

# BULLETIN

## SUDAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

## نشرة جمعية الدراسات السودانية

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### Our Purpose

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

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Please note, after years of no change, our membership charges have increased according to the recommendation of the SSA Board and their acceptance by the members present at the 28th annual meeting at Michigan State University, May 23, 2009.

### Electronic Distribution of SSA Bulletin

Beginning with this issue the SSA Bulletin will be mailed electronically on an experimental selective basis to those members who indicated that they are willing and interested to receive the Bulletin by email in order to save on the expense of printing and mailing the Bulletin. Libraries and members who prefer to receive the traditional hard copy will continue to receive it as usual. Please state your preference through an email to the Executive Director at raf8@psu.edu.

Your feedback on this new distribution process along with your support and contributions to the Bulletin are appreciated. Please support the SSA and the Bulletin by membership renewal, articles and reviews, and financial contributions.

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# From the Editor

by Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban\*

Dear SSA Bulletin Readers,

This issue features a focus on gender in the study of the two Sudans. It is worth reiterating that the Sudan Studies Association asserted its intention to continue to focus on the Republics of Sudan and South Sudan after the historic separation in 2011. President Abdullahi Gallab's address to the conference as Program Chair offers an excellent review of the conference highlights.

At this year's SSA conference in Philadelphia, generously hosted again by Dr. Ali Dinar and the Program of African Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, among the many valued and interesting panels was one on "Gender Relations and Humanitarian Aid." This followed Dr. Sondra Hale's recognition for her contributions to gender studies in Sudan. It was this combination that gave me the idea to devote a special issue of the Bulletin to matters of gender. The five articles include another case from Terry Walz's pioneering research on the 19th century slave trade in Cairo, a Nubian woman in "Zalfa's Story," as well as Hale's revisiting of her 1996 work *Gender Politics in Sudan* in light of recent developments, and articles by Nada Mustafa Ali on post-referendum gender issues between Sudan and South Sudan; by Sara Cleto Rial with a focus on pathways to a sustainable peace in South Sudan; and Rose Jaji's study of South Sudanese women refugees in Nairobi. As the first issue on a special topic, the editor welcomes other suggesting for comparable special issues.

I express my continued thanks to Marcus Jaeger for his exceptional job as Book Review Editor and a special thank you to Christopher Zambakari for his assistance with this issue. And no expression of gratitude is complete with a big thank you to Arizona State University and its support of the publication of the SSA Bulletin, especially Egbert Abraha and President Abdullhi Gallab.

*\*Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, PhD*

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All submissions and communication about the bulletin should be directed to the editor, Dr. Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban.
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# SSA 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference Program Chair Address

by Abdullahi Gallab\*

As a program chair I would like to welcome you all to the 32nd annual meeting of Sudan Studies Association. We are excited to return to the University of Pennsylvania that has hosted us twice before – in 1998 and 2007. SSA 32nd annual meeting represents a very special event to us. The Sudan Studies Association in its second conference after the split of the country into two Sudans, welcomes the opportunity to initiate its future by examining an expanding corpus of knowledge through numerous, though complex, processes of investigations and debates and by being the primary academic forum for scholars to share their latest work in the fields of studies of greater Sudan and its expanding geographies. The greater Sudan, as a lived experience and as a historic development, has not just encouraged studies of the past of this great human encounter with time and place, but also opened the door wider for scholars from all disciplines, in addition to intellectuals and knowledge workers, to explore and investigate the possibilities of arriving at new meanings and more refined understanding of this phenomenon, its human experience, its people, institutions of power, and their entanglement with time, place, neighborhood and the world.

We chose our conference theme “Greater Sudan: Cross Roads to the Future” because its symbolic, objective and verifiable meaning gives us the ability to turn our thoughts and glances to both fields of heritage and toward a future of a new understanding. Building upon serious scholarly studies, Sudanese conversations, debates and dialogues about past events in addition to forums and conferences, we see this conference as the event that connects our past 32 years and their traditions with new beginnings and, thus, our program has been designed to represent that intersection. It is an attempt to look even deeper to this human experience which we call the greater Sudan by examining and engaging with its past present, and future. That has always been the collegial and collaborative nature of SSA. We are glad that we have met here to share our knowledge and experiences and to also learn from each other. Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban describes SSA as a family. That is true. However, that family has transformed into a *gesellschaft* and a global one. There is a sense of belonging that holds together those coming from Japan, the United Kingdom, Mexico, Canada, Germany, Italy, the United Arab Emirates, Sharjah, the United States, Ethiopia, Cameroon, and Juba and Khartoum. Special word of welcome is due to our new and returning members of

SSA. There is something for everyone to do and to say and what we do and say as individuals and as a group makes a difference.

The Program Committee has put together an exceptional program that includes an assortment of scholarly events, conversations and opportunities with 24 panels, a key note and a presidential speech and a workshop. For an organization, 32 years young, we feel it is a privilege, an honor and a joy to have among us some of the grandparents of the association. This not a matter of ageism and it does not have to be. It is a matter of impact by producing generations of scholars, initiating debates, maintaining conversations, and supporting and endorsing many to enter and prosper within the field. Now is the right time for us to listen to some of them as they reflect on their professional developments and connect that with themes, challenges and contributions that echoed frequently throughout not only Sudanese studies but also other disciplines. This year, honoring a lifetime of distinguished scholarship, Dr. Sondra Hale, of the University of California, Los Angeles, will tell us if she would ever run out of poems, in her auto-ethnography of Sudan.

September of last year, Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban produced her 15th book: *Sharia and Islamism in Sudan: Conflict, Law and Social Transformation*. This book stands on the top of other recognized works she authored, translated and co-authored in that field. Carolyn will speak through her recent book about her forty years of investigation and compelling narration about Islam, Muslim societies, and the state in the Sudan. Another granddad, Ismail Abdullah is going to make our engagement with the author, her book and the corpus of knowledge that lies behind them easier, pleasant and amusing.

Richard Lobban also has been digging for the last forty years looking for the riches of the Sudanese past. I learned from my professor late Brian Haycock—*rahimahu Allah*—that delinking Sudanese archeology from colonial archaeology comes with long days and nights at the blistering heat, the dry and cold desert weather, and the blinding haboob of northern Sudan. And, over and above, a lot of digging. Now Richard has something to tell us about new discoveries in this field at this conference.

That is not the end of the stories the grandparents of SSA would tell. However, we will save some for other conferences to come.

From the special sessions and concurrent panels, there will be opportunities for continuing discussions and connections with each other over specific and different topics.

Once again, the program is an opportunity for younger Sudanese of the Diaspora not only to attend but also to present their talents. This year we have Azza Satti and Chris Zambakari as representatives of a new generation of Sudanese youth who will tell us what happens next.

Finally, and for the first time, Sudan Studies Association's program includes public intellectuals in a round table debating current issues in Arabic language. John Dewey once said "the past as a past is no longer our affair. If it were wholly gone and done with one reasonable attitude toward it: let the dead bury their dead. But knowledge of

the past is key to understanding the present. History deals with the past, but this past is the history of the present.” What we are planning to do is the beginning of how to incorporate within our activities history of the present.

I would like to thank all those who have hardily worked in this period for the preparation and the success of this meeting, including contributors, the sponsoring schools and departments at the University of Pennsylvania and Arizona State University, the participants, the local host, Dr. Ali Dinar and his team, ASU team: Dr. Souad Ali, Ms. Egbet Abraha. I would like also to thank Dr. Chris Zimbakari for organizing some of the panels and last but not least all members of the organization. For us, we really found it a special event; we hope that you too will also find this program a very special one.

\*Abdullahi Gallab is an Associate Professor of African and African American Studies and Religious studies in the School of Social Transformation and the School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies at Arizona State University.

# Revisiting *Gender Politics in Sudan:* What Have We Learned about Women's Activism in the Last Decade?<sup>1</sup>

by Sondra Hale\*



\*Sondra Hale is a Professor Emeritus in the Department of Anthropology at University of California, Los Angeles.

## Introduction

When Salmmah : Women's Resource Center (Khartoum) asked me to write a new introduction for the translation of my book, *Gender Politics in Sudan : Islamism, Socialism and the State* (1996, translated as *Assiyasa w'annawaa al ijtimaai ajjandara fi'ssoudaan: al islamawiyya wal ichtiraakiyya w'addawla*, 2011), it was a challenge. In fact, since its publication, I have given much thought to how I would change the book if I were to revise it, or at least, revisit it. In the intervening years I have been keenly influenced, not only by women's radical activism and participation in international movements throughout the world—such as in the much-heralded Zapatista movement in Mexico and the various other recent insurrectionary and anarchist-tinged movements such as *Kefaya* in Egypt, the youth revolt against the International Monetary Fund in Seattle ; the «Arab Spring » (Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya) ; Taksim Square in Turkey ; and the general upheavals in Brazil—but also by new signs of movement within Greater Sudan, in South Sudan, Darfur, the Nuba Mountains, and in such grassroots movements and postmodernist organizations as *Girifna* (« We Are Fed Up »). These have all exhibited a major change in gender dynamics, with women often playing innovative and creative roles.

A new book would also be changed by reference to the scholarship of Sudanese and South Sudanese, whereas before the publication of *Gender Politics in Sudan*, I relied heavily for my theoretical framework-- and even for much of my ethnographic knowledge-- mainly on works by Euroamerican women (and feminist) scholars. One can no longer simply pay lip-service to what was then a small handful of important Sudanese women writing in English, but must insist that one's work to be shaped by these scholars, no matter the language.

In the last decade or so, I have also been greatly influenced by bodies of knowledge emanating from postmodern/postcolonial, subaltern, transnational, and critical race theories—moving me away from the modernist frame within which I have done most of my work. Still, I remain committed to an emancipatory framework, and that is reflected in what I have written below.

Perhaps no one knows the drawbacks of *Gender Politics in Sudan* better than I, but despite its shortcomings and the fact that a great deal of the data are now outdated, I would still argue that the work can stand as a useful document because of its theoretical framework, political ideas about change, and some of the material that is uniquely Sudanese. Arguably, it may also be useful because many of the ideas I espouse in the book remain provocative. What follows is an implied self-critique as well as an overview of how I see some of the same phenomena today.

It is important to remember the context within which the book was produced. The research itself had been carried out over many years, starting in 1961. However, the core of the fieldwork was in 1988, just before the Islamists took power. Because it would not have been either wise or morally sound for me to return to the early harsh years of an Islamist Sudan, I did not embark on fresh fieldwork in Sudan for sixteen years. Therefore, from 1988 until the book was published in 1996, I relied on secondary sources, attendance at workshops and conferences outside Sudan, and on exiles' testimonies. Nonetheless, I kept abreast of events and processes by interviewing Sudanese in exile, being a part of progressive listservs, and reading everything I could get my hands on. I returned to Sudan in 2004 and resumed field research. What changes had occurred! And, yet, many of the processes that had been set in motion earlier remained amazingly the same—from both the left and the right. What had changed was the political activism of women from all over Sudan. Arguably, this has been the most important period for gender politics, specifically, for women, since the 1960s. To go one step further, I maintain that this is the most exciting and crucial time for women that we have seen—both in Sudan and now in South Sudan.

Although in the book I was not able to predict the explosion of women's activism at all levels, in the final chapter on transformative institutions, I was able to point to some theoretical considerations and raise questions about why and how women's activism on behalf of women may emerge where we least expect them. In so doing, I pointed toward a future of grassroots activism. Nonetheless, despite my theoretical stress on grassroots movements or consciousness-raising emanating from women's "traditional" groups, the primary thrust of the book was to contrast two main women's organizations associated with political parties – the Sudanese Women's Union (SWU) under the Sudanese Communist Party (SCP) and the Islamist women's movement, at that time associated with the National Islamic Front. These were the most visible manifestations of women's activism at the time, causing me to overlook the work of the incipient movement of non-governmental organizations(NGO's), not to mention another major oversight—my concentration on northern Sudan.

### **Not Just One Voice**

Because of the fruition of women's activism all over the Sudan, one can no longer validly refer to "the Sudanese women's movement" in the sense of one national organization that holds sway over the whole country. However, until the Islamists came to power in 1989 and banned the organization, most Sudanese and Sudanists accepted that the expression "the women's movement" was a code to refer to the SWU. For various historical, political, and epistemological reasons, the literature, including my

own, has not only skewed contemporary Sudanese studies in the direction of northern Sudan, but has also conflated most of women's activism under the SWU or, sporadically, its direct descendants/antagonists (such as the Union of Sudanese Women under Ja'afar Nimieri's Sudan Socialist Union).

This sole focus on the SWU was, arguably, inevitable, given that women's organizing at a visible national level began to develop during the mid-1960s when the SWU had its heyday. As we know, the organization spearheaded many projects within the frame of women's rights, e.g., suffrage, equal pay for equal work, and various other protections under the law. In other words, the SWU was closely associated with modernity. Even when the rise of Islamism presented a challenge to the "secular" SWU in the form of powerful and well-organized Islamist women activists of the National Islamic Front (NIF), these groups were also, one way or another, part and parcel of national politics, party sectarianism, and modernity – and the SWU was certainly in the forefront of women's involvement in these arenas.

My (and others') blind-spots about other types of women's activism, organizational acumen, and movements in the north or in other regions were a result of a number of factors, among which were narrow definitions of "politics," northern Sudanese ethnocentrism and chauvinism, and the racism of Sudanese and Sudanist scholars – a legacy of British colonialism. The colonial discourse on Sudan deemed the "Arab" Muslim north superior in culture and political acumen, and thus more appropriate for scholarly investigation. Northerners were perceived as "closer" to the British than the people of the southern, western, and eastern Sudan who were represented as "African," "Black," "pagan," and "backward."

For various reasons, the north has been the focus of my work (the South was closed during the time I started my field studies), meaning that I have focused on the "Arab," mainly Muslim north, and not on the "Black African," partially Christian and Muslim south. This positioning artificially situates northern Sudan in a "Middle Eastern" framework, and southern Sudan in an African one; nevertheless, my propensity over the years has been to consider Sudan African and to consider Arab, although a long-held self-identity of many, to be a recently aggressively resuscitated hegemonic category, fostered by the central government for its own reasons. In the new introduction to the Arabic edition of *Gender Politics in Sudan*, I began a new trajectory which begins to unsettle some of the parameters of my previous work.

As for the narrow concept of "politics," I am referring to the conventional Sudanese emphasis on party and state politics only, oftentimes with the subtext of sectarianism. To this day, neighborhood organizing, women's traditional cultural activities, self-help projects, and almost all extra-organizational activism are looked upon as somehow suspect and illegitimate – viewed as outside of, or antithetical to, the culture or to Islam, or to the development of modernity. As a consequence, for well over half a century there has been a focus on state politics, and the consideration of gender primarily in terms of its relationship to the state. Research on grassroots women's movements has been poorly developed, and when grassroots projects have been researched, they have usually been placed within the framework of "women and development."

Furthermore, during the long civil war between the north and south, a great deal of what transpired in the liberated areas of what is now South Sudan is overlooked or discounted. Likewise, research on both southern and northern women's organizing in exile is poorly developed and has only recently begun to take shape.

Also overlooked when one is analyzing the "women's movement," are a number of factors that have come to the fore since 2003, when the government, unable to sustain itself as the brutal, singular and centralized complex of institutions that it was, began to "liberalize," calling back to the country the various banned political parties and their affiliates and allowing other kinds of organizations to function more freely. As a consequence, civil society has grown extensively, perhaps dramatized by all the activities leading up to preparations for the elections of 2010, and the even greater activism of women at all levels and within every type of organization. One form this has taken is either the growth of, or the emergence of, dozens of NGOs engaging in human rights for women. The second phenomenon, a result of the deadly and protracted struggles in South Sudan, the Nuba Mountains, and in Darfur, is the proliferation of peace groups, many of which are composed mainly of women. As a corollary, the various NGOs that had been functioning primarily as women's rights groups, began to diversify to include peace as a primary agenda item, to some extent spurred on by the greater availability of outside funding for peace initiatives. The further expansion into educating and raising the consciousness of women as good citizens within civil society (e.g., educating toward the election) has had the effect of making more and more women cognizant of their potential contributions to civil society.

While my book did mainly address internal, national, state, and party politics, I contend that perhaps the most significant political organizing carried out by women has been taking place in neighborhoods, small villages, in war zones, and in what were the SPLM/A-liberated areas of South Sudan and the Nuba Mountains. These are extra-state functions, often distant from the capital. They may be protective, survivalist activities, but they are often instrumental in holding together the social and economic fabric. It remains to be seen how this survivalist organizing can be translated into a new environment of cease-fires and "peace," especially when the spectre of further conflict or perpetual conflict is in the air. In addition, some of the most effective women's organizing has taken place outside Sudan, not only among southern women in exile (e.g., Women's Voice for Peace, originally headquartered in Nairobi), but also among exiled northern women. Sudanese women in exile have been more able to act outside the old power monopolies; furthermore, away from the center of cultural hegemony, northern and southern women have had the opportunity to form some alliances. It is still too early to tell if these nascent alliances will hold when conflicts subside, have a hiatus, or are at "peace."

In unsettling the conventional approach to women's movements in Sudan, one has to note that many movements or projects organized by women, which may aim to benefit mainly women, may not be thought of as "women's movements or activism," or even women's projects on behalf of women, although we could say that a "female consciousness" is at work. However, they may be far from what would generally be

considered “feminist movements.” Nonetheless, we have been witnessing in Sudan, since the turn of this century, a proliferation of women’s organizations, considerable mobilization, a resurgence of debates about women’s organizing, and the weakening of northern gate-keeping in terms of who “owns” Sudanese women’s organizations and movement(s). One can also observe a weakening of the hegemony and a challenge to the sense of propriety that the main northern women’s organizations have always maintained. Women simply have more options now, referring to themselves as “activists” instead of by the usual self-identification of members of parties or sectarian groups or adhering to a particular ideology. It might be an overstatement to refer to the NGO-ization of Sudanese women’s activism, but it certainly is the core at the moment.

Furthermore, what has emerged are youth movements that have come into their own and are not simply arms of other political movements. Such a movement is *Girifna*, which is as much staffed by women as men and not beholden to any established organization. The free-wheeling organization that held “flash demonstrations” and launched what amounted to street theater, was something entirely new for Sudan. *Girifna* is now mainly active in exile and is using social media to mobilize, another innovation that has emerged in Sudan since I wrote my book. These are innovations that have and will change the face of Sudanese politics and place women political actors in a position where they have never been before.

### **Moving Toward the Future**

In my work I have been asking what Sudanese women’s studies, in the broadest sense, contributes to our understanding of women’s activism and movements for change in the world. I have mentioned some of the problematics of talking about not only a unified women’s movement, but overlooking some of the strongest women’s organizations in South Sudan and in marginalized areas of Sudan, as well as in the neighborhoods of urban areas. There are lessons to be learned from these omissions.

On the other hand, coalition-building among women from various regions throughout the Sudan has been very difficult. Entrenched “old” leadership, often not enlightened about race and racism, has made bridging regional/ethnic barriers problematic. Even building onto and/or changing established organizations is a problem because of generational conflict. We see this among northern (Sudanese) women of the left. Those returning from exile are bringing with them sets of new ideas with which they are trying to penetrate the sometimes impenetrable walls of the established organizations, often falling prey to suspicions about ideas “coming from the outside” (read: “Western” ideas). Many returnees have given up and have formed new organizations, sometimes NGOs. At the same time, those who remained active during the worst years of the Islamist regime developed new kinds of survivalist strategies that have carried them more cautiously into the 21st century. That these diverse strategies of the returnees and the stalwarts are sometimes in conflict goes hand-in-hand with the generational conflict. The same problems exist in South Sudan between not only generations, but among those who were born and raised in exile and those who never left during the war.

Certainly, one cannot speak of a unified women's movement. Nor would a unified movement necessarily be a positive. The activism and mobilization of Sudanese women are fragmented – not only among the various parties with their separate ideologies and histories of religious and other sectarianism – but between secularism and religiosity. And within each of these categories there are those working within Sudan and those working in exile. Though the type of work that the organizations do may help us further refine how we classify them, most organizations have multiple functions and goals. For example, while one goal may be to encourage religious traditionalism, literacy may be taught at the same time and linked to the goal of facilitating political mobilization.

Here I venture an over-simplified categorization of women's activism in Sudan and South Sudan. I would divide women's activism into at least eight types: (1) one represented by women members of the secular left of the SWU or the SPLM, for example; (2) a second by the cultural nationalists/religionists (e.g., Umma Party), including the Islamist women of the National Islamic Front, the National Congress Party, and scattered Christian groups; (3) a third by the various groups in exile; (4) a fourth represented by grassroots activists of all persuasions, including rural groups of women holding the fabric of society together, often in conflict zones; (5) a fifth constituted by the women's studies movement with its community activist and peace development component, encompassing, for example, the emergence of Ahfad University for Women as a visible force for rights, justice and equality for women, even during the worst years of the Islamist regime, as well as various women's studies units in other Sudanese universities; (6) a sixth composed of NGOs serving women; (7) a seventh composed of various development groups in post-conflict areas such as South Sudan where women are fighting for basic rights and decision-making powers; and last (8) groups mainly composed of youth who are attempting to form new associations and forms of organizing, e.g., *Girifna*.

Clearly, at the very least, these categories need refinement and differentiation. The introduction to the Arabic edition of *Gender Politics in Sudan*, begs a number of questions, for example, whether or not NGOs devoted to women's rights and peace (with women at the center) can be categorized as "grassroots." Considering that a large number of them are composed of elite or more privileged women, many of whom are either still active members in the SWU or in various other old-guard parties, we can say that the spirit of conventional and hierarchical organization rather than any kind of acephalous or anarchistic tendencies is still prevalent. Besides, most of these groups did not emerge organically from some community need. With regard to the women's studies movement, there is always the problematic of elite and academic women having a stake in the system. Those at a state university, no matter how radical, are part and parcel of an arm of the state; those in private universities may also be beholden to particular strong interests or groups. We shall see what will transpire at Juba University and other South Sudanese institutions of higher education.

At any rate, as one might expect in such a large country, with regional fragmentations and conflicts, and with large oppositional organizations in exile, the NGOs and grass-

roots groups are highly varied. They are organized to work for peace; for development; to help refugees inside and outside Sudan; to engage in religious indoctrination (while offering social services such as nursery schools); to encourage self-help, (such as the Blessed Bakhita Society in Cairo, an arts/crafts collective that both raises money and consciousness and engages in group healing among the refugees); to improve the quality of life for women and families through neighborhood and village collectives; to support political parties by forming auxiliaries; and to seek political power or power-sharing on a national or local level. And then there are the youth in their loosely-formed groupings, many of whom are trying to undermine or unsettle many of the above functions.

In the book I argued that Sudanese women's organizations (and now I would include South Sudan's women's organizations) which have not been established as helpmate organizations or "wings" might be more effective than the addendums and auxiliaries that have been produced for decades. A mobilization of women, emerging from both indigenous and grassroots formations and through women's popular culture (local networks, shared struggles as workers in the home and the neighborhood), a union of theory and praxis, could enable Sudanese and South Sudanese women to invent their own forms of resistance.

**Notes:**

1. The companion articles in this issue of the Bulletin, especially those by Rial and Ali should help flesh out a more comprehensive view of women's organizing in South Sudan and in exile on behalf of South Sudanese.



\*Terrance Walls is an independent scholar who divides his time between New York and Cairo.

# Zalfa's Story

## The Shayqiyya Woman Who had Fifteen Masters before Being Freed

by Terrence Walz\*

A highly unusual case from the records of the nineteenth-century Sharia courts of Cairo relates the story of Zalfa Hamad, a Shayqiyya woman from the Sudan who was wrongfully and egregiously enslaved by her husband and who, in the course of thirteen years of enslavement, passed through the hands of fifteen masters before she was able to reclaim her freedom. If we had a full narrative line, this would be one of the most compelling accounts of slavery in modern Egypt. But however grim its storyline, the case demonstrates an essential fact: though slave women might have multiple owners, Muslim courts could help those wrongfully enslaved to overcome the initial injustice. If they could prove they were freeborn by producing two male witnesses to support their claims, the courts almost uniformly freed them. In Zalfa's case, she managed to find two Shayqiyya countrymen among the several thousand Barábira—the term by which riverain Sudanese were known in Egypt—living and working in Cairo in the 1850s, and thus she was able to win the freedom she must long have sought.

The brief testimony that Zalfa presents is remarkable not only because of her background – related as she might be to a known historical personage – but also because of the variety of slave owners she toiled under in the course of her enslavement. During this time, she returned or was returned only once to the slave market. This was a right that slaves had if they did not like their owner, although we do not know whether in fact she exercised it or whether she returned to the market because the owner had died. Nor is it clear what role her final master Sa'id Agha al-Habashi – a freed slave himself – played at the time she began her court case, since he is the defendant. In the end, the judge ruled that Sa'id Agha had to bear the loss of what he had paid for Zalfa and told him to obtain the amount from the previous buyer – a highly unlikely turn of events as the seller, Muhammad al-Habbak, seems to have sold her to Sa'id Agha on good faith and to have been unaware of her free status.

First I will present a verbatim translation of the case and then provide an analysis of its details.

## CASE<sup>1</sup>

Defendant: Sa'id Agha al-Habashi, freed slave of the Honorable Muhammad Efendi Bikbashi.

Plaintiff: Zalfa Hamad, daughter of Hamad, son of al-Malik Jawish and daughter of 'Arafa bint Bishāra, Barbariyya [Nubian] by race (*al-jins*), born in Dar al-Shayqiyya in Dunqala Province. She swears that she is a free woman by origin, and that neither of her parents had been enslaved up to that time. She said that she was married to a Nubian named Khalil ibn Shaykh Idris, and that he brought her from her home country to Cairo in the year 1255 [1839-40].

She testified that [her husband] told [people] she was his slave and sold her to a man named Wadidi, shaykh of the slave dealers, without informing her. He then fled [Cairo]. Wadidi sold her to the Honorable Lady who belonged to the household of the late Ibrahim Pasha Yeghen [of the Muhammad 'Ali family], and then the Honorable Lady sold her to Mustafa Agha al-Shami. He then sold her to Isma'il Bey, former *zabit* of Cairo, and he sold her to al-Hajj Isma'il Radi, shaykh of the slave dealers (*al-yasirjiyya*), who sold her to Nasir Agha al-Yasirji. He sold her to 'Ali Agha al-Tawil, who then sold her to al-Hajj Sulayman Tarbana al-Ghafir, who sold her to al-Hajj Khalil al-Fuli. He sold her to Shahin al-Shaykh, who sold her to Muhammad Amin. Muhammad sold her to a Christian man named Hanna al-Harduri from Damietta, and he sold her to Sulayman Tarbana al-Tawil, and he sold her to Muhammad al-Habbak, a shopkeeper (*mutasabbib*) in Khan al-Khalili in Cairo, and he sold her to Sa'id Agha, the defendant, for 3,000 piasters.

She testified again that she is a freeborn woman, enjoying the freedom that all Muslims enjoy, and that the defendant possessed her without any legal justification.

The defendant was then questioned and [Sa'id al-Habashi] said that he had purchased her from Muhammad al-Habbak for 3,000 and denied knowing anything about the rest of her story.

The plaintiff was asked to produce witnesses, and she brought to the next session Ahmad Shammim and al-Hajj Muhammad Hamad,<sup>2</sup> both from Dar al-Shayqiyya, who testified that she was the daughter of Hamad al-Malik Jawish by 'Arafa bint Bishāra and was originally a free person. Their testimony and character were attested by Ahmad Amir, a watchman in Suq al-Salah and Muhammad Abu Ridwan, a watchman in Hawsh al-Hilmiyya. Both are Nubian (*al-Barbari*).

She was freed by the presiding judges, Shaykh Khalil al-Rashidi al-Hanafi, *amin al-fatwa* in Cairo, and Shaykh Muhammad al-Mansuri al-Hanafi. Sa'id Agha al-Habashi was instructed to undertake to have the 3,000 piasters returned to him.

## CONTEXTUALIZATION

According to her testimony, Zalfa said she was the daughter of Hamad Jawish and the granddaughter of a Sudanese chief named al-Malik Jawish (for *al-malik*, read *makk*) of

the Shayqiyya region of the Nile lying between the fourth and fifth cataracts.<sup>3</sup> There was a well-known *makk* of the Shayqiyya named Shawish (in Egypt the Turkish *çavuş*, meaning sergeant, was transposed to *shawish*, but in the Sudan it was written *jawish*), who in 1820 resisted the invasion of Muhammad `Ali's army in the Sudan. After losing several battles he offered his submission, and as a consequence, the Shayqiyya entered the Egyptian army as auxiliary troops. They became feared and hated by local Sudanese farmers for their role as tax collectors and armed irregulars and for the favoritism they enjoyed from the Egyptians as a result of their collaboration.<sup>4</sup> It is not improbable that this young woman was related to the figure of Makk Shawish, and thus we may wonder whether the reason her husband, who is identified as a Nubian (though he may also have been a Shayqiyya) sold her in Cairo was a result of residual feelings amongst Nubians against the Shayqiyya.

Of Zalfa's father, we are less certain. There was a "Makk Hamad" in Shayqiyya history who was active at the time Zalfa was sold in Cairo.<sup>5</sup> We know nothing about the family of Zalfa's mother, `Arafa bint Bishāra. Was she a member of the Bisharin, the tribe that controlled the desert routes to the north of Shayqiyya country to Egypt?

According to her testimony, Zalfa arrived in Cairo in 1839-40 (A.H.1255). This was the beginning of the period of economic retrenchment, but it was also four years after the devastating plague of 1835 that killed as many as 75,000 people – almost 30% of the population – in Cairo. Black slaves were particularly affected, it is said.<sup>6</sup> An upsurge in the trade in slaves occurred at this time, possibly as a result of the growth of the bureaucratic middle class and the demand for domestic help among secluded women in middle- and elite households. Trans-Saharan African female slaves were used as intermediaries with the outside world and to perform domestic chores; men also used them as substitute wives or managers of households. In sheer numbers, the largest group of slave owners in Cairo were Egyptian, but as a community, Turks and Maghribis owned slaves more often than any other ethnic group.<sup>7</sup>

Zalfa was brought to Cairo from the Sudan by her husband who is named Khalil ibn Shaykh Idris al-Barbari in the court testimony. Nothing is known about him. Considering her lineage, he must have come from a socially acceptable family. For unknown reasons, he decided to sell her and approached one of the slave dealers in the city, a fellow Nubian who would later become one of the biggest of the slave dealers in Cairo. He was Wadidi Sulayman Fadl al-Barbari, a trader originally from Ibrim, the district in *bilad al-Barabira* south of Aswan, named after the fortress and village of Ibrim. The court case took place in 1852, four years after the first national census in which Wadidi himself appears.<sup>8</sup> At this time he was living on Darb al-Sammakin in the Bab al-Sha'riyya district of Cairo, an area close to the old Sudan market called Wikalat al-Jallaba that had been the center of the Sudan (and slave) trade for several hundred years. According to the 1848 census, Wadidi was fifty-five years old at the time and rented a house with his son, Muhammad Salih, and three other men, all of them from Ibrim. The house was also inhabited by forty-five black African slaves—twenty-two males, four *habashiyya* (Abyssinian) females and nineteen *sudaniyya* (south Sudanese, central African) females—who would have constituted his slave inventory. It

would have been to this street and this area that long-distance traders (*jallaba*) and others would have come with slaves to sell in what was then the heyday of the slave trade of Egypt.

In 1839, when Zalfa's husband sold her to Wadidi "without her knowledge," saying that "she was his slave," the slave market was still located at the Wikalat al-Jallaba. It is probable that as she was a young woman, possibly aged between 14 and 18, she would have been lodged in one of the upstairs rooms, assuming that at this time Wadidi was working out of the market and not out of a private house. The average age of newly arrived female slaves was about fifteen.<sup>9</sup> As a married woman, she would probably have been properly clothed, even though she may have been sold as "fresh from the country."

Her first time around in the Wikalat al-Jallaba, Zalfa was fortunate to have been sold to a woman who worked in the harim of the household of the rich, well-connected and powerful Ibrahim Pasha Yeghen (Yakan). The family originated in Kavalla and descended from the ruler Muhammad `Ali's sister Zibenda, hence the name "Yeghen," which means "nephew" in Turkish. Ibrahim Pasha Yeghen (b. 1801) served as governor of Gharbiya, in the Syrian campaign, and then as commander-in-chief of Egyptian forces in Yemen in the period 1831-40.<sup>10</sup> His great house on Suwaiqat al-Lala in the Darb al-Ahmar district of Cairo was divided into two units, one wing for men and the other for women. His brother's *dar* was similarly designed, according to the architectural historian Hussam al-Din Isma'il.<sup>11</sup>

Zalfa's buyer was "an honorable lady of the household," who could have been one of the pasha's high-ranking female staff. (In some households eunuchs were the purchasers of slaves).<sup>12</sup> Many of the great households were managed by a *kikhya* or steward, who could be male or female.<sup>13</sup> She thus moved into a household of great wealth and importance. She would have been one of probably at least a dozen or so trans-Saharan African slaves in Ibrahim Pasha Yeghen's establishment.<sup>14</sup> Of her duties there, we can only surmise she was assigned to the usual domestic chores of black slaves – cleaning rooms, washing clothes, serving ladies in the harim.<sup>15</sup> Some Abyssinian and Sudanese women were assigned less labor-intensive positions, such as serving coffee and acting as companions to the young children of the master.<sup>16</sup> Did Zalfa fall into this category? The dry narrative of the court document in this instance provides no further details, nor any information about the circumstances under which she left the household. Clearly she wasn't freed, as elite Turks tended to do with their long-serving slaves. It may be that, because she hadn't been in the household very long, she was sold, probably sometime after Ibrahim Pasha died in early 1842 when there would have been a need to economize on the number of household retainers.

Zalfa's second owner was a man named Mustafa Agha al-Shami, possibly of Syrian origin. The title *agha* suggests a connection to the military or bureaucratic elite, or possibly to a commercial establishment, as many Syrians came to Egypt as traders. Perhaps they did not get along, and Zalfa requested to be sold; perhaps he died prematurely; or perhaps his business ended in Cairo and he moved back to Syria and decided not to take her with him. Her next owner was a police officer (*zabit*) in Cairo named



SLAVE MARKET - HOREAU - 1841

Isma'il Bey (the title *bey* denotes a high officer rank), and therefore she continued to serve in a highly placed household. But either she requested to be resold or he also died, because she ended up back at the slave market. This would probably have been after 1844, when Isma'il Radi was reimposed as head of the slave dealers and after the slave market had been moved out of the center of Cairo to the eastern cemetery area near al-Qaitbey Mosque.<sup>17</sup> Isma'il sold her to a fellow slave dealer named Nāsir Agha al-Yasirji,<sup>18</sup> who most probably was the merchant named Nasr al-Shuqayri, a long-time merchant in slaves in the area of Wikalat al-Jallaba.<sup>19</sup>

Her next owner, `Ali Agha al-Tawil, again carried the title of *agha*, but following him, subsequent masters are of unknown status. Two owners (nos. 8 and 11) carried the family name Tarbana and may have been connected to an old North African merchant family that settled in Cairo and Alexandria in the seventeenth century.<sup>20</sup> However, the occupation (*ghafir*) of the first Tarbana suggests that she had passed into a lower-status household. As the probable daughter of a Shayqiyya chief and raised in a family of high status, she may indeed have felt remorse of not indignant rage by this time. Being sold by Tarbana to al-Hajj Khalil al-Fuli, who may have been, as his name connotes, a seller or maker of beans continued her service in lesser households. The following two owners Shahin al-Shaykh and Muhammad Amin carry no occupation indicators. After working in those houses, she was then sold to a Christian, Hanna al-Haduri<sup>21</sup> of Damietta, her tenth owner. Did she live for a time in that city? As a Muslim slave, she could have protested and asked to be resold, and that may explain why she was sent back to Cairo and was sold to another man named Tarbana and then to Muhammad al-Habbak, a retailer in Khan al-Khalili, the great bazaar of Cairo. Finally, she was sold to Sa'id Agha al-Habashi, an Abyssinian ex-slave of a lower-ranked government bureaucrat named Muhammad Efendi Bikbashi.<sup>22</sup> Was this humiliating to her? In Shayqiyya society today, women are not allowed to marry men whose families had once been enslaved, and even emancipation did not change their status.<sup>23</sup>

Sa'id Agha had purchased her from Muhammad al-Habbak<sup>24</sup> for 3,000 piasters. This sum equaled the price paid for eunuchs or some Abyssinian women,<sup>25</sup> and even in 1852, it was not an insignificant sum. Zalfa Hamad had been sold to fourteen men and one woman and after thirteen years of enslavement still retained a high value. It may have been an indication of her beauty, color, stature or demeanor.

At the time of Zalfa's enslavement Cairo was attracting increasing number of Nubians from southern Egypt and northern Egyptian Sudan who came seeking employment as watchmen (*ghafir*) at the city's factories, warehouses, markets, streets, gardens, and private houses, or as doorkeepers (*bawwab*) in private houses and gates of the its numerous quarters. In the 1848 census, as many as 4,000 Nubians had found livelihoods in the city.<sup>26</sup> It was among these new emigrants that Zalfa was able to find two men from her home village who could testify that she had been born a free woman and therefore deserved to be free.

Zalfa, now in her late twenties or early thirties, was freed by the court and could, if she wished, return to Dar al-Shayqiyya.

**Notes:**

1. Source: Dar al-Watha'iq al-Qawmiyya (National Archives of Egypt) (hereafter DWQ), Mahkama Misr, series I'lamat vol. 28, p. 55, #143; date: 10 Rabi' al-Awwal 1269 / 22 December 1852
2. Possibly a cousin of Zalfa's.
3. The Shayqiyya were located between the fourth and fifth cataracts on the Nile between al-Kurti in the north and Hosh al-Juruf to the south. The court document identifies her as "Barbariyya" by race, "Barbari" being the place-name moniker given to the people living along the Nile between Aswan and Khartoum. The Shayqiyya now claim Arabic and Islamic ancestry—some say they are affiliated with the Ja'aliyyin group who claim descent from Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet (Anders Bjorkelo, *Prelude to the Mahdiyya* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989], 7); others, such as the historian Jay Spaulding, deny the Arabic-Islamic links, agreeing with William Y. Adams that they were also Nubian (with an Islamic/Arabic overlay). Spaulding believes this is attested by Nubian dialectical words remaining in their vocabulary: Jay Spaulding, "The Old Shaiqi Language in Historical Perspective," *History in Africa* 17 (1990), 283-84.
4. On Makk Shawish, Bjorkelo, *Prelude*, 11-12; Richard Hill (*Biographical Dictionary of the Sudan* [London: Frank Cass, 1967], "Sha'us") mentions how he was given land by the Egyptians and put in charge of an irregular Shayqi force; and in an additional note in his addendum, p. 408, Hill states that Shawish died 1823 and had a son named Kanbal, who died in a brawl between an Egyptian commander and another Shayqi leader named Hamad wad al-Makk (who also might have been Zalfa's father): see entry in Hill, "Kanbal, called al-Malik Kanbal."  
Na''um Shuqayr spelled the makk's name al-Malik Jawish (*Jughrafiya wa ta'rikh as-Sudan* [Beirut: Dar al-Thaqafa, 1967], 495). He was the head of the Adlanab clan of the Shayqiyya, one of three major groupings.  
After Isma'il's victory over the Shayqiyya in 1821, Jawish fled south while his brother Makk Subayr submitted. He proceeded south to Berber district, ruled by Makk Nasr al-Din. He continued negotiating with Jawish and some of the remnant Mamluks in Shandi, who submitted. He then joined Ismail and the Shayqiyya then became irregular cavalry. See P. M. Holt and M. W. Daly, *A History of the Sudan from the Coming of Islam to the Present Day* (Fifth ed., Harlow, England: Longman, 2000), 44-45.
5. Makk Hamad, a Shayqiyya chief, was active ca. 1838-42 during the period of Ahmad Pasha Abu Widn's governorship when he rebelled against the order to pay tax arrears due on land that had been in their possession. He left Shandi with his family with 200 followers for the Ethiopian marches. Their presence was reported to Shaykh Ahmad Abu Sinn, chief of the Shukriyya, who informed the governor and Hamad was attacked, and the governor captured most of his baggage and his women and children. Hamad escaped, and he and some followers raided the camp of Abu Widn. The governor was accompanied by Shayqiyya whose chief was Kanbal, the son of Makk Jawish, whom he suspected of having a secret understanding with Hamad. Kanbal was shot and the Shayqiyya troops sent home. Hamad was subsequently offered amnesty and he submitted. The story may be repeated in F. Werne's *African Wanderings* (London: Longmans, Green, 1852) and Holt-Daly, *History*, 57.
6. G. Michael LaRue, "My Ninth Master was a European," in Terence Walz and Kenneth M. Cuno, eds., *Race and Slavery in the Middle East: Histories of Trans-Saharan Africans in Nineteenth-Century Egypt, Sudan, and the Ottoman Mediterranean* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2010), 110-11 and footnotes.
7. Ghislaine Alleaume and Philippe Fargues, "Voisinage et frontier: resider au Caire en 1846," in J. Dakhli, ed., *Urbanite arabe: Hommage a Bernard Lepetit* (Paris, Actes Sud, 1998), 100; Terence Walz, "Sudanese, Habasha, Takarna and Barabira: Trans-Saharan Africans in Cairo as Shown in the 1848 Census," in Walz and Cuno, *Race and Slavery*, 43-76.
8. DWQ, Ta'dad al-Nufus, Mahafazat Misr (Cairo Governorate), Qism Bab al-Sha'riyya, vol. 3, p. 749.
9. Based on my examination of the 1848 census: DWQ, Ta'dad al-Nufus 1264, Muhafazat Misr, cited in Walz, "Sudanese, Habasha."
10. On the Yeghens: <http://www.royalark.net/Egypt/yeghen2.htm>, accessed 1/23/09
11. Muhammad Hussam al-Din Isma'il, *Madinat al-Qahira min wilayat Muhammad Ali ila Isma'il 1805-1879* (Cairo: Dar al-Afaq al-'arabiyya, 1997), 155-56.
12. See the fictionalized (but highly autobiographical) novel by Out al-Qouloub,

Ramza, translated and with an introduction by Nayra Atiya (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994), 12.

13. For instance, the household of 15 people belonging to Bayram Kashif was managed by al-Hajja Amuna al-Kikhya: *Ta'dad al-nufus 1264 [1848] Muhafazat Misr, Qism Abdin vol. 2: 368*; the household of 22 persons belonging to the widow of the former Ruznamji Efendi was managed by Kikhya Ratib Muhammad, *ibid.*, *Qism Qusun, vol. 3: 254*.

14. The governor of Sharqiyya province in 1848 had a household numbering forty-seven (including twenty-eight adult females, many of whom would have been slaves): Walz, "Sudanese, Habasha," 60; the governor of Upper Egypt's household in 1848 included sixty individuals, including twenty-four black slaves: DWQ, *Ta'dad al-Nufus 1264, Mudiriyat Asyut, Nahiyat Asyut, vol. 1: p. 366*.

15. See Ellen Chennells, *Recollections of an Egyptian Princess by her English governess, being the record of Five Years' Residence at the Court of Ismael Pasha, Khedive* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood, 1893), 24.

16. *Op. cit.* 227 (Shefket, who was the Abyssinian companion of Ibrahim, son of Ismail Pasha); 283, referring to Zora, the daughter of a Sudanese nursemaid.

17. Isma'il al-Radi (d. 1858: see Terence Walz, *Trade between Egypt and Bilad as-Sudan, 1700-1820* (Cairo: Institut francais d'archeologie orientale, 1978), 216, 245); at the time he made his waqf in 1831 he was titled "min ayyan al-tujjar fi al-rafiq al-aswad" ("among the eminent merchants of black slaves"); also found in the 1848 census in Bab al-Shar'iyya: DWQ, *Ta'dad al-Nufus, Qism Bab al-Sha'riyya, vol. 187, p. 767*; he died in 1858: estate probate, DWQ, *Mahakim Misr, series Tarikat, vol. 16, 38-9 (2 Rabi II 1275/10 Oct 1858)*.

18. Yasirji was the Turkish term for slave merchant that came into fashion in Cairo with the increased Turkish presence during the Muhammad Ali period.

19. On Nasr al-Shuqayri, Walz, *Trade*, 171, 203, 218.

20. Hussam Muhammad Abd a-Mu'ti, *al-'Aila wa al-tharwa: al-Buyut al-tijariyya al-Maghribiyya fi Misr al-Uthmaniyya* (Cairo, al-Ha'yat al-misriyya al-amma lil-kitab, 2008), 50-53

21. Spelling is uncertain.

22. Bkbashi may have indicated his ranking in the bureaucracy; or he might have been an ex-soldier who found employment in the government after his service in the military ended.

23. On the anathema of marrying one's daughter to a slave (or person of slave descent), Hayder Ibrahim, *The Shaiqiya: The Cultural and Social Change of a Northern Riverain People* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1979), 71-77.

24. Habbak: weaver. It may have been a family name.

25. The average price during the period 1851-55 for black females (sawda) was 1,444 piasters; for Abyssinian females, 2,250: Walz, *Trade*, Table 8, p. 208.

26. Walz, "Sudanese, Habasha," Table 2:2, p. 50.

# *Boarders, Bridges and Crossroads:* Gender and the Discourse on 'Outstanding Post-Referendum Issues' between Sudan and South Sudan

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## **Introduction**

Unresolved issues between Sudan and South Sudan have caused increased tension between the two countries in the run-up to and following the independence of South Sudan. The official agenda of negotiations currently defines these issues in terms of cooperation between Sudan and South Sudan, oil and other economic arrangements, security arrangements, the status of the nationals of the other country, post-service benefits for nationals of the two countries, trade, banking, and border issues. These issues affect diverse women and men in the two countries in distinct ways, but for the most part women, and a gender perspective have been absent from the negotiations that are limited to the governments of the two countries and several other stakeholders. Although the African Union High Implementation Panel, which has coordinated these meetings since 2010 includes a gender advisor; the negotiations and their outcome have lack a clear gender perspective (Ali, 2012). Involving women in the negotiations between the two countries, integrating a gender perspective, and learning from the initiatives that women's organizations have started since the 1990s would not only offer a more comprehensive understanding of these issues, the patterns of outreach by women's organizations in both countries offer possibilities for imagining an alternative future of peaceful coexistence between and within the two countries.

This paper interrogates the current construction of two of the 'outstanding post-referendum issues' in official discourses in Sudan and South Sudan: oil and nationality. I argue that the narratives emerging from selected women's organizations in both countries who have tried to engage 'post-referendum issues' from a gender and women's rights perspective offer a more meaningful picture of how these issues play-out in the daily lives of communities, especially diverse women in both countries.

The paper is based on a review of the official documents and agreements that address post-referendum issues. It is also based on in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, informal conversations, and participant observation in Sudan and South Sudan (particularly in Juba, Khartoum, Damazin and Port-Sudan) between 2010 and 2012.

In this paper, I try to avoid falling into binary oppositions of a homogeneous official

discourse (that of the two governments on one hand) and another homogeneous discourse of ordinary men and women or women's rights activists on the other. The negotiations are occurring against the backdrop of a history of conflict, mistrust, and continuous marginalization of the people of South Sudan by successive governments in Khartoum, and against the backdrop of a deep crisis of governance in Sudan.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, in recent years, women's organizations have tried to reach-out to the two governments and other stakeholders, such as the African Union High Implementation Panel, and the United States government, to demand better attention to women's participation and gender equality concerns in the negotiations.<sup>2</sup> Commitments by these and other actors to implementing Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000) meant better access for women's groups and more attention to gender equality concerns.

### **Borders, Bridges and Crossroads**

The title of this paper reflects my discontent with the overuse of the phrase 'crossroads' in scholarly and public policy discourse on Sudan and South Sudan. It also denotes my own preoccupation with gendered notions of actual and metaphoric borders and bridges. It seems that the Sudan region has been at a "crossroads" at least for five and a half decades, that is, since Sudan obtained its political independence in 1956. To be at a crossroads is, in itself, not necessarily problematic. It suggests possibilities and a degree of choice. Standing at a crossroads is a far better option than being at a deadlock. But it is time Sudanese academia and public policy surpassed the crossroads, at least intellectually.

The title also reflects my preoccupation with borders and bridges. Actual and metaphorical notions of borders and bridges offer important insights into the distinct impact of Sudan's turbulent history of slavery, conflicts, and social, economic and political exclusions and injustice in access to power and resources for historically marginalized areas of Sudan on diverse women and men and especially on women.<sup>3</sup> Artificial borders drawn by European powers at the Berlin Conference in 1884 and reworked by England in 1898 and 1956 continue to constitute a key point of contention between Sudan and South Sudan; and are among the key issues on the negotiations agenda between the two countries.

In post-colonial Sudan, women assumed the role of what sociologist Nira Yuval-Davis calls reproducing the boundaries of different ethnic and racial collectivities (Yuval-Davis, 1997) that never had the opportunity to develop into a nation within the artificial borders that Sudan inherited in 1956. Resistance by movements, at times organized along ethnic lines, against attempts by successive governments in Khartoum to forcibly build a nation through imposing a singular identity, language and religion on a diverse population; and resistance to unequal distribution of political and economic resources between different regions of Sudan has at times turned women's bodies into battlefields. This was evident, for example, in the sexual violence against women in Southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains, including sexual violence to ensure Southern

Sudanese women produce “Arab” children during the second war (1983-2005). It was also evident in the excessive use of sexual violence against women and girls in Darfur after the outbreak of war in 2003 (Ali, 2004, 2010).

Bridges, too, are significant for our understanding of the gender-specific impact of social and political marginalization of certain regions and ethnic groups in post-colonial Sudan. The concentration of development schemes in the center has left South Sudan and many parts of Western, Eastern and Northern Sudan without sufficient infrastructure such as hospitals, roads, and bridges. For South Sudan and in historically marginalized areas of Sudan, the lack of roads and bridges might have meant difficult access to education and the obstruction of trade. For a woman in labor, who needs emergency obstetric care, however, a lack of roads, hospitals, bridges, and other infrastructure is a matter of life or death. This is one reason South Sudan, at independence, had one of the highest maternal mortality ratios worldwide (Ali, 2010). Metaphorically, we continue to witness attempts by women’s organizations in both countries to reach-out and to build bridges and coalitions across difference. The relationship between Sudan and South Sudan is a key platform where women’s activism has unfolded.

How does all that serve our understanding of post-referendum issues and the post-referendum moment? While I believe we should think in terms of a post-referendum moment that encompasses issues beyond those on the agenda of negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan, below I discuss post-referendum issues with reference to oil and nationality.

### **Post-referendum Issues**

Prior to the South Sudan Referendum in January 2011, the negotiations between the SPLM and the GOS around ‘post-referendum’ issues focused on four key areas, defined along narrow terms of realist geopolitics: Security arrangements (which included the situation of the SPLA combatants in Northern Sudan), economic issues, including oil production and transportation and debt; nationality and citizenship, and international agreements. In addition, a number of issues that the two governments should have agreed upon prior to South Sudan’s independence, such as border demarcation, and the status of Abyei, had become outstanding issues.

A key feature of the negotiations is the lack of transparency and the lack of participation of civil society, including women’s organizations and activists, although the two parties agreed in a meeting in Mekelle, Ethiopia, in June 2010 that they would “discuss ways of involving civil society organizations and the Sudanese community at large, in the process.” The government of South Sudan has recently established mechanisms to communicate information about the meetings as well as signed agreements to the public. Another shortcoming has been the lack of a gender perspective in the substance of the various agreements that the two parties signed so far. Although the African Union High Implementation Panel has introduced the position of a gender advisor, her role has been mainly technical.

Nonetheless, women's organizations from both countries and transnational coalitions that women have formed have tried to engage the process of negotiations. As the Deputy Minister of Gender in the government of South Sudan stated in March 2013,

Women in both Sudan and South Sudan know that often they are not invited to negotiations. So we have decided to invite ourselves [to negotiations on the post-referendum issues]. In February [2013], a group of women leaders from both Sudan and South Sudan traveled to Addis Ababa, with support from [the Institute for] Inclusive Security, to advocate for women's participation. Dr. Priscilla N. J. Kuch, Deputy Minister of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, Speaking at the *Discussion on Gender, Peace and Security in the Post-2015 Development Framework*. Netherlands Mission, New York, March 6 2013 (attended by the author).

Kuch's narrative reflects the way Sudanese and South Sudanese women often take advantage of the opportunities that processes of war, economic crises and exile open-up for participation and for rethinking gender relations (Ali 1998, 2005, 2011). Women's organizations in Sudan, South Sudan and in exile have a history of resistance to political exclusion, and have at times worked collectively to ensure women's participation in peace negotiations and other political processes. In the 1990s, for example, several women's organizations and networks have campaigned to ensure women had a voice in the negotiations between the SPLM and the GOS (Ali, 2005). In the process, these groups built their capacities and developed concrete agendas for change.

Similarly, writing about South Sudan, Erickson and Faria (2011: 628) have argued that "new subjects and spaces for political activism and engagement are opening up for women in the diaspora and at home, revealing new opportunities but also tensions along lines of ethnic-regional-, faith-, and class-based difference."

Below I consider some of the activities and narratives of women and women's organizations around post-referendum issues. Some of these groups built alliances across ethnic, religious, regional, and other forms of difference. I argue that these narratives question and reorganize official conceptualizations of power, and of 'post-referendum' issues. In so doing, I argue for a "rescaling of geopolitics" (Smith, 2001), that shifts the focus in the negotiations from the abstract issues currently on the agenda, to a consideration of the impact of these issues on citizens in both countries. I further argue for the need to "repopulate the geopolitical landscape...with the gendered individuals and groups who, in their everyday lives, create, appropriate and challenge geopolitical discourse and practice at a whole variety of scales" (Smith, 2001: 231).<sup>4</sup>

In the run-up to the South Sudan Referendum, a number of women's organizations and Networks, including the South Sudan Women's Empowerment Network (SSWEN) and the Sisterhood for Peace have campaigned to include women in the discussions of post-referendum issues, and to ensure the substance of the negotiations addressed the concerns of ordinary women in both countries. SSWEN in particular brought together women from across South Sudan's ten states, and from different parts of

Sudan, to discuss post-referendum issues, in February 2011. The organization also invited South Sudan's chief negotiator and minister of peace Mr. Pagan Amom, South Sudan's Gender Minister, Sudan's former Minister of Social Welfare, the gender advisor on the African Union's High Implementation Panel, and members of a number of technical committees.

The conference made important recommendations that emerged from discussions of post-referendum issues in four discussion groups. Recommendations included call for more transparency and accountability of the negotiations process; the need to appoint more women members to the negotiating team of the four clusters negotiating post-referendum issues at the time; and the need to establish and support a team of gender experts to integrate a women and gender perspective into the negotiations. Participants further recommended that the gender analysis of the issues of security, nationality, international agreements, and economic arrangements be integrated into the actual work of the teams negotiating post-referendum issues. Finally, SSWEN called for the need to create an official mechanism for civil society to participate in peace negotiations (SSWEN, 2011). Although SSWEN shared the recommendations of the participants with AUHIP and with the two negotiating partners, these recommendations did not make it to the agenda of the negotiations. While several factors have contributed to the lack of integration of these recommendations in the official agenda, I believe that one of the key reasons was that the recommendations did not belong on the agenda.

During 2012 and early 2013, several women's organizations and activists have engaged the AUHIP and the United States governments. For example, the Institute for Inclusive Security's Coalition of Sudanese Women's Leaders has organized advocacy meetings with members of AUHIP, on a number of post-referendum issues in Addis Ababa in January and February of 2013. The author and a number of other activists has addressed the office of former US Special Envoy on Sudan and South Sudan Princeton Lyman regarding the importance of women's participation in the negotiations between the governments of Sudan and South Sudan and on the importance of integrating the specific concerns of women and girls into the agenda of the negotiations. The Office of the Special Envoy on Sudan and South Sudan has commissioned the US Institute for Peace to conduct a gender analysis of the nine agreements that the GOS and GOSS signed in September 2012 (USIP, 2012). The interest of the office of the Special Envoy in women's participation and gender equality was to a great extent part of the US government's implementation of US Security Council 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

Several other organizations organized activities to address some of the challenges arising from the lack of agreement between the two governments. These include My Sister's Keeper, which Sara Rial discusses in this issue of the Bulletin. A more recent initiative "Building Bridges", aims to strengthen links between diverse women in Sudan and South Sudan, with the aim of ensuring peace, gender equality and human rights. This initiative aims to bridge gaps between scholarship and activism, between policy and practice, and between the Diaspora and communities in Sudan and South

Sudan.

Below I discuss how the narratives of women and women's organizations continue to offer alternative readings of post-referendum issues. I focus on two post-referendum issues: oil and nationality; and the way women's organizations in both countries have articulated these issues.<sup>5</sup>

### **The Human Cost of Oil: Environmental Degradation**

Oil continues to be a contentious issue in the two countries. On 8 June 2013, President of Sudan Omar Bashir ordered his oil minister Awad Al-Jaz on air to shut down the oil pipelines that transport South Sudan's oil to international markets via Port Sudan; after accusing the government of South Sudan of supporting the armed movements organized in the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF). Formerly, the government of South Sudan had decided to shut-down the production of oil, after the two governments failed to agree on the price of transporting a barrel of oil, given that the government of Sudan imposed a high price for the transportation of crude oil.

While the official discourse on post-referendum issues approaches oil in terms of "national security" and in monetary terms, women and communities at the grassroots have defined the issue in terms of the impact of their daily lives. At the SSWEN workshop that took place in February 2011, participants from oil-producing states in South Sudan shared stories about the dismal impact of oil exploitation on their communities. Women narrated stories on how the pollution of soil, water, and air has affected their and their children's health and their livelihoods. Participants said the contamination of water and soil due to the exploitation of oil on their land has affected their health and well-being given their direct contact with the soil. The women reported increased numbers of miscarriages and birth defects.

Participants further reflected on the harmful impact of oil production on agriculture. Participants said the crops yielded much less because of pollution. This has compromised food security in areas already suffering. The women also reported that oil production had led to the displacement of whole communities. Yet the limited information available to the public from the negotiations indicate that issues of health, food security, and agricultural production seldom make it to the official agenda of negotiations between the two governments.

### **Austerity Measures**

Another direct impact of the lack of agreement on the issue of oil was an increase in the prices of food and other basic commodities due to the introduction of austerity measures by both countries to compensate for the loss of oil revenue. In South Sudan, news reports indicated that the lifting of subsidies and the rise in unemployment has forced women to 'turn to crushing gravel' where women earn as low as 10 South Sudanese pounds (about US \$ 3) per day, so they can pay for food, school fees for their children, and for healthcare expenses.

The introduction of austerity measures in Sudan also caused severe crises in Sudan. The rise in food and fuel prices caused demonstrations in urban areas, especially among the middle classes. However, the crisis hit people from war affected areas in South Kordofan and the Blue Nile and other politically, socially and economically excluded groups, hardest.

The current wars in the Blue Nile and South Kordofan states, which erupted in June and September 2011 respectively, are rooted in historical marginalization of the people of the two states by successive governments in Sudan. The recent outbreak of war in the two areas, however, is a direct product of the post-referendum moment. Rigged elections in South Kordofan state, and the lack of agreement over the outcomes of the popular consultation provided for in the CPA in the Blue Nile state, in addition to conflict over the disarmament of the combatants of the SPLM/A in the two states and the government of Sudan's refusal to acknowledge the legitimacy of SPLM-North in Sudan after South Sudan's secession all contributed to the eruption of the war. These conflicts have led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands to Khartoum and other major cities in Sudan, and to neighboring Ethiopia and South Sudan.

In Khartoum and in larger cities and towns, communities displaced by the conflict have had to reside with their relatives, the majority of whom were displaced during the second war that started in 1983 and that concluded with the signing of the CPA in 2005. Activists I interviewed said communities often shared their limited resources with the new arrivals, with limited or no support from local organizations.

In Damazin, the capital of the Blue Nile state, I interviewed recent arrivals and their host in a household where the only bread-winner earned 400 Sudanese pounds (about USD \$80 in 2012) per month. In addition to his wife, children, and mother, Rizig (not his real name) a young man who works in the healthcare sector, had to support twelve additional household members (all women and young children) who had arrived the night before I interviewed him. He was concerned how he could feed them given the increase in the cost of basic commodities.

Nuba communities recently displaced to greater Khartoum face similar challenges. A Nuba activist whose organization supports displaced communities in greater Khartoum, whom I interviewed in 2012, told me that families had to accommodate over twenty individuals at times in small houses in the outskirts of greater Khartoum. In April, 2012, this activist asked 'How can we feed all those family members when the cost of a kilo of Tomatoes is SDG 10?' (about USD 2)? (Interview with the author, April 2012). When I returned to Khartoum in July of the same year, the price of a kilo of tomatoes had doubled.

It is important to note that while food security affects women in distinct ways given their roles in providing food for their families, women and communities always find ways to cope with crises. In my earlier research, I explored the strategies that women in North Sudan used to address the impact of the economic crisis in the 1990s, including

through generating income from street vending (Ali, 1998). I have also highlighted the way Southern Sudanese and other women displaced by conflict managed whole communities during the second war (1983-2005) (cf. Ali, 2005). Women also often play important roles in protesting the increase in prices.

The introduction of austerity measures has generated resistance in major cities in Sudan. Female students at the University of Khartoum spearheaded the protests which then spread to a number of other cities. Women and youth have been at the forefront of these protests, and constituted the majority of over 2,000 activists and politicians arrested in June and July of 2012. The 'No to Women's Oppression' movement organized a vigil which included the banging of empty pots and have linked the protests to their wider concerns. These include the conflicts in South Kordofan and the Blue Nile states, and laws that discriminate against women.<sup>6</sup>

The economic crisis has affected women and girls in other ways. The government of Sudan had decided to downsize the public service due to the economic crisis. Among the first positions to go were those of the 'governors' gender advisors'. Those were positions the government introduced in Sudan's 15 states to address the impact of gender-based violence and to advocate for gender equality. These advisors had received training in advocacy and in ways to address gender-based violence. They have worked with UN agencies to implement programs to address gender-based violence, including in Darfur.

### **Nationality Issues**

Following South Sudan's independence, the president of Sudan stated that Southern Sudanese must leave to South Sudan by 9 April 2012, unless they adjusted or regularized their status through processing the necessary paperwork. The lack of agreement on nationality issues (until September 2012) between Sudan and South Sudan has created enormous challenges for returnees to South Sudan, including women. Several United Nations (UN) agencies have conducted a rapid needs assessment among the 40,000 returnees stranded in 38 departure points in Khartoum state alone. The assessment found that this population had no access to food, clean water, or latrines. Some of the women have had to sell their furniture to feed their families. Others decided to sell alcohol, which is illegal under Sudan's law and can attract fines, imprisonment, or both. There have also been reports of women forced into sex work in two departure points. The assessment also identified reports of rape and sexual harassment. In one departure point, five young women have committed suicide because of poor conditions. Although several United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) had prepared personal hygiene kits, until mid-July 2012 the kits had not been distributed (interview with the author, April 2012).

While in the past women displaced by war, including South Sudanese women in North Sudan, used to work in menial jobs, including as house servants, one interviewee told me that increasingly, residents are reluctant to employ women from South Sudan (interview with the author, April 2012). A recent report also documented experiences

of mistreatment and discrimination of South Sudanese in North Sudan (IRRI, 2013). However, several Khartoum-based women's organizations, including the Women's League, which is associated with SPLM-North, have organized trips to some of the departure points, to bid farewell to travelers. Families from North Sudan organized farewell parties to neighbors and friends moving to South Sudan, and several Southern Sudanese reported that they were able to sell their houses and belongings through Sudanese friends.

One of the agreements that the governments of Sudan and South Sudan signed in September 2012 addressed *The Status of Nationals of the Other State and Related Matters between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan*. The agreement sanctioned the freedoms of residence, movement, carrying-out economic activities, and the freedom to acquire and dispose of property for the nationals of each state in both territories. The two parties agreed to form a High Level Committee to work on the implementation of the two meetings within two weeks.

Women's rights activists in both countries, and some of the women's organizations had started asking questions about the four issues above, and on the impact of a lack of agreement on citizenship and nationality issues on communities in Sudan and South Sudan, before the independence of South Sudan. In a series of workshops that the Sudan Advocacy Network organized in the United States in the run-up to the South Sudan Referendum in 2010, and in the workshop that SSWEN organized in February 2011, women participants posed multiple questions about the possible impact of secession on South Sudanese communities in North Sudan and on North Sudanese communities in South Sudan.

Participants at the SSWEN meeting in February 2011 discussed the impact of secession on mixed marriages, for example. They recommended the creation of structures to meet the psychosocial and other needs of these families, and the introduction of paralegal support for those who need it. Participants asked how secession would impact children born to South Sudanese women due to rape during the war. Participants discussed the need for provisions to protect the rights of those individuals and the importance of consulting them when discussing issues of citizenship and nationality. Participants recommended that South and North Sudanese in both countries be given sufficient time—a period of five years—to move to the other country, in a way that preserves their security and dignity. Finally, the participants also recommended the prioritization of the security of civilians and internally displaced, including protection from gender-based violence (author's notes and SSWEN, 2011).

This paper discussed the notions of crossroads, borders and bridges in contemporary Sudan, with reference to ongoing negotiations between the governments of Sudan and South Sudan. The paper proposed an alternative reading of post-referendum issues, that draws upon the narratives of diverse women in both countries and that focuses on the impact of these abstract issues on people's daily lives. The narratives and experiences of women speak to some of the silences in the geopolitics that dominate the

negotiations and the relationship between Sudan and South Sudan. Collective action between women of Sudan and South Sudan and attempts at building reconciliation between communities and women in the two countries offer hope for imagining alternative possibilities for the two countries. This will be the focus of a future paper.

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**Notes:**

1. A recent report (IRRI, 2013:20) that discusses the relationship between the government of Sudan and the majority of its citizens, and that relies on the narratives of women and men who face exclusion in Khartoum, asks relevant questions: "How do you address a problem where there is strong denial that a problem exists? How do you appeal to a state to protect all of its citizens when it refuses to recognize the legitimacy to belong of groups or individuals that fall outside of its ideological or tactical survival framework, and that has shown open hostility to so many? On what basis does one appeal to a government that has lost legitimacy and where an arrest warrant on a charge of genocide hangs over the head of its president?"

2. The office of former Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan Princeton Lyman has hosted or participated actively in several fora that discussed gender equality in Sudan and South Sudan and post-referendum issues. The office of the Special Envoy hosted a discussion following the signing of the nine agreements between Sudan and South Sudan on ways to integrate gender into the implementation of the agreements. In addition, the US Institute of Peace issued an analysis and recommendations on women's participation and integrating gender into the implementation of the nine agreements (see USIP 2013).

3. I discuss borders, bridges, and the gender-specific impact of Sudan's conflicts on women and men in a talk I gave at the Sudan Advocacy Network conference on the South Sudan Referendum, which took place in Arizona, USA in June 2010 (see Ali 2010).

4. Smith developed her analysis taking the reunification of the former West Germany and the East German Democratic Republic as a point of reference.

5. For a brief overview of some of the gender aspects of the nine agreements that GOS and GOSS signed in September 2012, and for recommendations on how to take gender into account in implementing the agreements see USIP (2013).

6. This analysis does not cover lack of access to food and humanitarian assistance for communities in areas directly affected by war. There had been several attempts to negotiate humanitarian access for these communities.



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# Building Pathways to Sustainable Peace in Sudan and South Sudan: The Case of Sisterhood for Peace Initiative of My Sister's Keeper

by Sarah Cleto Rial\*

## About My Sister's Keeper (MSKeeper)

*My Sister's Keeper*, founded in 2002, is a women-led humanitarian and human rights action initiative based in Boston, Massachusetts, that partners with resourceful and resilient women and girls in Sudan and South Sudan and throughout the Diaspora as they reclaim their lives and rebuild their communities. My Sister's Keeper envisions a world where women all across the globe can imagine, create and sustain vibrant and joyous communities.

For several decades, the greater Sudan has been subjected to oppressive regimes and ongoing conflicts. Over 2 million have died, over 6 million displaced and untold numbers raped, maimed and enslaved. Many Sudanese women have worked tirelessly for peace with limited resources and access to support or information beyond their immediate circles.

An initial mission trip to southern Sudan in 2001 by Rev. Gloria White-Hammond, MSKeeper's Co-Founder and Executive Director, brought about the formation of the organization. As co-pastor of Bethel AME Church in Boston, Rev. White-Hammond and other African American ministers were invited by Zurich-based human rights organization, Christian Solidarity International, to participate in a slave redemption mission. What they witnessed there and hearing the untold stories of women moved Rev. White-Hammond to take action. She then returned to southern Sudan twice in 2002 accompanied by women from Bethel and other faith communities in the Boston area to learn from the Sudanese women how American women can help. That was the beginning of a long relationship and several projects.

Since 2002, MSKeeper spearheaded three pathways to peace (projects) by investing in educational programs for girls and women, and building cross cultural collaboration among women peacebuilders. The organization supported the Kurnyuk girls' primary school and build a school compound, started programs for teacher professional development, and a women's literacy project in Akon village, Gogrial West County, Warrap State, Republic of South Sudan.

The third project, which is the subject of this paper, is the Sisterhood for Peace that supports the growth of a network of diverse Sudanese women who are committed to collaborating across boundaries of race, religion, ethnicity, and geography to promote peace and justice in and between Sudan and South Sudan. The initiative provides training and technical support in conflict resolution, strategizing and action planning. The women then return to their communities and organize into diverse working groups to address various aspects of the countries' multiple crises.

### **The Sisterhood for Peace Initiative**

Sisterhood for Peace was launched in 2007 after intensive thinking of a core strategy group of women. The initiative developed out of the idea that within a robust and growing international movement for change in Sudan, the voices of Sudanese, and more specifically Sudanese women, were almost entirely missing. In 2005, as the Darfur crisis was escalating, Sudanese, South Sudanese and African American women began developing ways to shaping a collective response and finding solutions to the crisis that is largely affecting women and children. The Sudanese women started by findings ways to bridge the divides among them and talk about how ethnicity, religion, race and geography impacted the divides. They agreed to build a network of women peace builders that will keep growing organically to engage all women across the greater Sudan, from all walks of life, and across all ages.

### **SFP Theory of Change and Approach**

SFP seeks to build a network that advances women's leadership in global civic engagement. By civic engagement, the initiative refers to individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern. It can take many forms— from individual volunteerism to organizational involvement to electoral participation. And can include efforts to directly address an issue, work with others in a community to solve a problem or interact with the institutions of representative democracy. Women have been impacted by the conflict but left out of strategies to address it; they hold the power to work collaboratively towards peace and develop democratic solutions to divisive conflicts. We believe addressing complex situations requires an adaptable infrastructure and a network-based approach. We are strengthening a network that will give women the opportunity to step across the conflict and act from their collective wisdom to facilitate peace.

Therefore the SFP theory of change states that if women become:

- aware of their power to effect change in Sudan through civic engagement,
- educated about civic processes and how to get involved,
- willing and able to trust one another, to see and speak to one another's interests as shared interests, work collaboratively and more effectively across boundaries, and
- connected to a diverse network of relationships and resources that builds their confidence and expands their access to information, resources, skills, partners and sisterly support

then, women will:

- become active in civic life as volunteers, workers in civil society organizations, voters, candidates and government officials,
- build individual and collective visions, action plans and assets (including information, resources, skills, and relationships) that foster strong leadership, and
- mobilize those assets to generate creative solutions and facilitate sustainable peace throughout Sudan.

### **The Sisterhood for Peace Approach**

The SFP theory of change is rooted in models that have proven effective in other conflict zones such as Northern Ireland and Liberia. Based Over the years, MSKeeper bore witness to its promise for peace in Sudan and the SFP initiative launched the Sudanese Women's Leadership Forum. Through the fora, over 200 women in the Diaspora and in Sudan and South Sudan convened for conflict management training, strategizing and action planning. Affirmed in their power to effect change, the diverse women connected and continue in their work to take action together.

The objectives for the leadership forum are to:

- Convey the urgent need for women to address the crises in all of Sudan and South Sudan
- Affirm women in their power to facilitate sustainable peace throughout Sudan and South Sudan
- Build individual skills in conflict management and peacebuilding
- Strengthen participants' capacity for cross-cultural collaboration
- Develop action plans to address issues pertinent to current crisis (previously included the Southern Sudan Referendum, the Darfur Peace Processes, and the Popular Consultation)
- Develop strategic advocacy plan that will influence policies back home, in the US, and in the international arena
- Refine the strategy for growing the network of women peacebuilders committed to cross-cultural collaboration to promote peace throughout Sudan and South Sudan

The SFP approach is participant driven. My Sister's Keeper and partnering organizations - Institute for Inclusive Security, Interaction Institute for Social Change, United States Institute for Peace - provide training and facilitation; the women determine the strategy and develop the action plans. The organization's Boston-based and Sudan-based staff then "staffs" the action groups and links them to resources and relationships—other women and local and international partners--to accomplish their objectives.

### **Sisterhood for Peace Milestones**

In 2007, thirty Sudanese women living in Sudan and in the U.S. gathered in Boston to explore the cultural, political, and social divides that undermine their solidarity as sisters. They confronted hard issues, yet encouraged one another. The sisters have committed to ongoing cross-cultural dialogue and building unity among diverse

Sudanese women. The convening created an environment where Sudanese women from the conflict areas and from the center and northern Sudan, who live in the US, talked to each other about their hopes for the future of Sudan, hurdles that are keeping them apart, and strategies for moving forward together. The views of the women provided invaluable strategies that made up a collective vision and comprised the first step in helping women from the diverse regions of Sudan strengthen their voices and begin a grassroots movement to rebuild their life.

As a result of that meeting, Sisterhood for Peace began providing training in conflict management and peace-building that enhances women's capacity to lead civic engagement activities that will make this vision a reality.

In 2008 SFP collaborated with the Nobel Women Initiative and designed and hosted a meeting for thirty-five women from Darfur, South Sudan, Eastern Sudan, and the center. The goal of the meeting was to amplify women's efforts for peace and justice, with a view to promoting effective resolutions to the political crisis facing Sudan. Following that meeting, SFP participated in a conference organized by South Sudan Women's Empowerment Network (SSWEN) that brought together women from different parts of Sudan and the Diaspora working to build a just and lasting peace in all of Sudan.

In November 2009, 40 women from the established network and beyond gathered in Boston to attend a forum entitled "Pathways to Peace: Why We Can't Wait!" In the course of 3 days, the sisters took gigantic leaps of faith to begin building bridges across their traditional divides, because they had one goal in mind--peace throughout all Sudan. They developed a common vision for peace in Sudan and learned peacebuilding and civic engagement skills.

Important actions were identified as outcome of the forum and the sisters agreed to carryout the work through working groups. *Peace Process Working Group (Darfur, Referendum, and the Popular Consultation)* engaged in activism to push the then peace process in Doha, Qatar. The women traveled to Doha, in February 2010, to deliver the "Urgent Call for Peace in Sudan NOW!" to Mr. Djibril Bassole, the Joint AU-UN Chief Mediator. By all accounts, the women served as constructive, honest brokers—so much so that the mediation team requested delegation members to extend their stay to help facilitate the unification of the rebel groups. *Networking and Mobilization Working Group* has enlisted over 4000 Facebook members and 370 discussants in Yahoo group. They also work to refine a strategy for using text messaging for women in the network to communicate with one another and develop a buddy system to match Diaspora women with women in Sudan. *Supporting Grassroots Mobilization in Sudan Working Group* works in connecting the efforts of Sudanese women in the Diaspora with women inside the Sudan for peacebuilding in the country.

In July 2010, the Diaspora *Grassroots Capacity Building* Group led in organizing and executing a historic peacebuilding conference for over 70 diverse women in Juba,

South Sudan in July 2010. The participants worked along the same lines of the above action groups and formed their local contacts. More than 100 network participants throughout Sudan and the Diaspora have been collaborating and implementing action plans in 5 action groups. The Sudan-based *Darfur Peace Process* Action Group drafted a petition calling on leaders of all the armed movement groups to unify to negotiate with the Government of Sudan. The Sudan-based *Grassroots Capacity Building* Group teamed up with the *Popular Consultation* Group and organized a conference in Southern Kordofan, in December 2010, and developed action plans to address the issues pertinent to the popular consultation. The *Referendum* Action Group worked to ensure inclusion of at least 25% women on state referendum commissions in 7/10 states in South Sudan, and to develop a 2-page brochure to guide the advocacy on issues pertinent to women pre- and post-Referendum in 2011.

In February 2012, MSKeeper convened 20 women to strategize how to address the border crises. Participants developed a comprehensive policy statement which was presented at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and among US policy experts. The sisters also launched a “Sisterhood for Peace” fund to provide needed sanitary supplies for women and girls now in refugees camps escaping the wars in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States.

Previously, SFP has successfully organized a one-day workshop in Wau that brought thirty women from the Greater Bahr El Ghazal States and two participants from Khartoum. In the US, a number of networking meetings were organized for women - in Boston, Massachusetts, Manchester, New Hampshire, and Portland, Maine - that have been highly regarded as empowering for the women and moving their activism forward.

An important highlight for the SFP initiative is the award of the writer with the prestigious Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Human Rights by Sec. of State Hilary Clinton in December 2010. Sarah, a native of Wau, South Sudan, directs MSKeeper programs and supports all the three pathways to peace. Sarah graciously accepted the award on behalf of the Sudanese women peacebuilders in the SFP network and beyond.

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

A number of challenges have been met in the process of building the network and during the implementation of the program. However, the staff used many of the challenges and turned them into opportunities for improvement.

From the beginning we have acknowledged the fact that building an effective network is time consuming, in general, while trying to bring diverse groups together is met with some difficulties along the way. In the case of SFP, these complexities were magnified given the reality of the greater Sudan - war-torn and rife with regional and cultural conflicts. Despite a general sense of sisterhood, there were, nevertheless, tensions between different regional groups. For instance, during a dialogue in the period leading to the referendum, women from Abyei were concerned that their referendum was

getting insufficient attention compared to Southerners' referendum. Southerners were concerned that Darfurians were getting too much attention. Nuba Mountains women patiently advocated for more support from other women. This has helped facilitators to be aware of those tensions and to emphasize the importance of a collective voice towards the various issues.

We note that lack of full time staff presence on the ground has hindered MSKeeper's capacity to follow up closely on the implementation of the action plans. Participants of the leadership forums usually get very energetic during the conference and ready to go and do the work. But with lack of close follow up and support from a staff, many women get carried away with other matters similar activities or by personal needs. We have addressed this by assigning volunteers who also try to do as much as they could.

More milestones could have been reached given resources. Many women volunteer their time to the network and they also have to take care of survival needs. MSKeeper has put much effort to support staff, raising funds to organize the trainings, and provide a space for the women to meet. The women themselves have organized fundraisers especially noted for their trip to Doha and the Sisterhood for Peace fund.

### **Lessons Learned**

- We have learned that mobilization, relationship building, learning from one another and implementing shared decisions all happen at the same time as the network grows
- The importance and impact of diversity: All the stakeholders consistently commented on the diversity of the SFP network participants which always include women from across Sudan and South Sudan. This has always reflected the fact that it is not the problem of one specific region or group, but a collective crisis that must be addressed by all.
- The Diaspora plays an important and unique role: Though many national and international groups, including the government, feel that the Diaspora does not have an important role to effect change in their motherland, several other groups expressed their appreciation of the unique role of the Diaspora women as advocates. The Diaspora women have access to the international community and could more readily advocate for peace.
- The Road to Peace is difficult, but Navigable: Forum participants develop deeper appreciation for the complexity of the crises between the two countries and internal conflict groups and the difficulty of getting to a peace agreement. Dialogue becomes challenging, the level of mistrust increases, and the process for getting to action becomes tedious. Nevertheless, the women were encouraged by each other's openness and remain hopeful.

Over the decades of brutal wars, many Sudanese and South Sudanese women have worked tirelessly with limited resources and little access to support or information beyond their immediate circles. They have labored in relative isolation, often unaware of the struggles and hard work of their sisters in different parts of the greater Sudan

and the Diaspora. Sisterhood for Peace has seen what's possible when women build trust in one another, and come together to develop creative solutions to end mass atrocities in their motherlands and around the globe.

In conclusion, the expertise and experience which Sisterhood for Peace participants have gained over eight years present pragmatic approach which can assist others in designing, formulating, and implementing an effective network for change. This innovative approach presents new vibrancy to growing a network of peacebuilders. The integrated efforts of all Sudanese and South Sudanese and that of their friends have helped developed a model that could be used by, or refined to meet specific needs of organizations that wish to do similar work.

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# Exile and Opportunities among South Sudanese Refugee Women in Nairobi, Kenya

by Rose Jaji\*

## **Introduction**

The norm in much of the literature on refugee women is to portray them as helpless victims of violent political conflicts, sexual abuse or exploitation and general violation of their human rights (see Beyani 1995; Forbes Martin 2004; Human Rights Watch 2013). This paper departs from this orthodox portrayal of refugee women and argues that despite the challenges that refugee women encounter as they seek to re-establish livelihoods and social relationships destroyed by war and flight or find alternative means of sustaining themselves, exile is not solely about difficulties and the anomalous. At the same time that South Sudanese refugee women's occupation of marginal spaces as non-citizens leads to economic, political and socio-cultural dislocation and exclusion, it also presents them with opportunities that they did not have in their country of origin. This paper discusses how South Sudanese refugee women in Nairobi, Kenya use opportunities that arise in exile for personal development in terms of literacy and education, engaging in income generating activities as well as challenging the cultural status quo where it clashes with their individual interests.

## **Data Collection**

This paper is based on research which I conducted in 2006-2007 and follow-up research in 2012 and 2013. I obtained data through participant observation, interviews and focus group discussions. I lived in Waithaka and Kawangware which carry large refugee populations and visited the women in their homes in these two areas of Nairobi as well as in Kibera slum and at the Sudanese Women's Association Network offices (SWAN Centre) where some of the women attended literacy classes. I interviewed ten South Sudanese women and had two focus group discussions. One of the groups contained six participants while the other contained seven. For the women's security, all the names used in this paper are pseudonyms.

## **Exile and Quest for Literacy and Education**

Many South Sudanese refugee women from rural backgrounds arrived in Nairobi with limited or no formal education. They explained that this was due to continued preference for boys and prioritisation of their education coupled with the limited access to schools in South Sudan which seceded from Sudan in July 2011 to become an independent country. The circumstances of refugee women from rural backgrounds

is in contrast to refugee women from urban contexts most of whom arrived in Kenya equipped with skills and work experience as nurses, teachers and civil servants which can be used in an urban context. This rural-urban divide is limited among South Sudanese women most of whom stated that what is needed in South Sudan is not reconstruction after the war but construction as the little infrastructure that had existed had been destroyed during the war in addition to the region not having had meaningful infrastructural development. While women from South Sudan related difficult experiences of violence, flight and adaptation to the asylum country, they also showed resilience which enabled them to take Nairobi not only as a sanctuary but also as a site of personal development and preparation for contribution to nation-building after repatriation to South Sudan.

One of the areas that South Sudanese refugee women identified for personal development is literacy and education. Some of the women attended literacy classes at the Sudanese Women's Association Network (SWAN) Centre in Nairobi. The morning class had a participant whom the teacher estimated to be in her 70s. This woman explained that she had never been to school all her life in South Sudan and now that she had the opportunity, she wanted to learn to read and write. For immigrants, proficiency in the host country's main language(s), literacy and education create opportunities for "economic and social mobility" (Warriner 2004: 193). Monica described the importance of literacy and education thus, "There is need for us to go to school because without school [there is] no life." Rennie, another woman, presented the difference between living in Nairobi and in South Sudan in terms of access to education as follows,

There [in Nuba Mountains] is no education or school. The husband can work but I have to stay at home with the children even if there is work. It is our tradition that women don't go to school; it is only children who are allowed to go to school.

Monica juxtaposed South Sudan with Nairobi and related,

Women in [South] Sudan suffer a lot, they walk for five hours to get water which they carry on their heads in the heat, and in Nuba Mountains, sometimes the temperatures can go up to 54 degrees. Now, five hours fetching the water, you almost spend the whole day fetching water. They also do the household work like pounding maize, millet or sorghum to make food for the children. There is no time to go to school in [South] Sudan even if there is a school to go to because much of the time women have to do domestic work and this is what makes women suffer a lot in [South] Sudan. [...] We missed it [education] at home and there is an opportunity here, we have to come [for classes at the SWAN Centre]. Sometimes we walk [when they do not have money for transport] to get the little that can help us like the education that we are getting. We have seen that people grow up in education but sometimes we find it very difficult. The little [money] that we get, we want to use [it] at home and for transport to come to school. Without this little knowledge, we would go nowhere so we are trying our best so that we get this little knowledge to help us.

South Sudanese women as mothers also take advantage of Kenya's free primary education to provide their children, particularly their daughters with the literacy they themselves were denied as children. In the period preceding the referendum on secession, many South Sudanese refugees in Nairobi viewed literacy and education as part of preparation for participatory citizenship in the new nation which has the potential to create for them the kind of space and participation they had been denied for decades in Sudan. Mary depicted education as a channel for a better future by stating, "When you go home, you can help your sister and your brother and the children. When you go home without knowing anything, it is not good." Lucia corroborated this by explaining, "People are here because of the children who have to go to school and for them, they can't stay at home, they have to come here to share and learn so that when they go home, they can prosper."

The women saw literacy and education as having the capacity to transform them from citizens to "full" citizens. Joy defined citizenship as referring to a state of simply living in a country without engagement in processes of nation-building and associated "full" citizenship with participation in a country's economic, political and socio-cultural processes. The women also emphasized the importance of participatory citizenship through their own education and that of their children and portrayed their nurturing roles within families as contributing to nation-building by preparing future leadership for South Sudan. This understanding of citizenship is communitarian as it stresses full membership in terms of embracing both rights and responsibilities (Marshall 1950). It is about involvement and practice or agency which enables people to participate in the affairs of the nation state and shape or influence their society through activity and engagement (Meer and Sever 2004). The desire to contribute to nation-building through nurturing of future leadership can only be realized if concomitantly pursued with the development of requisite infrastructure which addresses basic needs such as education and health. In this respect, repatriation and full citizenship are premised on existence of an enabling environment for women's welfare roles that entail bringing up and educating children (Meer and Sever 2004). Zanie observed,

Those who remain — there are no schools, everything was bombed down; you have to start afresh. The international community is saying South Sudan reconstruction; I don't see it as reconstruction; it is construction because we are starting from zero. [...] To go and resettle back at home? When there are schools, when there are good hospitals with medicine and when the roads are done. Even now, if these things are finished now, tomorrow I will be there. But if they are not there, our children are in school here. How will I take them? Where will I take them to learn? There, they teach in Arabic; my children don't know Arabic. How will they start their life? So, if they put these things in place, they have teachers, they have clean drinking water, they have good roads, they have good schools with teachers, and hospitals with medicine and doctors, even tomorrow I can go. Now, I cannot take the children with me; I go and come back; I go and come back.

South Sudanese women also use their time in Nairobi for training and acquisition of skills ranging from tailoring to formal university education. They made reference to

the two-way relationship between education and economic self-sufficiency in that they needed education for them to have jobs in South Sudan after repatriation at the same time that they need to engage in economic activities in Nairobi in order to finance their children's tertiary education which requires tuition fees in Kenya. The women engaged in a variety of income generating activities such as tailoring, basketry and making of filters for clean drinking water which they sold in South Sudan. Women who sent filters to South Sudan saw this not only as generating incomes for themselves but also as a contribution to South Sudan's need for clean drinking water. Refugee women's engagement in income generation serves a dual purpose in that it enables them to integrate into the host country and, at the same time, prepares them for repatriation with restoration of peace and physical security in their countries of origin (Martin and Copeland 1988). Zanie presented the connection between income generation and going to school thus,

My mother started making *mandazi* [cakes], doing odd jobs — peanut butter selling to make ends meet, making samosas, making what. When there are functions we go and make *kisrathi*, this is our traditional food. Then people paid her, then we started life like that then I joined school.

Some of the women saw quest for security as intertwined with pursuit of education. Martha, a 17-year old girl stated that she had come to Kenya “for learning” while Christine, a 24-year old young woman said that she had come to Kenya “to study”. Julie who was in the same afternoon class as Martha and Christine said that she had studied in a university for six months and explained,

But you see also, for this learning, we are supposed to learn in [South] Sudan but because of war we didn't get the chance before to learn in [South] Sudan, that is why we came to Kenya. Because there was war, we couldn't go to school there and when there is peace we will go. As I was in my country as a mother and at that time I didn't get time to go to school, even my children, they didn't go to school. [...] Really, there is a change in life when I arrived in Kenya. When I arrived I couldn't speak or understand whatever people were saying in English last year, totally. This is — I think that there is a change now; I can understand what the people are saying when they talk in English. Even I can talk in English, even if it is not full English but I am feeling better than before, this is my feeling and also there is a change in my life because I am now living in the city and these are the two things in my life that I feel have changed.

### **Cultural Adjustment and the Women's Rights Narrative**

The use of exile for development of self-esteem and independence was also presented in cases where women had lost their husbands to the war or divorced due to the strain of life in exile. Some of women explained that their husbands lived in South Sudan where they worked and sent money to them. Zanie who was Muslim explained that her husband had “run away” from her and the children in Nairobi because he could not afford to take care of the family. After explaining the difficulties that she had endured taking care of her two children on her own, she stressed her appreciation of individual

Kenyans especially women whom she described as “good”. She related that Kenyan women had taught her “to be independent” and this advice helped her to continue on her own after her husband had deserted her. She described her experience with Kenyan women,

In Kenya how I have stayed with the people; individuals are good especially the women. The women taught me a lot; how to be independent; not to depend on begging, begging, begging; how to interact with them. Whenever they have their activities within the neighbourhood, they call me and I join them.

Zanie also related that she had become liberal in her religious views because she interacted with other women regardless of their religious backgrounds. She also went around without the veil and explained that she wanted non-Muslim women to feel comfortable in her company. She contrasted life in a war situation in South Sudan to Nairobi thus, “I have that freedom of movement; I have the freedom of expression. If something is bad I have to say it is not good; it does not fit me.”

The cosmopolitan character of Nairobi enables refugee women to meet and interact with women from different socio-cultural and economic backgrounds and familiarize with alternative ways of life. This enables many refugee women to challenge cultural practices in their communities which they deem unfavorable or discriminatory. For example, they freely express themselves in defiance of cultural restrictions that require women to be tame and sometimes do so without fear of reprisals from men in their communities because of the atmosphere of security which the presence of vocal NGOs and women’s and human rights groups in Nairobi engenders. Gender is a buzzword in the NGO world such that women who have gender-related problems easily strike a chord with NGOs. The women find the political atmosphere in Nairobi as enabling them to have political opinions and express them without repercussions. South Sudanese refugee women’s occupation of marginal spaces as refugees is enabling in that it functions as a platform where the women create new identities and narratives and resist culturally sanctioned femininities as well as those of the host. In this sense, exile provides the women with the space for “apparent resistance” Hollander and Einwohner (2004) or overt resistance to the patriarchal gaze (Bartky 1988).

In the context of exile, Sudanese women are able to re-evaluate gender roles and come up with new arrangements in their households. As they interact with locals and form relationships outside their refugee communities, they find new opportunities which some of them view as emancipating. The urban context they live in coupled with limited or absence of censorship by elders from their clans and villages gives them confidence to live on their own as demonstrated by cases of refugee women deserted by their husbands who were reluctant to look for their husbands and coax them back. In particular, young women independently made decisions to defer marriage in order to pursue formal education at tertiary level. Some of the women openly expressed admiration for single Kenyan women who have their own houses but do not have husbands and describe them as “free”. Nairobi thus presents South Sudanese refugee

women with the appropriate environment to openly object to and evade traditional, cultural and religious practices such as polygamy, female circumcision and early and/or forced marriage and seek NGO intervention by which the women circumvent age-old traditions and cultural practices that they consider detrimental to their rights, liberties, needs and aspirations. The foreign status of refugees' own culture as outsiders creates the opportunity for refugee women to blend or even substitute it with aspects of local cultures and the women' rights discourses that facilitate pursuit of individual aspirations and goals.

There are similarities between the role of NGOs in South Sudanese refugee women's lives in Nairobi and that of the police in the lives of Nuer refugee women resettled in the US (see Shandy 2007; Holtzman 2008). Although male-dominated structures remain largely intact, refugee women exercise a considerable degree of agency by which they convert exile into an opportunity to "escape the confines of patriarchal control" (Daley 1991: 249). The women appeal to NGOs for intervention because of the absence of the extended family system which traditionally gave its backing to men in matters relating to gender relations and conflict. They also create alternative definitions and compositions of family that do not conform to traditional arrangements. In taking advantage of the absence of the extended family and the presence of NGOs that function as a counter to cultural practices women perceive to be discriminatory and oppressive, the refugee women turn exile into a space in which they maneuver in order to slacken the grip of cultural practices.

The circumstances of South Sudanese refugee women show that while their membership in the category "refugees" is exclusionary, their membership in the category "women" opens channels for inclusion in Nairobi. This shows how social location as a form of belonging 'is constructed along multiple axes of difference' (Yuval-Davis 2006: 200) in ways that render belonging a fluid term as people can belong in different ways. While South Sudanese women are outsiders as refugees, they are able to belong through gender thus showing that contrary to much of the literature, gender as it relates to women does not automatically lead to exclusion as it can become the channel of inclusion where other categories of belonging act as barriers to inclusion. Within the framework of Sacks' (2000) Membership Inference-rich Representative (MIR) device, membership in a specific category implies certain characteristics and activities that are identified with the particular category. As such, when South Sudanese refugee women feel excluded as refugees, it is their membership in the category women which opens up opportunities for them. This is because local women, through inference to their own experiences, are able to understand refugee women who share similar experiences as shown by the case of Zanie cited above and her relationship with Kenyan women. The transnational nature of human and women's rights makes it difficult for activists and organizations to advocate local women's rights and exclude refugee women's gender-related concerns. South Sudanese refugee women's shared identity with local women enables them to overcome the social and legal barriers that are created by the refugee/foreigner category. In terms of how they grapple with issues relating to self-development and the dissonance between cultural values and individual circumstances

and interests, the women demonstrate agency or capability to identify and exploit opportunities in diverse contexts (Giddens 1985).

The circumstances of South Sudanese women in Nairobi portray exile not only as a period of loss but also of gain. Borrowing from Simon Turner's (2006: 57) "included exclusion", the exclusion that refugees generally experience is accompanied by inclusion through refugees' membership in categories such as gender that are transnational in that they defy national boundaries and the concomitant foreigner/citizen divide. Similarly, Victor Turner's (1967) liminality or the state of being "betwixt and between" is as much applicable to refugees as it is to initiates is characterized by activity rather than dormancy. In the same way that initiates prepare for their return into society, South Sudanese women in Nairobi can be seen as using their time in exile to prepare for return to South Sudan and contribute, through knowledge and skills acquired in exile, to development of the new nation as 'full' citizens. This optimism was, however, qualified as the women also acknowledged the challenges that they would face on repatriation. Sarah presented these challenges as follows,

Life in my country is difficult. It is very expensive; expensive a thousand times than before. Now, in Juba alone accommodation is US\$150 per night in a tent. You see. Then come to food. There are no roads; they are trying to make roads now. Transport; you hire a car, it used to be US\$200 per day but now it has gone down to US\$100 per day. People are not employed; what do you do? Those who remain— there are no schools. Everything was bombed down; you have to start afresh. The international community is saying South Sudan reconstruction; I don't see it as reconstruction; it is construction because we are starting from zero.

Monica corroborated this view thus,

We came to get good schools for our children and there are no proper hospitals in South Sudan, here you get medicine and a little knowledge and can do something to earn a living. There are hospitals [in South Sudan] but they have no medicine and proper doctors. Some of the doctors are traditionalists but you can't mix traditional medicine with the scientific one. One can die while people just look at that person.

The emotional attachment to and longing or enthusiasm to return to the country of origin among South Sudanese women is characterized more by a realistic and practical approach rather than romanticism. The women strike a balance between their sense of belonging to South Sudan on the one hand and appreciation of the challenges that are present in the country on the other hand. Their position also demonstrates that repatriation is not solely premised on cessation of the violence that led to flight because it also depends on the presence of a conducive environment through availability and accessibility of basic needs such as food, shelter, health services, education and housing (Harrell-Bond 1989). As such, repatriation among South Sudanese refugee women involves a cost-benefit analysis in which the idea of home being the best place to be is juxtaposed to exile in Nairobi where life is relatively easier and cheaper because

of accessibility of education and health as well as infrastructural development all of which make life in Nairobi relatively easier. The countervailing factors to the longing for home result in the women treating the subject of repatriation with a mixture of cautious enthusiasm. Despite the challenges in South Sudan, the women are eager to return to their country as they do not see Kenya as home. Zanie remarked, "But when I go back home, I will fit into this society. Home is home." Angela noted that she remained South Sudanese and depicted Kenya as a place to rest,

We wanted peace for ourselves but we cannot stay here permanently. When you find a peaceful place, you sit down and rest. When peace comes, we will go back home but if there is no peace, we can't go back. Here there is no peace, no happiness, you don't feel free but when you go back to your country you have freedom and you don't feel restricted. When you walk on the streets and people see you are South Sudanese, they just shout "Gereng Gereng" which refers to John Garang but you have nothing to say. You know it is hurting but this is not your country. Garang was in the bush for these years and that to Kenyans means I as a South Sudanese am coming out of the bush coming to town. We now call Kenyans in South Sudan a Kibaki but it's not as painful as this one here.

Rennie noted that the education they were able to access in Kenya came with a price as their presence in Kenya presented them with other problems. She stated,

This [education] is one of the things that made us come here but coming here means more problems. You have to look for school fees for the children as a refugee, where to sleep, food and your own transport from home to where you get the little knowledge that you get. When I came in 2000, life was very difficult. You had to carry a document around to show that you are a refugee or you would be arrested by the police in Kenya.

Although South Sudanese women are able to access opportunities in Kenya which they could not access in their country of origin, they consider South Sudan as home or the place they belong to. Yuval-Davis (2006: 202) observes that construction of belonging is not simply about cognitive stories because it is also "reflect[s] emotional investments and desire for attachments". South Sudanese women's emotional investment in their country is fostered by constant reminders that they do not belong to Kenya such as being address by the name Garang. This denotes "boundaries of the political community of belonging" Yuval-Davis (2006: 204) which separates South Sudanese in general from Kenya. That the name Garang is used also shows that boundaries are not only about physical space but also about key figures representing or impersonating South Sudanese nationhood or the national and territorial difference of the South Sudanese and their status of being outsiders. "Anchoring of identities" (Whitehouse 2012) occurs not only in physical space but also in individuals who are regarded as the quintessence or symbol of a particular identity.

### **Conclusion**

The situation of South Sudanese refugee women in Nairobi shows that life as refugees

is simultaneously constraining and enabling as well as exclusionary and inclusionary. As South Sudanese women seek to create social space for themselves in Nairobi, they also seize available opportunities for self-development through education, training and economic activities in preparation for life in South Sudan after repatriation. In this respect, the women's activities in exile that appear disconnected from South Sudan are very much part of the new state in that the women use their stay in Nairobi to prepare for active roles in the new state. South Sudanese refugee women's narratives also portray exclusion as a fluid rather than absolute concept. Similarly, the narratives also demonstrate the possibility of refugees having a sense of not belonging to the host country despite inclusion such that the opportunities in Nairobi do not replace South Sudanese refugee women's sense of not belonging to Kenya and of having their home in South Sudan. Exile is an ambiguous space in that it creates challenges and opportunities both of which may not have existed in South Sudan. It is existence on the fringes where gains and losses blend in ways that are reflected in the women's simultaneous sense of being part of Kenya and not being part of it or finding home in Kenya without feeling at home.

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# A Review of Andrew Natsios' *Sudan, South Sudan and Darfur: what everyone needs to know*

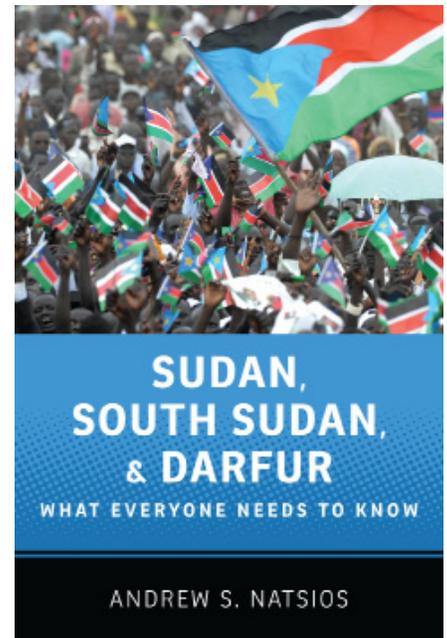
by Richard Lobban\*

Before picking up this book I recalled the time I met Envoy Natsios at a conference on Sudan and had high regard for his work as a Special Humanitarian Coordinator, and Presidential Special Envoy to Sudan. More than that, I was intrigued by the engaging and challenging sub-title of the book since I have spent many of my own professional decades trying to inform students and the public about “everything they need to know” about Sudan. My views and respect for his previous work have not changed.

One overarching concept in the book is that there are ‘three Arab tribes’-- ‘the Arab triangle’-- (p. 10, map supposedly illustrates this) that rule Sudan. Because this is central, I think this deserves some further analysis. First of all, the concept of ‘tribe’ has its own problematic socio-political and historical complexities about which we have written (Fluehr-Lobban, Lobban and Zangari, 1976). Second, is the idea of ‘Arab’ ethnic identity in Sudan whereby the Ja’alyin and Shayqiya are, at best, “Arabized” Nubians. The ‘true’ Arabs, such as Kabbabish, Guhayna and Baggara, are really more marginal than central to the Sudanese polity. The Danagla, who are mentioned as part of this ruling triad, are not really “Arabs” at all but are Nubians with their own long history, and non-Semitic language that is still spoken. Finally this concept supposes that Sudanese ethnic groups are homogeneous by class, which they certainly are not. Yes, it goes without saying that the so-called “Jellaba” elite of the business and military ruling class are overwhelmingly in control of Sudanese decision-making, but understanding modern Sudan needs more of socio-ethnic scalpel than a reductionist ‘ruling tribes’ concept. Natsios has made a general impressionistic statement about power in Sudan, but we are now further along in understanding Sudan.

Despite the presumptuous subtitle, clearly Natsios is not at his strength as an historian. His 4-page chronology only begins in 1821. Did Sudanese history only ‘start’ with Turco-Egyptian occupation....in a nation with 5,000 years of history? Even a gloss to this vast history, when it was mostly not even known as Sudan might be called for. This is a pretty sweeping general comment, but there are very many inaccuracies that could annoy Sudanists, some, of a score of examples could be:

(p. 2) The *circa 1959 map*, indicates Eritrea but it was not independent until 1991; Democratic Republic of Congo was not so named in 1959; border with South Sudan



NATSIOS, ANDREW S. 2012. SUDAN, SOUTH SUDAN AND DARFUR: WHAT EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW. OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. 250 PPS. CONTENTS, GLOSSARY, INTRODUCTION, 4-PAGE CHRONOLOGY (1821-2011), APPENDIX, BIBLIOGRAPHY, \$16.50. ISBN 978-0-19-976419-8

only in 2011.

(p. 5) ‘the Niles *merge* in front of the presidential palace’; only the Blue Nile *diverges* at that point.

(p. 6) the Nile waters are insufficient for Egypt in 2017: According to what source?

(pps. 9 and 24) the Fur sultans lasted *four centuries*; but the Keira dynasties (1650-1916) did not even last three centuries, especially subtracting the Mahdist period. The Daju and Tunjur dynasties were not Fur.

(p. 10) There are 597 tribes and sub-tribes in Sudan and 133 languages; Source is much needed.

(p. 11) *Nilotic tribes are of one racial group*; in fact, this is much more complex topic.

(p. 14) *European fascination with Sudan started in the 18th century*. This overlooks that the land was not even called Sudan at the time. It also overlooks that Greeks and Romans had relations with Nubia even 2,000 years earlier.

(p. 17) *only the Shayqiya resisted the Turks*; in fact their resistance was not long-lasting and the Ja’aliyin resistance of Mek Nimr was fiercer not to mention the southern Sudanese and borderlands resistance.

(p. 18) Thinking that *al-Azhar* was the *imported basis* of Turabi’s *Salafism* is a big leap in analysis.

(p. 22) ‘the Ottoman Turks did *not fear* that the Mahdi would expand his power’; but they sent a military expedition (that failed) to crush him in 1883.

(p. 23) ‘the palace of Gordon is *the same* that is occupied by the post-colonial President’; actually the Turco-Egyptian palace was *utterly destroyed* and fully rebuilt by the British and many times remodeled after 1956.

(p. 28) The reference to the 1899 treaty glossed that this was by military conquest as is made clear in the document. The *rising* of the 1924 Nile River Arabs was the White Flag Society that was not ended as described.

(p. 29) from the British viewpoint I guess there could be illusions that their *rule* was ‘relatively light’ but the tens of thousands of Sudanese who were killed in their conquest and administration might not agree.

(p. 70) *Taha and four associates were hanged*; only Mahmoud Muhammad Taha was hanged by Nimieri on 18 January 1985 following the “September laws” introduced by Nimieri’s Minister of Justice Hassan al-Turabi who had been in this position since 1979. The others were spared when they recanted.

(p. 83) *thousands* of women were *removed* from their *professional positions*; Evidence is needed for this since the majority of the students at the many Sudanese universities today, for example, are women. **Fluehr-Lobban (2012) notes that not a single female**

**justice was removed during this period.**

In various chapters the purported numbers (with lots of zeroes and great variations and ranges) of deaths in the two civil wars and in the Darfur conflict are floated, but never sourced. There is no doubt that human casualties were and still are, great, but the numbers inflated by one side and reduced by another needs more analysis.

(p. 84) Military regime change had '*limited loss of life*'; while might be the case in Khartoum, it was the huge loss in life in the fractured nation that often precipitated the power shifts in Khartoum.

(p. 102) US turned down Sudanese opportunity to seize Osama bin Laden in 1996. This was confirmed to me by Ambassador Carney, but it begs the question of why this was the case when it seems this would have been a great opportunity and parallel to that of French snatched Carlos the Jackal from Khartoum

(p. 112) 'Gezira dam'? I am only familiar with the Sennar, Jebel Aulia and Roseires Dams in the Gezira.

(p. 197) [10 May] 2008 '*fighting was near the presidential palace*'; there are no credible reports that it managed to cross from Omdurman.

Chapter 7 is entitled 'The Three Rebellions of Darfur'. This is one of his best chapters because it does a deep dive into the relevant history and clearly shows that the current or 2003 revolts are not new. We learn about the problems of land use and registration, why Nimieri's "reforms" failed and about the substantial population increase, as well as Gaddafi's machinations for the Arab Gathering and Islamic Legion in Darfur and endless plots against Sudan. The high quality of this chapter is juxtaposed to the frequent errors of the former chapters noted above. Natsios also effectively addresses the issues of identity and governance that also relate.

Chapter 8 continues the 'Third Darfur Rebellion' is also an excellent follow up with more details on the sources of arms and foreign supporters for Darfur as well as the regional geo-political and proxies for this and related power plays in Sudan. The debates about the 'genocide-word' and the number of casualties is carried on in this chapter, but not really resolved with some sort of reasoned ranges. The chart on page 157 has fonts that are so very small that they cannot be read at all.

Chapter 9 covers the very important Comprehensive Peace Agreement. It also is a fine job of analysis and narrative of the details of the context and personages that allowed this document to steer the event from 2005 to 2011 in and around the politics of oil and military maneuvering of the time. Much like the "sequestration" debate in the United States, maybe few imagined that this would actually lead to the separation of the South Sudan, but the CPA clearly set this operation in motion.

Moving to the short Chapter 10 on the Darfur Peace Agreement comes under close scrutiny in parsing the 28 rebel groups and their network of small arms and light weapons that supports them. Chapter 10 also provides reasons for the failure at the

first DPA agreement, and again at the failed Sirte meeting in 2007 with Khartoum not being serious. In April 2008 JEM launched its remarkable attack on Omdurman. Given the unfolding of the Libyan revolution in 2011 it is notable that the main Darfur rebels came to the aid of Gaddafi until he was finally killed in Sirte. JEM's Ibrahim Khalil was captured and held in Tripoli but managed to escape back to Sudan where he killed in still murky circumstances. Not surprising, Khartoum supported the anti-Gaddafi forces. So it was, and still is, trans-Saharan and trans-Sahelian events are much connected.

Finally, Chapter 11 addresses the huge question of The Future of North and South Sudan. As with the earlier chapters, this is very ambitious since no one has a crystal ball and regional events are changing quickly. Here Ambassador Natsios concludes by wondering how the Khartoum government has stayed in power for so long and he determines that it is the military, intelligence organizations, and control of economic resources. This is not very surprising, along with the failure of effectiveness of the sanctions. On the other hand, the NCP ruling party is steadily losing control of the north according to Natsios, but it is the NISS intelligence body that is really in charge. Interestingly, in the climate of conspiracies and autocracy, it is loyalty, more than professional competence, that is rewarded. Natsios believes that time is no longer on the side of the north as the military, political, social, and economic factors that keep the regime going can all be seen as weaknesses at present and indeed, their now function in a "siege mentality". This is not to say the fragile south is much better but only that the north is in a worse condition. On page 204 he notes that the Arabization and Islamization projects have virtually run their courses. Oil has been a blessing and curse for both new states. If there are two failed states or just one, or if there is more national breakup, or if they can both reform is hard to say. As Natsios concluded, 'which of these scenarios unfolds is an open question only time will answer.'

So, in the end, this book is very well worth reading. Where it is strong, it is very strong, but unfortunately the imprecision and inaccuracies presented some challenges to sustain the motivation to get to the valuable end. Natsios is a professional diplomat and administrator, too bad that the Oxford editors did not vet the historical parts with more care.

**Bibliography:**

Fluehr-Lobban, Carolyn, Richard Lobban and Linda Zangari, "Tribe" a Sociopolitical Analysis", UFAHAMU, UCLA Journal of African Studies, vol. 7, no. 1, 1976.

\*Richard Lobban is Professor Emeritus of Anthropology and African Studies at Rhode Island College, where he taught since 1972. Recently he received an excavation license for a continuing archaeological project in Sudanese Nubia with colleagues from Rome and Moscow.

## A Review of Adekeye Adebajo's *UN Peacekeeping in Africa: From the Suez Crisis to the Sudan Conflicts*

by Lawrence Modisett\*

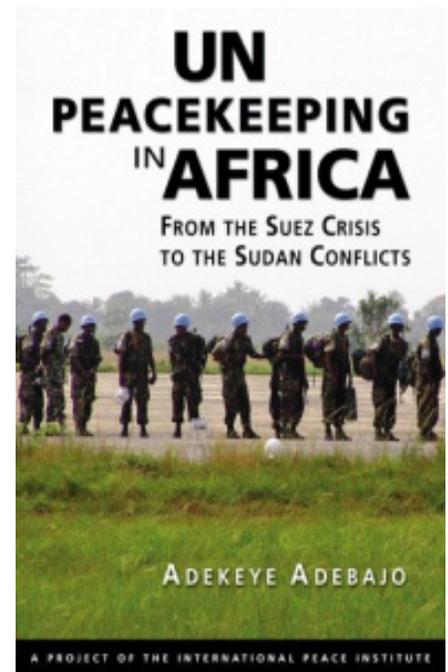
Adekeye Adebajo's opening sentence is blunt: "This book is about the games that great powers play." (p. 1) Much of what follows is exactly that, a description of how great power interests, especially those of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, have largely determined the failure or success of UN peacekeeping missions, or whether they were undertaken at all. Thucydides would feel at home within these pages.

Dr. Adebajo also seeks to provide an African perspective on a topic whose treatment has largely been "Western-centric and self-referential." (p. 3) As he trenchantly observes, "Peacekeeping in Africa is clearly too important to leave to theoreticians in Western academic laboratories." (p. 6)

The resulting book is neither simplistic nor one-sided, but a deeply insightful, multi-faceted examination of UN peacekeeping in Africa. Dr. Adebajo is eminently qualified for his task. A former Rhodes Scholar, he is currently Executive Director of the Centre for Conflict Resolution at the University of Cape Town and the author or editor of five previous books on related themes. He has also served on UN missions in Western Sahara, South Africa and Iraq and is personally acquainted with many of the individuals whose roles he describes. The result is a work that combines scholarship with a sense of realpolitik. The author documents every assertion, but there is never any doubt as to where he stands.

Dr. Adebajo structures his book around fifteen case studies spanning five decades. Grouped by region, they address UN missions to Suez, Western Sahara, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Namibia, Angola, Mozambique, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Somalia, Ethiopia-Eritrea, South Sudan and Darfur.

Despite his initial statement highlighting the role of the major powers, Dr. Adebajo employs a comprehensive analytical framework that examines each conflict on three "interdependent" levels: domestic, regional and external. (p. 7) While noting that every outcome depends heavily upon unique contingencies, he demonstrates that a consistent requirement for successful missions is a high degree of cooperation among players at each level. Obstructionist warlords, self-seeking regional states, or powerful



ADEKEYE ADEBAJO. 2011. *UN PEACEKEEPING IN AFRICA: FROM THE SUEZ CRISIS TO THE SUDAN CONFLICTS*. FOREWORD BY JAMES JONAH. A PROJECT OF THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE INSTITUTE. BOULDER CO: LYNNE RIENNER PUBLISHERS. 270 PP. \$58.50 HARD COVER, \$22.00 PAPERBACK.

external actors can easily thwart a peacekeeping operation – Somalia, Rwanda and Angola providing the starkest examples.

The two case studies from Sudan demonstrate how persistently the leadership in Khartoum has sought to manipulate domestic, regional and external actors. Along with Omar al-Bashir's notorious skill at exploiting divisions among his internal opponents, Dr. Adebajo notes how he attempted to counter African states' support for South Sudan by warning of a chaotic "domino effect" if colonial boundaries began to unravel. (p. 188) He also played to the concerns of major external powers – in particular, the US quest for allies in the post-9/11 "war on terror" and the Chinese need for energy imports. (pp. 190-191) The author notes, however, that both these states used their relationships with Khartoum to pressure Bashir at critical times, the US urging him to agree to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and China helping persuade him to accept the AU/UN peacekeeping force in Darfur.

The Sudanese case studies also embody lessons on the evolution of UN peacekeeping. Dr. Adebajo notes in particular the significance of the "hybrid" AU/UN mission in Darfur, a major step in developing closer cooperation between the international body and regional organizations. He points out that regional peacekeepers benefit from access to the UN's financial, diplomatic and logistical resources, and the UN benefits politically because the "African character" of the operation helps counter charges that UN peacekeeping is a cover for "neocolonial" machinations. (pp. 207, 209) The author also notes that China and Russia supported the hybrid force after opposing an exclusively UN mission.

In his concluding chapter, Dr. Adebajo identifies five things the UN needs to do to increase the effectiveness of future peacekeeping operations in Africa and elsewhere: encourage the Security Council to provide more resources and oversight to its missions; clarify and regularize the division of labor between the UN and regional organizations, which the author calls Africa's "most pressing peacekeeping challenge" (p. 12); secure the cooperation of local hegemony like Nigeria and South Africa; develop effective strategies for dealing with domestic and regional "spoilers" (p. 238); and ensure individuals selected to head peacekeeping missions possess the necessary knowledge, experience and personal qualities to be effective. He also believes the Security Council must be "democratized" to include permanent membership from Africa and other underrepresented regions. (p. 233)

One issue Dr. Adebajo addresses but does not explore at length is how to define "success," although he identifies this as one of the key challenges facing UN peacekeeping. In his introduction, he defines a successful mission as one that implements its mandate in a way that brings "some stability" to the country, even if all mandated tasks have not been completed when the peacekeepers leave. (p. 7) In his conclusion, he seems to go somewhat further, arguing that even where peacekeepers have not succeeded in eliminating violence and instability, as in the eastern Congo, Darfur and elsewhere, things would have been worse without them. (p. 242)

But Dr. Adebajo also seems to share Johan Galtung's conviction that simply imposing

a “negative peace,” one that halts violence without removing its causes, is not enough; lasting success only comes with “positive peace,” where the cultural and structural roots of violence are eliminated. Though he does not use Galtung’s terminology, Dr. Adebajo appears to subscribe to this view when he laments the UN’s “failure to undertake effective and sustained peacebuilding after conflicts” or provide sufficient resources to ensure countries do not fall back into violence. (p. 19) While he applauds steps the UN has taken in this direction, such as establishing the Peacebuilding Commission in 2005 and setting up peacebuilding offices in Liberia and Sierra Leone, he recognizes that these represent only the beginning of a long and arduous process.

This book is both a valuable reference source and an insightful handbook for anyone involved with UN peacekeeping, whether as a scholar or practitioner. The author succeeds in his objectives, providing both a useful analytic framework and a distinctly African perspective. The work is comprehensive and well-documented, and its value is further enhanced by a comprehensive bibliography and thorough index.

\*Lawrence Modisett is an adjunct professor in the field of peacekeeping and conflict resolution at the U.S. Naval War College. He has a Ph.D. from Georgetown University in diplomatic history and was a political analyst at the Central Intelligence Agency during the final years of the Cold War.

# A Review of George Hatke's *Aksum and Nubia: Warfare, Commerce, and Political Fictions in Ancient Northeast Africa*

by Oscar H. Blayton\*

## AKSUM AND NUBIA

Warfare, Commerce, and Political Fictions in  
Ancient Northeast Africa

by

George Hatke

New York University Press  
and

Institute for the Study of the Ancient World  
2013

HATKE, GEORGE. 2013. AKSUM AND NUBIA:  
WARFARE, COMMERCE, AND POLITICAL  
FICTIONS IN ANCIENT NORTHEAST AFRICA. NEW  
YORK UNIVERSITY PRESS. 230 PP. \$45.00.

George Hatke's book *Aksum and Nubia: Warfare, Commerce and Political Fictions in Ancient Northeast Africa* sets out the known evidence of the history of the interaction between the ancient civilizations of Aksum and that of Kush. The former existed in the northern highlands of Ethiopia from about the dawn of the Common Era until the seventh century. The latter extended from the middle Nile Valley south to the lower Blue Nile from the early ninth century BCE until the fourth century CE. And the fact that there is no known evidence of a great deal of interaction between these two civilizations does not take away from the value of this study.

There are quite a few books in print about both ancient Nubia and Aksum. Just to name a few, books on Nubia include: Richard Lobban's *Historical Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval Nubia*, *Ancient Nubia: African Kingdoms on the Nile* by Marjorie Fisher and Derek A. Welsby's *The Kingdom of Kush: The Napatan and Meroitic Empires* to name a few. And among the titles on Aksum are: *Axum* by Yuri Mikhaïlovich Kobishchanov, *Ancient Ethiopia: Aksum, Its Antecedents and Successors* by D. W. Phillipson and Stanley Mayer Burstein's *Ancient African civilizations: Kush and Axum*. But Hatke's book gives us a current "status up-date" as to where we are in understanding the interactions of these two ancient kingdoms.

The introduction of this book deserves a careful read, because it is here that the author stabilizes the expectations of the reader with regard to what has been found in the historical record and what is to be found from reading this book. Hatke very candidly states: "Unfortunately there is relatively little evidence of Aksumite contact with Kush. No mention of Aksum has yet been found in Kushite inscriptions..." We are forewarned at this point that this is a book about what has been found, but that what has been found has not been a cornucopia or archeological or documentary evidence. So our expectations have to be adjusted by a lesson that most of us learn early in life; namely: "you don't always get what you hope for."

But what George Hatke does do for the reader is to carefully detail and explain what evidence has been found and to make some analysis of that evidence. In addition to explaining his work in the introduction found in Chapter 1, he also gives us a brief picture of northeast Africa before the existence of either Nubia or Aksum. That gives

the reader a foundation for understanding why the known historical evidence indicates that there was not more interaction between the two cultures. Water, being one of the main modes of travel of the period on which this work focuses led one culture (Kush) to focus on the Nile River for transportation while the other (Aksum) had as its “highway” the Red Sea.

In the second chapter of the book, Hatke explores what is known about trade that existed between Aksum and Nubia. He informs the reader that there is little material evidence of trade between these two kingdoms. Both kingdoms traded to a more significant degree with the Roman Empire due to commerce flowing from Kush down the Nile River, and from Aksum to ports on the Red Sea.

The third chapter makes a close examination of the transcription of the *Monumentum Adulitarum* II (“Royale Inscription Éthiopienne” [RIÉ] 277 or) by the merchant / geographer Cosmas Indicopleustes. This undated account of an unnamed king of Aksum is a useful, albeit cryptic piece of historical evidence that has tantalized scholars for centuries. Hatke attempts to strain as much of the distilled historical value as possible from what is known about this inscription and the subsequent transcription of Cosmas Indicopleustes. It is a task of gleaning flecks of historical gold from an obdurate landscape rather than digging into a rich vein of the “mother lode.”

In the fourth chapter, Hatke focuses on the 4th century campaigns of King Ousanas and his successor, King ʿĒzānā, and he draws particular attention to the evidence of the possibility of “a direct military confrontation” between Aksum and Nubia during that time. By analyzing RIÉ 186, which memorializes Ousanas’ campaign into northeast Africa, Hatke points out some significant considerations. RIÉ 186 is the oldest known Aksumite inscription to cite a long list of royal titles held by the king which it memorializes. In this list of titles, Kush is one of the lands over which this king claims to hold dominion. And it should be noted that this is the first Aksumite inscription in which Kush is mentioned by name. It is through the analysis of historical evidence, Hatke deduces that RIÉ 186 refers to the military campaigns of Ousanas, although the author does acknowledge that the identity of the king who erected RIÉ 186 “has been a point of contention for many years.”

Chapter 4 goes on to discuss the Aksumite military actions of Kush during the reign of ʿĒzānā, son of Ousanas. Referring to three inscriptions that refer to the same invasion of Nubia, (RIÉ 271, RIÉ 189 and RIÉ 190, whose inscriptions according to the author differ only in terms of the details of the invasion selected), Hatke makes a detailed examination of what can be learned relative to Aksumite – Kushite relations. In addition to the analyses of inscriptions, Hatke reviews existing archaeological evidence and the known Graeco-Roman textual evidence that might shed some light on the issue.

Hatke closes Chapter 4 by examining the question of whether Aksumite military invasions led to the downfall of the Kushite Empire. Most importantly, he cautions against the temptation to assign a precise date to the fall of Kush on the basis of Aksumite inscriptions. The evidence, he concludes, is not significant to make such a connection, and the time frame of the military incursions into Nubia and the time

frame of the fall of the Kushite Kingdom appear to be two separate issues.

In Chapter 5 the author addresses Aksum after the fall of Kush and makes mention that even two centuries after the collapse of Kush, it is still listed among the dominions of a sixth century Kushite king in RIÉ 191. It is because of these anachronisms that Hatke takes a portion of his work to discuss the political fictions in Ancient Northeast Africa. The evidence presented relative to the political fictions is beyond the scope of this review, but the author provides a plethora of incidences of relationships between peoples and politically organized communities to illustrate his point.

The conclusion of this book, found in Chapter 6 is spent in grappling with the nuances of historical interpretation and understanding what is found and what is not found by the historian. Indeed, throughout the entire book Hatke tries with great care to respect the nuances of competing probabilities that make up a body of history. His measured approach to history was greatly appreciated by this reader and is an effective lure that will pull me back to read it more than once.

While the book is extremely interesting because of my particular interests, there are a few matters I would like to comment on, relating more to technical aspects of the book rather than to the content of the material.

In searching through the index I found eight references to Adulis, but non to the *Monumentum Adulitarnum II*, although the name “Monumentum Adulitarnum II” is contained in the chapter heading for Chapter III. It may have been the case that *Monumentum Adulitarnum II* was mentioned so many times [103 times including endnotes] that listing each in the index was impractical, but it was difficult to try to refer back to a particular section to see if *Monumentum Adulitarnum II* was mentioned when it was not listed in the index.

While the author states: “The intended audience includes anyone, scholar and layman alike, with an interest in African history or Late Antiquity.” it is disappointing that terms such as “RIÉ” are not explained. “Royale Inscription Éthiopienne” is not a term with which most laymen are familiar and its acronym “RIÉ” is used in the book quite a few times.

In discussing the military campaign described in the *Monumentum Adulitarnum II*, Hatke states: “As a result of these campaigns Aksumite rule was extended, albeit briefly, throughout the Eastern Desert as far as Roman Egypt and over a sizeable portion of the western coast of Arabia as far north as the Gulf of ‘Aqaba (see Map 1).” Map 1 does not designate “Roman Egypt” nor does it clearly show the extent of the Aksumite rule. What is shown is the routes (and presumably their extent) of the campaigns described in the *Monmumentum Adulitarnum II*. The map shows three linear representations but delivers no information regarding area. However it is helpful that the Beja, Atalmo, and Tangaites peoples are generally located on Map 1, as they are three peoples who are listed in the *Monumentum Adulitarnum II* as having been “subdued” in the memorialized campaign.

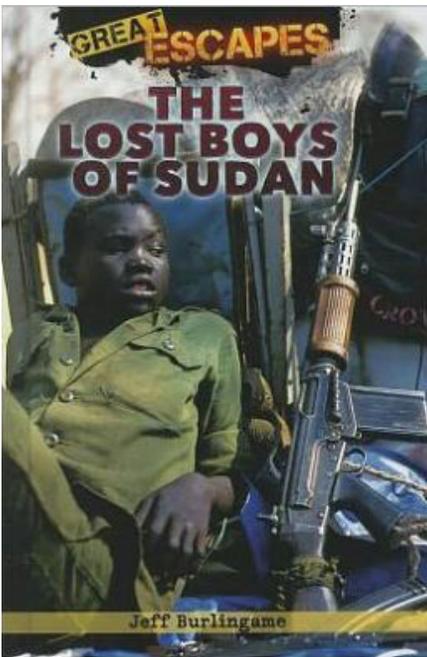
To the author’s credit the remaining two maps in the book are easier to understand.

Map 2 is much more satisfying as it is said to represent the campaigns of Ousanas and ‘Ēzānā in the 4th Century CE. As the campaigns were probably linear to some degree, and the representations of those campaigns on the map are linear the author’s point are quite clear. And Map 3, like Map 2, is easy for the reader to digest in that it depicts three 2 dimensional representations of areas that are said by the author to be the areas of three kingdoms in the 6th century.

Altogether I thoroughly enjoyed the book. It is loaded with detail and thoughtful analysis and I recommend it to anyone who has an interest in Ancient Northeast Africa.

## A Review of Jeff Burlingame's *The Lost Boys of Sudan*

by Brett Shadle\*



BURLINGAME, JEFF: THE LOST BOYS OF SUDAN, TARRYTOWN, NY: MARSHALL CAVENDISH, 2012. 80 PP.

This book is directed toward a youthful audience, ages 11 or 12 and up. It is part of a series called “Great Escapes” which, the blurb tells us, presents stories about “the brave individuals caught in history’s worst atrocities – and their amazing will to survive.” This did not fill me with high hopes for the volume. Would the Lost Boys become the avatars for young Americans seeking a yet-more realistic shooting game? The cover photo of a boy, perhaps in his early teens, in an army uniform reclining next to his automatic rifle, similarly did little to inspire my hopes for the book: by my understanding, relatively few of the Lost Boys – at least those who managed to reach Kenya – fought for the SPLA. Burlingame is the author of numerous books, on topics ranging from Hillary Clinton to Kurt Cobain, from Malcolm X to Taylor Swift. This is his only work on Africa.

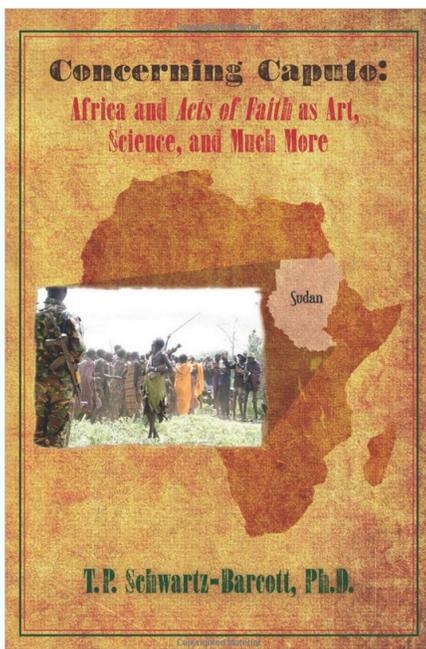
Fortunately, the book exceeded my (albeit limited) expectations. While the author does not flinch from describing the horrors the Lost Boys experienced on their long, very often deadly trek to Ethiopia and then to Kenya, neither does he make the book a pornography of suffering. A deeper examination of the origins of the north-south split would have been helpful. As it stands, the period from the emergence of Australopithecus on through independence is given but one page. Here we also are told that the Dinka are a “traditional people” unlike the “more modernized” residents of the north, an unnecessary reinforcement of ideas young American readers have already imbibed from their culture (17). From this point, however, the book does better, primarily because the author relies much more on words of the Lost Boys themselves. He follows the storyline that is well known to readers of what has almost become a genre, that of Lost Boy (auto)biography. There is nothing new here, but their stories are retold for a younger audience than Dave Eggers or John Dau intended to reach. To that extent, I imagine the book should be successful.

I do wonder, however, about the ethics of a book as this. As Burlingame notes, very many Lost Boys wire money back to Kakuma or South Sudan. Valentino Achak Deng funds a school in South Sudan through speaking tours. John Dau has the Lost Boys Foundation. When one takes Lost Boys’ stories, packages them for younger readers, and sells them to (presumably) hundreds of middle school libraries, does one perhaps

incur a duty to financially assist the Lost Boys, or refugees, or South Sudan? It is surely important to make their stories widely known, but is it ethical to profit too handsomely from it? This is a question I cannot answer here. But at \$34 a book if bought from the publisher, it does give me pause.

## A Review of T.P. Schwartz-Barcott's *Concerning Caputo: Africa and the Acts of Faith as Art, Science, and Much More*

by Enrico Ille\*



SCHWARTZ-BARCOTT, T.P. 2013. CONCERNING CAPUTO: AFRICA AND THE ACTS OF FAITH AS ART, SCIENCE, AND MUCH MORE. MINNEAPOLIS: MILL CITY PRESS. PP. 356 WITH INDEX.

T. P. Schwartz-Barcott presents here a review of Philip Caputo's 2005 novel *Acts of Faith*, based on an extensive appraisal of its complex plot and characters. Filled with a huge number of quotations and summaries of the novel, Schwartz-Barcott's rendering allows rediscovering and rereading Caputo's magnum opus, as it is called on page 1, with a much clearer grasp of the threads and events of the 669-page narrative.

The novel revolves around the issue of relief delivery from Kenya via Lokichoggio to refugee camps and those areas in southern and central Sudan that had been exempted from access permissions by the Sudanese government in Khartoum during the Second Civil War (1983-2005), especially the Nuba Mountains. The plot involves a private relief organization in Kenya, a private airline and its pilots, businessmen as investors, human rights-related non-governmental organizations, journalists, members of SPLA and the Sudan Armed Forces, as well as members of militias and several so-called tribal groups; in short, the complex arena of actors involved in the workings of contemporary wars. They are brought together in "[s]exual liaisons, love affairs, suspicions, animosities, conspiracies, and other intrigues", which inevitably leads "to a series of tragic events" (page 5). Those survivors who initially had any intention to go good are in the end left "less certain of right and wrong, of justice and injustice, and of their power to determine their own fates in Africa" as "[t]hey have not been able to alter the quintessential forces in Africa that burden its most dispossessed people" (page 6-7).

Caputo himself is the subject of a short biographical epilogue. Schwartz-Barcott strikes from the beginning a very personal note here, mentioning in the first paragraph how they "served together as Marine Corps combat officers in Vietnam in 1965" (p. 329). Quoting from Caputo's memoirs *Means of Escape and A Rumour of War*, the writer's childhood in Chicago is retold, including how he described a change of neighborhood as displacement of a "tribal sense of belonging" (p. 330); then the years at university, in Vietnam, the beginnings as reporter, war correspondent and writer. Already his first novel, *Horn of Africa* (1980), covered grounds revisited in the 2005 novel, other often war-related novels followed. The epilogue ends in a picture of Caputo as grandfather, but still energetic writer, and amicable recollections of the author's memories of him.

Instead of this familial tone, Schwartz-Barcott finishes with the assertion that he “ha[s] tried to be as independent, objective, and original as possible” (p. 342). This includes, as Richard A. Lobban points out in his foreword, that the author is less “fatalistic and pessimistic” about Africa than Caputo (page xiii), mentioning some of the more positive developments of the past decade.

However, Schwartz-Barcott’s writing has its better moments, when he looks at the novel as literature, reproduces content and undertakes some attempts at inter-textual reading. It is getting less accomplished the more he tries to give a matter-of-fact evaluation of the novel’s relation to ‘reality’, often being imprecise or even mistaken in details. It makes therefore sense to look first at chapter 6 on *Acts of Faith* as literary art.

For his literary criticism, Schwartz-Barcott heavily relies on a 2007 *Encyclopedia Britannica* article on “The art of literature”, and argues that the novel meets most of its criteria for great literature. This includes a variety of themes; the creation of credible environments through details rather than abstractions; a dynamic structure of events to hold the plot together, while aiming at “psychological situations” (p. 268); complex and manifold characters; thought-provoking symbolisms; narrative techniques supporting character development and the plot; a grand scope and dimension without descending into diffusion, especially through a balanced relation between beginnings and endings. Going through the check-list, Schwartz-Barcott attests the novel to fulfill these criteria, “[n]otwithstanding a few minor slips” (p. 295). This rather mechanical review is turned into a deeper co-reading of the novel and several works on literary theory, mostly Eagleton, Gardner and Culler. Rather than the work of art by itself, Schwartz-Barcott tries to capture what the book does for the reader, and it may be worthwhile for those familiar with the book to re-evaluate their reading experience in this way.

This is certainly the strongest part of the book, as it makes aware of literary reference points and sensitizes for structures and details that both readers interested in thrilling entertainment and readers interested in the region may miss. But doesn’t it strike the author as odd that no comparison is made with any literature *from* Africa? It may be understandable that many Sudanese works are ignored, since they too often don’t appear in English, apart from some writers in the diaspora, such as Tayeb Salih, Jamal Mahjoub and Leila Aboulela, who rose to some level of popularity. But what about the many literary reflections by African writers about war and social disintegration, survival and perseverance-- starting, at least, with Chinua Achebe? Aren’t the references not mentioned in reviews-- including Schwartz-Barcott’s-- at least an indication as to what sender and what addressee are communicating here-- which begs to ask why only them? It seems that literary criticism should have something to offer in this direction.

But I am also at odds with another aspect I want to mention here shortly. The author attempted to verify background information and balance some of the generalizations that a number of Caputo’s characters utter. However, due to a lack of familiarity with the region, he chose too few, often journalistic sources that led to sometimes less and sometimes more distorting results.

Let me concentrate here on Schwartz-Barcott's appraisal of information about 'the Nuba', many of which come from the about hundred pages Caputo dedicates to details of their everyday life, especially through the experience of a former NGO worker as the wife of a Nuba military leader. Similar to the frequent references to Leni Riefenstahl's superficial observations, Schwartz-Barcott does not succeed to sufficiently differentiate the kind of place the Nuba Mountains were, most of all in the 1990s and early 2000s when those events were supposed to take place. He bases his 'reality check' on an *Encyclopedia Britannica* article of 1973, Meyer and Nicholls' *War and Faith in the Sudan* and Jok Madut Jok's *War and Slavery in Sudan*, not completely bad, but certainly insufficient sources.

Many of the qualifications are accordingly wrong: the nomadic pastoralist Kawahla, far from being 'Nuba' or uninvolved in the war, were made "the pacifist Muslim sect of the Nuba" (page 85). Mountain names are misrepresented, called "the Heibans, the Moros, and the Limons" (page 99). Iconographic elements of some Nuba groups' cultural activities, such as scarification, wrestling or the south-eastern Nubas' nyertun – always a ready excuse to depict sexual promiscuity -, become a common trait of all 'Nubans', in spite of a nominal acknowledgement that "Nuba is not so much one highly cohesive society of nearly identical tribes and clans as it is a loose network of many culturally distinctive tribes" (page 101) and some faint hints at Islamization and Arabization. In Chapter 5, these mismatches come to an inexcusable excess, when he writes of a "normative form of copulation in Nuban society" (page 262). I cannot even start to imagine based on which observational position the sexual practices of millions of people could be reduced to such a statement. If it was intended to be ironic, the author doesn't show this very well, especially since the chapter reads like a light-hearted, but not deconstructive travel guide that "would not mention a tip or technique from *Acts* if it seemed to be totally invalid" (page 262).

The importance of these details may be limited for most readers. But the critical post-colonial discourses of the last decades – which he merely mentions in a rather tongue-in-cheek reference on page 322 – showed that an essentialist perspective on Africa is not just about generalizations gone wrong. Representational practices that support the view of Africa as a place difficult to grasp for any outsider – as if this couldn't be said about any place in the world – feed more people's yearning to look into the 'heart of Africa', to detect some all-inclusive truths about this 'exotic place', to write sentences like "Africa [...] is utterly unique, baffling, and inscrutable to the vast majority of people who were not born there" (p. 266).

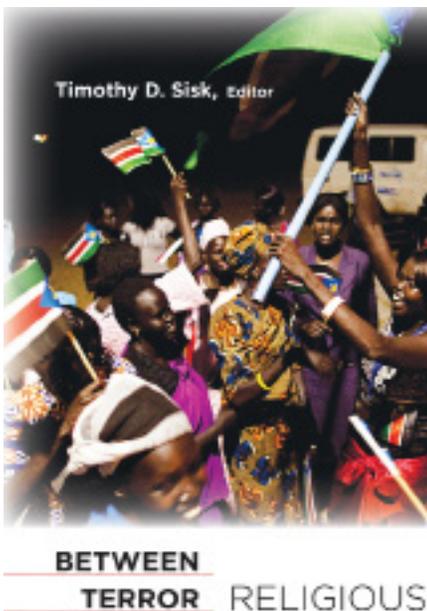
It may even be that for some of "the most disadvantaged, pain-wracked, innocent, and desperate people of this world", who the author dedicated his book to, a tragic version of Oscar Wilde's ironic comment on being known is thereby played out: "There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about" (*The picture of Dorian Gray*, Chapter 1). But the critical point Schwartz-Barcott could have brought more into the foreground is the questionable perception that essentialist generalizations about Africa or any of the people living there are necessary at all: there should be no excuse from critical scrutiny, most of all if it concerns a region that has

been subject to so many simplistic and partly very harmful representations, such as Sudan in general, and the Nuba Mountains in particular.

All this being said, Caputo's novel was for me a thrilling and engaging reading, and Schwartz-Barcott provides a helpful guide, especially for those not at all familiar with the places, times and people it is about. The book should, however, be treated with an alert critical awareness of its writer's perspective, his sources of information, and what they can and cannot say about the places, times and people he speaks about.

## A Review of Timothy Sisk's *Between Terror and Tolerance: Religious Leaders, Conflict and Peacemaking*

by Gabriel Warburg\*



SISK, TIMOTHY. D. ED. 2011. BETWEEN TERROR AND TOLERANCE: RELIGIOUS LEADERS, CONFLICT, AND PEACEMAKING. GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY PRESS. PP.270 PAGES, LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS, INDEX. , \$32.95. PAPERBACK. ISBN 978-1-58901-782-5

It was the Henry R Luce's Initiative on Religion and International Affairs, which made this project possible. It consists of 11 research projects, including diverse regions in the world; starting with the Vatican, Lebanon, Israel, the Nile Valley, Northern Ireland, and ending with Buddhism and the Kashmir Conflict. In his introduction, Sisk starts with the July 2007 attacks in London, which according to investigations were undertaken by British born Muslims, radicalized by "Islamist clerics...believed to have preached glorification of violence...Counterbalancing such situations are others in which religious leaders have played an opposite role : serving as an essential bridge between groups in conflict." [1]

In chapter one titled: "Religion, Nationalism, and Intolerance", David Little illustrates the "dramatic spread of nationalism after the decline of the Cold War". [3] According to Little "The general notion is that under the impulse of nationalism, nation and state coalesce in different ways, with variable consequences for the incidence of violence." [15] In his conclusion, little writes: "religion and ethnicity assume prominence-variously to be sure, and along with other important influences-in shaping the character and ideals of the nation and the organization of the state." [24] In chapter two Nader Hashemi claims that "religion is a key marker of identity today in the Muslim world across the Sunni-Shi'a divide...., recent polling confirms that religion trumps ethnicity and national citizenship as the main source of self-identification across Arab and Muslim societies. [29]

I will first deal briefly with Micheline Ishay's study on Israel and Palestine (Ch.4, pp.69-85), which deals with the role of religion in the Israeli-Palestinian context. The transition from a state-managed economy, to liberalization had an important impact on both Israeli and Palestinian civil societies. "The end of Labor Party's dominance and the rise of the Likud Party...marked a turning point toward liberalization and the emergence of a privileged class independent from the state." [73] It is worth noting that this plan was initiated by members of the Labor party, such as Shimon Peres, who was prime minister at the time. "With others, Peres was convinced that entering the Global economy would lead toward regional prosperity...and strengthen peace efforts." [73] However, the privatization of Israeli economy "showed two contradictory

trends: rapid economic development that coincided with growing social disparity.“ [75] Repetitive failures on both left and right to deliver peace and subsequent intifadas, the Zionist ideology experienced an ever growing identity crisis. It was this void of which enabled religious leaders to increase their social economic and political influence. [75] “Leaders of Likud, ...Shas, Israel Beitenu,...have positioned themselves to provide a new cultural and strategic equilibrium leaning toward the right of the political spectrum.”[77] However, if Ishay, the author of this paper, claimed that “Shas has thus far stood out as the best prospective partner for peace among the religious parties”[83], this is no longer true in the 2013 elections, since Shas has joined the right wing parties opposed to proposed Peace negotiations. Ishay rightly concludes that even “if one could imagine a peace settlement built on some...shared authority between these two ethnic groups, there would be good reason to worry about Palestinian and, to some extent Israeli women, and generally about human rights in this region.”[82]

This review is written for the Bulletin of the Sudan Studies Association; I shall therefore dedicate my interest to the study of Sudan, which happens also to be my own field of interest, and was written by its editor, Dr. Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban; (ch. 6, pp. 105-122). She rightly points out that “since the 1989 Islamist coup, with its brutal suppression of dissent in the North and intensification of the war in the South, these dramatic changes have not been studied,” for the simple reason that “Western researchers have stopped coming to Sudan.”[106] Religion has played a dominant role in conflicts in Sahelian Africa “and has been targeted by evangelical Christians for proselytizing.” [107] Historically, Sudanese Islam, has been a Sufi folk system, dominated by several Sufi orders. It was undermined by the Egyptian conquest in the 19th century which implanted orthodox Islam of the Azhari brand. This was “fundamentally changed by top-down Islamism, imposed and institutionalized by two military regimes...that were greatly influenced by the Muslim Brother-hood.”[109] Politicized Islam, created by Hasan al-Turabi, who together with Gen. Hasan Umar al-Bashir, toppled the democratic Sudanese government, headed by al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, his brother in law and head of the Ansar. They created the Salvation Regime and forced an “Islamist Civilization Regime”, through a new penal code. [109] According to Fluehr-Lobban: “Arab identity was denied by prominent Islamist leaders, such as Hassan al-Turabi”, while the term “Arabized Africans”, was employed for northern Muslims, “targeting the ruling elite.”[111] There has never been a religiously based peace movement in Sudan “This role has been cast for Sudanese in the Diaspora, such as Abdullahi An-Na’im or Mahjoub al-Tijani. [117] It is interesting to note that an academic such as al-Turabi, who studied first in London and then Paris, started his academic career in Sudan as dean of the faculty of law and led the civil uprising against the military regime of General ‘Abbud in 1958. He later became an accomplice of Numayri’s military regime and an active supporter of Muhammad Umar Bashir’s military Coup. In fact, as Fluehr-Lobban writes: “Hassan al-Turabi is perhaps the chief catalyst agent for the outbreak of violence and the years of civil war from 1983 to 2005” [116] it started with the September laws when the Shari’a was reimplemented as the only source of law and the *hudud* [penalties] which were also used against Southern unbelievers. [Kuffar].It was only in 1999, “when the relaxation of the Islamic

experiment coincided with the commercial flow and export of oil,” primarily to China. It was only after the CPA was signed, that the *hudud* were abolished in the southern, non-Muslim Sudan as well as from non-Muslims living in the North and retained only for Muslims. [113]

In her conclusion, Fluehr-Lobban writes: “Whatever the outcome of separation or unity of the Sudan, the role of religion has been key. Religion, well known for its ability for division was part of the genesis of civil war. Religion also has the potential to provide this vision as well as the leadership for a more peaceful future.”[120]

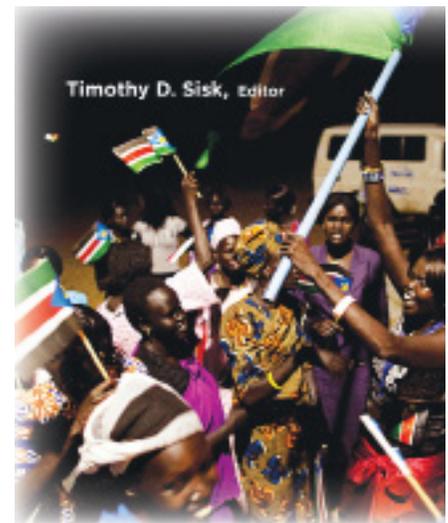
## A Review of Timothy Sisk's *Between Terror and Tolerance: Religious Leaders, Conflict and Peacemaking*

by Katie J. Hickerson\*

"Identities are not like hats," the historian Linda Colley once wrote. "Human beings can and do put several on at a time."<sup>1</sup> Scholars attempting to understand the varying roles of religious, ethnic, and national identities in conflicts across the globe would do well to remember Colley's sartorial quip. Identities are never more multivocal than in cases where religious leaders play crucial roles in national conflicts, as demonstrates the volume entitled, *Between Terror and Tolerance: Religious Leaders, Conflict, and Peacemaking*. This volume explores the roles of religious leaders in ten case studies ranging from Kashmir to Khartoum, from Nigeria to Northern Ireland. By examining these wide-ranging and policy-oriented case studies along with two conceptual chapters, it becomes apparent that the diverse conflicts and challenges facing "nations" require specific knowledge of local contexts.

The role that "religious elites" play in conflict and peacemaking varies from case to case. As the editor states, the "juxtaposition of religious leaders' roles in exacerbation of conflict and the instigation of violence and their roles as direct and active peacemakers is simplistic – religions are 'multivocal'. Thus, there is a need for a greater understanding of the contingencies and circumstances under which religious leaders may play a conflict-exacerbating or conflict-ameliorating role." (p. 2) The volume's case studies focus on "plural" or segmented societies, which Sisk contrasts with "more putatively nation-state-based countries of Western Europe or the complex, integrated, immigrant-based societies such as the United States." (p. 3) That Sisk does not use the term 'postcolonial' or reference the colonial heritage that unites the case studies is striking. These studies include Nader Hashemi's thoughtful examination of Sunni-Shi'a relations in Iraq (chapter 2), George Irani's account of the relationship between the Vatican and Lebanon in its civil wars (chapter 3), and Scott Hibbard's account of the sectarianism in Egypt (chapter 5), all help us consider the case of Sudan in comparative perspective.

Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban's "Religion, War, and Peacemaking in Sudan: Shari'a, Identity Politics, and Human Rights," (chapter 6) provides a thoughtful analysis of recent Sudanese history through an examination of the major post-colonial conflicts and challenges. Fluehr-Lobban goes beyond the "chronic conflicts, history of repressive rule, and human rights violations" (p. 105) that characterize so much



**BETWEEN  
TERROR RELIGIOUS**

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of the knowledge production on Sudan, writing that these issues have roots in the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium that was characterized by “the nearly permanent state of war and suppression” (p. 105). Instead, Fluehr-Lobban brings to light some of the Sudan’s pressing issues outside of the Western clichés: Chinese dependence on Sudanese oil, Sudan as a recipient of the “China model” for development, and the astonishing growth of the Sudanese economy (at the time of this writing, Africa’s eight largest). Additionally, Fluehr-Lobban notes the dramatic transformation of the capital city of Khartoum into one of Africa’s largest, with a population of eight million, one-quarter to one-third of the country’s total population. She notes that, of this growing urban population, “perhaps half... are the internally displaced” and one-quarter are non-Muslim, which is “not only a major demographic transformation of the primary city but of the nation” (p. 106). The northern Sudanese population has also become disproportionately female, due to massive migration of young men to the Persian Gulf. Fluehr-Lobban notes these trends are understudied due to lack of Western researchers in Sudan following the 1989 Islamist coup.

After this provocative introduction articulating a more complex understanding of the East-West and North-South divides through urban space, Fluehr-Lobban examines the various roles of religious leaders in Sudan and “the multiple roles that religion and religious leaders have played, or might play in a future post-conflict society and in the precipitation of conflict and its management.” (p. 106) Fluehr-Lobban suggests that the religious elite and the political elite are the same privileged actors. Crushing the very British-established boundaries which promise democratic alternatives are problems of ethnicity, poor post-colonial governance, self-serving elites, and chronic militarism (p. 107). She summarizes the role of religion in the Sudan crisis as follows: the establishment of the Sudanese religious core and periphery before the nineteenth century ‘militant Islam’ (p. 107) exacerbated economic and demographic divides within Sudan’s borders, the emergence of a post-independence small ethno-religious nationalist movements (Umma Party and Khatmiyya Sufi order), and the reemergence of militant political Islam that placed limitations on non-Muslim citizens (p. 107). Fluehr-Lobban states that these partly explain the religious factors in the conflict, but not entirely—other countries in the Sahel have combinations of these factors, but not the same kinds of conflicts.

Fluehr-Lobban brings to light the different conceptions of Sudan as a Muslim versus multi-religious state by citing the 1998 “Permanent Constitution,” and the 2005 “Interim National Constitution.” The 1998 constitution states, “Islam is the religion of the majority of the population. Christianity and customary creeds have considerable followers” (p. 108). The more recent constitution, however, articulates the State as “a democratic, decentralized, multicultural, multilingual, multiracial, and multi-religious country where such diversities coexist.” (p. 108) This shows that while the nation is considered religiously diverse in binding documents, its policies, particularly the Islamic Civilization Project (Mashru’ al-Hadari), have promoted a “Saudi-like public morality” (p. 109) that has transformed earlier Islamic identities and created a new Sudanese Muslim identity.

Fluehr-Lobban illuminates the difficulties of conceptualizing religious leaders as conflict provoking or peace making when religious leadership has been co-opted by the major political players. In the south, the resistance movements such as the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement and the earlier Anya-Anya maintained secular outlooks even though the leadership was predominately Christian-educated. This calls into question the nature of Sisk's study: how can you analyze Sudanese political leadership without changing your framework of analysis in order to consider, also, religious elites? Does privileging the concept of a democratic secular state force these central political actors to the margins of the very politics they influence?

Fluehr-Lobban's chapter challenges several assumptions guiding this volume—especially the assumption that religious elites and political elites are, or should be, separate. This conflation of the religious and the political is, in fact, the story of modern Sudan. Fluehr-Lobban's contribution shows that the model of the Western nation-state—which Sisk implies as the “ideal” configuration of state power—simply does not work as yardsticks to measure the nation-states of the postcolonial world. Instead, attention should be paid to local configurations of religious and political power.

Following Fluehr-Lobban's piece (chapter 6) there are five additional case studies addressing the relationship between religious leaders and conflicts. These include Rosalind Hackett's account of the interreligious peacemaking and active civil society in Nigeria (chapter 7), Mari Fitzduff's thought-provoking piece on religion and civil society in Northern Ireland (chapter 8), Karina Korostelina's chapter on the relationship between religious and social identities as factors in Tajikistan's civil strife (chapter 9), Susan Hayward's spirited work on the political mobilization of monks in Sri Lanka (chapter 10), and a piece co-written by Sumit Ganguly and Preveen Swami on religious leaders and conflict in Kashmir where “it is far from clear that religious authorities have played a central role in either promoting or dampening religious tensions” (p. 221; chapter 11). The volume concludes with a brief section by Sisk on the aims and findings of this volume. He explains the impetus of this work was to complicate the focus on “ethnic conflict” and strictly economic contributors to violence and instead examine the *social* aspects of conflict. In the end, Sisk argues for a move towards rights-based societies where an integrated civil society “cuts across religious, sectarian, and doctrinal lines” (p. 328) as well as implementing institutionalized religious dialogue in order to marginalize “those who would articulate difference and division” (p. 328). In sum, he argues for a strong state to ensure religious tolerance.

While it may be imprudent to judge a book by its cover, perhaps the best way to conclude this review is by returning to its beginning. A large image of several women standing, smiling, and waving flags of South Sudan graces the front cover of this volume. This is a striking testament to the tangled nature of religion, nationalism, and state-building politics in the Nile Valley. This book is useful for policy makers, conflict resolution specialists, and scholars looking for geographically distinct case studies and thematically diverse approaches to the roles of religious leaders mediating or contributing to political crises.

**Notes:**

1. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, (Pimlico, 2003), 6.

# Tributes to the Memory of Jay O'Brien



*Anthropologist and Sudanist Jay O'Brien passed away shortly after the end of the SSA conference in May 2013 held at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Jay and wife Ellen Gruenbaum, fellow Sudanist, were scheduled to deliver papers at that conference and their absence was cause for general concern. Unfortunately, we soon learned that our fears were founded. Richard and I knew Jay and Ellen from our earliest days in Sudan in the 1970s and we shared the unique adventure of being among the first Americans to carry out research during the early years of the Numieri government. Many of Jay's colleagues and friends have offered tributes and condolences in his memory. And the SSA family of scholars sends its collective condolences to Ellen and the family.*

## **From SSA President Abdullahi Gallab**

Goodbye Jay O'Brien.

We are deeply saddened by the news that our long-time colleague, friend and SSA board member professor Jay O'Brien of Purdue University-West Lafayette passed away Monday May 27, 2013 at the Simon Cancer Center in Indianapolis. Our deepest sympathies and heartfelt condolences go to his wife, our colleague, professor Ellen Gruenbaum and their family.

Jay was scheduled two days before the time of his death to participate in a joint presentation by him and Ellen in the Sudan Studies Association's 32nd conference in Philadelphia titled: "Stories from Sudan: Why Narratives Matter." Alas, we never had a chance to listen to you this time, Jay, nor to say goodbye.

His life-long enthusiasm and relationship with the Sudan and Sudan Studies began in graduate school. He and Ellen first went to Sudan to begin their Ph.D. fieldwork in 1973. The total of their stay in Sudan was five years, during which they overlapped with many SSA colleagues—among them, fellow anthropologists and geographer Sondra and Gerry Hale and Carolyn Fluehr and Richard Lobban. After finishing his fieldwork, Jay returned to the University of Connecticut where he completed his PhD in cultural anthropology. Throughout his academic career, he spent periods teaching

and doing research while based at the University of Khartoum and University of al-Gezira in Wad Medani. He also taught in California State universities, in Sweden, and was a Visiting Professor at the University of Botswana before joining the Anthropology Department at Purdue University-West Lafayette in 2008. He authored many articles and authored and co-authored the following books:

- (1) *The Political Economy of Development and Underdevelopment: An Introduction (with Salah E. el Shazali), DSRC, Khartoum, Sudan. 1979*
- (2) *Economy and Class in Sudan (co-editor Norman O'Neill), Avebury Press, UK. 1988*
- (3) *Golden Ages, Dark Ages: Imagining the Past in Anthropology and History (co-author William Roseberry). University of California Press. 1991*
- (4) *Forthcoming--A Man is Not a Man Without Two Wives: An Anthropologist's Journeys in Sudan.*

Jay was also a talented writer of non-academic prose.

Jay was a consummate, caring and dedicated scholar who made significant contributions that spanned fundamental areas in the field of Sudan studies. His everlasting legacy in this field was, perhaps, best manifested in many of his Sudanese, American and international students who were inspired by his mentorship and his dedication to issues of human cultural life and the search for social justice. His SSA colleagues remember him not only for his scholarship and thoughtful contribution to the livelihood of the Association but also for his generous, friendly and pleasant personality. He had a great, warm wit.

Jay was born in Montclair, New Jersey, on January 13, 1947. He grew up in San Jose, California, and graduated in 1969 from Stanford University. Before that he was an exchange student in Sweden.

Jay is survived by his wife, Ellen, his sons Jesse and Zachary (wife, Michelle) and granddaughter Violet, and his mother Blanche, his sister Karen, along with eleven nieces and nephews.

Abdullahi Gallab  
SSA President

**From Norman O'Neil, friend and collaborator (co-editor *Economy and Class in Sudan*) from UK**

It is with much sadness, but also with a sense of thanksgiving, that I feel compelled to share with others reflections on the life and work of the late Professor Jay O'Brien who sadly died recently at the relatively young age of 66. Jay O'Brien was one among an extraordinary group of American expatriate social-anthropologists working in the University of Khartoum who – throughout the 1970s – both enriched, and were themselves enriched by, Sudanese culture. For me, and for those who encountered

Jay O'Brien at that time, several words serve to encapsulate his character: empathy, compassion, generosity of spirit, integrity, commitment, scholarship, wit, love and playfulness. Jay was always a delight to be with. His intellectual enthusiasm was infectious and was invariably enhanced by a wry sense of humour. He was a superb teacher: popular with staff and students alike, and acknowledged to be immensely generous in terms of the amount of time he was prepared to devote to what today we refer to as counseling, advice on study skills, pastoral care and career development. It mattered to him, a great deal, that his students were able to develop their talents to the full, as a very large number of his Sudanese graduates did, and are now able to gratefully testify. His early work in Sudan soon resulted in a doctorate, several scholarly articles and a jointly edited volume on development in Sudan, in which he was able to encourage and persuade others to contribute, who would not otherwise, at that time, have been able to readily find a publisher for their work. Jay O'Brien helped them in that, as in so many other ways. He was exceptional: he was immensely talented but disarmingly modest, and the kind of person in whom others readily place their trust. He was also a great wit and a delight to be with and he will be greatly missed – by his wife Ellen, his sons Jesse and Zach, by his mother Blanche, sister Karen, and by his many friends and colleagues throughout the world.

**From Abdu M. Musa, Professor of political science, Khartoum, Sudan**

The death of professor Jay saddened me. It is a heart breaking news. We miss a pleasant person and a talented scholar and we will never forget you Jay.

**From Sidgi Kabbalo**

Please accept my deep and sincere condolences. Jay was a good friend, a great academic teacher and researcher and a revolutionary. I was lucky to meet him and became one of his friends. Although I was not his student in the department of social anthropology in Khartoum, I learned so much from our discussions and exchange of books and journals. I will always remember him.

I would have loved to get in touch with you in a different situation. My thoughts are with you and your sons, for whom please convey my condolences.

**From Idris ElHassan**

I received with great sorrow the painful news of the death of our great friend Jay. It is not only a big loss for you and the family, but also to all those who have known him; particularly Shadia, myself and all his friends in the Sudan. We have come to know you and Jay for over thirty five years now. Throughout this period, both of you were true friends and very near to our hearts. We were so happy when we had a chance

to get together for dinner at al- Saha . That evening, he was very relaxed and happy. He was beaming and appeared very delighted. This is the memory we will always hold for him. His openness and sincerity were some of his qualities we cherished most. In the present difficult times , we want you to know that we are thinking of you and the family. We share with you all the sorrow and pain caused by this event. Our sympathies and heart-felt condolences go to you and all his family.

Sincerely, Idris , shadia and family

**From Steve Howard**

Ellen, I was very sad to learn of Jay's death. He was very kind to me as I launched my 'Sudanist' career decades ago, introducing me to some good people at U of K... with my sympathies,

Steve Howard, Director, African Studies and Director, Graduate Studies, Center for International Studies, Professor, Media Arts and Studies, Ohio University

**From Abdullahi El-Tom**

I am so saddened by the loss of Professor Jay O'Brein. I would not have been where I am had it not been for him! May he rest in peace and my sincere condolences to Ellen and the rest of family.

# Note to Contributors

The Bulletin solicits the submission of news items of personal nature, announcements of upcoming 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 the Sudanese Universities, Sudanese proverbs, anecdotes, etc. Articles and other submissions should be typed with full author's name and short bio. All submissions should be sent via email to the editor at least three weeks before the production deadline.

Dr. Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban  
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