

SSA

Newsletter

**A Publication of the Sudan Studies
Association of North America**

نشرة جمعية الدراسات السودانية



Volume 19, No. 1 & 2 (March 2000)

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To:

Sudan Studies Association

Founded in 1981

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The Sudan Studies Association (SSA) is an independent professional society founded in the United States 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. SSA works to foster closer ties among scholars in the Sudan, North America, Europe, the Middle East and other places. Normal activities of the SSA include the publication of this Newsletter, organizing meetings for the exchange of ideas, and recommending research candidates for affiliation with appropriate institutions of Higher Education in the Sudan. The Association also sponsors panels and programs during the meetings of other academic organizations. It occasionally publishes the proceedings of its annual meetings in book form.

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

These categories of membership are available

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Life Membership: (payable in three installments)	\$200.00		
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Africa's Sudanic Core: At The Millennium

From the Editor:

This Issue of the Newsletter coincides with the 19th Annual meeting of the SSA, which will take place in Poughkeepsie, New York, USA. This issue is dedicated to Sudanese art-related issues; it features articles, interviews and works by Sudanese artists in the Diaspora. The plight of Sudanese artists is quite understandable since the basis of their creativity, artistic expression and professional development requires **real** and unbound freedom. In this Issue there is close similarity between Abu Sabib's and Khalid Kodi's works which incorporates Sudanese political themes into their drawings, and this can be seen in Abu Sabib's 1986 drawing "Sisyphus". For both artists (as well as for others), the issues that they show in their works are a testimony of the interdependency of art, politics and other social forces that influence creativity and artistic expression.

Artists in the Sudan are in a continuous struggle to create independently in an environment that is marred by restrictions and sanctions. With the current situation, in which more Sudanese writers, artists and musicians are living in the Diaspora, it will be interesting to note how such an experience of the immigrants is reflected in their works. Such influence was already mirrored in Al-Tayeb Salih's seminal work "Season of Migration to the North", as it is also seen in this Issue in Khalid Kodi's last exhibit (Asrar: A Visual Dialogue with Alice Walker" which is a synthesis between his Sudanese vision and experiences, and the writings of the African-American novelist Alice Walker. Such synthesis, which is reflected painting and literature, could also be felt in music, dance, and academic writings; Sudan however, remains the focal point of these works, at least for now.

Regards,

Ali B Ali-Dinar

Sudan Studies Association 19th Annual Conference

April 6-8, 2000
New England Building
Vassar College
Poughkeepsie, New York

President
Ann M. Lesch

President Elect and Program Coordinator
'Abdullahi 'Ali Ibrahim

Executive Director: Richard A. Lobban

Newsletter Editor: Ali B Ali-Dinar

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PROGRAM

Thursday, April 6, 2000

- 1:00 - 6:15 p.m. Registration
101 New England Building
- 3:00 - 4:30 p.m. **SSA Board Meeting**
- 4:30 - 5:00 p.m. Welcoming Remarks
Chair: Dr. 'Abdullahi 'Ali Ibrahim
President Elect, Sudan Studies Association
- Dr. Norman Fainstein
Dean of the Faculty, Vassar College
- Dr. Constance Berkley
Local Arrangements Coordinator
- 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. Session 1: Plenary Session: **Experiencing Sudan**
- Chair: Dr. Ahmed 'el Amin El Bashir
Panelists: Dr. Amna Bedri, Ambassador Allen Gouly,
Professor Abd al-Rahman Abu Zeid, Dr. Mohammed Sukkar,
Dr. Muddathir Abdel Rahim, Dr. Elias Nyamllel Wakoson
- 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Dinner: Pratt House
Host: Dr. Norman Fainstein

Friday, April 7, 2000

- 8:30 - 9:30 a.m. Session 2: **Nubia: A Corridor to Africa**
- Chair: Sam Laki
Panelists: Ronald Baily, Northeastern University and Marcia Banes, Longfellow School, Cambridge University,
"Unlocking the Secrets of Nubian Culture: Nubainet, etc."
Timothy Kendall, "New Discoveries in Bayuda Desert."
- 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. Session 3a: **"Youth Exudes the Aroma of Paradise: Youth in the New Millenium"**
- Chair: Rogaia Abu Sharaaf
Panelists: Selma Hasan, Swarthmore College; Roshan Musa; and Samah Salman

Discussant: Ismail Rashid; Laura Beny

- 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. Session 3b: **"Exhibitions of Art and Villages"**

Chair: Ali Dinar.

Panelists: Awad Abdelgadir and Khalid Kodi

- 10:30 a.m. Break

- 10:45 - 12:00 noon Session 4: **"Islam in the Political Process"**

Chair: Mohamed Mahmoud

Panelists: Paul Saucier, Rhode Island College, "Nationalism, Identity and Islamic Fundamentalism: Problems, Solutions and the Creation of a Democratic and Poly-ethnic Sudan."

Ismail H. Abdalla, The College of William and Mary, "The Turabi Revolution: At a Dead End of the Road: A By-Pass or Cul de Sac."

Mukhtar A. Ellakhmi, Petroleum University, Saudi Arabia. "Islam, the State and the Nuba Mountains."

Mohamed Mahmoud, Tufts University, "Problematizing Ridda (Apostasy): Is a Critique of Islam Possible?"

- 12:15 - 1:15 p.m. Lunch

- 1:15 - 3:15 p.m. Session 5: **"Strategies for Survival"**

Chair: Barbara Degorge, SUNY Old Westbury

Panelists: Abdelrahim Mohammed Salih, University of Bayreuth, Germany. "Wrestling Nature: Rythm of Life, Human Competence, and Ecological Ambiance at the Nile Fourth Cataract."

Bagie B. Muhammad, Indiana University-Bloomington. "The African Famine and the Story of the Sudanese Women Artist."

Lillian Craig Harris. "Choosing Death, A Consideration of Suicide in Sudan."

- 3:15 - 3:30 p.m. Break

- 3:30 - 5:00 p.m. Session 6: **"Rituals of Power"**

Chair: Gabriel Warburg, Haifa University, Israel

Panelists: Gabriel Warburg, Haifa University, Israel. "Slatin Pasha: Administrator and Soldier."
 Peter Garretson, Florida State University. "The Nefira Age Set Ceremony of the Lataka in Time Perspective, with a Focus on the Nefira of 1933, 1977 and 1999."
 Jay Spaulding. "The Micropolitics on Echo Island."
 Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, Rhode Island College. "The Early Pan-Africanists With Ties to Sudan."

- 5:00 - 6:15 p.m. **Annual Business Meeting**
- 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. Cash Bar: Vassar Alumnae House
- 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Annual Banquet
 Vassar Alumnae House Dining Room
 Speaker: James Faris

Saturday, April 8, 2000

- 8:30 - 9:30 a.m. **Session 7: "In Sickness or in Health"**
- Chair: Dr. Ibrahim Hani
 Panelists: Dr. Ibrahim Hani, International Health Consultant. "The Problems and Challenges in Growth Monitoring."
 Nagat El-Hag, Ohio State University. "Towards a Multidisciplinary Approach to Health Care in Sudan: The Role of Pediatric Psychology."
 Ahmed Abdel-Hameed Adeel, Hanan Mohammed Abdalla and Ahmed Hamad Alnaury. "Household Expenditure on Malaria Case Management in Wad-Medani, Sudan."
 Mohammed Sokkar. "Popular Participation in the Eradication of Malaria."
- 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. **Session 8: "Tayeb Salih's Literary Links With Sudanese Traditions: An In-Depth Discussion."**
- Chair: Dr. Constance Berkley.
 Panelists: 'Abdallahi 'Ali Ibrahim, Tayeb Salih, Talha Jibril, Ibrahim H. Badr.

10:30 - 10:45 a.m. Break

10:45 - 1:00 p.m. **Session 9: "Race Matters"**

Chair: Ambrose Beny.
 Panelists: Stephanie Beswick, Kean University. "The Ethnicity of Bondage in the Valley of the Upper Nile: Slavery and the Slave Trade Through the Eyes of the Possessed."
 Ismael Musah Montana, York University. "The Black Slave Community of Tunis in Context."
 'Abdullahi 'Ali Ibrahim. "Whiteness in Strange Places: The Invention of the Northern Sudanese."
 Khalid al Mubark Mustafa, Woodrow Wilson. "Southern Sudan: Eternal Victim?"
 Kevin Dejesus. "African Child Soldiers in a Comparative Context: Understanding Youth and War in the Sudan."

1:00 - 2:30 p.m. Annual Luncheon : The Cafe at Aula
 Speaker: Tayeb Salih

2:30 - 4:00 p.m. **Meeting of the New Board**
 Room 107 New England Building

2:30 - 4:00 p.m. **Session 10: "Africa at Vassar"**

Chair: Naana Winful
 Panelists: Naana Hagan, Shauna Rhodes, Lydia Daniel
 Discussant: Duane Bailey Castro

4:00 - 5:15 p.m. **Session 11: "Governance, Legitimacy and Libations"**

Chair: Muddathir Abdel Rahim
 Panelists: Richard Lobban, Rhode Island College. "The Search for Politico-Religious Legitimacy Along the Nile."
 Randall Fagely, Pennsylvania State University. "Federal Solution for the Sudan: A Comparative History."
 Malik Balla, Michigan State University. "Sudan and Africa: Who Fails Who?"
 Sam L. Laki, Central State, Ohio. "Management of Water Resources of the Sudan."
 Mohammed Zein, Major-General (retired) and former Ambassador. "Issues in the National Security of Sudan."

5:15 p.m.
 Adjourn

Ma's salaama

The Exiled Modernists: Sudan's Contemporary Art Legacy

by

Sondra Hale, Anthropology Department, UCLA

Since the beginning of the repressive tendencies of the Nimieri regime after the attempted coup in 1971 and especially by the early 1980s, dozens of talented Sudanese modernist artists have been in exile, able to contribute to the cultural politics of the progressive opposition only under enormous constraints. The heavy political hand of the religious right fell heavily on artists, especially painters and sculptors, just as it did on women, "minorities," and non-Muslims. The hardships that have befallen Sudanese contemporary artists have not reached the level of international scrutiny that has underscored the plight of many groups in Sudan in the 1990s. That is partially because most people, including many Sudanese, are unaware of the importance of artists to the contemporary cultural development of Sudan. Sudanese modernist artists have been among the most prominent in Africa and the Middle East and were gaining ground when their ascent was thwarted by the development of the Islamist revolution of 1989. With the scattering into diaspora of musicians, actors, writers, and filmmakers, along with the visual artists, rich cultural resources were squandered.

Visual artists, some of whom have achieved international acclaim, were nurtured by a rich environment, and this is reflected in their art, whether inside Sudan or in exile. Some of the artistic genres may have been originally Western, but the motifs were invariably "Sudanese," or reflected the artists' own political or cultural sensibility. Culturally, northern Sudan, for example, is an exciting place where the beauty and complexity of the Arabic language turns everyone into a poet. Unlike many other places, poetry is for the people; they own their own language, occupy it, use it as a tool, a weapon, a solace, and as text for visual art. Visual art, too, thrived in the capital, especially at Khartoum Technical Institute (KTI), later to become the College of Fine and Applied Art, where for decades dozens of modernist artists emerged, often combining traditional forms/motifs/techniques (e.g., calligraphy) with new methods and images. Although initially rejected by the general public and officials as too "Western," these artists increasingly occupied important places in society, and some were given government jobs, e.g., at the Department of Culture.

The thriving "Khartoum School," could boast such outstanding first generation modernist artists as Ibrahim el-Salahi, Ahmed Mohamed Shibrain, Hussein Shariffe, Hassan Bedawi, Hassan el-Hadi, Taj Ahmed, Musa Khalifa, Mohamed Omer Khalil, Kamala Ibrahim, and many others. The second generation (not all

were trained at KTI), included Mohamed Omer Bushara (in exile in Saudi Arabia and now England), Hassaan Ali (in Egypt), and Omer Kheiry (recently deceased), indirect and direct students of the early generation. Eventually cultural critics emerged among the practitioners and Abdullah Bola and Hassan Musa (both in exile in France) exerted strong political and cultural influence on the newer generations. Now we are seeing a third generation of talented artists, many of whom have fled into exile and only some of whom are managing to deal with their spartan existence and still be artistically productive. Among the newer generation of exiled artists are Bagir Musa (in exile first in Egypt and now Canada) and Khalid Kody (in the U.S.). By the 1980s the cultural center of the north began to embrace artists from western Sudan such as Tahir Bushra, Abdel Aziz Ishaq, and Mohey el-Din el-Zein (all at first in exile in Ethiopia and now the U.S.), whose particular political perspectives and cultural sensibilities had begun to change the Khartoum art scene. Aside from the occasional Nuba, the few southern artists who thrived in the capital are mainly gone, in exile in Nairobi and other African cities. They, too, painted from a rich terrain, cultural traditions, and political pain. Whether or not their art will survive the war is a question.

Meanwhile the College has been converted into a center for religious calligraphy. All sculpture is suspect because of its three dimensional character, and painting is associated with the dreaded West. Artists are expected to serve the religion and the religious state and virtually no political art is tolerated.

Whether or not the exiled artists, who are invaluable national treasures, are able to produce an art that reflects the exile experience and is, thus, "Sudanese" while simultaneously embracing the international milieu, remains to be seen. Whether their art production will reflect only the homeland, invent a new tradition, or create an oppositional culture also remains to be seen. It is a question whether the artists can serve the opposition (or want to) and if the new sensibilities they have accrued while in exile will coalesce into a new artistic tradition grounded in Sudanese culture--when the New Sudan emerges. How important will the new artistic developments be to the New Sudan's cultural development? Will the warriors and sectarians again rule Sudan and develop its culture, or will the cultural workers take front stage?

We can see that the metaphor of waiting is prominent in some of the diaspora art--the suggestion of a languid, politically immobilized population waiting to be galvanized into resistance and rebellion. What role will the artists play in that galvanization?

Conversation with Muhammad Abu Sabib
(art should be a critical tool against the old establishment)

Interviewed by
Endre Stiansen

Muhammad Abu Sabib was born in Merowe, and was raised in Kassala and Gadarif before moving to Khartoum. In 1974 he graduated from the College of Fine and Applied Arts at the Sudan University of Sciences and Technology and received a BA in philosophy from Cairo University (Khartoum). Subsequently he has earned a number of post-graduate degrees: a Higher Diploma from the Institute of African and Asian Studies at the University of Khartoum in 1978; an MA from University of Alexandria (Egypt) in 1982; and a Ph. D. in African Art from Uppsala University (Sweden) in 1995. Before moving to Sweden, he was a lecturer in the College of Fine and Applied Arts. Since receiving his doctorate, he has been associated with the Department of Aesthetics at Uppsala University and has been writing on cultural and artistic issues as an essayist and researcher.

The son of a Shayqi merchant, Abu Sabib is the first and only member of his family to become a professional artist. His grandmother was an accomplished poet performing on special occasions. She has shown great interest in his work, contributing valuable information on the traditional jewellery of the Shayqiyya included in his MA dissertation. The Abu Sabib family is known for its close connection to the Khatmiyya. One grandfather was a trusted khalifa of Sayyid Ali al-Mirghani, and his wife's father was a khalifa in the Khatmiyya.

Abu Sabib is a calligrapher, a painter and a cartoonist. (For technical reasons, the SSA Newsletter can only reproduce a selection of his cartoons.) He has participated in several exhibitions in Khartoum, and a selection of his work will be exhibited at the Fifth International Conference on Sudan Studies, University of Durham, 29 August - 1 September 2000.

Here is a brief summary of a conversation the author recently had with Abu Sabib.

Endre Stiansen: How do you see the role of art in contemporary Sudanese society?

Abu Sabib: The Sudan with its massive size and ethnic diversity embraces a richness of artistic and aesthetic experience that may well be incomparable in Africa. There are so many styles of artistic expression in dance, visual art, music and literature. This huge heritage, rich in variety and quality, can appear overwhelming, but in fact there is a lot of common ground between traditional



M. Abusabib, THE AWAKENING, ink on paper, 1988 الصحوه

artistic heritages of different groups. This is something many people do not understand. This is what I am trying to prove in my present research.

Art is an active element in Sudanese cultures. For this reason art has been closely associated with the nationalist movement ever since the 1920s, as an expressive channel for ideas and aspirations. This association is the case for literature, music and song (modern and traditional) and the visual arts. The role of art in almost all Sudanese cultures has been both functional and aesthetic. Sudanese use art when they celebrate and mourn, in their religious practices. The artistic expression embodies the world outlook of the Sudanese and their cosmological thinking; it also embodies value systems and therefore is very central to the life of the people.

Endre: One feature of early Sudanese cultural nationalism was the emphasis on the Arab and Islamic heritage. For instance, none of the leading poets paid attention to the South. How do you explain this bias?

Abu Sabib: True, particularly with regard to the poetry of the early nationalist poets which carry strong Arab and Islamic overtones. They called on the people to go back to Arab and Islamic values and glories, but very soon this trend was challenged (vehemently) by well-known critics. I can mention al-Amin Ali Madani and Hamza al-Malik Tambal. Through their efforts, Sudanese literature took a decisive turn towards expressing the Sudanese personality. This development went through many stages, and many literary schools contributed. Perhaps nobody did more than Muhammad al-Mahdi Majdhub in taking Sudanese poetry further toward portraying what the Sudanese personality feels. He was the first poet who tried to broaden his understanding of the Sudanese personality, or ethos, by including the South. This paved the way for new generations to deal with Sudanese culture in a deeper sense, Sudanese culture in its historical depth and diversity.

In fact, in modern Sudanese literature, we have seen several important attempts to define the Sudanese culture and personality. Some of these have been very controversial, but in my view they were all genuine endeavours at conceptualising what we mean by "being a Sudanese". One example is the "Sahara and Jungle" school of the 1960s. If we look at the current situation, it is possible to talk about a real Sudanese literary production which expresses the identity of the national community. Also leading musicians and singers today simply refer to their art as Sudanese. This is the outcome of a historical process of "specification" which began with the first stirrings of nationalism early in this century. If we take a long-term perspective toward Sudanese history, we will notice that at certain moments sudden turns of events have set the lives of the people in motion, pressing the intellectual debate further toward a clearer specification of the concept "the Sudanese identity".



M. Abusabib, SISPHUS, ink on paper, 1986 سيزيف

Endre: Since 1989, many Sudanese argue that the vision of unity in diversity has been replaced by cultural jihad. What is your view?

Abu Sabib: Politics and art have always been pivotal to the intellectual debate about the Sudanese identity, and this has strongly influenced the art produced. My generation of visual artists got involved with general Sudanese cultural and political issues in the 1970s, but we inherited the concerns and questions central to the 1960s. These issues have not yet been resolved. The political question is central, particularly what we mean by democracy. The student movement, which was so active even in my own college, and the democratic forces created an environment that greatly influenced my own thinking.

One important and difficult issue, which my generation faced and tried to resolve, is the place and role of the traditional Sudanese heritage in art and culture. In political struggles among intellectuals and activists, the conservative powers have discredited democratic and socialist slogans by describing them as alien to our society, our culture, and our traditional heritage. In this way they created a sort of polarisation between the traditional Sudanese cultural heritage and the progressive ideas be they socialist, democratic, or liberal. Therefore it appears to many that there are two camps: those who favour and defend the traditional heritage, and the progressive forces that disrespect the traditional heritage.

This polarisation is very misleading. We, the progressives, are not against the traditional heritage or Islam. The claimed polarisation is very much used and abused by conservative forces and in particular the Islamists. In a sense, they have high-jacked the Sudanese traditional heritage, and reduced it to two elements: Islam and Arabism. Only the two constitute the proper Sudanese identity, in their opinion. This is very damaging because all of Sudanese history and culture is about variety and diversity. To reduce it to two elements is absurd and simplistic. This is particularly so because they define the Sudan by the northern part of the country, and they want to have the other non-Arab non-Islamic Sudanese cultures reshaped within their own cultural matrix. Their attitude, however, has important antecedents since it is a continuation of the ethno-religious ideology of the old political-religious establishment.

Endre: Much of your own art address contemporary issues. Why have you chosen to be so explicit?

Abu Sabib: It is very difficult to escape the political question, and almost impossible to overlook the big social and cultural problems of the Sudanese people, particularly under this regime. I am a product of the 1960s, with its well-known slogans about democracy, justice and emancipation. Today what we have in the Sudan is the climax of the ethno-religious ideology defined by the NIF in its



M. Abusabib, A pedestrian song, Ink on paper, 1996 أغنية الكدّاري

ultimate form. I believe that art should continue to be an important critical tool against the old establishment. Historically art has always been the mouthpiece of the Sudanese nationalist movement, and it is still carrying out this role. The very least I can do in my profession as an artist is to use the important visual

medium to support the political alternative.

Endre: In your non-political as well as your political art, you use images from popular Sudanese culture. Can you explain why you have chosen this form of expression?

Abu Sabib: In my work I concentrate on what I think "the Sudanese face", the real Sudanese cultural face, is. Sometimes I mix styles because I seek the expression that will be the most appropriate to convey my message. One of my calligraphic works is called "Sudanese Deity". It portrays the shape of a tomb (qubba) and a dead man's torso shaped with a pattern of one letter (the alif), and in the middle of the form a sufi text written in the calligraphic style. I don't think there is that big a difference between the sufi tomb as a religious institution and the old shrine, and the kind of practices carried out at both institutions are in essence the same. I touch also on many issues which reflect what I believe are true Sudanese cultural traits but long denied, eclipsed by the deeply entrenched ethno-religious Arab-Islamic ideology. Islam is part of our culture, as are Arab influences, but our Sudanese culture cannot be abstracted into one religion and one language. The attempt by the present Islamist regime to "Islamise" the arts is both stupid and naive because Sudanese arts and aesthetics are insoluble into an Islamic doctrine -- if there is anything called a Islamic doctrine in arts and aesthetics. What we have are moralist interpretations and guidelines that serve the political agenda of the Islamists.

Endre: You are now living in exile, how has it influenced your work?

Abu Sabib: If there is anything positive to be said about being in exile, it must be that this situation sharpens the perceptions and demands a decisive position towards the problems facing the country. Being in Sweden one comes in direct touch with the European and global artistic output and one finds oneself in a position to judge from first-hand experience. I have not found much difference between what I came to know theoretically when I was in the Sudan, and what I have experienced here during all these years. The questions of ethnicity, class, and power are basically the same.

Endre: Finally, when will you hold your next exhibit in the Sudan?

Abu Sabib: Very soon after this regime has been eliminated!

(For the first time during our conversation, he laughs -- it is a laughter resonating with the sadness accumulated in forced exile and the optimism of a proud Sudanese nationalist.)

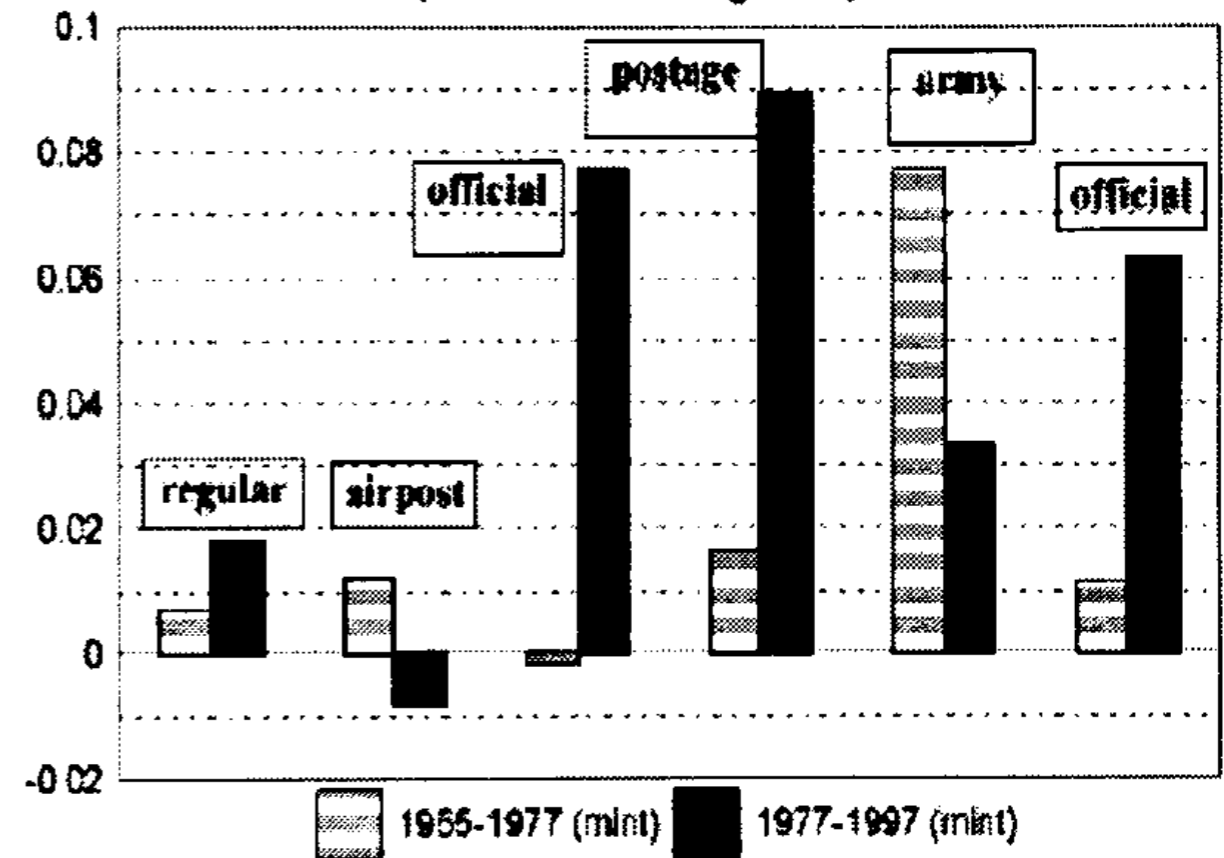
Endre

Prices of Sudanese Stamps over the Decades

Michael Kevane, Santa Clara University

Sudanese stamps have long been of interest to collectors, both because of the artistic imagery of the early colonial stamps, with their romantic 'camel postman' roaming the desert, and because of the numerous overprints and surcharges as postal conditions in the Sudan changed rapidly with different administrations. Somewhat out of curiosity, I decided to determine how much Sudanese stamps appreciated in value over the decades since independence. I thus present in the graph below the change in value of various categories of Sudanese stamps using the standard Scott's catalogs for 1955, 1977, and 1997. I have included only regular catalog items, and not the special and more rare types such as inverted overprints, unusual perforations, or color mismatches.

Annual rates of return (mint stamps)
(for various categories)



As the interested reader can see, the more specialized stamps have appreciated the most over the years. The height of the bars represents an approximation to the annual rate of return of owning all of the stamps in a particular category for the two time periods. Official and postage due stamps saw an 'explosion' in value over the twenty years of the period 1977-1997 compared with the regular and airpost stamps. Notice, however, that these annual rates of return are quite modest... and we have not netted out annual general price inflation. Investing in the U.S. stock market would have been far more lucrative than investing in Sudanese stamps; although I believe there are far more psychic rewards to being able to impress friends with your nerdy stamp collection after a hard night of partying than checking your E*trade account every two hours

**Khalid Kodi:
"Sudanese Artist Probes Suffering of
Homeland"**

Kay Bourne, Bay State Banner,
Thursday, July 29, 1999

Khalid Kodi's revolutionary installations express a pain deep in his heart caused by the disastrous conditions in his homeland, Sudan.

In the same stunning exhibit, "ASRAR: A Visual Dialogue with Alice Walker," Kodi also shows a wall full of his charming acrylics where people and animals float through the mythic dreams he holds to as a son of that very same culture.

With this exhibit at the Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists [in Boston] through Aug. 29, Kodi hopes to open up a conversation about Africa with African Americans in particular. As a departure point, he admires the dialogue Walker opens up with her novel "Possessing the Secret of Joy," among other writings.

Kodi has read and reread Walker's story in which she comments critically on various cultural practices found in Africa, including female circumcision. As Kodi sees it, "Traditionally, when African Americans look into Africa they see it as a holy culture, as inspiring, as glorious, the whole thing is glorious. While Alice Walker looks into African culture with more of a critical eye, taking in both the positives and the negatives."

The installation that most directly relates to Walker's concern features three large "kedahs" or shields arranged on the three walls of an alcove. These domes have been painted in swirls of blood reds and wound blues. These configurations have profound visual historical meaning to Africans.

Kodi has used the shapes to question a practice considered taboo to discuss in a traditional society that abhors change – female circumcision. Other suggestive forms pertinent to the theme take center stage in the alcove, among them a womb shaped object hollowed out as a gourd might be yet strung with taut wires. Also on these wall, as well as decorating another wall by themselves, are Kodi's version of tribal marks.

These human scale sticks are intricately rendered into abstracts of tribal markings by digging thousands of tiny holes into the wood, which is also painted red hinting at the status of scarified men being the best blood of a nation. To achieve a scrubby finish of minute cuts and protuberances, Kodi individually

glued on toothpicks. These staffs can be interpreted as abstract portraits of people in a highly mythologized society. The most devastating of Kodi's inventive installations has been set up in a side gallery at the entrance to the show. The viewer is meant to venture for a few minutes into the ravages of war.

On the floor are igloo shaped cages in which hands grope for a few grains of food or maybe simply for a meaning to the madness that has kept Sudan in the turmoil of a civil war for 40 years. It is the longest ongoing civil war in the world yet one that is so little talked about, it seems a secret to the rest of the world.

Individually made plaster, gray tiles are layered onto the back wall. Each tile has hands on it – the hands of men, women and children, symbolizing the victims in which 1.9 million people have died and another four million have been forced out of their homes. Sudan has produced more internally displaced people than any other country on earth. The tiles serve as a screen upon which are projected wrenching, color slide photographs of these uprooted and dying people.

In two of Kodi's installations, there are cloth garments hanging as if they were mobiles. The authentic traditional dress, some of it adapted for military wear, suggests the suffocating presence of internal colonists who have picked up the dictatorial whip from where the former invaders laid it down. The garments hang like drapes that need an airing, heavy and foreboding.

By contrast to these work freighted with the trauma of a suffering people, Kodi's acrylics dance before the eyes like gossamer adventures from the Arabian Nights. Fantastic birds fly overhead or stand still on the ground, craning a neck to hear the women gossiping. A mammoth green lizard lies contentedly on the ground. As with the installations, these works also have an African look that seems to all for a specific symbolic decoding. Yet the messages are less oppressive, more a psychic language than a rigid law of the land. Asrar stands for "secret" [in Arabic]. In these exceptionally strong works there is a divide between the secrets that oppress versus those that inspire. Kodi's exhibit suggests the harmful secrets are better not kept.

Khalid Kodi ... teaches art at both Boston College and Brown University. He has exhibited extensively in this country and in his native Sudan.

Laura Beny

أخبار عن السودان
Sudan in the News

**Discovery of 3,000-year-old
Egyptian Temple in Sudan**

WARSAW, (AFP Feb 22) - Polish archeologists have found the ruins of a large Egyptian temple in Sudan dating from the New Kingdom era of 1580-1085 B.C., reported the daily Rzeczpospolita. The ruins run for some 500 meters (1,650 feet) along the right bank of the Nile at Hudjeir Gubli, near El Arak, with walls 107 centimeters (three feet two inches) thick and fragments of columns measuring 200-250 centimeters in diameter. The size was unusual for the region, said the newspaper, which sponsored the expedition. The archeologists stumbled on the temple by accident at a local farm, where expedition leader Bogdan Zurawski had gone for water. The stone foundations of the temple were well preserved, but the walls had been used for centuries by local residents as a source of construction materials. The archeologists suggested that an ancient Egyptian city may have been located nearby.

**US Treasury Sanctions Against Sudan's
Sudapet Oil**

(24 February 2000) The US Treasury Department has announced that economic sanctions have been applied to Sudan's state-owned oil enterprise, Sudapet Limited, and to the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company Limited (GNPOC), a joint venture in Sudan between the government, three foreign oil companies, and Sudapet. Following is the text of a February 16 department news release on Treasury's action:

(begin text)

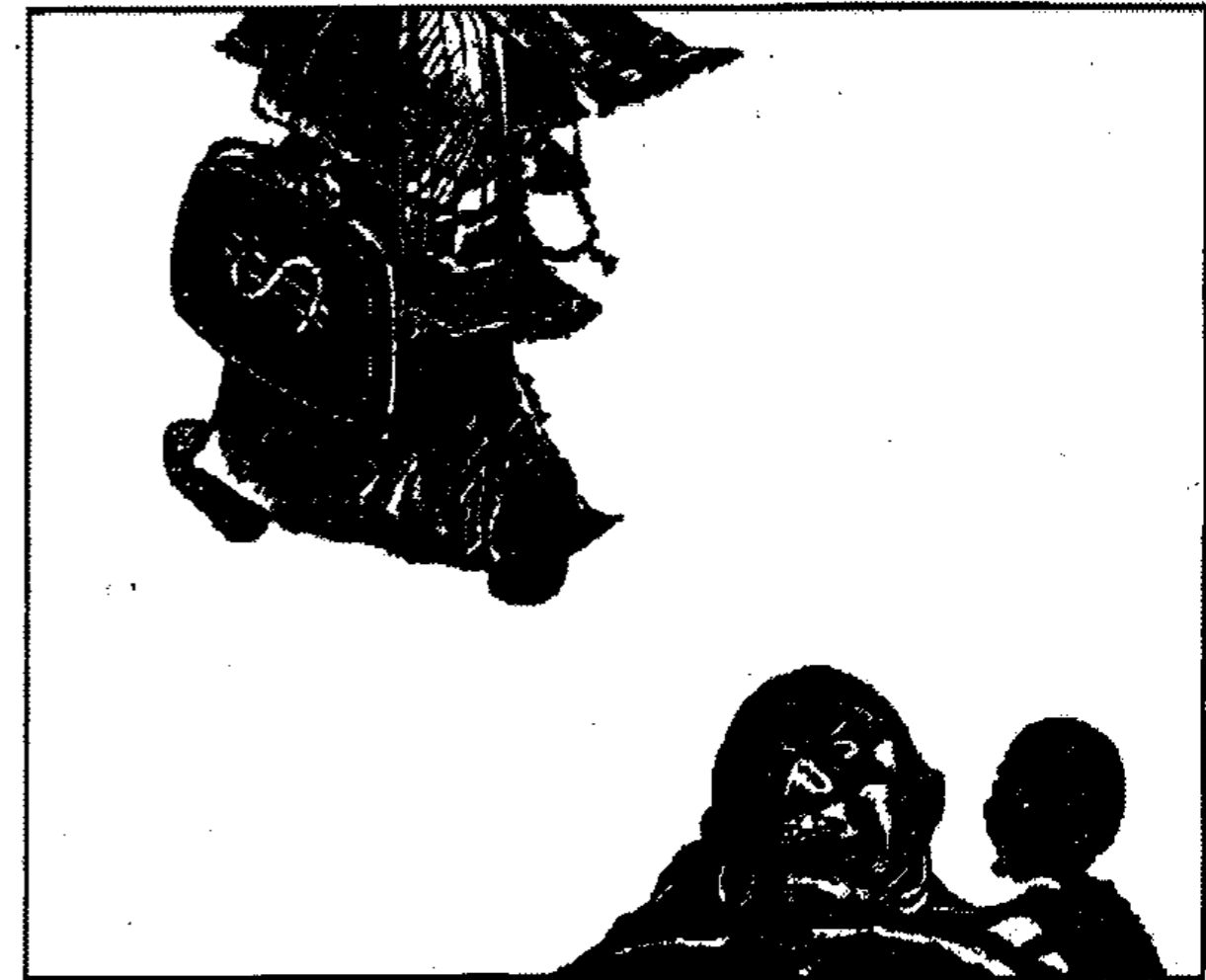
The Treasury Department announced today that economic sanctions against Sudan have been applied to Sudan's state-owned oil enterprise Sudapet Ltd., and to the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company Ltd. (GNPOC), a joint venture in Sudan between the government of Sudan, three foreign oil companies, and Sudapet. The foreign joint venture partners, which have not been designated, are the state-owned China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), Malaysia's state-owned oil company Petronas, and Canada's Talisman Energy Corporation.

The addition of GNPOC and Sudapet to the list of entities owned or controlled by or acting on behalf of the government of Sudan means that U.S. persons and their foreign branches are prohibited from engaging in most trade and financial transactions with these entities, and that any GNPOC or Sudapet assets within the possession or control of U.S. persons are frozen.

Doing business with GNPOC or Sudapet, like doing business with the government of Sudan, carries criminal penalties of up to \$500,000 per violation for corporations and up to \$250,000 for individuals, as well as imprisonment of up to 10 years. Civil penalties of up to \$11,000 per violation may be imposed administratively by Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).

Today's announcement increases to 125 the total number of government of Sudan entities designated by OFAC pursuant to Executive Order 13067 of November 3, 1997.

(end text)



M. Abusabib, THE VAMPIRE, Ink on paper, 1989

The Group of Alternative Policies for Sudan (GAPS)

Ann M. Lesch,
Visiting Fulbright Professor,
Cairo University

The Group for Alternative Policies for Sudan (GAPS) was formed in 1996 by Sudanese professionals and academics in the Sudan and abroad in order to draw up frameworks for social and economic policies that could replace the programs instituted by the government that seized power in 1989 as well as serve as a continuing forum to provide policy analyses for future governments. As GAPS's brochure states, its members "were previously involved in the formulation and implementation of policies inside and outside the Sudan in their capacities as senior executives, academics, and consultants in international organizations." GAPS seeks to serve as a way to build a broadly-based consensus among those professionals as well as to formulate specific policies to "halt and reverse the process of increasing marginalization of the country."

GAPS, headquartered at the Office of African Studies in the American University in Cairo and coordinated initially by Professor Ibrahim Elnur (former head of the economics department, University of Juba), is led by a steering committee that has formulated an ambitious program for research and policy analysis related to (1) development strategies and macro-policy, (2) sectoral policies in agriculture, industry, etc., (3) social services, notably in education, health, and poverty eradication, and (4) population dynamics, particularly related to the dislocations caused by the civil war. Within each cluster of issues, the GAPS steering committee worked to create a core group and wider networks, which include far-flung experts, given the enhanced ability to communicate through the internet. The Cairo-based steering committee prepared analyses of major policy sectors, with considerable assistance from the liaison group of professionals and academics in Khartoum. The latter's involvement has been critically important in order to obtain up-to-date data and pertinent analyses of current programs. The core groups then convened workshops to analyze research reports and develop consensual policy recommendations. These efforts began comprehensively in June 1997, when GAPS received financial support from the Ford Foundation, later supplemented by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

The first conference, held in Cairo in August 1998 in conjunction with the Association of Sudanese Academics, brought together about fifty professors to critique the current situation of higher education and to propose alternative policies. Twenty papers were published in the 630-page Proceedings of the Conference on the State and Future of Higher Education in Sudan, edited by

Mohamed El Amin A. El Tom. Detailed recommendations to overhaul the university system were also published in the proceedings. The published papers included studies of the process of Arabization and Islamization in higher education; the negative impact on the quality of education caused by the proliferation of universities; the overproduction of ill-trained graduates, which the economy cannot absorb; changes in admissions criteria that result inter alia in the admission of academically unqualified students so long as they can pay the fees in hard currency; gender stereotyping in the educational system; and the political, social, and economic causes of the intellectual brain drain in the 1990s. Since only eleven participants came directly from the Sudan and only two of their papers were published in the proceedings, the papers and recommendations primarily reflected the perspectives of exiles, some of whom had been abroad a long time. Their essays and the conference recommendations will be reviewed separately in a future issue of the SSA Newsletter. I will only note here that many of the recommendations would be impossible to implement under current conditions and would be difficult to implement even in the future, given the major structural and financial changes that have occurred in the higher education system during the past decade. Nonetheless, the fact that the formal professional association initiated and sponsored the conference gives weight to its recommendations and indicates the deep concern that academics have about the deterioration of their once-renowned system of higher education.

GAPS's second publication was Towards a Framework for Attainable Health Policies for Sudan, the proceedings of a workshop held in Cairo in March 1999 and organized by Dr. Magda M. A. Ali. The proceedings were the culmination of intensive efforts to collect country-wide statistics and conduct case studies by doctors and health practitioners inside the Sudan. Dr. Ali developed a network of more than 200 medical doctors, senior public health specialists, and pharmacists, of whom 25 came together for that workshop. The draft document and proceedings were distributed widely to medical personnel and discussed in follow-up workshops, including one in Doha in February 2000. Although the proceedings will be reviewed separately in the Newsletter, I will note here that the (unsigned) essays reflect intimate knowledge of current health indicators, health service delivery, and the situation facing pharmacies and the pharmaceutical industry. Case studies on the deterioration in the Khartoum Teaching Hospital and in a rural area near Wadi Halfa illuminate the deleterious impact of the government's withdrawal from financing the health system. The dismantling of the Occupational Health Department illustrates the politically-motivated destruction of a valuable program. The proceedings also include brief reports by Sudanese doctors who visited the South and Wadi Halfa as well as the executive summary of the WHO/UNICEF joint assessment mission to Bahr El-Ghazal in June 1998. The workshop participants offer concrete suggestions for the improvement of health care, some of which could be

implemented under the existing political system.

GAPS's work on social policy also encompasses the issue of basic education. It commissioned eight studies, which include data collection and surveys within the Sudan by its Khartoum-based liaison group. Plans are being made for a conference on general education, co-sponsored by the Association of Sudanese Academics and the Association of School Teachers in Sudan.

By now GAPS is deeply involved in the analysis of the Sudanese economy from macro and sectoral perspectives. The Khartoum-based group has been analyzing macro-policy, taking as its starting point an assessment of the structural adjustment policies that the government launched in 1992. They are critiquing the economic and social impact of the cancellation of subsidies, introduction of fees for services, and depression of wages, as well as analyzing whether the policies have been able to foster economic growth and hold down inflation. The group is also developing alternative macro-policies that take into account social needs and regional equity.

GAPS plans to hold workshops in conjunction with the Sudanese Engineering Society in the United Kingdom (SESUK) on infrastructural issues related to water resources and industrial development. SESUK has already held a workshop on energy resources, with a particular focus on the potential for enhancing hydroelectric power in the Nile basin.

GAPS convened a high-level working group in Cairo in January 2000 for a five-day consultation on agricultural policies. The participants felt a sense of urgency, given the depth of the agricultural crisis. They also wanted to undertake a frank critique of past development models and structures. Participants emphasized the need for sustainable as well as equitable policies. The workshop was convened by Professor Farouk M. Ibrahim, former professor of plant pathology at Khartoum University and long-term consultant to FAO in South Yemen. Dr. Ibrahim succeeded Dr. Elnur as coordinator of GAPS in November 1999, when the latter joined the Population Council's Cairo office. Dr. Ibrahim's working paper utilized a report by FAO in 1997, the government's strategic plan, and the Economic and Social Agenda for the Sudan (a policy framework prepared in 1998 by Sudanese academics at the African Centre for Resources and Environment, chaired by Mansour Khalid). Dr. Ibrahim sharply criticized many past policies, including the way in which governments prevented tenants from behaving as independent entrepreneurs, pushed the original cultivators and pastoralists off the land, and encouraged mechanized farms that turned large areas into dust bowls. His presentation provoked a lively discussion. At separate sessions, the participants critiqued papers on managing natural resources, the irrigated agricultural sector, rainfed agriculture in western Sudan, the financing

of rural development, and rehabilitation and development of the South. Two important days then focused on reaching a consensus on two draft frameworks, one a strategy for agricultural development in general and the other a strategy for rehabilitation and agricultural development in the war-torn South. The guidelines give priority to human development and income generating activities, especially among women and in rainfed areas. They emphasize the importance of shifting resources to the rehabilitation and development of war affected areas and the value of the carefully calibrated introduction of technology as well as the strengthening of water systems. Although logistical and visa complications prevented all but two of the invitees from coming directly from Sudan to Cairo, those present had long and deep experience in government, parastatals, and universities, which enabled them to craft detailed policy recommendations. These will be discussed further inside and outside the country. The proposals can be useful for funding agencies and grassroots organizations as well as to influence the future policies of political groups.

The GAPS initiative is a pioneering effort to mobilize the talents and experience of Sudanese academics and professionals in order to critique past economic policies and conceptualize possible future policies. Although operating on a shoe-string budget and with widely scattered participants, its coordinators have succeeded admirably in their objectives. The frankness with which GAPS addresses the socio-economic problems facing the Sudan testifies to the continuing vitality of the Sudanese intellectual community in the face of extreme hardships and an uncertain future.

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The renowned Sudanese novelist, Al-Tayib Salih, will be the keynote speaker at the SSA traditional luncheon on Saturday April 8th, 2000 in Room 107, New England Building, Vassar College. The SSA encourage all Sudanese and their friends in New York and New England to attend and participate in this cultural event. The cost for Saturday Luncheon is \$25.00. For reservation please contact:

Ms. Patricia Boyd E-mail paboyn@vassar.edu,
Fax (914) 437-7204 Phone (914) 437-7490

Recent Articles/Book Reviews on Sudan

Compiled by Michael Kevane

Hoffman, LC; Fisher, PP; Sales, J. **Carcass and meat characteristics of the Nile crocodile (*Crocodylus niloticus*)** *Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture*, Feb, 2000, V80(n3):390-396.

Kleindienst, MR. **On the Nile Corridor and the out-of-Africa Model** *Current Anthropology*, Feb, 2000, V41(n1):107-109.

Lovell, MS. **Burton, Speke and the source of the Nile** *TLS-the Times Literary Supplement*, Dec 24, 1999(n5047):15.

Meital, Y. **The Khartoum Conference and Egyptian policy after the 1967 War: A reexamination** *Middle East Journal*, Win, 2000, V54(n1):64-82.

Bakheit, MA; Warille, AA. **Anomalies of the vermiform appendix and prevalence of acute appendicitis in Khartoum** *East African Medical Journal*, Jun, 1999, V76(n6):338-340.

Stigger, P. **Omdurman 1898: The eye-witnesses speak: The British conquest of the Sudan as described by participants in letters, diaries, photos and drawings, (1998) (English)** by P. Harrington, F.A. Sharf *International History Review*, Dec, 1999, V21(n4):1038-1039.

Ibrahim, AA. **A theology of modernity: Hasan al-Turabi and Islamic renewal in Sudan** *Africa Today*, Sum-fal, 1999, V46(n3-4):195-222.

Edwards, DN. **Meroe city: An ancient African capital: John Garstang's excavations in the Sudan., (1997) (English)** by L. Torok, I. Hofmann, I. Nagy *Journal of African History*, 1999, V40(n3):475-476.

Musa, HA; Shears, P; Kafi, S; Elsabag, SK. **Water quality and public health in northern Sudan: a study of rural and peri-urban communities** *Journal of Applied Microbiology*, Nov, 1999, V87(n5):676-682.

Book Reviews

Review of Ann Lesch, **The Sudan: Contested National Identities**, Indiana University Press, 1998.

This timely, well-researched and comprehensive review of the political forces and events responsible for the tragedy of the modern Sudan is definitely worth the very modest paperback price. Lesch surveys the political writings, secondary literature, and events as they unfolded until the end of 1997. Sadly, recent events do not make the book out of date; politics in Sudan, despite spectacular headlines of rifts in both ruling regime and opposition NDA, remain sectarian, personal, divisive and stalemated.

The book focuses on national-level political forces. It opens with a brief discussion of the concepts of nation and identity that frames the history of conflict in the Sudan. A couple of short and very readable chapters then bring us right up to the brief 1985-89 parliamentary period. This in and of itself is remarkable for most books on Sudan, which spend inordinate time on the 1950s and 1960s, leaving the last chapter for the present. Finally, we have a book that focuses on today! The chapters on the present situation are arranged in rough chronological order, and include discussions of the parliamentary period, the polarization among the northern parties, two chapters on the negotiations with the S.P.L.A., the complex structures of the current military regime, a thorough chapter on the indoctrination and control policies of the military regime, and two chapters on the fragmented opposition. An appendix lists members of governments since 1985, there are copious notes for each chapter, and an excellent index.

For this reviewer the book constitutes a veiled criticism of and political primer for the opposition to the military regime. The main opposition, consisting of S.P.L.A. and former northern political parties D.U.P. and Umma, have utterly failed to articulate a compelling vision that would constitute a real call to arms. Without such a vision their hopes to liberate the people of the Sudan from a criminal dictatorship that hides behind Islamic rhetoric seem utopian. The regime will eventually fall, but not because of a better alternative. And the Sudan will end up like Zaire/Congo. That is the criticism.

The primer part of the book carefully goes through, in a balanced and objective way, the tortuous politics of the last thirty years, and insistently suggests that what Lesch calls the 'ethnic-pluralist' model of the state is the correct alternative. After reading this book, could any reasonable person disagree?

Lesch's unsaid message is that neither side seems to have found their miracle propagandist, a person who articulates a vision that overwhelms and captures the public imagination. Lesch does not pretend to offer that inspiring vision, and perhaps inherent in the nature of the Sudan such a vision is impossible: what language would it be phrased in, anyway? Arabic? English? Definitely not a southern language, if it is to command the loyalty of the north. Multi-lingual imagery? Why not?

The poverty of the vision of the current crop of leaders is I think apparent when one thinks of the lack of imagery created by the political forces. For instance, the only image in Lesch's book, other than a map, consists of the S.P.L.A.'s Venn diagrams of political possibilities in Sudan, reproduced on page 176. The top part shows a large circle representing northern Sudan encompassing a smaller circle representing southern Sudan. The middle diagram shows the two circles, now equal in size, partially overlapping. The bottom diagram shows two circles again, this time completely separate. This is the vision that a villager would take up arms for? Only a Ph.D. like Garang would think so. Perhaps he is thinking of the Olympic symbol? Does the S.P.L.A. have a logo? Does the N.D.A.? Perhaps the real problem of Sudan is the marginalization of poets, artists, singers and musicians... the current regime has managed to isolate and disperse them, preventing the efflorescence of a language and imagery of resistance.

Lesch ends on a hopeful note, summarizing the soul-searching of the Umma Party which, in exile and dependant on the S.P.L.A. for the military fight against the regime, decided to support a secular state and the right to separation for the South. Finally, some growing up, the reader might feel. (But not enough, apparently, as in 1999 Sadiq al-Mahdi, head of the Umma, went on to negotiate separate agreements aimed at returning himself to power.) Apologies do not symbols or programs make, however, and much more work needs to be done.

by Michael Kevane,
Santa Clara University
December 30, 1999

The Sudan Studies Association Newsletter

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Note to Contributors:

The Newsletter solicits the submission of news items of personal nature, announcements of up-coming scholarly events or anticipated publications, abstracts of dissertations or scholarly papers, panel proposals, articles, book reviews, bibliographical or historiographical essays, impressions about recent visits to the Sudan, research experiences in the Sudan, exchange programs with faculty in Sudanese Universities, Sudanese proverbs, anecdotes, etc. Articles and other submissions should be typed with full author's name and address. If it is all possible, we prefer having submissions in diskette, or better still through the electronic media (e-mail). The latter is fast and, for the most part, free. The Newsletter goes to the printer in the last day of January, April, July, and October. All submissions should arrive at least three weeks before production deadline.

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