Lesch@ucis.vill.edu.

Villanova University is located ten miles west of Philadelphia, PA. The university is easily accessible by car and train and is near the Philadelphia airport. Conference sessions and meals will be held in the Connelly Center on campus. A reception is planned for Thursday evening and a banquet for Friday evening. Rooms are reserved at the nearby Radnor Hotel, 591 East Lancaster Avenue, St. Davids, PA at the special rate of \$89.00 for single or double occupancy, plus 8% tax. Participants should make reservations directly with the hotel at (215) 341-3500 before April 13, 1995.

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CONFERENCES,PAST AND UPCOMING

1994 NYASA CONFERENCE AT ITHACA

The 18th Annual Conference of the New York African Studies Association, entitled "Positive Perspectives for the 21st Century," was held at the Sheraton Inn & Conference Center in Ithaca, New York on Friday, April 29th and Saturday April 30th, 1994. The Conference co-chairs were Locksley Edmondson, Director of the Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell University, and David B. Lewis, Director of the Institute for African Development at the University.

Highlights of the conference included a teacher training workshop on Africa ; the opening address by Dr. Adebayo Adedeji, Executive Director of the African Centre for Development and Strategic Studies in Nigeria, and former Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission on Africa; an evening reception at the Africana Studies and Research Center; and a Jazz Concert with Donald Byrd at the Statler Auditorium. The Conference concluded with an address by Ali A. Mazrui on "Afrennaissance: In Search of an African Vision."

MESA 1994 ANNUAL MEETING

MESA's 28th annual meeting will be held November 19-22, 1994, in the Valley of the Sun, Phoenix, Arizona. The meeting site is the beautiful **Pointe Hilton Resort at Tapatio Cliffs**. The Conference rate will be in effect through the Thanksgiving weekend, November 27th.

PRELIMINARY MEETING SCHEDULE;

Saturday, November 19th is "Meetings-in-Conjunction" day when MESA's affiliated organizations hold their business meetings, receptions and so forth. **An SSA meeting will be held that day.** Sunday, November 20 is the first day of panels, with four two-hour panel sessions; Panels continue on Monday, November 21, with three sessions. The Plenary Session will be held at 10:30 and the Book Exhibit Soiree from 8:00 pm to 10:00 pm. Panels conclude on Tuesday, November 22, with one session. The reservation cut-off date is **October 19, 1994**. The Pointe Hilton can be contacted through 800/876-4683. For further information contact MESA, University of Arizona, 1232 North Cherry Avenue, Tucson, AZ 85721.

AMERICAN RESEARCH CENTER IN EGYPT 1995-96

The American Research Center in Egypt ARCE announces FELLOWSHIPS FOR STUDY IN EGYPT 1995-96. Application deadline: November 1, 1994.

COALITION FOR PEACE IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

The Coalition for Peace in the Horn of Africa is an ad hoc collection of NGOs, activists and academics interested in issues of U.S. policy to the Horn of Africa. The following is an example of some of the kinds of advocacy statements we work on together. If you would like to be put on our fax and mailing lists to be apprised of upcoming actions or activities, please contact John Prendergast at the Center of Concern at 202-635-2757 (phone) or 202-832-9494 (fax).

June 16, 1994

Ambassador Melissa Wells
Special Envoy to Sudan
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Ambassador Wells,

The Sudanese Government offensive, aerial bombardment, continuing drought, the manipulation of food as a weapon of war, extraordinary human rights violations and scorched-earth tactics such as village burning and asset stripping have once again pushed countless thousands of Sudanese civilians to the brink of survival.

As opposed to previous responses by the U.S., which were largely reactive increases in humanitarian assistance, the U.S. is now much better prepared to proactively address the root causes of the suffering. The appointment of Ambassador Melissa Wells as Special Envoy to Sudan signals a new commitment to conflict resolution which the NGO community strongly supports.

The undersigned suggest the following initiatives to further peace-making and life-saving efforts in Sudan:

1. Support the IGADD Secretariat: Up to this point, the IGADD peace initiative has been undermined by a relatively weak and under-resourced Secretariat. U.S. financial and technical support to the Secretariat, through an intermediary such as the InterAfrica Group or the Carter Center, would be an important investment in present conflict resolution efforts in Sudan, as well as encouragement for future initiatives throughout the war-torn Horn of Africa. The U.S. should also encourage the U.N., E.U., Arab League and NGOs to support the IGADD process, both diplomatically and financially. The fact that countries in the region are acting as mediators in the Sudan conflict is an important political development which has ramifications for the entire region. Peace in Sudan is a precondition for regional security.

2. Explore openings for peace-, institution-, and local capacity-building: The SPLA-Mainstream recently held a major convention during which the organization decided to create autonomy between its military and civilian wings, improve management for civilian administration, create an independent judicial system, and improve its human rights record through the institution of codes of conduct for its officers and soldiers. Similarly, General Bashir recently indicated his government's openness to human rights monitors and to advice on various constitutional issues related to potential peace agreements. Such signals should be explored and supported if serious. Current

efforts at local capacity-building and human rights monitoring also deserve support. Further institution-building efforts to use the vast experience and skills of people and groups within the region should be initiated.

3. Support local mediation: As we indicated to you in our last communication, local efforts at peace-making between warring communities are as important as national conflict resolution. The Sudan Working Group in Nairobi is helping to coordinate these efforts, and they are supported by networks in Europe and North America. We strongly urge you to consult with, and listen to, the church leaders who spearhead the Working Group concerning the types of support the U.S. could provide for local mediation.

4. Strengthen and coordinate humanitarian diplomacy: The UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs should be encouraged to strengthen its role in humanitarian diplomacy, and enhance its working relationship with the Humanitarian Subcommittee of IGADD. Donors should press for corridors of tranquility and road and barge access, as well as de-militarized rail access to Bahr al-Ghazal. Although the last year has seen a rapid increase in accessible areas, access has mostly been via air, and unsustainable option over the long term. We urge the U.S. and other donors to unite, through DHA, in the position that no supplies will go by air that can be delivered by rail, road and barge, as long as these non-air options are not exploited for military purposes (as was the unfortunate case with the newly constructed road in Bahr al-Ghazal on which the Government has moved to take significant territory and key towns from the SPLA).

5. Renew efforts to access the Nuba Mountains: The Nuba Mountains remain the region most inaccessible to external monitoring and assistance. Many of the worst atrocities of the Sudan's civil war have been committed there, with few outside witnesses to "legitimize" them. Special efforts should be

expended by the U.S. Special Envoy to win humanitarian and human rights access agreements to this embattled region.

For further clarification on any of these issues, please contact John Prendergast of the Center of Concern at 202-635-2757, or Sharon Pauling of Bread for the World at 301-608-2400. We look forward to discussing these and other proposals at your earliest convenience.

(Contact the Newsletter Editor for the list of signatures to the above letter.)

The Latest Resource on Sudan

Sudanese Rebels at a Crossroads:
Opportunities for Building Peace in a Shattered Land
by John Prendergast

As the war in Sudan escalates, the debate about the international response has intensified as well. This discussion paper traces the war strategies and their social, political and economic effects in southern Sudan; the military and political changes underway in the south; opportunities for institution building within the SPLA and its humanitarian wings, conflict resolution efforts, and the strengthening of human rights and humanitarian diplomacy.

Item # 4194 49 pages \$3.95 May 1994

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SPRING 1994 SUDAN NEWSLETTER EXCERPTS

EDITORIAL

Despite war, hope and vision enable the people to persevere with resilience; but for how long?

Recently, one of our Sudanese friends, Keith Gingrich, wrote in the MCC Peace Memo (Newsletter) that the media tends to spend most of its time reporting "bad news" and less of "good news." I marvelled at that statement, and asked myself: Is there any good news in the Sudan that we omit to cover in this bulletin? I looked through many letters and documents in the Sudan file but honestly, there wasn't any piece of good news.

As a committed pacifist, Keith probably had a vision of attempting to give hope to this seemingly volatile and hopeless world--of famines, civil strife and savage ethnic cleansing, earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, and so forth. Bad news, in fact, is quite depressing. But it is the only news and experience that the people in the troubled areas of the world know anyway, and very few people outside the trouble areas would like to hear more of it. I believe we're not victims of a bias press, but of bad news itself. The major media organizations rarely go to South Sudan and get more of that bad news stuff. Good news in South Sudan is so scarce. For instance, the Sudanese children born after 1980, do not know anything called peace. Fortunately, there is an overwhelming amount of resilience, plenty of hope that one day the crimes committed against them shall come to an end. This is the only vision that keeps the Nuba and South Sudanese going, but for how long?

The Sudan is at war, and the only good news would be cessation of hostilities. Since 1983, an estimated 1.5 million South Sudanese people have died in the most savage but less attended humanitarian disaster in the world today. As though the scale of suffering inflicted upon these helpless people is not enough, the Sudanese Arab-Islamic government in Khartoum has maneuvered Zaire and Central Africa Republic to deposit its troops in their territory and to invade South Sudan from there.

Sino-Sudanese military pact is an evil pact

We are also perturbed by the Sino-Sudanese military pact that was signed early this year. Recently, a Chinese Foreign Minister, Qien Qichen, visited Khartoum for two days (January 14-16, 1994). The Sudanese Minister of Industry, Abdel-Salaam Taj al-Sirr Mustafa, told the Sudan News Agency (SUNA) that the Sino-Chinese pact covered "bilateral cooperation, and strategic interests, basic services, and development." But other sources state that the big chunk of the agreement focused more on military provisions--which the Sudanese Islamic fundamentalist regime needs badly to fight against the Southerners. For the past three years, the Chinese government has maintained secret dealings with Khartoum with Iran as an intermediary and a procurator of these transactions. Given this past history, it is no longer a secret that more military hardware continues to undock at Port Sudan.

Intelligence groups in the region have spotted a Chinese made A5-M supersonic bomber taking off from Juba for its routine military operations against the Southern Sudanese villages. The instructors and operators of these sophisticated bombers are hired Pakistani pilots, who are the only people used to this type of bomber.

On January 23, 1994, the Sino-Sudanese pace moved to establish \$100 million in capital for a joint Sudanese-Chinese bank in Khartoum with a branch in Beijing.

While bilateral relations are important for any nation and community in realizing Ricardo's "comparative advantage" in trade, we believe the Chinese presence in the Sudan [at this time] is very unfortunate. The Chinese government, with its insensitivity to human rights issues, should not export Tianamen into Sudan--we have enough problems of our own.

Nevertheless, we are pleased that the international community has moved, at last, and closely monitors the activities of the Sudanese government and its brutalities (see the White House Press Statement below). Southern Sudanese people need and deserve more attention. They need your help in every way you can to end the war. We hope the year 1994, will be the year of peace in Sudan.

- The Editor -

THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS STATEMENT

For the first time since taking office, the Clinton Administration has strongly protested against the Sudanese government's continuous aid-raids against the civilians in South Sudan. Below is a reprint of a full text from the White House Press Statement of February 12, 1994.

The Administration condemns the new military offensive by the armed forces of the Government of Sudan on populations in the South. These outrageous attacks on civilian and military targets demonstrate a callous lack of concern for the lives of innocent Sudanese and a disregard for efforts to promote peace.

This offensive will only increase the suffering of the Sudanese people, create thousands of new refugees and undermine the on-going international humanitarian relief effort.

In response, the President has directed a number of diplomatic and humanitarian actions to be taken. He has instructed Ambassador Donald Petterson in Khartoum to protest vigorously this military action to the Government of Sudan. The State Department called in the Sudanese Ambassador in Washington to underscore our concern over the military offensive and especially the indiscriminate bombing of civilians. Our Ambassador in Kenya is urging leaders in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Eritrea to redouble their efforts, through the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), to stop the fighting and to bring about peace in Sudan. The President also intends to appoint a high-level Special Envoy to Sudan to assist efforts to achieve a cease fire and permanent peace agreement there.

Since Fiscal Year 1993, we have provided more than \$160 million in humanitarian assistance to the people of southern Sudan. In response to this latest tragedy, we are consulting with non-governmental organizations in order to identify new ways to facilitate humanitarian assistance in Sudan. We are also conducting an assessment of anticipated needs in preparation for increased food aid to Sudanese refugees in Uganda, Kenya, and Zaire. We will consult with our Special Humanitarian Representative for Sudan, Ambassador John Burroughs, when he returns next week.

Despite the Government of Sudan's participation in regional humanitarian summits, it continues to violate humanitarian principles, causing further loss of life and hardship in the region. We call on the Government of Sudan to cease these actions and recognize that the future political and economic stability of Sudan depends upon all parties respecting basic humanitarian principles.

TERROR IN THE MOSQUE

At least sixteen people were killed and twenty wounded when five men armed with automatic machine guns opened fire at the Mosque at Thowra residential area in Khartoum on February 5, 1994. The five men were two Mauritians, one Libyan (identified as Mohammed Abdalla al-Khilaifi, also the leader of the ring), one Yemeni, and a Palestinian identified as Munir Khalil. In a shoot-out with the police, both the Mauritians were killed, while the Libyan and the Yemeni were wounded and hospitalized. A Sudanese suspect, Mohammed al-Mahi--who is a member of the ring, but was not there when the incident took place -- was arrested at El-Roseiris two days after the attack. He confessed to the police that their operations included a plan to assassinate Dr. Hassan el-Turabi, the leader of the Islamists, National Islamic Frong (NIF). According to al-Quds al-Arabi Newspaper in Khartoum, the ring belonged to one of the Islamic extremist groups, "al-Takfir Wa al-Hijrah." The Sudanese security agents were quoted as saying that the attackers were highly trained professionals who did not leave behind any identification, except information provided by the wounded and arrested individuals.

The Mosque, belonging to one of a puritan Islamic sect, el-Sunna Nuhammadiya, was also believed to be a center of anti-government critics, especially two clerics, Sheikh al-Hadiyya and Sheikh Abu Zayed, who have recently challenged the government's misuse of Islam. These clerics regard Dr. Turabi and the Sudanese leader, Lt. General Omer Hassan el-Beshir and his government, as infidels.

The northern Sudanese rebel groups, the NDA, issued a statement in Egypt saying that the five attackers were government vigilantes, but it seems the government's accounts suggest the attackers were anti-government elements. Who's who?

Meanwhile, the government denied that the armed men were its vigilantes. It issued its own account of how two of the armed men attacked the police station earlier that day and ran away with automatic machine guns. On their way, they hijacked a motorist and went off with the vehicle directly to Thowra residential area where they committed the crime.

However, there are questions left unanswered here. If these attackers were the government's vigilantes, why did they want to assassinate Dr. Turabi? Or was this a cover up of the operations? And if the attackers were from an independent ring, why did they attack the Mosque anyway?

Meanwhile attacks on Holy places -- Mosques in Hebron and in Khartoum, Churches in Lebanon and South Sudan - are deep pathological acts carried out in total disregard of the sanctity of sacred premises.

* * * * *

IN FINE FEATHER? or IN GOD'S EYE?

My essay will analyze Dr. Khalid Al-Mubarak's play Rish An-Na'am (The Ostrich Feather), written in Arabic in 1976, upon the advent of Al-Numeiry in Sudan. The play is inspired by the true story of Sheikh Taj-al-Din-al Bahari who came from Baghdad to Sudan upon the invitation of some Sudanese pilgrims. Al-Bahari spent seven years in Sennar and spread the teachings of Sheikh al-Jilani's Qadiriya *tariqah* which is, today, the largest Sufi *tariqah* in Sudan. The play is written in symbolical style and allows the author to draw a vivid political satire with a nice blend of humor, pathos, and poetry. It dramatizes Arab man's lost soul as it is drawn in many contradictory directions. Set on a long indefinite road, with the desert behind him and the ocean ahead, Arab man seems to be in search for a home and some meaning in life in the midst of evils of many sorts. (ABSTRACT)

My paper will attempt to analyze Dr. Khalid Al Mubarak's two-act play Rish An-Na'am⁷ and my title "In Fine Feather or in God's Eye?" indicates the basic questions the play asks: what are the choices given to present-day Arab man? Will he opt out for a comfortable life in the city of man and keep himself in "fine feather"? Or will he, on the contrary, place himself in "God's Eye and shun the world of men? Written in symbolic style, the play allows the author to draw a vivid political satire with a nice blend of pathos, humour, and poetry. It dramatizes Arab man's lost soul as it is drawn in many contradictory directions. Set on a long indefinite road, with the desert behind him and the ocean ahead, Arab man seems to be in search for a lost home in the midst of evils of many sorts.

Former Director of the Institute of Music and Drama in Khartoum, Dr. Al Mubarak lives presently in exile in England, and teaches Drama at the University of Bristol. He has generously sent me his plays and the genesis of Rish An-Na'am which he started in Bristol, in 1974 when he was completing his Doctoral Dissertation on the Theatre of the Absurd. He then went back to Khartoum, finished the play and published it in 1976 at the dawn of Al-Numeiry's regime. Unhappily, the play was never produced in Sudan. The Omdurman National Theatre accepted it but never dared put it on stage! Only the sacrificial Sufi scene, which brings to a climax the first act of the play, was performed by Dr. Al Mubarak's students in the gardens of the library of the Goethe Institute in Khartoum. The play had its premiere later in Egypt, in 1984, and was performed that same year at the Morocco Festival. It was subsequently banned from representing Sudan in the Damascus Festival and the ban happened five days before the departure of the Company (from Khartoum).

⁷First published by the University of Khartoum Press, 1976.

A French translation by Mme Vivienne Yagi is in press.

Another landmark in our author's life is worth mentioning, for it sheds additional light on our understanding of the basic issues that are dramatized in Rish An-Na'am. Apparently, Dr. Al Mubarak had resigned in 1972 from the Communist Party which he had joined as a teenager. He felt, then, that he could breathe freely and spread his intellectual and artistic wings, unhampered by the strait-jacket of didactic commitment.⁸ After this important decision to withdraw from the Communists Party, the author wrote an absurdist play for the BBC Nahnu l-Ahya' (We the Living) followed by Rish An-Na'am which uses very skillfully absurdist theatrical techniques within a play of ideas. Finally, there is a very strong Sufi tradition in Al Mubarak's family. His grandmother is a direct descendant of Ghulam Allah bin A'ed, mentioned in Ibn Daif Allah's Kitab al-Tabaqat, and the author will draw the story of Sheikh al-Buhari from that same source, as we shall see. Yet Al Mubarak adds to these facts of his life that he has often derided his Sufi heritage and rebelled against it.⁹

The structure of Rish An-Na'am is very interesting. Made of two acts with nine short scenes in Act I and ten similarly short scenes in Act II, it unfolds with great economy of means, without any attempt at verisimilitude in the decor which is stark and neutral, but with great care at creating rhythm and pattern that carry the theme of the play forward. And this is achieved in the structure of the play which is built up in counterpoint with one scene in which travellers meet by chance and interact, followed by another with very brief lines where a journeyman errs on stage, dishevelled, lost, looking for his way, surrounded by rustles,

⁸Dr. Al Mubarak's own words as expressed to me in a letter from Bristol, dated January 11, 1992.

⁹Ibid

thistles, and dead end roads. An increasing sense of terror pervades the atmosphere as his returns on stage rhythmically recur. His silences fill the scene with a foreboding sense of doom, and his physical condition drastically deteriorates in scene after scene. The second act progresses with the same contrapuntal effect, except that the lost and mute journeyman appears only twice, and exits from the scene beastlike, with long hair and long nails, crawling rather than walking, absolutely famished and destitute.

In contrast with these Beckettian very short vignettes, are the dramatic scenes which precede and follow them, in which a few characters interact and establish an exchange of meaningful ideas. The short vignettes, however, undermine profoundly any attempt at meaning. Thus the mute journeyman functions as an emblem, or a tragic foil, for all the other characters put together. This technique reminds one of mimes and clowns in the circus, of a Charlie Chaplin or a Marcel Marceau. In this sense Rish An Na'am is a tragi-comedy as Waiting for Godot is a tragi-comedy. Many comic elements are indeed present in the play, and link it with the low comedy genre, the farcical, bringing relief in the midst of despair. Actually, despair and desolation are the ruling emotions of the play and insert Rish An Na'am in the main body of twentieth-century literature, which doesn't offer much consolation to man.

In the meantime, and in contrast with that desolate journeyman, are other travellers who meet also on a start road, but who are heading towards Sudan. They are followed by many people, exiles from all parts of the Arab world, looking for the right place to build an ideal city. The two main protagonists, Yasser and Othman, have fled away from their countries for life's sake. Actually they had dared oppose their respective rulers on trivial matters, and had to leave their countries immediately. Thus, the theme of exile is struck in the first few minutes of the play, together with that of dictatorship. The satirical mode is quickly used, as well, when each says he has come from a place

where beasts of prey are waiting to jump at them if they ever turned back. Later, nostalgia will often invade them and in moments of physical or spiritual weakness they contemplate going back home. But they remember the threat over their lives and stick to where they are.

Moreover, in the same first scene Yasser and Othman meet Abdul Salam, a funny bald and fat man who has also fled away from what he calls his "ideal city", where an ideal ruler had imposed the Islamic Law on all wakes of life. And Abdul Salam satirically comments:

God sent us a calamity in the shape of
a ruler who turned our life to hell. He
forbade us all that makes life livable.
Yes, I fled away in search of the furthest
point on earth from our ideal ruler. I
don't envy him the paradise he wants to
enter. As for me, I want my drink,
interest on my money, and the woman I
desire...Hal Hal Hal¹⁰

A direct reference, of course to what was happening in Sudan and many other Arab countries. Abdul Salam funnily walks around with his bottle of wine, mocking the *Shari's* and whoever wants to implement it. The three characters who meet in scene I insert the play, as well, in a historical context, as people are flooding behind them to start a new life in Sudan, and more specifically in the Jezira. The author often indirectly refers to Sennar, through the meeting place of the Blue and the White Nile, and the dream of a new City to come. Except for the Sufi Shaikh, we hardly meet any other characters in the play, which is a play

¹⁰My trans., p. 13.

of ideas rather than of character. The protagonists represent types more than anything else.

The historical theme is reinforced by the true story of Shaikh Taj-ad-Din al-Bahari al-Baghdadi as recorded in Ibn Daif Allah's Kitab al-Tabaqat¹¹. The Shaikh was invited by some Sudanese pilgrims to come to Sudan and stay with them for a while. The Shaikh accepted their kind invitation and came to the kingdom of the Funj where he stayed at Wadi Sha'ir in the Jezira for seven years around 1550, and then returned to Baghdad. During this time he taught and spread the Qadiriyya Way, also called the Jailaniyya *tariqa* which has remained, until today, the most important Sufi way in Sudan. According to Trimmingham, al-Jilani is the most popular Saint in Islam¹². Shaikh al-Buhari built a hut in Wadi Sha'ir, married into the people like all other missionaries, and initiated many into the Qadiriyya *tariqa*. He left behind him Khalifas in different areas qualified to admit others as well.

In Rish An-Na'am Dr. Al Mubarak singles out a story which is very popular in the Jezira, of who the Shaikh tested the first group who came to be initiated. The is recounted in Tabaqat, and is translated by Trimmingham, in the following way:

People came to him to be initiated into the

¹¹Muhammad al-Nur Ibn Dayf Allah, Kitab al-tabaqat Fi Khusus al-'awlia' wa al-Salihin wa al-'ulama' wa al-Shu'ara' Fi al-Sudan, ed. Yusef Fadl Hasan (Khartoum University Press, 3rd ed., 1970-1985) pp. 127-129.

¹²J. Spencer Trimmingham; Islam in the Sudan (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press), 1949; pp. 196 and 220 ff. See also the migrations into the Jezira area of the Sudan at the dawn of the Sennar Confederation, pp. 85 ff.

Sufi Path. He hid some rams in a store-room (qati) and said to the people, 'I am going to initiate and guide you and slaughter you, then you will die in the faith.' Thereupon the people dispersed except Shaikh Muhammad (al-Hamim) wad'Abd as-Sadiq who was then a youth wearing a silk shirt. He removed it, performed his ablutions and prayed two rak'as. The Shaikh took him inside the store-room, initiated him and slaughtered one of the rams and the blood flowed from the store-room. The people thought that he had slaughtered him. Then came Shaikh Ban An-Naqa who was very old. He said, 'I am a bull who has served his days. I prefer to join my Lord.' So he performed the ablutions, prayed two rak'as, and went in. He initiated him and slaughtered another ram and the blood flowed towards the people. He said to them 'Come! Don't be envious, annoyed or stingy.' They refused and after that the two came out safe and sound¹³

Dr. Al Mubarak adapts the ritualistic scene for the stage and in Rish An-Na'am the two historical Shaikhs who enter into the Qadiriyya way are transformed into the protagonists Yasser and Othman.

Scene 9 of Act I dramatizes the historical one, with the slaughtering of two rams behind a curtain, believed by the crowd to be the two heroic Shaikhs. Thus, Act I reaches a climax by reproducing the sacrificial rites of the Sufi tradition which is, as well, a universal one as described by Mircea Eliade and James Frazer amongst others in India, Australia, Tahiti and other places.

¹³Ibid., pp. 218-219.

Similarly when in Act II the Shaikh trains Yasser in the Sufi way, the author follows closely the Qadiriyya ritual.

The main intention, of the play, however, is to examine whether it would be possible at all to build up the good city here on earth. We have already seen that Yasser and Othman had fled away from political dictatorship, while Abdul Salam had run away from the religious one. Would the Sufi way provide the answer to that perennial question about justice and human dignity in the city addressed by Plato, al Farabi and so many others in history?

The answer is negative in the play, hence the mood of desolation underlined above. Shaikh al-Buhari is a saintly figure who trains Othman and Yasser, then appoints Othman, almost by force, at the head of the new city, with Yasser and Abdul Salam helping him closely. Two years go by when Othman in great difficulty rushes to his teacher for advice. His main preoccupation is the need to build up prisons in the city, for people are turning into criminals with no instruments of coercion in his hands. The Shaikh refuses to give his opinion and makes Othman fully responsible for any decision he will take. Deeply shaken by the insistence of Othman for help, the Shaikh turns to prayer then describes to Othman the prisons he knew in Baghdad, with dark stony caves where men were thrown and forgotten for ever after. Completely inadequate, he leaves the scene with no further help.

Several years later, Othman covers the previously naked floor of his house with velvety carpets and feathery cushions on which he lies, while servants bring him luxurious foods and drinks. Cruel guards watch over him, other drag chained men to his feet, while Yasser is thrown in the deep cave of a prison. Yasser had had the courage to denounce the growing corruption of his friend. To no avail. He is fated to die. His loud cry in the wilderness is stifled by the prison wardens who block every opening around his cell. We are also informed that Shaikh al-

Buhari is on his dying bed back in Baghdad, completely incapacitated, praying day and night. Abdul Salam now traffics with the Ostrich feather and supersedes the erring mute journeyman, seated on lovely feathery cushions.

Thus the central symbol, the Ostrich Feather, functions poetically at all levels, and determines the satirical mode of the play. It powerfully draws on all the connotations that the Ostrich suggests. A hybrid creature, neither bird nor quadruped, a native of Africa and Arabia, used in Arabic both in the masculine and feminine genders, it is extensively reared for its expensive feather. It is also swift-footed but cannot fly. The Arabic dictionary informs us, as well, that a common proverb compares an ignorant, dried-up, conceited man to the Ostrich. We also know that the coward or the hypocrite hides from the truth by covering up his eyes, as the Ostrich does behind its feather.

Hence the richness of Al Mubarak's central symbol. The bird becomes an emblem for Africa and Arabia meeting in Sudan, with the dream of the mixture of bloods, races, and nations alluded to often in the play. The bird parodies, as well, the arrogant and conceited ruler who sinks in its lovely feather forgetting friends, ideals, religion and all. The cover page illustrates an ostrich with a crown on its head! In fact we witness here the bankruptcy of ideologies, whether sacred or secular, with no solution in view for the problem of governmentship.

The theme of our panel to-day is "The Islamic Impetus Initiating Sudanese Literature". If the Islamic impetus has initiated anything in Rish An-Na'am I am afraid it has done so negatively, for there is no salvation for Al Mubarak in turning to religion to build up the new city to come. One should look for other solutions for the Arab nation at the dawn of the twenty first century. I started by asking with Al Mubarak whether man should live in "fine feather" or in "God's eye" - Abdul Salam has chosen the first option and Yasser the second at the cost of his life. Othman

has sunk deeply into a bloody rule, and there seems to be no solution for Arab man's quest. Only rulers can afford to live in "fine feather" while the majority live in "God's eye" out of the failure of all options. If the theme of this Year's Conference is "Islam, past and present", Al Mubarak's play seems to say that we have to look at new solutions outside Islam for the hope of building up the new good city. In the meantime wonderment and exile seem to embody the condition of Arab man inside Rish An-Na'am as outside it in the real world. Exile and its implications are very much present in Al Mubarak's play, and in a poignant passage Yasser says:

The old homeland is dear to my heart
as a cherished memory but it had become
too narrow for me...The old love is like
an old trunk which has grown rotten.
The roots remain in the soil but stop
feeding the branches and the foliage and
the fruit...¹⁴

Thus the richest parts of the homeland are scattered all over the world, and desolation fills the scene. Tayeb Salih had asked the same basic question in his two-volume novel entitled Bandar Shah published around the same period as Rish An-Na'am¹⁵. Yes we are all looking for the proper Shah who will guide us in building up the good *Bandar*. Shall we ever find him? This is the essential question... **PAPER DELIVERED BY DR. MONA AMYUNI, APRIL, 1992 SSA CONFERENCE, VASSAR**

¹⁴My trans., p. 54.

¹⁵Vol. I: Daw il-Bayt (Beirut: Dar al-'Awda), 1971.
Vol. II: Maryud (Beirut: Dar al-'Awda), 1976.

NEWS FROM SEAN O'FAHEY AND JOHN HUNWICK

John Hunwick and R. S. O'Fahey announce a joint project in collaboration with a number of other scholars, for the publication of a six-volume work under the general title *Arabic Literature of Africa*. The volumes will be published by E.J. Brill of Leiden (Plaanijstraat 2, P.O. Box 9000, 23PA Leiden, The Netherlands) and the first of the projected series has already appeared (December 1993). The entire series will be under the joint general editorship of Hunwick and O'Fahey and each of them will be primary editor for specific volumes.

The project will fill a major gap in our knowledge of the intellectual and religious history of the African Islamic world. It is essentially a continuation of the work of other distinguished scholars, notably Carl Brockelmann in his *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur* (2 vols. & 3 vols. supplement, Leiden, 1937-49) and Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (Leiden, 1967-in progress). In as much as Brockelmann had scarcely four pages on writers of Africa outside the Maghreb and Egypt, and Sezgin, after ten volumes, is still dealing with the first five centuries of Islam, the new work, which focuses precisely on the area south of the Maghreb and Egypt and chronologically on the 10/16th-14/20th centuries, will complement the vast labours of these scholars of the Germanic tradition.

O'Fahey has just published the first volume of the series, on the writings of Eastern Sudanic Africa down to c. 1900, in collaboration with Muhammad Ibrahim Abu Salim, Albrecht Hofheinz, Yahya Muhammad Ibrahim, Berndt Radtke and Knut Vikor. It deals with authors living in the area of the present Republic of the Sudan and their writings, as well as the writings

of the Idrisiyya tradition both within the Sudan and outside it (chapter 6), and the Sanusiyya tradition (chapter 7), which belongs wholly outside the Sudan. O'Fahey will also edit a volume on Eastern Sudanic Africa since 1900 and another on Ethiopia, the Horn of Africa and Eastern Africa.

The first five volumes of Abu Salim's al-Athar al-kamila li'l-imam al-Mahdi can be purchased through Christopher Hurst & Co. (Publishers), 38 King Street, Covent Garden, London WC2E 8 JT.

ISLAM AND SOCIETY IN AFRICA

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NEW TITLES

THE SWORD OF TRUTH: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SHEHU USUMAN DAN FODIO, Mervyn Hiskett. *The Sword of Truth* is a classic in the field of northern Nigerian Studies and a landmark in West African historical writing.

ASSAULTING WITH WORDS: POPULAR DISCOURSE AND THE BRIDLE OF "SHARI'AH", Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim. This book presents an extensive and witty analysis of the metaphors inherent in the practice of *sahir* among the Muslim Arab Rubatab of the Sudan.

HOLYMEN OF THE BLUE NILE: THE MAKING OF AN ARAB ISLAMIC COMMUNITY IN THE NILOTIC SUDAN, 1500-1850, Neil McHugh. *Holy men of the Blue Nile*, presents a detailed, original study of Muslim holymen in the north-central Sudan and the role they played in the cultural and social transformation of that region.

ORDER FROM NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY PRESS, Chicago Dis. Center, 11030 South Langley Avenue, Chicago, Ill, 60628.

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BOOKS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

Francis M. Deng and Larry Minear, *The Challenges of Famine Relief*, (Wash. D.C.: Brookings, 1992)

Douglas H. Johnson, *Governing the Nuer*, (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993)

Kenneth J. Perkins, *Port Sudan, The Evolution of a Colonial City*, (Oxford/San Francisco: Westview Press, 1993)

John Prendergast, *Sudanese Rebels at A Crossroads*, (Wash.D.C.: Center of Concern, 1994)

Anyone who wishes to review one of the above titles should call or write to the Newsletter Editor. (914) 437-7490/87

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Normal activities of the SSA include the publication of the Newsletter, organizing meetings for the exchange of ideas, and recommending research candidates for affiliation with appropriate institutions in the Sudan. The Association also sponsor panels and programs during the meetings of other academic organizations. It occasionally publishes the proceedings of its annual meetings in book form.

For information about membership, change of address, program information, or back issues of the SSA publications, please contact the Executive Directors listed inside the cover page.

For news releases, or information to be communicated to members, please write to the Editor of the Newsletter.

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