

SSA NEWSLETTER.

A PUBLICATION OF THE
SUDAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA

CONTENTS

PAGE

1	EDITOR'S NOTE
5	T. SALIH: A SOUTHERN VIEW-POINT
8	WOMEN IN ISLAM
11	RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS
14	SUDAN IN THE INTERNET
15	INFLATION IN THE SUDAN
16	SUDANESE FEMALE LEADER
24	ABEL ALIER'S PLEA TO NIF
26	INDEPENDENCE DAY IN PHILLI
28	AL-TURABI AND HIS CRITICS
32	PLEA FROM SUDAN FOUNDATION
38	NDA ASMARA DECLARATION

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THE SUDAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1981

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The Sudan Studies Association (SSA) is an independent professional society founded in the United States. 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 maintains 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.

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

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is for one each academic calendar year which entitles the subscriber to receive all the issues of the SSA Newsletter, and to discounted registration rates for attending the annual meetings of the Association.

These categories of membership are available

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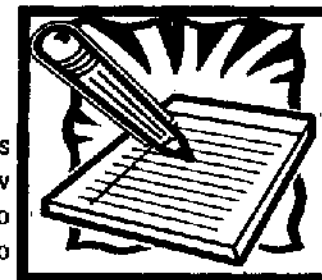
For information about membership, change of address, registration for meetings, or back issues of SSA publications, please contact the Executive Director.

Financial and other Donations:

The SSA is legally incorporated as a non-profit making organization. Thus all contributions and other donations are tax-exempt. Your gift is appreciated.

From the Editor:

Dear SSA Member:



I have agreed to be the editor of this Newsletter in the coming year or so, till a new editor is identified. I have volunteered to do this job for the second time in the past five to six years because I strongly believe that the publication of our Newsletter should not be interrupted for any reason. It should continue under all circumstances. Our inability to find an immediate successor to Dr Constance Berkley should not be an excuse to delay the publication of the coming volume. The President of the Association and its Board of Directors are still looking for volunteers for this job. I know that you are pleased every time you receive your copy of the Newsletter. So why not volunteer yourself to be the editor for one or two years and let others appreciate your work. I, and many men and women of my generation, are getting old, may be even out of touch. We therefore need new blood, new vigor, new ideas, new determination. I ask our younger colleagues to please take the responsibility of SSA leadership now rather than later. A good place to start would certainly be the editorship of the Newsletter.

It is true, the preparation and the publication of this Newsletter three or four time a year is time-consuming. On the one hand, one has to keep nagging friends, colleagues and SSA officials to send news items; asking them repeatedly for their latest publications, their academic activities, their readings or any thing that may be of interest to the rest of us. On the other hand, one also looks for information on the Sudan from every possible source. One joins this of that Internet group (see details about these below), read other Africanist Newsletters, Books in Print, Dissertation Abstract, and the like for additional information about Sudanese studies, about politics in the Sudan, and about anything that is relevant to our membership. It is in doing this kind of info-hunting that one gets informed about many things on the Sudan, and gets the satisfaction that comes with that. Perhaps not all people would want that. But I am sure there are a few who would like to avail themselves with such an opportunity. To these I am making the appeal to consider volunteering to be the

next Editor one year from now.

We are now faced with a tremendous challenge in the publication of the Newsletter. Things have changed dramatically in the last year or so. We are now in the High-tech information age. The slow moving news items that used to reach our readers in three to four months, for which they were often grateful, now reach them instantly through the internet. As more and more people link to this electronic super highway, this publication can not survive if it can not provide for our readers something special; something that Internet discussion groups will not or are unable to provide. I am talking here about content, about valuable information on ongoing research, on intelligent communications, debate, book reviews, panels proposal and the like. Not that these are taboo topics in the Internet. No, but I do not think they have the same value or significance if they do not appear *IN PRINT*. That *is* the difference. It is the permanence of the information we print that makes the difference. If that information takes longer to reach those for whom it is intended, so be it. Again, a sizeable number of our readership either have no access to or are unable to take advantage of this new medium of communication. To these, news in print remains essential. Likewise, those of us who need documentation for tenure or promotion, circulation of ideas in the Internet, though faster, is of no significance at all. If you need to put something in print fast, a Newsletter which is geared to deal with academic issues, a Newsletter which is serious, professional, and punctilious is the place to get published. With your help and contributions I will make sure that this Newsletter live up to every body's expectations.

As you must have already noticed, the Newsletter has a new face up-lift. This is the second time I use my surgical pen or desk-top publisher to make changes in the appearance of the cover sheet. On the substantive level, there are equally important changes as well. First, I managed to constitute an Editorial Advisory Board for the Newsletter to which I have recruited a handful of eminent, dedicated and productive scholars of Sudanese studies. They will advise me on the best way to produce a scholarly and attractive Newsletter on regular basis. Their names appear on the inside cover. I have also got on board as an Assistant Editor Dr Ali Dinar, the Outreach Coordinator at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr Dinar's expertise in the electronic media has been recognized by many, including the African Studies Association. He is going to put to good use this expertise in the coming issues of the SSA Newsletter. Secondly, and this important for submissions for publication, I have pre-fixed the dates when we will go to the print shop. This will

force all of us to think ahead if we are to meet these deadlines. I hope you, too, will work with me to ensure that these deadlines are met every time.

One more thing, it is important that we take advantage of available publishing technique to keep up with the competition. As more and more of us become proficient in word processing and graphics, we will continue to see improvement in the style of our publication. More importantly, I predict that very shortly we will be able to put into the hands of our readers, and at a reasonable cost, the entire collection of articles given at our annual meetings. Producing a master copy of these papers is very easy now, and many print shops offer very competitive prices for the reproduction of multiple copies. All we need is for people reading papers at these annual meeting to provide me or any other person who volunteers, with a copy of their presentation in disk form **AHEAD OF TIME**. This way we would not be spending precious time *reading* our papers at the panels. Instead, we will have all the time for serious discussion of content and for the exchange of views.

In the end, the newsletter is what we, as a group, not individuals, make of it. It should be a collective effort reflective of what we as academicians do or think about. *All of us are editors, and all of us should contribute.*

IMPORTANT

If you think that this issue is mostly on the political problems of the Sudan, and has little information about member activities, you are right. There are two reasons for this bias. First, Sudan, whose studies are the concern of this organization, is currently facing almost insurmountable problems, and its very existence as a united country is at stake. Hence, the publication of relevant materials.

Secondly, despite my repeated exhortations, pleas, or requests, to the honorable members of this association for news items, research reports, etc, I am afraid the response was less than enthusiastic. Three submissions were made, two of which, unfortunately, have been published previously elsewhere. Apparently, not only the Sudanese state is faced with crisis of purpose and destiny. However, the future of the SSA Newsletter is not as bleak as it seems. Act now.

Have a productive Spring.

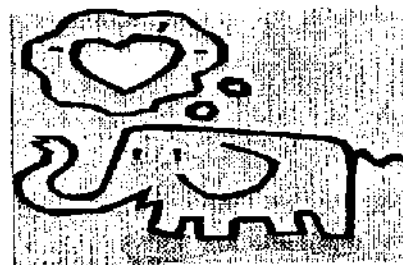
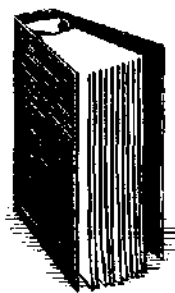
**THE
NEWSLETTER
IS WHAT WE
MAKE OF IT.
ALL OF US
ARE EDITORS,
OR SHOULD
BE**

DISCLAIMER

SSA Newsletter is a forum of *free expression*. All ideas and opinions circulated here are therefore the sole responsibility of their respective authors, and are not necessarily those of the Sudan Studies Association, or its officers.



Just before going to press I have received two submissions; the first, an extended note on the Memoirs of Sir George Schuster by Prof. Martin Daly, the other a copy of a paper entitled "the Blood of Experience: The Conflict in the Southern Sudan" which Professor Robert Collin read in a recent international conference on "The Conflict in Southern Sudan" sponsored by the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, Ontario, Canada. These will be published in the next issue of the Newsletter *which will go to press by March 31st. Editor.*



Tayyib Salih: A Southern Point of View

I have translated below a piece published by the Sudanese novelist, Tayyib Salih, in his column *Aakher Waraqa* (the last page). It is his *Khawatir* from Washington #11 "Impression on Visit to Washington." (*Al-Majallat* of August 30, 1996.) In it he has included a letter sent to him by Ms A. Sabino Saferyio (I am transliterating from the Arabic, so the actual spelling of her name will most likely be different) in which she was critical of some points he had previously raised in the column. *The Editor.*

"I usually do not publish the correspondence I receive from (my) steam readers. Though many of these letters deserve to be published, I regret I can not do so here because of space limitation. I do, however, thank those who wrote them. Nonetheless, a particular letter from a southern sister living in Vienna (Virginia) caught my attention. As the reader can see, her message to me reflects enormous bitterness, which is common among many of our brothers and sisters from the South. It does not matter whether (the causes of) such bitterness are true or not, Northerners must take this bitterness very seriously in their future relations with the south.

I do not want to enter into an argument here with the respectable lady. It suffices to say that she appears not to have been following my writings, or if she did, has failed to understand where I stand (with regard to the current crisis in the Sudan). Had she read my writings carefully, she would not have confused me with the policies of the Sudan government, or accused me of being indifferent to the suffering of the orphans and the widows (in southern Sudan.) Didn't I cry enough (in my novels) at least twenty years earlier (over the fate of the poor and the powerless).

I have never put myself as a defender of the policies of the various governments in the Sudan, specially the policies of the current government. On

the contrary, I expressed my opinion, an opinion shared by most Sudanese, that the successive governments (in the Sudan), specially military regimes, committed unforgivable atrocities (against civilians) in the south. I also made known on several occasions, explicitly or implicitly, my opinion (also shared by many) that the war fought now by the current government under the slogan of jihad is a stupid undertaking which will complicate further the problem rather than solve it. On the history of slavery in Africa, all I did was to criticize the wrong impressions perpetuated by some southerners that it were the Arabs, all Arabs, including Arabs in northern Sudan, who were solely responsible for the trade. It is wrong (to blame the Arabs alone for slavery in Africa). All unbiased accounts of slavery in Africa by Europeans like Professor Basil Davidson, Frank Mark Linon Stanley and the Sale of the Congo, or Dr James Walvin's book "the Black Ivory" (all testify to the fact that slavery was an international business.)

Again, this honorable lady thinks that what the governments in Khartoum do is what most ordinary people in the North want, and thus believes that all Northerners are party to the sins and atrocities committed in the South by the various governments, specially the military. In reality, northern Sudanese, just like their southern counterparts, were and continue to be victimized by those who abuse power. I said on many occasions that it is improper for southerners to reserve for themselves the role of the "victimized" and ascribe to the Northerners the epithet of the "Victimizer", or the "Aggressor". It is more complicated than this simple dichotomy, and many thinking men and women in both the north and the south began to realize this fact. Below is Ms Agnes Sabino's letter, written in good Arabic and in clear handwriting."

"Greetings:

I have read with interest your recent articles published in *al-Majalla* under the title "Impressions from Washington", and I was not surprised that you have expressed those opinions on southerners and their problem. As a traditional Northerner, You, like many other Northerners, have the great propensity to put the blame on others in a clever way. As usual, the blame, this time, was on the British. Why can't you blame the British? Aren't they, at this very hour, destroying the villages in the South and in the Nuba Mountains? Aren't they the ones who are executing ethnic cleansing there? Aren't they the ones who gave license to their Arab militia (those form the Baggara tribes known for their hostility to the Nilotics because of competition over water and grazing lands, and to whom the Sudanese government {sorry, the British government} provides arms and food) to rape women, after spilling the blood

of their men and children? The goal of what is going on now in the south is very clear, even the blind can see it, and the stupid can understand it.

The question of renewal of slavery in the Sudan, and the violation of human rights has been repeatedly reported recently by human rights organizations, by neutral eye-witnesses who have no ax to grind. These stories are not fictitious. They are stories reported by individuals who fell victims but managed to run away, or bought back their freedom from their slavers. Do you (Mr Salih) think that these people are confused? Do you believe they made a mistake of not identifying the British as the perpetrators of these heinous crimes? Instead they blamed the Sudanese government which is as innocent as the wolf which was alleged to have killed Joseph (reference here is to the story told in the Quran. *Editor*.) If this is what you think, then you are right, Oh our eminent Teacher, in what you have written: "they (southerners) see the elephant, but prefer to stab its shadow instead".

The important question, though, is still who are they? Who are these people who see the elephant, but aim at its shadow instead? Do you realize that the big problem is with Sudanese like yourself, people who know all these facts, yet try every thing possible to prove that they were false, or, failing that, to find a scape goat? Sudanese like yourself who can not stand seeing Carolyn Fluchr Lobban crying (over the fate of the Sudan. *Editor*.), yet are quite indifferent to the tears of thousand and thousand of orphans and widows who shed tears every second and every minute all over the Sudan, but specially in the south and the Nuba Mountains. But why should their tears be important to you any way? After all, whatever tears they may shed, they are cheap tears. They were better off if they accepted their fate, and agreed to the dictates of people like Mrs Lobban (on the unity of the Sudan, *Editor*), even if that means their continued slavement, their being despised by Northerners who treat them like citizens of the tenth class, since the status of (even) the second-class citizenship is considered too honorable for them.

To Islamize them, to Arabicize them? Why not. All people are born free, except these southerners, for they are deemed slaves even before they are born. Every adventurer in their lands wanted to control their destiny as he wished. He would like to mould them and shape them in any way he desired, or believed fitting to do. All hell brakes loose if these southerners, with their stern faces and red eyes, choose to hold on to their identity and beliefs, and begin to resist being dominated by you, Oh Masters of the land. When they do, you accuse them of aiming at the shadow of the elephant instead of the elephant itself.

And why are you surprised if some one doubted that you were

African? Aren't you the same person who made fun of Black Americans calling themselves "Afro-American"? You accused that black American immigration officer of all sorts of things, simply because he was doing his job as thoroughly as he was told to do. Of course it would have been different if the immigration officer was a white person with blond hair and blue eyes, named Mrs Lobban. Then you would have thanked him immensely, even if he denied you entry into the United States, and sent you back to Britain instead. Who knows, you might even have probably written us a nice piece about him praising him and his family

Finally, I respectfully ask you that next time do not shout at the top of your voice that "they see the elephant, but decide to pierce its shadow". Just make sure that you do not have a block of wood in your eyes before telling others that they have twigs in theirs.

Agnes Sabino.

I am not aware if Mr Yayıb Salih has responded to this letter, as he promised to do. If he has, I appreciate if you let me know so I may publish his response the next time *Editor*

@@@

The following short article is by a young activist Sudanese female who fights for the restoration of democracy in the Sudan. She is teaching at the Brigham Young University and is also active in an Internet Discussion groups coming from Emory University.

"Neglecting The Egalitarian Message of the Quran: A Feminist Interpretation of Islam"

By

Soudad Tag-Elsir Ali
Brigham Young University

"In nothing does Islam maintain its fitness to be considered a modern world religion than in the high position it accords to women." Imam Muhammed Abduh

I have been appalled at the various comments expressed by a few highly educated Muslim women and men that "Islam is oppressive to women,"

that the Quran is "antithetical" to feminism. What has been surprising the most is the fact that these views deliberately neglect the most egalitarian message of the Quran regarding women, and focus on a few areas out of their contexts. Since this subject cannot be addressed in such a small piece of writing, I would attempt here to highlight some of the numerous Scriptures in the Quran that reflect a remarkable feminist concept in a surprisingly contemporary manner, hoping to address those other controversial areas of the Quran in a different contribution.

I have chosen two Verses from al-Quran that discuss some important aspects of women's issues. We read in the Quran from *Surat al-Nissa'* [Chapter 4 on Women] the following:

[1] "If a wife fears cruelty or desertion on her husband's part, there is no blame on them if they arrange an amicable settlement between themselves. And such settlement is best; even though men's souls are swayed by greed. But if ye do good and practice self-restraint, Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do" (Quran 4.128)

The same Verse in different translation:

If a woman fears ill-treatment or desertion on the part of her husband, it shall be no offense for them to seek a mutual agreement, for agreement is best. Man is prone to avarice. But if you do what is right and guard yourselves against evil, know then that God is cognizant of all your actions.

We read in the *Tafseer* [interpretation] of this Scripture as follows:

"To protect women's economic interests, various rules are prescribed for dower in marriage. But the sanctity of marriage itself is greater than any economic interests. Divorce is, of all things permitted, most hateful to Allah. Therefore, if a breach between husband and wife can be prevented by some economic consideration, it is better to make that concession rather than imperil the future of the wife, children, and probably the husband too. Such concessions are permissible, in view of the love of wealth ingrained in unregenerate man, but a recommendation is made that we should practice self-restraint, and do what we can to come to an amicable settlement without any economic sacrifice on the part of the woman."

[2] A Landmark Chapter in the Quran: *SHE WHO PLEADED:*

This remarkable whole *Sura* in the Quran [Chapter 58: 'She Who Pleaded' *[al-Mujadilah]*] was revealed and dedicated to alleviating a woman's indignation of her husband's injustices, and thus issuing a Divine Verdict that abolished a sacrilegious misogynous social custom that Islam had inherited from the pre-Islamic era: "Allah has heard and accepted the statement of the

woman who pleads with you (the Prophet) concerning her husband and carries her complaint to Allah, and Allah hears the arguments between both of you for Allah hears and sees all things..." (Quran 58:1).

The whole chapter discusses this significant case. About the story behind this key Scripture, we read in Dr. Sherif Muhammed's analysis: "Khawlah was a Muslim woman whose husband Aws at a moment of anger pronounced this statement: "You are to me as the back of my mother." This was held by pagan Arabs to be a statement of divorce which freed the husband from any conjugal responsibility but didn't leave the wife free to leave the husband's home or to marry another man. Having heard these words from her husband, Khawlah was in a miserable situation. She went straight to the Prophet of Islam to plead her case. The prophet was of the opinion that she should be patient since there seemed to be no way out. Khawla kept arguing with the prophet in an attempt to save her suspended marriage. Shortly, the Quran intervened; Khawla's plea was accepted. The divine verdict abolished this iniquitous custom. One full chapter (Chapter 58) of the Quran whose title is *Al Mujadilah* or "The woman who is arguing" [She Who Pleaded] was devoted to this incident, "Allah has heard and accepted the statement of the woman who pleads with you (the Prophet) concerning her husband and carries her complaint to Allah, and Allah hears the arguments between both of you for Allah hears and sees all things...." (58:1). A woman in the Quranic conception has the right to argue even with the Prophet of Islam himself. No one has the right to instruct her to be silent. She is under no obligation to consider her husband the one and only reference in matters of law and religion.

Despite of this egalitarian aspect of the Quran, women in most Muslim communities are oppressed and treated as second-class citizens. Should we take the abuse of women in Muslim communities, that is largely derived from a misogynous attitude towards women and a misinterpretation of the Quran, against Islam? Or is it high time that Muslim women enforced the egalitarian message of the Quran that is clearly in their favor? It is indeed interesting that those who advocate the idea that Islam is "antithetical" to feminism see Islam through either Marxist ideologies, or through Islamic fundamentalist ideologies. In examining the position of women, Islam will continue to be distorted, as long as we insist on interpreting Islam through these two theories. Looking at Islam through the paradigm of its main source, the Quran, is probably the starting point of salvation for Muslim women because, as Imam Muhammed Abdu (the most forceful advocate of Islamic liberalism in modern times), accurately argued: "in nothing does Islam maintain its fitness to be considered a modern world religion than in the high

position it accords to women

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

1) *Gender Politics in Sudan: Islamism, Socialism, and the State* (Westview Press, 1996). By Sondra Hale, Anthropology Department, University of California, Los Angeles, 312 pages (tables, notes, glossary, bibliography, index).

Focusing on the relationship between gender and the state in the construction of national identity politics in twentieth-century northern Sudan, the author investigates the mechanisms that the state and political and religious interest groups employ for achieving political and cultural hegemony. Hale argues that such a process involves the transformation of culture through the involvement of women in both left-wing and Islamist revolutionary movements. In drawing parallels between the gender ideology of secular and religious organizations in Sudan, Hale analyzes male positioning of women within the culture to serve the movement. Using data from fieldwork conducted between 1961 and 1988, she investigates the conditions under which women's culture can be active, generative, positive expressions of resistance and transformation. Hale argues that in northern Sudan women may be using Islam to construct their own identity and improve their situation. Nevertheless, she raises questions about the barriers that women may face, now that the Islamic state is achieving hegemony, and discusses the limits of identity politics. Westview Press, 5500 Central Avenue, Boulder, Colorado 80301-2877.

2) *Bithrat al-Khals* (a translation into Arabic of Francis M. Deng's *Seed Of Redemption: A Political Novel*) by Ismail H Abdalla. 236 pp. Center for Sudanese Studies. Cairo, 1996.

3) *Islam, Medicine and Practitioners in Northern Nigeria*, by Ismail H. Abdalla (Edwin Meller Press, New York, 1997). The book makes brief reference to traditional medical practice in western Sudan.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

From **Heather J. Sharkey** <hsharkey@PHOENIX.PRINCETON.EDU> we have the following communication on her research.

Most of my Ph. D thesis concentrates on the cultural aspects of Northern Sudanese nationalism --for example, how early nationalists expressed their ideas on the Sudan as a nation through poetry. However, one early portion of the dissertation does discuss the ways in which British education policy reinforced pre-colonial elites, by hand-picking boys from fine Arab-lineage families to attend the Gordon Memorial College and the provincial government schools, while shunting boys of servile background into technical workshops, where they learned manual trades as carpenters, stone masons, etc. (The point is that these disproportionately high-status young men, who graduated from the Gordon College, went on to become the nationalist --and national --leadership and to take control of the country at independence. Their emphasis on Sudanese Arabism, as opposed to, say African or Afro-Arab diversity, as a platform of the Sudan's national identity, reflected their own specific cultural background.)

I have scrutinized Condominium-era Education Department reports for statistical breakdowns on students' backgrounds (and have found the proportion of students of Southern/Nuba descent in the Gordon Memorial College to be shockingly low, and to have become lower as the years progressed --for example, only 2.2% of the Gordon Memorial College students defined as "Sudanese" or "Black"--as opposed to "Arab" --in 1930, down from 18.9% in 1907). I am convinced that the reduction in "Sudanese"/"Black" representation was a fallout of the 1924 revolution, i.e. British mistrust of "detrified blacks". I have also found comments scattered throughout the unpublished memoirs of British officials (deposited in the Sudan Archive at Durham) to be illuminating. The whole issue is, of course, intimately connected with education policy in the South. Moreover, I have even found some sources which suggest that missionary schools in the South also privileged southern boys of fine descent (i.e. the sons of Southern chiefs), over southerners of humble background. In other words, there are parallels between Northern & Southern education policies and elite formations

God willing, I'll complete my dissertation over the summer.

And from **Ann Lesch** (LESCH@UCIS.VILL.EDU) we have received the following note about her current research:

The Nigerian government hosted negotiations between the government of Sudan and the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement in 1992 and 1993. Those negotiations included detailed discussions about the national character of Sudan, the relationship between religion and the state, and the nature of an interim period. Ann Lesch and Steven Wondu have received a research award from the US Institute of Peace to undertake an analysis of the formal positions and the official minutes in order to write a monograph that will assess the parties' stances and strategies and provide a guide to the outstanding issues that would need to be addressed in any future negotiations.

RECENT DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS

Alber, Arlene M., *"Assessment of the variability in the timing and pattern of epiphyseal union associated with stress in teenage and young adult skeletons from Medieval Kulubnarti, Sudanese Nubia"* Ph. D. U. of Colorado at Boulder. 1995. 9613226.

Abdelrahman, Ali H., *"Agricultural cooperatives and community economic development: A Case study of western Sudan"* Ph. D. Pennsylvania State U. 1995. 9612677.

Morton, J. F., *"Economic Development in Darfur Region, Sudan: With special reference to impact of aid"* Ph. D., U. London, 1994.

Ali-Dinar, A. Bakr Aldin, *"Contextual analysis of dress and adornment in al-Fashir, Sudan"* Ph. D., U. Pennsylvania, 1995. 9615009.

Morkot, R. G., *"Economic and Cultural Change between Kush and Egypt [Sudan]"* Ph. D. U. of London, 1994

Pitya, Philip L., *"History of western Christian evangelism in the Sudan 1898-1964"* Ph. D., Boston U., 1996. 9617017.

Geiger, C., *"Geologically/geophysically constrained integrated basin analysis for the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden and its implications for hydrocarbon exploration [Sudan]"* Ph. D., U. Oklahoma, 1994. 9513755.

Ibrahim, A. E. *"Interpretation of Gravity and magnetic data from the Central African Rift system [Sudan]"* Ph. D., U. of Leeds. 1993

Kaballo, S. A. M., "The Political Economy of crisis in the Sudan 1973-1985" Ph. D., U. of Leeds. 1994.

Osman, E. A., "The Fertility impact of rural development projects: The Case of the Rahad Irrigation project, Sudan" Ph. D., Boston U. 1995. 9540804.

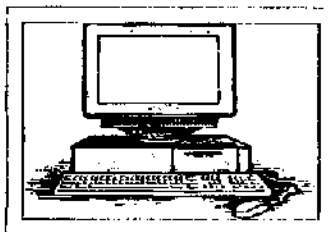
Abdelrahman, K. A., "Fertility differentials in an agricultural area: A Case study of the Gezira and Managil [Sudan]" Ph. D., Mississippi State. U., 1995. 9533404

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Where to Find news about the Sudan in the Electronic Media

There are many Web sites, and the number increases by the minutes, from which you can easily down load information about the Sudan. Once you are in any Web site, you can browse through and connect to many other Web sites in and outside the US. Here are a few.

Please note, some of these addresses may be case sensitive.



1) <http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/index.html>

2) <http://webzone.ccacyber.com/www.sudan>

You can also send e-mail message to the following LIST SERVE sites for information and membership.

3) <http://i-cias.com>

4) <http://www.sufo.demon.co.uk>

5) <http://www.asharqalawsat.com> (Once in, you can navigate to other web sites. You can do the same from most web sites.)

6) <http://www.mynet.net/~nisanews/Scholars/Turabi/index.html>

7) listserv@listserv.cc.emory.edu This is a discussion group dealing exclusively with Sudanese issues.

IMPORTANT:

If you need to receive your Newsletter electronically, just send me your e-mail address. This way you will get it the same day it goes to the print shop. You will, however, get your hard copy by mail.

The Editor

&&&&

INFLATION IN THE SUDAN

I am printing here a piece broadcasted by Reuter on February 14th, 1997, because of its relevance to the general problems afflicting the Sudan now. *The Editor*.

Goats and grains steer rural economy in Sudan

When times are good, it costs only one goat in northern Sudan to buy a bag of sorghum. But this year, villagers are bartering up to 17 goats for a 90-kg (198-pound) bag of the grain in Sudan's rural Red Sea state markets, where livestock is still the currency. "In the Red Sea state, the coin of trade is goats," said Sasi Kumar, Oxfam U.K. country representative. "...Last year the rains failed, prices went up for fuel and there were barriers to transport. This added to a sharp increase in sorghum prices.

"People have sold or given up most of their livestock and are almost destitute now," he said. The problem in Sudan's Red Sea state is one example of how millions of people can go hungry in a country which is one of the world's poorest but where surplus food is produced. Fuel subsidy cuts, war, poor transport and drought have ganged up on access to staple grains in Sudan to threaten nearly a quarter of a million people with hunger and destitution in the state, one of 26 in Sudan.

Food shortage drives Sudanese to hunger and destitution.

Kumar said scarcity of food has driven thousands of people to state camps in Tokar, Sinkat and Suakin. "We found high malnutrition rates in children" of up to 80 percent, he said. "I expect more and more movements of people." United Nations agencies estimate Sudan's production of sorghum, wheat, millet and maize will rise 50 percent to 5.33 million tones --a surplus --in the year from September 1996. Sorghum will account for 4.1 million tones, wheat 641,000 tones, millet 490,000 tones and maize 94,000, they say. This means sorghum exports could be 600,000 tones in that period and wheat imports about 395,000 tones, less than in recent years because of the increased domestic crop, the World Food Program/Food and Agriculture Organization report said. That's the theory. But reality is not so simple in Africa's largest country, where many people walk miles to fetch water, support families by herding livestock, and struggle to survive floods, sun-scorched fields and war. The report said that sorghum exports depend on whether domestic production meets those levels and the government lifts an export ban. The wheat imports are composed of 321,000 tones for commercial use and 74,000 as food aid. "The overall

food outlook for 1996/97 is therefore favorable, but at the levels of certain provinces and states the food supply situation is likely to be precarious," said the report, based on a visit ending in December. "Despite the overall surplus, the six states in Darfur and Kordofan, the Red Sea state and the south as a whole will all be in deficit," it said. "...some areas and sectors of the population will have difficulty in meeting their food needs."

HIGH COST OF DISTRIBUTION IS MAJOR PROBLEM

Aid officials in Khartoum said while an overall cereals surplus is forecast, it is not evenly distributed. Higher transport costs could put the brakes on spreading the grain among needy states. "...for the deficit areas, prices will be high especially in certain areas of the West for which transport costs are currently very high due to fuel prices and inter-state taxes," the report said.

Severe food deficits were likely in drought-affected areas of North Darfur, North Kordofan, West Darfur, West Kordofan and areas of South Darfur, it said. A major transport operation will be needed to bring sorghum from the surplus regions but, even then, prices may be beyond the reach of many rural poor people, the report said. "People have already sold most of their livestock, they have no goods they can trade for food," said Philip Clarke, WFP's country director. "Especially with the war, the government doesn't have the economic resources to transport." Sudan has been fighting a war with anti-government rebels since 1983 in the south. In January it accused Eritrea, which borders the Red Sea state, and Ethiopia of supporting the rebels in a fresh offensive, a charge the two countries deny.

Sudan has cut fuel subsidies in line with economic reforms. Clarke said it would cost about \$80-\$90 to transport a tone of grain by truck from surplus to deficit areas. He said that one solution was getting donors to pay transport costs and setting up food-for-work programs. We can not offer to provide free assistance to these people in a country where there is at the moment a surplus of food," Clarke said. "We can not have free hand-outs."

The following piece is another crop from the Internet that some may find informative about social mobility in the Sudan. It is about the career of one of the most important figure in the feminist movement in the Sudan. *Editor.*

KHALDA ZAHIR OF ALMORADA VILLAGE, UMDURMAN

**By
Amir and Caron Zahir**

I would like to introduce some women from Almorada. In doing so, by no means do I intend to undermine the contributions of other women in Almorada,

or in other urban and rural areas of Sudan. Or, to claim those women were the only ones who had some contributions that are worth mentioning. Rather, I am simply trying to share with you some of the untold stories of the area I love and grew up in, through the eyes of those selected group of women.

One of the first women I will like to introduce to you, is Khalda Zahir. Most probably, I will share with you more information about Khalda than about the other women, because of the shared family history. Khalda was born in Almorada in January 8, 1926. She was the first born child of Fatima Ajab Arbab and Zahir Surour Elsadati. Of course, at the time having the first born to be a baby-girl, or having girls in general, was not something that a lot of families would be proud of. Notably, that was due to the prevalent sexist attitude. However, since her birth, her father was so determined to provide her with whatever opportunities in order to assist her in reaching her potential. In order to understand Khalda's upbringing, I believe it is important to touch on some of her father's personal history.

The late Zahir Elsadati (Born, September 2, 1898 and died, November 28, 1981) was an army officer. He was born in Omdurman to a migrant family from Dar Foor in Western Sudan after they settled in the area during the Mahdia. Moreover, he was born in the same day that his father died in the Battle of Karary, and he was brought up by his mother. That was a very important factor in his life, as he developed a deep respect for women and their ability to achieve and survive as he learned from his mother. He joined the army in 1910 as a *wald* (boy) foot-soldier and developed through the ranks.

As he stated, he was kicked out of Omdurman Alameeria School, because he plotted with some classmates and beat up the arrogant Egyptian geography teacher. At the time, that was considered an act of mutiny against the newly established colonial authority, regardless of the age of the perpetrators. They were arrested immediately and taken to *Alzabita*, or police station. The *mufatish* (District officer) immediately deemed them unsuitable for formal education, and therefore, the army was the only place that would be able to "teach" them. In addition, shortly after he joined the army, Zahir lost his mother, the only immediate family he had left, after most of the family members died before her in the Mahdia wars.

Although, Zahir did not have any opportunity to ever complete his formal education, he was determined to seek knowledge in every source he could find at the time. So, reading was his major interest. In particular, he was fascinated with history and politics, and he actively got involved in it through the secret activities of the White Brigades Society during the 1920's. Further, that fascination with knowledge, led him to develop a very strong

relationship with one of the first Sudanese historians, Shiekh Mohamed Abed Al-rahim who became his mentor. Mohamed Abed Al-rahim was one of the Kataba of Al-khalifa Abd-ullahi and he took it on himself to document the history of Sudan as he has seen it or heard it. Furthermore, he had a huge home library that was made available for knowledge seekers. He also published "Omdurman Magazine", which was later became the training ground for a lot of Sudanese writers, journalists, and poets, such as Al-tijanle Yousif Basheer.

The fact that Zahir was denied the opportunity to complete his formal education, was the driving force that later made education and knowledge as some of his core values in life. Also, in that early age, he has learned and developed a very strong sense of right and wrong, and the importance of being an independent thinker, and being able to live with the consequences of his decisions, regardless of the severity of those consequences. Those circumstances of Zahir's upbringing, shaped up his tough personality and his core values. He also, made sure to pass these strong values to his daughter Khalda.

At the time, educating women was a relatively a new phenomenon, and as we all remember the struggle of uncle Babiker Badrie in trying to bring this issue to the forefront. The only school for girls at the time in Almorada, was Mad'ra'sat Bcs'mila (Miss Miller's Primary School for Girls. Currently Almorada Primary School For Girls, which is located directly in front of Dar Al-ryadh in Shari'a Almorada). So, after Khalda completed her primary education, her father send her to El-ersal'ia Junior High School, which was run by the English Church. The building of that school is currently occupied by Al-tijany Al-mahie's Psychiatric Hospital in Shari'a Al-arba'een near Al-seen'ia (the roundabout that was donated to the city by Al-hadie Mursat the prominent businessman in 1960). She finished her junior high school years in 1940. That was quite an achievement for a young woman at the time. Particularly, because most young women used to be forced to quit school to wait for the future groom. Or, if they had some support from their family, they would go into teaching, or nursing. However, Khalda expressed her interest in going to high school after she was encouraged by some of her teachers to do so. The only high school for women in Sudan at the time, was the Unity High School, which was a private school that was run by the church, and it was solely reserved for teaching *banat Al-kho'wajat* (the daughters of the "foreigners" -the British, and the other communities of people of Greek, Armenian, Italian, Syrian, or Lebanese background.)

At the time, her father was with his army battalion in Southern Sudan. Khalda secured the support of her mother and her younger brother Anwar, however, there was no one else from her immediate, or the extended family

that would dare to give her support. Subsequently, she wrote a letter to her father expressing her desire to go to high school, requesting the school fees, and his support. This whole process took some time from start to finish. However, in the neighborhood, it was quite a fiasco, everybody was talking about the fact that Khalda was going to be educated with *banat Al-kho'wajat*. Some of the people had meetings after meetings in *Nadi Alzubat* (The Officers Club) to discuss the matter, and some people even started joking about it by saying "*ha ha ... Zahir awiz yital! betto mufattisha* (Zahir wants his daughter to become a district officer) which was unthinkable even for a Sudanese male at the time. Some even send letters to her father in the South in order to influence his decision. Some suggested that she should abandon her effort to continue her education, and she should instead be a teacher, because, according to them, she was *bit fasie'ha jiddan* (a very outspoken girl)?

However, after thinking about the whole issue, her father send back to Almorada two letters. The first letter was to Khalda commending her on her decision, and the second letter was to her uncle -Mohamed Ajab -instructing him to accompany Khalda to the Unity High School in Khartoum and register her for the coming year. Needless to say, Khalda's uncle Mohamed was not please. He, nevertheless, reluctantly signed the registration forms as her guardian, paving the way for Khalda to start the application process. It was not that easy because in the Unity High School at the time there was no Sudanese girl among the Students, and it seems that the administration was not in a hurry to grant the final acceptance. Luckily for Khalda, she received a very unusual support form Ahmed Yousif Hashim, the prominent Sudanese journalist, who was the editor of one of the newspapers at the time, *al-Sudan al-Jadeed* (The New Sudan). It happen around the same time that Khalda was struggling with this issue, Ahmed Yousif Hashim was writing a series of articles about women education in Sudan, or the lack there of, and he mentioned that there was only one high school for girls in Sudan which was the Unity High School, and it had no Sudanese girls among its students. Shortly after that, Khalda received the acceptance from the school administration to start her high school in the following year.

Khalda continued her high school years achieving very good grades. Moreover, that was particularly challenging because, during those high school years, her father was away in Al-kafr and Al-alameen fighting with the Allied Forces in World War II. So, Khalda as she was the first born, and her brother Anwar as the second born, had to share the parental responsibility of their other younger brothers and sisters. However, and to the astonishment of the school administration, Khalda graduated from high school with very high

grades in 1946. Some people in the school administration did not believe a Sudanese girl could achieve such a high academic standard. With those good grades Khalda could have gone to any school she chose. Khalda expressed her interest in going to university and study medicine!! When she made her preference known, another battle started.

At the time, Gordon Memorial College, which was later became the University of Khartoum, was not for everyone from the Sudanese people, especially women. The first battle Khalda had to fight was to secure the support of her family, and her father was very quick to encourage her to continue on with her education. Her father had already returned back from the front and he was living in Almorada. So, other family members and the rest of the elders in the neighborhood, did not bother to fight him on his decision. The second battle was around securing acceptance from the college. To their credit, some of the progressive teachers in the Unity High School, used Khalda's performance and the good grades as a spear-head to lobby the college administration to grant her acceptance to Gordon Memorial College School of Medicine in 1946. In being accepted, Khalda became the first Sudanese woman to ever enter the college and the medical school. That acceptance came just in time, for her father had already made plans to send her to Egypt if she was denied admittance to the Medical School.

The other obstacle that Khalda had to face, was to be able to cope with the college's time-table, and hectic schedule (from seven in the morning to sometimes late at night). At the time, the school had no residence for its female students, and there was no *kubrie* (bridge) between Omdurman and Khartoum where the college was located. Quickly, her father arranged for her to live with his life time friend, al-Ameera'at Hassan al-zin, and his wife Fatima Mohamed Abed Al-rahim -the daughter of his mentor - who lived in the army *islag* (barracks) in Al-mog'ran. The arrangement was that she would live with them during the week days and would go home in weekend. With this arrangement Khalda simultaneously had a new family. That relationship between the two families continued strongly until today.

1946 was also a turning point in Khalda's personal history. In addition to starting college, she also became very active in the political and social life in Almorada. As an early sign of developing her feminist consciousness, Khalda and two of her friends from the neighborhood -Fatima Talib and Mahasin Abed Al-aal -founded *Jam'ee'yat al-fata'yat al-thaqafia* (the Women Cultural Society) in order to promote women education and helping to empower young women to enrich their social lives. Around the same time, she

also met a close friend of her brother Anwar by the name of Osman Mahjoub -the older brother of Abed Al-khlik Mahjoub. (Abdel Khaliq Mahjoub, it is to be remembered, was the former Secretary General of the Sudanese Communist Party, who was executed by Nimeri in July 28, 1971). Subsequently, Osman introduced her to Dr. Abed Al-wahab Zin Al-abdeen. Later, in the same year, Osman Mahjoub and Dr. Abed Al-wahab recruited Khalda to become a member of the *al-haraka al-Sudania Lel-taharror al-Watani* (Sudanese Movement For the Liberation of Sudan), which later became *al-Jebha al-Mo'adia Lel-Esti'mar* (The Front Against Colonization-FAC), and eventually became the Sudanese Communist Party. In doing so, Khalda became the first Sudanese female to ever join a modern political organization.

Khalda continued her political activities both in college and in the neighborhood. In 1948, and due to the mounting pressure from *Mutamar al-Kheriejien* (The Graduates Congress), the colonial authority introduced the idea of establishing a Sudanese Legislative Assembly in order to ease that pressure; however, they reserved the right to appoint its members. A political battle started right away between the supporters and people who were against the colonial idea. *al-Jebha al-Mo'adia Lel-Esti'mar* (FAC) led that political battle, and that what is known now in history books as the "battle of the legislative Assembly". *Nadi al-Kheriejien* in Omdurman, became the battle ground, and a series of *ndawat* (workshops, forums, or meetings) were arranged. The party announced that it was going to introduce Khalda as one of key speakers against the colonial idea of the Legislative Assembly in one of the *nadawat*. At the time, the idea of having women attending a political forum was very unusual, and particularly having a rather young man as a speaker, was even stranger.

Everybody was very curious, and in the day of the *nadwa*, a large crowd had assembled in *Nadi al-Kheriejien* in a very hot afternoon. Although, a lot of people were skeptical, Khalda delivered a fiery speech that made the crowd shout slogans against the colonial authority. As consequence, Khalda was arrested immediately by the police, and she was taken from there to *al-zabttia* (The Police Precinct), and that was her first arrest. Moreover, that was the first time ever for the Police to arrest a Sudanese woman for her political views. The news of her arrest travelled very fast in all Omdurman, and people started talking loudly about the fact that the Police arrested a "woman" for talking against the colonial authority. At the time, her father was in Bayt Itleet Prison Camp near Tel Aviv in Palestine, after he was taken as a prisoner of war in the War of 1948. So, her uncle Osman Mutwallie met with the Police to negotiate bail. For fear of public outcry, the

Police was very quick to grant her bail that same night.

The second arrest was in 1950 during a student demonstration in the college campus. This time, her uncle made it very clear that she had to graduate first, before resuming any political activities. Indeed, for Khalda it was easy said than done. However, she manage to graduate from medical school in 1952, as the first Sudanese female medial doctor. 1952, was also another turning point in Khalda's personal life, as her long time friend and comrade Osman Mahjoub proposed to her. Again, that marriage proposal started another battle for Khalda; however, this time it had a very strong racial overtone. Osman Mahjoub's family were from the Shay'gee'ya tribe, and as I have stated earlier, Omdurman was sharply divided among racial lines. So, people from both families were dead against that proposed marriage. Large number of her family were against it because Osman was Shay'gee, and they wanted her to marry an officer or at least a son of an officer, preferably from the neighborhood, not a teacher like Osman. Whil Osman's family were against the marriage because, Khalda was *P'ora'wia sakit* (a person from western Sudan and did not live up to their standards). Everybody had his or her agenda, and it would appear that there was no consideration at all for the feelings of the young couple. Again, her father who had a deep respect for Mahjoub Osman, the groom's father, met with Mahjoub and finalized the wedding plans, regardless of all of the opposition from members of the two families. None of Khalda's uncles attended the wedding, and a large number of Osman's family did not either, and also boycotted his father and his immediate family for years to come.

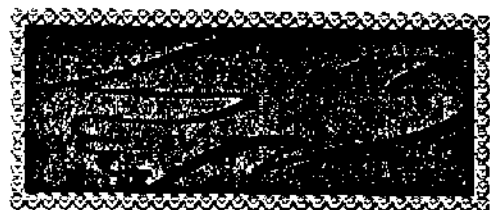
In 1952 Mahasin Abed Al-aal, Fatima Talib and Khalda, recognized the need of establishing an umbrella organization to unite and promote women issues. Subsequently, they founded *al-Etihaad al-Nisaa'i al-Sudani* (The Sudanese Women's Union), and Khalda was elected as the first president. Up to that time, for Khalda, it seemed that every single step she had taken in her life, such as what a lot of people take for granted today, was a major battle. She started her career as medical doctor after finishing her residency between Omdurman and Khartoum General Hospitals. In 1954, the young couple were transferred to Baher Al-gazal Province in Southern Sudan. Osman as a teacher in the newly established Rombaik High School, and Khalda as Medical Inspector for the province, responsible for supervising the medical assistants in all of the villages and the urban centers in the province.

Shortly after that Khalda and Osman started their new family; however, she continued to work while raising her young children. Through the years, andas a career woman, she had to deal with the pressures and the

demands of the job, the sexist attitude of some of her colleagues, as well as, the demands of her large family (a father, a mother, a step mother, nine sisters and nine brothers). Also, the demands of her political and social activities, such as meetings, *beyoot bekyal* (funerals), *sma'yal* (celebration for new-born babies), and other social engagements. Visiting sick people in the neighborhood, in their homes, or in hospitals, was an expectation, simply because she was *al-dictora bet al-hilla* (the doctor from the neighborhood). Notwithstanding all of that, she never complained. Aas a matter of fact, she saw that as her duty to do.

Khalda continued to work in the Sudanese Ministry of Health, refusinf all other gerenous offers and lucrative jobs she has received from international and regional kealth organizations. In the mid 1970s she assisted in the establishment of *Mujamma' Sihhat al-Atfaal* (Children's Community Health Center in Omdurman). It was located in an old building that used to be occupied by the administration of her old junior high school, al-Ersalia in the corner of Shari'a Al-arba'een and Shari'a Al-urda in Omdurman. Her last post she was the department head of Pediatrics with the Sudanese Ministry of Health. Khalda retired in the mid 1980's. She has four children (Ahmed, Khlid, Mariam, and Suad). Currently, she lives between Eng-land, Cairo and Su-dan.





A Plea to NIF

By Mr Abel Alier

On February 1st, 1997, Mr Abel Alier, former Vice-President under Nemeiri, sent a sincere and passionate plea to the current head of the military government in Khartoum, General Omer al-Bashir, with a copy to Dr Hasan al-Turabi asking them to enter into a dialogue with the various opposition groups or risk leading the country to total disintegration. Here are some excerpts from this important and courageous document.

**President Omer Hasan Amed El-Bashir and
Honorable Dr Hasan Abdallah Turabi**

I wish to address you directly again on the fundamental issues which have confronted the state and the people for years, in particular, the last seven years. (These) include: a) the 14 year (old) civil war between the central government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement [SPLM], and its factions. In those last seven years the conflict has been further fueled by the new unhelpful policies such as a holy war (jihad) against the people of Southern Sudan and other people of the Sudan, establishment of an Islamic state that recognizes non-Muslims and non-Arabs in the Sudan as foreigners in their own land.

b) the difficult economic condition that has created enormous suffering for all the social sectors.....Most citizens in urban and rural areas of the country can no longer afford even one-half of semi-decent meal a day. The soldier, the policeman, the school teacher, the health worker, the civil servant, the businessman (except a few favored by the government) and the millions of armies of the unemployed citizens, are all impoverished as incomes are entirely inadequate to meet basic needs.....In the South, all public sector employees

who are incidentally are (paid) less than their counterparts elsewhere in the country, are not getting their salaries at all, contrary to whatever positive reports you may be receiving.....The small Southern Sudanese traders (are now) reduced to economic bankruptcy, destitution, and poverty.....The business community in the North (prosperous seven years ago) are languishing in jails, due to government over taxation, and unfair and discriminatory market practices that work in favor of individuals favored by the government.....Large populations (are) displaced by the war and (are) regularly harassed by endless government plans of residential relocation..... The streets of our national capital (are) teeming with the disadvantaged members of the society; roaming helpless street children, the handicapped, widows, the old and the sick (are everywhere).This very ugly social condition, which ought to draw the attention of even the most insensitive human being, should be urgently addressed.

c) Our government's determination to establish, promote and sustain an unusually repressive system of governance need to be urgently addressed. The ban and clamp down on dissenting political, social, professional, constitutional (voices) and the very absence of justice and the rule of law has of late led some prominent citizens to join the growing ranks and files of other citizens fleeing the country for a life in exile. Some of them are forced by the style of rule of their government to resort to non-peaceful options

d) Our government's policies on race, culture and religion have further enlarged the gulf between the various peoples of the Sudan. Our public officials speak and act so often as if there is only one religion, only one culture, only one race and only one language in the Sudan. There is need to address what the Sudan is, and what it ought to be.

(The) WAY OUT
ernment does admit that
helped create and which it
almost intractable and fun-
you have a moral responsi-
dressing these problems,
them. You can do this by
standing call for a genuine

**YOU HAVE A
MORAL RE-
SPONSIBILITY
TO SAVE THE
PEOPLE FROM
THE SCOURGE
OF WAR**

political groups; the Government of National Salvation, the National Islamic Front (NIF), the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), The Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), and the South Sudan Independence Movement

I wish that our gov-
the problems is has
now faces are many,
damental. Both of
bility to lead in ad-
and in resolving
responding to a long
dialogue among all

(SSIM).....The parties should discuss:- a) two images of the Sudan; the one which you have promoted vigorously in the last seven years by which you see the Sudan as Arab and Islamic with one culture and one language as against the second (image in) which others see a Sudan of diverse races, cultures, religions and languages. b) Other related issues, including democracy, plural political and social systems, human rights and freedoms, justice and the rule of law administered by an independent judiciary. c) A newly constituted government of transition to (a state of) just(ice), peace, security and democratic elections. d) Self-determination.

..... You have a moral responsibility to save the people from (the) scourge of war and from a violent political disintegration of the country. The people yearn for peace, for freedom, for the rule of law, for prosperity and amicable relations with neighbors and the wider international community.

Your brother

Abel Alier

Khartoum

Independence Celebrations in Philadelphia

By **Ali Dinar**

African Studies Center, University of Pennsylvania

On January 4th, 1997, the Sudanese National Rally of Philadelphia (SNR), has celebrated the 41st anniversary of Sudan Independence. The Sudanese National Rally, is an off-shoot of the Sudanese National Democratic Alliance, the main opposition group against the current regime. Since the establishment of the SNR in December 1995, it has been active in exposing the regime's repressive policies and its violations of human rights.

The theme of this year's celebration was "Sudan: Crisis & Solutions". Featured in this one-day event was a photographic exhibit in which biographies and pictures of different Sudanese historical figures and major events which lead to independence were presented. Part of this exhibit was sponsored by the Sudanese Victims of Torture Group [SGVT] who provided pictures and written posters about their activities and future work. There was a book exhibit and handouts provided by the different participants.

The celebration which was attended by around 100 individuals some of whom came from New York, New Jersey, Washington, and Rhode Island, was officially inaugurated by Dr. Abdullahi Beraima, the President of the

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The celebration which was attended by around 100 individuals some of whom came from New York, New Jersey, Washington, and Rhode Island, was officially inaugurated by Dr. Abdullahi Beraima, the President of the SNR. The program began with slides' show delivered by Dr. Ali Dinar. With the aid of these slides Dr Dinar narrated the history of the Sudan from prehistoric era to the present, highlighting the struggle for independence, stressing the inter-relationships among the different peoples in the Sudan, and underscoring the theme of continuity and change in Sudanese culture.

This was followed by a panel of speakers with representatives from the Umma party, the National Democratic Unionist party, the Zanjarab Party, and the Democratic Alliance. All speakers have iterated similar views regarding the severity of problems in the Sudan which have been aggravated further by the current government. The representative of these parties agree that the devastation that has ravaged the country in all areas must be addressed decisively and immediately after the toppling down of this regime

Dr. Ismail Abdalla of the College of William and Mary was the Keynote speaker who addressed the issue of survival strategies currently adopted by the Sudanese. Dr. Abdalla thinks that the Sudanese have shown more resilience than given credit for in adapting to the harsher conditions of life in the Sudan now. He also implored the Sudanese in the diaspora to think of practical ways to help their brethren in the country. He cited, as an example, book and computer donation to institutions of higher education the Sudan.

The attendants were later entertained by the actress Tamadur Shaikhaldin who presented sketches from her renowned work "al-Indirawa/ Insanity" which featured the dilemma of the Sudanese immigrants in the USA. The program had concluded with songs performed by Mohammed Khalifa, who was great.

For more information about the SNR, please write to:
Sudanese National Rally of Philadelphia
P.O.Box 34836, Philadelphia, PA 19101, USA

UNITED NATIONS APPEAL FOR FOOD FOR THE SUDAN

The United Nations has recently made an appeal in Geneva for 120.8 million dollars to meet the needs of an estimated 4.2 million people facing starvation and disease because of war and natural disasters in Sudan. The money will be used to finance 33 humanitarian projects in Sudan this year. Most of the affected people have been struggling to cope with chronic malnutrition and infectious diseases, which are spreading at an alarming rate, according to the UN statement. Their plight has been exacerbated by crop failures and floods. The most vulnerable group include some 630,000 children under the age of five.

The largest request was made by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), which needs some 46 million dollars to help improve the health, nutrition and food security of children and the elderly. The World Food Program (WFP) is requesting 43.1 million dollars for food aid and to meet its transport and handling costs. Some 3.4 million people in southern Sudan, 445,000 in the transitional zone between the north and the south and 395,000 others in the capital require assistance in the form of medical care, basic education, emergency shelter, livestock and fishing inputs. The most severely affected regions in the south are the Bahr Al-Ghazal, Jonglei and Upper Nile states. Other vulnerable areas include camps and settlements around Khartoum where an estimated 1.8 displaced people live in squalid conditions. Sudan, with a total of four million internally displaced people, is believed to have the highest number of such people in the world. Eighty percent of them are women and children, according to the UN statement. Most of the emergency assistance in Sudan is channeled through Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), under which seven UN agencies and more than 50 non-governmental organizations cooperate to bring assistance to war-affected populations in southern Sudan and other regions. The OLS also works in partnership with all parties to the Sudanese conflict, including the government.

Their Thirty Years War: The Defrocking of Hasan al-Turabi

By *Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim*

Department of History, University of Missouri

The Arabic proverb "*inna al-Masa'ib la ta'ti furada*" or "Misfortunes do not assail in ones" is the equivalent of what an English speaker means when he says "misery loves company." Hasan al-Turabi, the leader of the Islamic revival movement in Sudan and Secretary-General of the six-year-old Islamic "International," could not agree more these days. Sudan government, whose "evil genius" he is said to be, is under pain of international sanctions to surrender the men who crossed into Sudan from Ethiopia after their failed attempt to assassinate President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt last year. To make what is bad worse, Ja'far Sheikh Idris, a dissident who broke ranks with the Turabi-led Muslim Brotherhood almost thirty years ago, and has lived ever since in Saudi Arabia and the United States, gave a public lecture on October (1995) at the University of Khartoum in which he charged al-Turabi of apostasy and dismissed Turabi's views on religious reform as secularism in Islamic garb.

Charging al-Turabi with apostasy is not new. It has stalked him all the time, specially during the course of the conflict that raged in the Islamic movement in the late sixties. This conflict was between al-Turabi's faction, what I would call here "the political group," and their opponents whom I call the "educationalist group." The educationalists were appalled by the readiness of the political group, led by al-Turabi, to overhaul the internal structure of the movement in order to accommodate the numerous and extremely successful, if ethically questionable, political alliances with other centers of power. They accused al-Turabi's faction of being preoccupied with politics and showmanship at the expense of deepening the educational foundation of members. Ignored and outnumbered, the educationalist, among whom was Ja'far Shaykh Idris, rebelled in the late seventies and formed their own organization. Apparently, it was this brake-away organization that sponsored the lecture of Mr Shaykh Idris; their old, fiery brother who was returning from the USA.

The lecture was by and large a rehash of a litany of the alleged heresies of al-Turabi, long in circulation among the initiated. In going public, the educationalists might have wanted to settle old scores with al-Turabi whose government and movement appeared to have attained both power and prestige. Members of the al-Turabi's movement in the audience were angry and disconcerted. A young and apparently confused member of the audience asked the lecture; Mr Idris, if al-Turabi could lead Muslims in prayer, considering the things Mr Idris had said about? Mr Idris, who sounded like passing a sentence rather than giving an answer, responded by saying: "Not before he recants".

The accusation of apostasy apart, al-Turabi could hardly fail to recognize this flagrant self-righteousness his movement has perfected into a technology of political power. Two of the heresies of which al-Turabi was found guilty by his critics would evoke memories of dramatic and tragic episodes in the recent history of the Sudanese people; memories that would rub salt in wounds that are still raw. The first heresy is al-Turabi's flippant language in the public statements in which he discusses matters pertaining to Prophet Muhammad, his household and his companions. Thirty years ago, the use of such un-restrained language gave the budding Islamic movement its first clear-cut victory over the Sudan Communist Party, believed then to be the most popular and well-organized communist party in Africa. In 1965, a student, allegedly a member of the Communist party or one of its splinter groups, made a statement that the Islamists deemed frivolously disrespectful of the Prophet and his household. Mobilizing a broad alliance comprizing other Sudanese parties, clerics and sufi brotherhood, the Islamists succeeded in altogether banning the Communist party and in barring its dully elected representatives from sitting in Parliament. The party never recovered from this fatal blow. This event and its repercussions gave al-Turabi's movement an unsurpassed authority to speak on religious matters, an authority enjoyed neither by the popular and dominant sufi fraternities nor by the clerics.

It would be one of the bizarre ironies of fate if al-Turabi could be forced to recant or be charged with apostasy in the wake of Mr Idris's lecture. It is only ten years ago that the Muslim Brotherhood were implicated in the execution of a religious opponent accused of apostasy. Many Sudanese hold the Brotherhood responsible, politically as well as juridically, for charging the late Islamic reformer, Mahmoud Muhammad Taha, who was 76 years old at the time, of apostasy. Accordingly, he was condemned to death and was publicly hanged in 1985. Even those observers sympathetic to the Islamists do not absolve them of having a hand in the murder of this important man. The Muslim Brotherhood had for a long time dismissed Taha as an annoying, eccentric demagogue, but took no action against him. But when Nimeri, the military dictator who ruled the Sudan between 1969-1985, tried Mahmoud M. Taha for heresy, the Brotherhood threw its weight behind him. As a "new-born" Muslim, Nimeri had already allied himself with the Brotherhood a few years back. On the day of the public hanging, many followers of the Brotherhood flocked to the "killing field", in show of support for the decision to execute the old man.

Many Sudanese find some of the charges against al-Turabi ludicrous and baseless. Nevertheless, the charges are there, and are serious. Al-Turabi is

accused, for example, of believing (in contradiction to most Muslim thinkers) that, in Islam, the application of the term "apostasy" is restricted only to those who raise arms against a Muslim government. He is also believed to have said that Muslims who want to change their religions were free to do so. But if these accusations have any foundation in truth, then why did al-Turabi fail to practice what he is believed to have preached, once he has assumed power in Khartoum? Contrary to statements in which al-Turabi is said to have made these ideas known, article 126 of the 1991 Sudan Criminal Code promulgated under the present government--a government allegedly run by al-Turabi--does not make any distinctions between categories of apostates. At any event, it is saddening to see Islamic thinkers toy with a matter as serious as apostasy. Apparently, into law his for which he may adversaries, it is trouble to verify sations.

All said and elsewhere should "public enemy big problems. For for what is good for bad for al-Turabi.

Nimeri executed M.M. Taha should be a lesson to secularists to be seriously concerned when they hear the word "apostasy" thrown about, even if it is the head of their hateful enemy that is going to roll this time. Again, the Islamists of the Educationalist group should not be encouraged to carelessly flounce around apostasy charges even if they are slitting each others throats. "Never again" is suitably invented for situations such as the one under consideration here. It will serve as an early-warning system to help us nip in the bud all accusation of apostasy before they turn sour and cancerous. Secularism, let it be remembered, came into the world to save religious adversaries from killing one another in the Thirty Year wars in Europe.

The Following is a plea by a fellow named Sean Gabb, Director of what he calls the Sudan Foundation in Great Britain. It has been distributed through the Internet. I am re-producing it here for one reason, that is to show the extent to which the crisis in the Sudan has really become "global", electronically at

**SECULARISTS
SHOULD LOOK
FOR WHAT IS
GOOD FOR THEIR
CAUSE, AND NOT
WHAT IS BAD
FOR AL-TURABI**

al-Turabi is not prepared to enact "heretical" notion of apostasy, pay with his own life. As for his clear that they do not take the their sources or prove their accu-

done, secularists in the Sudan and not rejoice in the fact that their number one" is having presently a change, they should be looking their cause rather than what is

The promiscuous ease with which

least. The plea also attempts to document the recent events on the Sudan-Ethiopia border, clearly from one view point. Publishing this view point in the Newsletter may one day prove to be of a historical value to researchers.

The Editor

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The Sudan Foundation

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Sudan Special Appeal

Sudan Foundation Calls for End to Outside Armed Intervention in Sudanese Affairs

Introduction

What follows is an appeal for action. Whatever your faith or politics, you have it in your power to help bring about an end to what could easily become a major humanitarian crisis in one of the most sensitive areas of the world. Please read the following text, and please consider writing to at least one of the individuals named below.

The Beginning of the Crisis

On Sunday the 12th January 1997, an Ethiopian force of 22 tanks supported by approximately 6,000 soldiers crossed their border into Sudan. This force occupied the Sudanese towns of Kurmuk, Gisau, Yada and Menza. The invasion was preceded and accompanied by an intensive artillery bombardment. Accompanying the Ethiopians were units of the Sudan People's Liberation Army, a grouping that believes in the creation of a separate state in what is now the south of Sudan. These in turn were accompanied by elements of the National Democratic Alliance, a group of northern rebels who probably do not want the south to break away -at any rate, their leader, Sadiq Al-Mahdi, was the Prime

Minister who fought the southern rebels in the 1980s -but who certainly wish to overthrow the present Sudanese Government.

Within a few days, the Eritrean army joined in with its own attack on Sudan. Then on the 26th January 1997, President Museveni of Uganda arrived in London threatening further intervention in Sudanese affairs. He proposed that the Organization of African Unity should call the Sudanese civil

war a "colonial conflict", thereby avoiding the ban on intervening in the internal affairs of another Africa country. These actual and threatened invasions followed a year in which the Sudanese Government and the main rebel factions had made significant steps towards a negotiated, internal settlement of the civil war, which has raged on and off since before independence in 1956. The signing of the Peace Charters in March and April 1996, together with the general elections which returned much of the country to civilian, democratic government, had raised hopes that the killing and all the collateral suffering were at last coming to an end.

The Causes of the Crisis

Perhaps the main reason why these hopes have for the moment been retarded -let us all hope not dashed -is American hostility to the present Sudanese Government. The public justification for this hostility is alleged Sudanese involvement in international terrorism. This has been made to justify a recent grant of \$20 million in military aid to Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda.

What is the Sudan Foundation Doing?

The Sudan Foundation, of which I am the Director, is an independent organization. It is controlled by no government, and is associated with no specific religion or ideology. However, its policy is to encourage all and any moves towards a just and lasting settlement of the civil war. It has therefore consistently supported the internal settlement based on the Peace Charters. It has also pragmatically accepted that, while there is much that could be improved there, the present Sudanese Government is the only one likely to contribute effectively to a settlement. This pragmatism is supported by a strong skepticism regarding the claims of international terrorism and human rights abuses -see, for example, Sean Gabb, "Anglo-Sudanese Relations: An Open Letter to the Right Honorable Malcolm Rifkind MP QC, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs", published by the Sudan Foundation, December 1996.

It is for this reason that I wrote my most recent letter to Mr Rifkind. Its text follows below:

Dear Mr Rifkind,

I am writing to urge you to take immediate and urgent action with regard to events in Sudan. Last Sunday, the 12th January, 22 Ethiopian tanks plus around 6,000 Ethiopian soldiers and a sections of the Sudanese People Liberation Army (one of the Sudanese rebel groups), crossed into Sudanese territory, occupying several towns. This aggression was preceded and accompanied by artillery and rocket bombardments of these Sudanese towns from

within Ethiopia. Though the precise form it took was a surprise, this alliance between the Ethiopians and some of the Sudanese rebels was fully to be expected. It derives from the granting of \$20 million in military aid by the United States to various of Sudan's neighbors for the purpose of destabilising the present Sudanese Government.

Whatever can be said against the present Government in Khartoum, you will surely agree that aiding and abetting wars of international aggression is no way for a civilized country to achieve its foreign policy aims. You will also agree that the examples of Rwanda and Zaire and Somalia show the inhuman folly of trying to create a political vacuum in this most unstable and sensitive region of the world. Also, from my previous communication, the Open Letter to the Right Honorable Malcolm Rifkind MP QC, sent to you last month, you will be aware of the internal peace process currently underway between the Sudanese Government and the main rebel actions -a peace process that the overwhelming majority of the Sudanese people believe can bring a just and lasting settlement to the civil war that has raged in that country since before it became independent from Britain. Therefore, the Sudan Foundation calls on you to do the following:

To denounce this act of aggression by Ethiopia, and to work within the United Nations to achieve a total withdrawal of Ethiopian armed forces from Sudan, and an end to Ethiopian military support for any Sudanese rebel group;

To use all the influence that Her Majesty's Government may possess in Washington to end the present American policy of violent destabilisation within a country that is a sovereign member state of the United Nations and a former territory of the British Empire;

To commit Her Majesty's Government to a full support for and encouragement of a just and lasting -and internal settlement of the Sudanese civil war.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Yours sincerely,

Sean Gabb, Director. The Sudan Foundation.

Last 30th January, I received the following reply from the Foreign Office:

Foreign and Commonwealth Office. London SW1A 2AH 27 January 1997
Sean Gabb Esq The Sudan Foundation 212 Piccadilly London WC1V 9LD
Dear Mr Gabb,

Thank you for your letter of 15 January to the Foreign Secretary. I have been

asked to reply.

We too are concerned by reports of fighting in Sudan's border regions. We are particularly concerned by the effect on the already difficult humanitarian situation in the country. We have not however seen any evidence that there has been an Ethiopian invasion of Sudan. (The Ethiopian Government have strongly denied such allegations.) Rather the fighting appears to be the start of the long-expected offensive by the Sudan People's Liberation Army, the largest southern rebel group. We would like to see a negotiated end to the civil war in Sudan and peace talks based on the recognition that Sudan's different communities all deserve equal respect. The US Government have also urged a peaceful solution to the civil war through dialogue and negotiation. They have also stated publicly that none of the \$20m of non-lethal assistance to Sudan's neighbors has yet been delivered; and that it could therefore have contributed in no way to the current fighting.

Yours ever,

A. W. Turner. Near East and North Africa Department

This is an interesting letter. The claim of ignorance regarding Ethiopian involvement in the invasion is surprising. The British and Irish media have been reporting on it since the incursions began. If Mr Turner's informants in East Africa have failed to notice the sound of gunfire, he must surely have bought a newspaper during the past few weeks. More important is his repetition of the claim that none of the American "non-lethal" assistance has yet been delivered, and that it could therefore "have contributed in no way to the fighting". It is almost a truism that there is no such thing as non-lethal military assistance. Give a government bandages: money is thereby saved for the purchase of bullets. It should be equally plain that the promise of aid in the future is a subsidy on present action: promise a million dollars for March 1997, and the million dollars already set aside for that month can be used for some other purpose -in this instance, a killing and burning spree that threatens to repeat the horrors of Zaire on a far greater scale. The \$20 million of pledged aid is also very much the tip of the iceberg so far as American involvement is concerned: United States military instructors, for example, have been training rebel Sudanese military forces for over a year in Eritrea itself. Of most importance, however, is the tone of the letter. The British Government will do nothing to bring pressure to bear on the Americans and the other aggressors in this war, so long as British public opinion remains inactive. It must therefore be activated.

What Can *YOU* Do?

I encourage all my British and Irish readers -and any of those overseas who feel inclined to contribute -to write to at least some of the individuals and organizations listed below. Some people believe that writing letters is a waste of time. It is not. Most of the individuals listed below have a duty to reply. If their replies are unsatisfactory, they can be challenged by further letters. If there are enough letters doing this, minds can be changed. As for newspaper editors, these are employed to give readers what they want. If enough readers can make their voices heard, the editors may decide to increase or amend their coverage. Remember, people are basically good; and most of the world's ills come not from deliberate evil but from ignorance of the truth.

Here is the list:

His Excellency the Ambassador Embassy of the Republic of the Sudan 3 Cleveland Row, London SW1.

(Condemning the Ethiopian, Eritrean and SPLA aggression, but at the same time calling on the Sudanese Government to redouble its efforts to bring about a just and lasting settlement to the civil war.)

His Excellency the High Commissioner, Uganda High Commission, Uganda House, Trafalgar Square, London WC2N.

(Calling on the Government of Uganda not to try breaking the Charter of the Organization of African Unity using the means proposed by President Museveni, but instead to abstain from interfering in the internal affairs of its neighbors.)

His Excellency the Ambassador, Ethiopian Embassy, 17 Princes Gate, London SW7.

His Excellency the Ambassador, Embassy of the United States of America, 24 Grosvenor Square, London W1.

(Both condemning the armed intervention in Sudan. The Ethiopians should be requested to recall their armed forces back within their own borders and to abstain from future aggressive actions in support of any side in the Sudanese civil war. The Americans should be asked to consider the humanitarian impact of their military aid to Sudan's neighbors -how the mere promise of it has ignited a conflict that has perhaps already killed and injured thousands and driven tens of

thousands from their homes and land.)

The Right Honorable Malcolm Rifkind MP QC Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, King Charles Street London SW1A

(Reiterating -though not repeating word for word -the points made in my letter

above. Mr Rifkind should be encouraged to use all his considerable political and diplomatic skills, plus his equally considerable influence in Washington, to help bring about an end to what could turn into a major humanitarian disaster with repercussions throughout Africa and the Middle East.)

Readers are also urged to write to their elected representatives, whether national or local.

CONCLUSION

One need only look at the vicious civil wars within West Africa and within Somalia to recognize the danger in foreign attempts to destabilise Africa's largest country. What Sudan and its neighbors desperately need is peace and stability. By writing one or two of the letters suggested above, it is possible to bring pressure to bear on those who have the power to end this conflict before it escalates beyond all control.

Remember, your involvement can make a difference.

&&&

Below is the Asmara NDA's Declaration of principles. I made a few editorial additions (the words "article" and "section") for clarity. *Editor*

CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE ON FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) convened an extra ordinary conference in the city of Asmara, the capital of the State of Eritrea under the motto "*Conference on the Fundamental Issues of the Nation*", in the period between the 15th and 23rd of June, 1995. The Conference was attended by leaders and delegates representing the Democratic Unionist Party, the Umma Party, the Sudan Communist Party, Union of Sudan African Parties, Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement and Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army, Legitimate Command of the Sudanese Armed Forces, Sudanese Alliance Forces, The Beja Congress, Sudanese Trades Unions and Independent National Personalities

The Conference deliberated extensively on the following fundamental issues:

(Article) I. Ending of the civil war and restoration of peace in the Sudan: In order to realize this objective, the conference recognized the need to address and resolve the following issues:

- Section a) Right of self-determination,
- Section b) Relationship between religion and politics
- Section c) System of rule during the interim period

(Article) II. Programs and modalities for the intensification of the struggle to overthrow the NIF regime.

(Article) III. Arrangements and tasks of the interim period

(Article) IV. Foundational bases for the future Sudan

(Article) V. Humanitarian issues

(Article) VI. Structuring of the National Democratic Alliance

The NDA held its conference in full awareness of the hard and oppressive conditions currently endured by the Sudanese people as a result of the policies of the illegitimate fascist National Islamic Front (NIF) regime which has degraded the dignity of our people, tarnished and put in disrepute the image of the Sudan in the outside world, threatened international and regional peace and security, caused instability in neighboring countries and exported and continued to sow discord in more than a country. The NIF aggressive policies have led to their rejection of all peace initiatives and the escalation of civil war in the country. Pursuant to the declared objectives and principles of the NDA as enshrined in its charter;

Inspired by our people's struggle against successive dictatorial regimes; Guided by our past experiences in consolidating national unity and;

Committed to the establishment of a new democratic system of governance based on pluralism and respect for human rights; The Conference

resolves the following:

(Article I), Section a) Self-Determination

1) Affirms that the right of self-determination is a basic human, democratic and people's right which may be exercised at any time by any people.

2) Recognizes that the exercise of the right of self-determination constitutes a solution to the problem of ending the on-going civil war, and facilitates the restoration and enhancement of democracy in the Sudan

3) Affirms that this right shall be exercised in an atmosphere of democracy and legitimacy and under regional and international supervision.

4) Affirms that the areas afflicted by war are Southern Sudan, Abyei are Southern Sudan, Abyei District, the Nuba Mountains and Ingessena Hills.

5) Declares that the people of Southern Sudan (within its borders as they stood on 1.1.1956) shall exercise the right of self-determination before the expiration of the interim period.

6) Resolves that the views of the people of Abyei District as regards their wish to either remain within the administrative set up of Southern Kordofan region or join Bahr El Ghazal region shall be ascertained in a referendum to be held within the interim period but before the exercise of the right of self-determination for the South. If the outcome of the referendum establishes that the majority of the people of this district wish to join Bahr El Ghazal, the people of Abyei shall accordingly exercise the right of self-determination as part of the people of Southern Sudan.

7) Resolves that with respect to the Nuba Mountains and Ingessena Hills a political solution to redress the injustices suffered by the people of these areas shall be sought by the interim government and that a referendum to ascertain their views on their political and administrative future shall be organized and carried out within the interim period.

8) Reaffirms its commitment to a just peace, democracy and unity based on the free will of the people of the Sudan and to resolving the present conflict by peaceful means through a just and lasting settlement. To this end the NDA endorses the IGADD Declaration of Principles (DOP) as a viable basis for such a just and lasting settlement.

9) Reiterates that true peace in the Sudan cannot be viewed within the framework of the problem of the South but rather from the standpoint that our problem is of a national origin.

10) Affirms that our national problems cannot be solved except through clear, serious and continuous dialogue among all Sudanese national groups.

11) Asserts that the nature and history of the Sudanese conflict has proved that permanent peace and stability in the country can not be achieved through a military solution.

a) II. The constituent members of the NDA shall adopt a common stand on the options to be presented in the referendum in the South, which options shall be a) unity (confederation I federation) and b) independent statehood.

a) III. The NDA affirms that the Central Authority shall within the interim period devise and implement the necessary confidence-building measures and the appropriate restructuring of the State and socio-economic institutions and processes, so that the exercise of the right of self-determination could have the best chances of upholding the unity option.

b) Relationship between Religion and Politics

1) All human rights norms and principles enshrined in regional and international human rights instruments and covenants shall be an integral part of the constitution of the Sudan, and any law, decree, executive order or policy measure contrary thereto shall be considered null and void and unconstitutional.

2) All laws shall guarantee full equality of citizens on the basis of citizenship, respect for religious beliefs and traditions and without discrimination on grounds of religion, race, gender or culture. Any law contrary to the foregoing stipulation shall be considered null and void and unconstitutional.

3) No political party shall be established on religious basis.

4) The state shall acknowledge and respect religious pluralism in the Sudan and shall undertake to promote and bring about peaceful interaction and coexistence, equality and tolerance among religions and noble spiritual beliefs, and shall permit peaceful religious proselytisation and prohibit coercion in religion, or the perpetration in any place, forum or location in the Sudan of any act or measure intended to arouse religious sedition or racial hatred.

5) The NDA undertakes to preserve and promote the dignity of the Sudanese woman, and affirms her role in the Sudanese national movement and her rights and duties as enshrined in international instruments and covenants without prejudice to the tenets of prevailing religions and noble spiritual beliefs.

6) National programs in the fields of information, education and culture shall be formulated and disseminated in accordance with the

regional and international instruments and covenants on human rights.

c) System of Rule During the Interim Period:-

1) The Sudan shall be ruled during interim period on the basis of decentralization. The interim constitution shall stipulate the powers and competence of the central and regional entities and the manner of their distribution.

2) The NDA shall formulate a law for the decentralized system of rule in the Sudan.

3) The decentralized system of rule shall be based on the distribution of powers and competence, as agreed upon between the Center, Northern Entities and the Southern Entity. An agreement as to the names to be applied to those entities shall be reached subsequently.

4) The role of local government and the system of native administration shall be taken into account in the formulation of the law on decentralization.

5) In organizing the interim administrative set up the following issues shall be put into account:

a) Redressing injustices and root causes of the war and the creation of a conducive atmosphere for the rehabilitation, reconstruction and rebuilding of the country.

b) Gauging the wishes of the people of the various areas as regards the evolving democratic process in the country.

6) In implementing the system of decentralization, due regard shall be given to the difficult economic conditions of the country, austerity measures shall be taken with the view to reducing unnecessary public spending. It is also emphasized that wide-based popular participation at all decision-making levels should be ensured within the framework of democratic decentralization.

(Article) II. Programs and modalities for the intensification of the struggle to overthrow the NIF regime

1) The legitimacy of the armed struggle being waged by the various forces of the NDA with a view to overthrowing the NIF regime in accordance with agreed upon mechanisms.

2) Provision of material and other means required to execute this program

3) Establishment of a high politico-military committee to undertake the task of coordination, supervision and implementation of the

programs of intensifying the struggle to overthrow the regime.

(Article) III. Military and security arrangements during the interim period

The conference adopted all the recommendations proposed by the ad hoc technical committee on this matter.

(Article) IV. Foundational bases of the New Sudan

For the purposes of laying down the foundations of the New Sudan the conference adopted the following programs for the interim period:

- a) Economic Program for the interim period
- b) Foreign policy and regional and international cooperation
- c) Eradication of the vestiges of the NIF regime
- d) Laws governing political parties
- e) Trades Unions code of ethics
- f) Press and Publications law

(Article) V. Humanitarian issues

The erroneous economic policies of the regime and its escalation of the civil war have resulted in unprecedented internal migration and displacement. These have, in turn, caused a serious damage to the environment and subjected large sections of the population, especially women, to untold suffering. Furthermore war, instability, political subjugation and violation of human rights have all combined to force huge numbers of citizens to seek refuge abroad. Out of concern for the welfare of the Sudanese people and their right to free movement inside and outside the country, and in an attempt to address some of the urgent problems facing displaced people and refugees, the conference adopted a practical program of action to be implemented during the interim period. The conference also decided that measures shall be taken to assist refugees and victims of the regime's brutal policies both in the short and long terms, in cooperation and coordination with the international community and the appropriate organizations in the Sudan.

(Article) VI. The Structuring of the National Democratic Alliance and amendment of its charter

The conference adopted the new organizational structure of the NDA which shall consist of the conference, the Presidency, The Executive

Bureau, The General Secretariat, The Specialized Departments, and The Branches. The conference also adopted the program of external action and the proposed Amendments to the NDA charter with a view to accommodating the new and intervening political developments. By successfully addressing these fundamental issues and adopting the above-mentioned programs the NDA Conference on National Fundamental Issues has reached a consensus formula to which all its forces are committed. These programs include the removal of the regime, the ending of the civil war and realization of peace, the restoration of democracy and the creation of a conducive atmosphere for the establishment of the new Sudan. In order to enable it realize these objectives, the NDA earnestly appeals to the international and regional communities, sisterly and friendly countries, peace-and democracy- loving states to come to the help of the Sudanese people in their legitimate struggle to rid themselves of the pariah regime and thus enable the Sudan assume its natural position within the family of nations. The NDA calls upon all the Sudanese compatriots inside and outside the country to unify their ranks and rally around the banner of the NDA in order to enhance the implementation of its programs. The NDA, having been honored in holding its conference in the land of Eritrea, would like to extend its heartfelt gratitude and thanks to the sisterly and heroic people of Eritrea under the leadership of the Popular Front for Democracy and Justice. The NDA salutes the stand of the Eritrean people in support of the Sudanese cause and the fundamental issues affecting the Sudanese nation. The NDA specially salutes the gallant hero, President Isais Afwerki, for his comprehensive understanding of the Sudanese problem and for the heroic stand he has taken in support of the Sudanese people. The NDA would like to take this opportunity to commend the positive role being played by the IGADD countries, led by President Daniel arap Moi, and Friends of IGADD countries in their endeavors to bring about a speedy end to the war and to restore peace and democracy in the Sudan.

The NDA also commends the positive stands taken by the sisterly and friendly countries which have special historic and close relations with the Sudan and its people, namely Egypt, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, all the neighboring countries and all other friends in the world at large. The NDA cannot help but also express its appreciation and thanks to all those friends who cabled the conference to convey messages of support and encouragement.

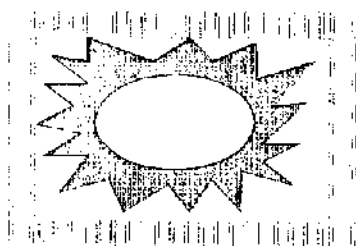
Important Announcement from the SSA Executive Director, Dr Malik Balla.

The SSA International Conference will be held in Cairo between June 11 through the 14th, 1997. The *deadline* for submission of papers and request for participation is March 31, 1997. So take this opportunity to write to Dr Malik about your plans to attend this international conference. His address is on the inside cover sheet.

Dr Malik also encourages members to re-new their SSA membership for the 1997-98 academic year. See details for annual subscription on the inside cover of this Newsletter.

Note from the Editor

As promised, the second issue of this Newsletter will go to the printer on March 31st. So send in your submissions right away. Thanks



The Sudan Studies Association Newsletter

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Note to Contributors

The Newsletter solicits the submission of news items of personal nature, announcements of up-coming scholarly events or anticipated publications, abstracts of dissertations or scholarly papers, panel proposals, articles, book reviews, bibliographical or historiographical essays, impressions about recent visits to the Sudan, research experiences in the Sudan, exchange programs with faculty in Sudanese Universities, Sudanese proverbs, anecdotes, etc.

Articles and other submissions should be typed with full author's name and address. If it is all possible, we prefer having submissions in diskette, or better still through the electronic media (e-mail). The latter is fast and, for the most part, free. The Newsletter goes to the printer in the last day of January, April, July, and October. All submissions should arrive at least three weeks before production deadline.

FORMER SSA PRESIDENTS

1994-6	Nilson Kasfer	1986-7	James Sultan
1992-4	Muhammd I. El-Shoush	1985-6	David Scoryer
1990-1	Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban	1984-5	Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban
1989-90	Constance Berkley	1983-4	James Hudson
1988-9	Ismail H Abdalla	1982-3	Richard Lobban
1987-8	Jay Spaulding	1981-2	Ahmed E. El-Bashir