

# SUDAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

BULLETIN

نشرة جمعية الدراسات  
السودانية



*SPLM party rally, Northern Sudan, 2007 (courtesy North Khartoum SPLM office)*

*In this issue:* Tributes to beloved SSA members Robert O. Collins, Edith Grothberg, and Ambrose Beny; Highlights of the 2008 annual SSA Conference, Tallahassee; Articles: Alex de Waal "Sudan, whose agreement, whose peace?"; Al-sadiq Y. Abdalla, "On the relevance of Linguistics education to the communicative needs of the Sudanese;" Reviews: The Kenana Handbook of Sudan 2007; Darfur: short history of a long war 2005; Condemned to repeat 2002; The Bible or the Axe 2005

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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. 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 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.

## join us

*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.

### Membership Categories

Regular	\$30.00
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## Passages



Dr. Collins with doctoral graduate Scopas Poggo

### **Eulogy on Professor Emeritus Robert Oakley Collins By Scopas Poggo**

I first came to know the late Professor Emeritus Robert Oakley Collins through his books when I was doing research for my Master's thesis (*The Pattern of Azande Resistance to British Rule in the Southern Sudan, 1898-1914*) in the Department of History at Memphis State University, Tennessee in 1991-92. Inspired by his enormous knowledge about the Southern Sudan in particular, the region in which I was born and raised, I decided to seek admission in the History Department at the University of California, Santa Barbara to be supervised by him during my doctoral program (1994-1999). As one of the three Southern Sudanese students and the last that he supervised, it was truly a wonderful and rare academic opportunity to study under the tutelage of a very well educated, well-trained, and well-enlightened scholar on the history of the Southern Sudan in particular, and the Sudan at large. I must indeed say that

the knowledge and skills that I acquired in the History Department at UCSB during Collins's mentorship have modeled me into a critical, analytical, and meticulous scholar. These qualities are reflected in my own scholarship on the Southern Sudan.

Professor Collins supervised twenty-five doctoral students in his 29 years of tenure (1965-1994) in the Department of History at UCSB. Four Sudanese graduate students received their doctoral degrees under his mentorship: Dr. Ahmed Sikainga (Northern Sudan, 1986); the late Dr. Damazo Dut Majak (Southern Sudan, 1990); Dr. Kenneth Okeny (Southern Sudan, 1992); and myself (Southern Sudan, 1999). The Southern Sudanese who received their Ph.D.s under Professor Collins's supervision owe him a treasure of thanks for training the first batch of doctoral students in history from that region since the country gained its independence in 1956.

Professor Collins wanted his graduate students to have a holistic understanding of African history: from pre-colonial times to the present. He was demanding, tough, and fair to his students. He was easily approachable, likeable, and available to his students at all times. Despite his busy schedule, whenever his students asked him to write letters of recommendation for them, he would not hesitate to do so. Thus, all of his doctoral students found teaching or administrative positions in colleges, universities, the private sector, or in government. Professor Collins has indeed left behind a permanent positive legacy in the minds and hearts of his former students!

Professor Collins scholarship on the Southern Sudan in particular, and the Sudan at large is very important and impressive. His dedication to the study of the history of the Upper Nile region of Africa yielded more than thirty books and several articles (written by him or co-authored). His research work is in-depth, easily readable, and his writing style is very impressive. His last contribution to the historiography of the Sudan is his newly published book entitled *A Modern History of the Sudan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Dr. Collins schol-

arship on the Sudan earned him three distinguished awards, which included the presidential award from former President Jaafar Mohammed Numayr in the early 1980s, his book, *Shadows in the Grass: Britain in the Southern Sudan, 1918-1956* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983) earned him an award on the best book on Britain in 1984, and the *Constantine Panunzio* award (2007)—only one of the two awards given to Professor Emeritus who continued with active publication record at the University of California systems. Professor Collins publications have been, and will continue to be read by Sudanese faculty, students, politicians, the general public, as well as foreign diplomats, governments, and non-governmental organizations that have interests or conduct business in the Sudan. Religious organizations (Christian or Islamic) as well as non-Sudanese scholars who specialize on various aspects of the Sudanese history, anthropology, ethnicity, culture, religion, and languages will find his books very valuable. Yale University Press, which published several books of Professor Collins could honor one of its prolific authors by reprinting his major works whose copyrights have already expired: *The Southern Sudan, 1883-1898: A Struggle for Control* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1962); *Land Beyond the Rivers: The Southern Sudan 1898-1918* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971); *Shadows in the Grass; Britain in the Southern Sudan 1918-1956* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

Of all his published works, Professor Collins had only one book (co-authored by him and J. Millard Burr) that aroused international controversy: *Alms for Jihad: Charity and Terrorism in the Islamic World*. A wealthy Saudi citizen, Shaykh Khalid bin Mahfouz who was mentioned in the book, challenged Cambridge University Press (publisher of the book), and to avoid a lawsuit for defamation in courts in the United Kingdom, the latter accepted to pay the former a settlement, and also destroyed all copies that had not yet been sold. Professor Collins remained defiant until his last hour about the controversy surrounding their book. In a state-

ment published online in *History News Network* at George Mason University, Collins noted: "he and J. Millard Burr had written a good book that deserved to exist...The Shaykh can burn the books in Britain, but he cannot prevent the recovery of the copyright by the authors nor their search for a U.S. publisher to reprint a new edition of "Alms for Jihad." (*History News Network* article reproduced in *Los Angeles Times Stories*, 29 April 2008).

Professor Collins eloquent speech was equally matched by his impressive writing style. He could read Arabic and was fluent in this language. He was an excellent story-teller, and this rare quality made him a great teacher in his undergraduate and graduate classrooms at Williams College, Columbia University, and University of California, Santa Barbara. As a reader for his African history courses in the History Department at UCSB for four years (1994-98), I personally noticed that his classes were popular among the students. He was also an articulate and effective public speaker. I had the rare and last opportunity to chair a panel on the Sudan in which Dr. Collins participated at the African Studies Association conference in San Francisco, California in November 2006. It was truly an honor for me to present papers in the same panel with a former mentor.

Besides his teaching and research responsibilities, Professor Collins served in various administrative capacities at UCSB. He was chair of the History Department, Dean of the Graduate Division for ten years, and Director of the UCSB, Washington, D.C. Center for one year. He was frequently consulted on issues pertaining to the Sudan by the State Department officials, and former US presidents like Jimmy Carter. He was also a consultant for Chevron Oil Company that had initially invested in the oil fields at Bentiu in the Upper Nile region of the Southern Sudan in 1983. In his retirement years, especially from 2003 until his death on April 11, 2008, he was frequently consulted on various issues, pertaining to the Darfur conflict in western Sudan.

As I conclude this celebration of Dr.

Collins contributions to scholarship, I salute a man of enormous knowledge, wisdom, and a wonderful sense of humor. I am honored that Professor Collins came into my life. I looked to him as an excellent mentor, and he held me to high standards!

Scopas S. Pogo, Ph.D.  
The Ohio State University



**Edith  
Henderson  
Grotberg**

**February 5, 1918 -  
May 20, 2008**

Edith Henderson Grotberg, a world renowned educational psychologist and co-founder with husband Lee Burchinal of the Sudan-American Foundation for Education (SAFE), died on May 20, 2008, of pneumonia at Sibley Memorial Hospital in Washington, DC.

Known as “Ede”, Dr. Grotberg received her BA degree in Liberal Arts from Northwestern University in 1938 she also earned her PhD in the School of Education at Northwestern University, completing it in 1958 with a concentration on educational psychology. In 1963, she joined the faculty at American University in Washington, D.C., in the Department of Education, where she developed the nation’s first program for teaching children with learning disabilities. Also, while at American University she was honored as the Outstanding Professor and was elected President of the Faculty Senate. Further academic appoint-

ments were as an Adjunct Professor at Ahfad University for Women, Omdurman, Sudan; George Washington University, School of Public Health and Health Services, Washington, D.C.; and Georgetown University, School of Nursing and Health Sciences.

Dr. Grotberg had many leadership roles in her field. She was a Board Member and then President (2003) of the International Council of Psychology. She was co-Chair of the United States Federal Interagency Committee for the International Year of the Child, 1978–1980, a United Nations initiative. She was a Senior Associate, Institute for Mental Health Initiatives (IMHI), Washington, D.C., and Managing Editor of *Dialogue*, published by IMHI. She created and was a Senior Scientist and Director of the International Resilience Research Project, Civitan International Research Center, University of Alabama, Birmingham. The resilience project involved researchers in over 30 countries. In addition, Dr. Grotberg was a member of the faculty of Curso Internacional de Actualizacion de Resiliencia, Universidad Nacional de Lanus Buenos Aires, Argentina and a member of the International Scientific Committee, International Academy of Law and Mental Health.

She has been recognized with the 1995 Knowledge Utilization Award for applying research knowledge to the promotion of resilience; First Prize in 1997 from the National Association of Mental Health Information Officers for issues of *Dialogue*; 1998 Achievement Award from the Institute for Mental Health Initiatives; American Psychological Association Presidential Citation for Scholarly Leadership, 2000; Ahfad Graduates Medal, 1983; Honorary Doctoral Degree from Ahfad University for Women, 2002; and elected Fellow of the American Psychological Association 2007. Much of her international impact was through her work involving projects in collaboration with UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, and PAHO.

**Memorial Contributions** may be made to the **Sudan American Foundation for Education**, marked for the **Ahfad Scholarship Fund**. The funds will be used to pay for scholar-

ships for young women from Darfur and southern and eastern Sudan at the Ahfad University for Women where Dr. Grotberg and her husband, Dr. Lee Burchinal, taught for five years. Sudanese American Foundation for Education (SAFE) has collected and sent over 280,000 books, over 70,000 issues of scientific and professional journals, and a wide variety of educational equipment and supplies to over 60 academic libraries, NGOs, and other organizations throughout Sudan, but mainly in the northern region. In addition, a shipment of over 25,000 books is being prepared for shipment in late July. This shipment is being sent in cooperation with the World Bank Volunteer Book Project. Contributions to this effort would be welcomed. Providing your contribution to the Fund through SAFE will allow you to claim a federal tax deduction for your contribution. The Ahfad University will match contributions to the **Edith H. Grotberg Scholarship Fund**.

The SSA community lost a long time member and supporter with the death on May 20, 2008 of Dr. Edith H. Grotberg. She taught at the Ahfad University for Women from 1983 through 1987. During this time, Dr. Grotberg introduced the first courses in the country on learning disabilities and special education. She also directed many senior papers and conducted research on ways to help Sudanese mothers stimulate the development of their infants and young children. Some of her many publications appeared in various issues of *The Ahfad Journal*. Dr. Grotberg was also one of the founding directors and the treasurer of the Sudan-American Foundation for Education.

The many persons in Sudan and around the world whose lives she touched remember her for her ready smile, gracious manner, intelligence, and generosity to anyone in need. Remembrances to Ede”, as she was known to her many friends and colleagues, can be posted on her Web site, [www.edithgrotberg.com](http://www.edithgrotberg.com). Her site also contains a full description of her many accomplishments and contributions to the world.

Dr. Grotberg is survived by her hus-

band, Dr. Lee G. Burchinal; her 3 children, Sandra Grotberg, Karen Weinberg, and James Grotberg; 3 step-children, Margaret Burchinal, Janice O’Boyle, and Esther McGinty; 13 grandchildren, and 5 great grandchildren. As a Sudanese friend in Omdurman, noted: “She is starting her own tribe.”

by Lee Burchinal



## Remembering Ambrose Ahang Beny

by  
Francis M. Deng

Eulogies typically honor the memory of the departed through recollections about their character and accomplishments by those who knew them well. I remember Ambrose Ahang Beny as a colleague, a friend and a fellow Southern Sudanese intellectual with whom I enjoyed stimulating exchanges of ideas and shared many concerns about our country and our people.

Those of us who knew Ambrose Ahang will remember him as a first-rate scholar with a sharp intellect, a love for ideas, and a witty talent for articulating them with engaging relish. After all, he graduated with honors from the Faculty of Arts, Khartoum University, was appointed on the academic staff of the Faculty, and was then sent abroad on a scholarship to pursue post-graduate studies in English literature. But his love for ideas and intellectual engagement was far broader than his scholarly and professional focus on literature.

Although I knew Ambrose Ahang in

Khartoum University, I believe I was several years his senior and it was in the United States where I pursued graduate studies in law at Yale University, and he continued his studies at the University of Indiana, that I got to know him well. Our first encounter resulted from a tragic incident. One day, I received a surprise call from Caldwell, New Jersey, from Rita d'Joseph who informed me that she and her husband were the host family of a Sudanese student, Ambrose Beny, who had just arrived in the United States and was on an orientation course before proceeding to Indiana for graduate studies. She then informed me that Ambrose had had a bad car accident and was in the hospital. I immediately went to Caldwell and was relieved that Ambrose's life was not in danger, but shocked by the severity of the injuries he had suffered. Shattered, his jaw and face needed major surgical repair, which was eventually done with remarkable success. Another blessing was that he was under the care of a truly compassionate host family, Jack and Rita d'Joseph, who treated him with great affection.

As I understood later, Ambrose was driving at night with a friend of the d'Josephs, John Hall, a locally well known avowed reader, with a particular interest in English literature and African history, and with whom Ambrose had struck a friendship. John Hall was driving, but did not suffer any major injury, except that he must have been in shock, for it was the badly injured Ambrose who got out of the car and went to the nearest house, bleeding profusely, asking for help. From that incident and throughout his recovery, Ambrose demonstrated remarkable courage, which made it easier for those around him to cope with his tragedy.

It was from Rita d'Joseph that I first learned an anecdote which she attributed to Ambrose and which I have used over the years to the amusement of my audiences. Without mentioning Ambrose by name, I relate the story of a host family, whose Southern Sudanese guest student was curious about African-Americans and wanted to see them. His white

host family took him to Harlem. As they were driving around, Ambrose wondered where the Blacks were. The answer he got was, "Don't you see them all over the streets?" The Southern Sudanese's reaction was, "But these are Arabs." Of course, Ambrose knew that they were not Arabs, but the point I believe he wanted to make, and which I make in retelling the anecdote, is that African-Americans, like the so-called Sudanese Arabs, are for the most part a hybrid race and identity is malleable.

While at Indiana University, Ambrose visited me in New Haven and we had a pleasant time together, reminiscing about our home country and our university days in Khartoum. As I was working on my doctoral dissertation on Dinka law, I took advantage of his presence to discuss many issues related to the Dinka cultural values and their legal expression. Ambrose allowed me to tape some of our conversations and I recorded him singing in Atuot with Mading De Riak, which one may hear in my collection of songs *Music of the Sudan: The Role of Song and Dance in Dinka Society* (Smithsonian Global Sound). I should note here that until John Burton's studies—see, e.g., *God's Ants: A Study of Atuot Religion* (1981)—academically formalized their identity as a separate group, aided by the knowledge and insights of Atuot intellectuals including Ambrose, we never thought of the Atuot as different from the Dinka. The Dinka saw the Atuot as a branch of the Dinka. In any case, Ambrose and I enjoyed discussing our traditional culture with no question about our common Dinka identity.

Ambrose later hinted to me that he had befriended a young woman undergraduate in Indiana. The relationship sounded serious. I was therefore not surprised when Ambrose informed me shortly afterwards that they were planning to marry and he asked me to be his best man. I flew down to Indiana for the wedding and met Mary for the first time. The wedding was small and private, involving the couple, Mary's sister as the bridesmaid, myself as the best man and the priest.

Ambrose and Mary visited me before

leaving for the Sudan. Mary was pregnant with their first child, John. In the years that followed, Ambrose continued his graduate studies at Leeds University in England, where my brother Zachariah Bol and I visited them, then returned to the Sudan, where he served in different capacities, first in Khartoum University, then in the national Ministry of Culture and Information, and finally in the University of Juba. When I returned to the Sudan as Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ambrose and Mary and their three children, John, Laura and Iduol were living in Khartoum. When Mary eventually returned to the United States with the children, the temporary interruption in Ambrose's relations with his children never affected their bond of love and affection, which spoke highly of the role Mary played in raising their children under difficult circumstances. She gave them an excellent education in the United States and ensured their professional success.

Although their marriage ended, Ambrose maintained a warm relationship with Mary and an extraordinarily close bond with their children. Indeed, one of the aspects of Ambrose's life which gave me great satisfaction was witnessing how all three of his children with Mary, John, Laura, and Iduol were so devoted to their father. They gave him all the support one could expect from one's children at such a time. And they gave me a very gratifying appreciation for the modest support I tried to give them and their father. When I first learned of Ambrose's terminal condition, I flew to Toronto and spent the day with him and John and Laura, in the hospital. Iduol had just gone back to her job in New York. Both Laura and Iduol exchanged messages with me in which they expressed their appreciation, but more importantly conveyed their devotion to their father and a deep sense of loss that loomed over them.

Ambrose faced death with remarkable courage. He fought hard for his life, challenging discouraging statistics. With a painful sense of humor, he said to me that he was not statistics and that, in any case, even if the chances for

survival were only one percent, there was no reason why he would not be one of those covered by that percentage. And indeed, the experimental treatment he was receiving was working so well that the doctors told his children that he was "a walking miracle". But he was also courageously prepared to go, if that was the timing of his destiny. I am also convinced that he felt comforted by the presence by his bedside of the children he would leave behind. They went back with him to the Sudan and the news about his condition continued to be miraculously positive.

When the end came and Laura announced, "My Dad is Gone," describing him as her "friend and soul mate", whom she would miss deeply, it was a very painful surprise to me. My response was a combination of obvious shock, and consolation that he was leaving behind wonderful children whose devoted love for him was boundless. "My dear Laura," I wrote in response, "I was deeply saddened by the tragic news of your father's passing away, especially as it came to me as a surprise. I heard that your father was doing very well in the Sudan and that you were considering having him stay in the country instead of returning to North America. We must, of course, now live with the reality of his having gone. However, your words confirm he has left behind a loving family and I know that he has also left behind a wide circle of dear friends and colleagues. That is the kind of death the Dinka say need not be mourned, for he will continue to live in the fond memories of his family and the large circle of people he has touched. Nevertheless, Dorothy and our sons join me in sending our most heartfelt condolences and prayers for his eternal rest. Please pass the same to the other members of the family, your Mom, John and Iduol. May God bless you all and console you in your grave loss. I will follow this with a call in a little while."

Ambrose and I did not always agree, especially on the politics of the South, but we found intellectual stimulation in discussing our differences, respected each other's opinions,

and nearly always searched for and found a common ground. Ambrose had the remarkable ability to discuss issues objectively, and even passionately, but without personalizing them. Even in his last days, when the end was near, his intellect remained sharp, his concern with national issues undiminished, and his optimism, though tempered by realism, very much alive.

Although Ambrose and I had been friends for long, I believe his last days brought us even closer together. Those days also brought me much closer to his children, for which I am deeply grateful.

Echoing what I said to Laura, the Dinka say that a man who has left behind children to continue his name, linked to the extended circle of relatives and friends, and has touched many more people in a wide variety of ways, should not be mourned, for he will remain alive in the memory of the living. On all counts, Ambrose Ahang Beny will remain alive in the memory of a wide circle of relatives, friends, and associates at home and abroad. May the Almighty God also rest his soul in peace in the world of the everlasting life he has joined.

*Francis Deng serves as U.N. Special Advisor for the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities*



## **Remembering Ambrose Ahang Beny Acuar (1938-2008)**

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My Father was born around the year 1938 in Aturok, Yirol, Southern Sudan into an Atuot Dinka family. His father was Beny Acuar and his mother was Kulang Mou Kacuol. He had five brothers—Madol, Macar, Kon (deceased), Ahou (deceased), and Cieng—and

one sister—Acuoth. My Father left home at an early age to attend school at a time when the schools in southern Sudan were run by British colonialists. In what I believe was a compromise, my Grandfather, Beny Acuar, had selected my Father from among his siblings to attend school. Families generally preferred boys and young men to be reared for a life of cattle-herding. Boys spent many days of the year in the cattle camps and it was an honorable thing to do. Curious, I often asked my Father why Beny Acuar chose him and not another sibling. I believe that his Father recognized his brilliance and wisdom from an early age and thus sent him to school.

Although my Father was the only person in his immediate family to receive a formal education, he never forgot where he came from and he did not view himself as superior to those who remained in the village. Instead, my Father had a rather complex understanding of his physical and existential journey from home. It was part blessing and part curse, he once told me. He never fully elaborated on this point but I understand it thus: his journey was a blessing in that it exposed him to a wide variety of intriguing ideas, people, and worlds and it was a curse in that it came at the cost of frequent alienation, loneliness, and deeply missing his parents and siblings as well as the simplicity of life in the village and cattle camps. He reflected on the initial “foreignness” of the towns (in the South) where his schools were located and his youthful experience of “culture shock”. My Father also humorously shared how he loved school holidays because they meant a homecoming during which he would drink fresh cow’s milk to his heart’s content, rid his system of the “awful” food of colonial boarding schools, and shake off the pretenses of town life with a deep sigh of relief, relaxing back into Atuot society, culture and song.

My Father first attended Akot Primary School, and from there went on to Loka Intermediate School and Rumbek Secondary School. From the beginning, he excelled academically, finishing at the top of his class at each level. He absolutely loved ideas and learning,



*Laura and father Ambrose Beny, Toronto, February 4, 2008*

more for their own sake than for any instrumental purpose. (Indeed, he recently lamented to me how education is increasingly viewed instrumentally and students choose majors based on potential monetary remuneration rather than passion and genuine curiosity.) By his final year, Rumbek Secondary School had been relocated to Khartoum because of the outbreak of the first civil war in the mid 1950s. It was his first time to travel North, creating yet another “culture shock” for my Father. However, he quickly adjusted to life in Khartoum. After all, his early years were a study in dramatic contrasts, adjustments and seamlessly straddling multiple worlds and imaginations.

Because of his exemplary performance at Rumbek Secondary School, my Father won a coveted spot at the University of Khartoum (the “U. of K.”) at a time when admissions were extremely selective. Thus, he was among the earliest southern Sudanese students to attend the university. Once again, he excelled academically, winning the University Shell Company Prize for the best all-around intermediate year student in the Faculty of Arts, U. of K, in 1962. My Father had a fascinating and

memorable experience at the U. of K. It was the first time for him to experience such profound intellectual cross-fertilization born of the convergence of some of the Sudan’s best young minds from every region of the country. It was during his undergraduate studies that my Father came to appreciate the significance of “*being Sudanese*”. He made many deep and lasting friendships with classmates from every region of the Sudan, including colleagues who held vastly different political views. Many of these friends, most of whom had not seen my Father for many years, have graciously and heartwarming-ly reached out to me in recent months to offer their condolences and share fond memories of my Father.

In 1965, my Father graduated from the U. of K. with a B.A. in English Literature and Economics, First Class Honors. Although he was a double major, his primary passion was literature, a subject in which he would pursue further studies. He won a fellowship to study in the USA from the African Graduate Fellowship Program (AFGRAD) of the Africa-America Institute and he pursued post-graduate studies in English Literature at Indiana Univer-

sity, Bloomington, where he earned a Masters Degree in English Literature. It proved to be an auspicious time because my Mother was a sociology student there. My Mother's Kenyan roommate enthusiastically exclaimed, "There is someone *very special* I want you to meet." After they married, my parents returned briefly to the Sudan in 1967 before moving to England, where my Father was a University of Khartoum Senior Scholar at Leeds University and earned an M. Phil. in English Literature in 1969.

In the early 1970s, Africa called my Father home yet again and he joined Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda as a lecturer in literature. Makerere was a very exciting place to be in the 1960s and 1970s because many renowned African scholars and literary giants, including several southern Sudanese, had converged upon the university—the "Harvard of Africa" at the time. African literature had just burst onto the global literary scene with Heinemann's African Writers Series and post-colonial literary criticism was vibrant and provocative. Although my parents very much enjoyed their life in Kampala, they were eventually forced to depart Uganda due to the infamous political crisis under Idi Amin's presidency. The family's next stop was Toronto, Canada, where my Father began his doctoral studies at York University in African and post-colonial literature. He interrupted his Ph.D. studies in the late 1970s, however, to return to the Sudan to serve as Deputy Director of the Department of Culture in the Ministry of Culture and Information. For southern intellectuals, the 1970s were years of great optimism and promise, because of the 1972 Addis Ababa Peace Agreement and the many aspirations contained therein. Many southern professionals, my Father among them, had enthusiastically returned home to participate in nation-building. At the Ministry of Culture and Information, among other things, he was instrumental in creating the first amateur dramatic society and the Nyokuron Cultural Center in Juba and helped to compile a national folklore that celebrated the Sudan's cultural diversity.

My Father next joined the nascent University of Juba (the "U. of J."), the first university in southern Sudan and a creation of the 1972 Addis Ababa Peace Agreement. There, he taught African, British and post-colonial literature and served as the Dean of the College of Education, I believe the first southerner to hold that post. It was an exciting, yet tumultuous and often difficult, time in the life of the U. of J. Perhaps not surprising for a university that was born out of political strife between the "center" and the "margins" of the country, student activists (and their faculty supporters) conflicted with faculty and administrators—the latter dispatched mostly from the "center"—on issues such as whether the university was fostering the growth of a "homegrown" intelligentsia, among others. Many students felt, for instance, that insufficient numbers of students, faculty and administrators were from the South. As a dean and a revered faculty member, my Father had to carefully navigate these conflicts—not an easy task, especially as he was sympathetic to several of the students' grievances. A former student recently suggested to me that egalitarianism—award of merit—was my Father's approach at the U. of J. It was his approach to life generally.

When the second civil war broke out in the early 1980s, Juba Town became increasingly unstable and it became nearly impossible to feed a family on a professor's salary. By the early 1990s, my Father had left the Sudan for Canada. His life of exile in Canada was challenging in many ways. I often wondered if we would ever return home, since the war dragged on, seemingly without end. Nevertheless, despite financial and other hardships, my Father remained intellectually engaged. He attended conferences—such as SSA, ASA, MLA, etc.—as much as possible. He emphasized the need for southern scholars to write the history of southern Sudan, and indeed Sudan, to reflect that southern Sudanese are participants/agents rather than mere subjects in the history of their region and country. He considered issues of higher education and curriculum development



*Laura with family members attending the funeral of Ambrose Beny, Yirol, South Sudan 2008*

in the Sudan. He explored the hitherto dominant meaning of “being Sudanese” through an analysis of the imagery and character portrayals in the works of Al Tayeb Saleh, e.g., Mustafa Sa’eed in *Season of Migration to the North*. As many SSA members may recall, my Father’s analysis angered some. However, my Father gracefully explained that literary criticism is not personal, but rather a sociopolitical/cultural analysis that aims to understand where the work is “coming from” and what it tells us about the wider society. My Father also remained politically active in Canada, participating in Sudanese community groups and joining the young men and women in political activism (e.g., protest against the Canadian oil concerns in the late 1990s). Importantly, he also tried to bridge the divide between northern and southern Sudanese community groups in Canada. As Amir Zahir writes, “[h]e profoundly understood the

deeply-rooted mistrust of many Southerners, and the short-sighted, and ethno-centric views of many of the northerners. He, however, was almost above it all.”

In May 2007, my Father was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Of course, I was devastated and afraid. However, my Father did not pity himself, nor did he show any fear. In quintessential Ahang Beny fashion, he told us not to be afraid or despair, because “I won’t be the first person who ever died, or the last.” Like that, for as long as I can remember, my Father reflected on the general human condition and never set himself apart for special consideration or pity. It is that magnanimity and borderless universality that gave rise to the following moment I recorded in my Journal on November 1, 2007, after a doctor’s visit before what was to be his final visit to the Sudan:

*the doctor... filling in for Dr. Leigh was Anne, from Ireland. We asked Anne so many questions about Dad's trip to the Sudan and what to expect in the coming months, what to do before we leave, and while we're there in the Sudan, etc. And Dad was so brilliant, as usual, as ever; he was optimistic, but also realistic and when the doctor said that this disease (the cancer that eats Dad and that Dad fights with his mind of steel) is definitely changing and is in a process, Dad opined resolutely and courageously: 'Yes, it's not static' and 'I don't come here looking for guarantees'....Then, Dad abruptly changed the subject to Ireland. He told Anne that he has always admired the Irish people, because they have a lot in common with his people, the Southern Sudanese, having been oppressed for ages and yet ever resolute in their struggle. Then, he turned to Yates, the Irish poet and James Joyce, the Irish Novelist, whom even the Irish run away from because he is so difficult to understand, writing in a stream of consciousness as he did. Anne, the Irish doctor, was amazed that this man, facing the challenge of his life, could deflect the dire situation to the beauty of the Irish people and their literature and even dissect their literature and explain to Anne that in order to appreciate and, more importantly, to understand James Joyce's *Ulysses*, one must first have read his prior works, the *Dubliners* and *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. I was speechless and mesmerized. Here I was trying to get answers to practical questions about life and death matters concerning Dad and Dad is reveling in the beauty of a people, the Irish, their art, their ideas, and their history. He could not be as bothered by the mundane as by the beauty of art, life and humanity....And, [he] grinned, that beautiful and brilliant grin of his with the sparkle of brilliance in his eyes.*

My Father's character through his illness gave me enormous strength and though I lamented his eventual passing, I found serenity in his extraordinary strength and dignity. He continued to read his fine books and listen to his fine music—however, none more than music from all over the Sudan. I believe it deeply comforted him to sleep with the familiar and soothing sounds of home. It certainly comforted me to hear the music from my room. Most mornings of his final year, I brought his tea—shai bi le-

ben or “white tea”, as he called it—to his room, pulled up a stool by the side of his bed, we drank tea together and we talked about everything from the mundane to the intellectually profound, much of it about the Sudan. My Father shared my pre-tenure trials and tribulations as if they were also his. He encouraged me every step of the way. Often, we worked until the early hours of the morning, I in my room writing and he in his room reading, with the soothing sounds of the Sudan in the background. (In a bittersweet turn of events, I received tenure on May 1, 2008, exactly the one year anniversary of his fateful diagnosis. He missed it by less than three months, but I believe he knows and is proud.)

In March 2007, we honored my Father's wish that he be buried beside his mother in Panebei, Yirol, Sudan. It was the only thing that he asked of us upon his diagnosis on May 1, 2007. He drew a map of the area and we promised him that we would fulfill his wish. The entire village and beyond came to his burial, a three day traditional Atuot ceremony. There were prayers, song, traditional dance, remembrance of our ancestors, many tributes, and even humor, which I know my Father would have appreciated. Perhaps most touching, the children clamored for the limited prayer cards with our Father's photo because, they told us, they want to follow in Ahang Beny Acuar's footsteps academically and otherwise and the prayer card will serve as a reminder of that dream.

My Father now rests peacefully beside his beloved Mother, Kulang Mou Kacuol, in the village of Panebei, Yirol. There is no running water there as of yet but he is home, a place he never really left, free at last and unencumbered by the burdens of our physical world. Ahang Beny Acuar was a true Sudanese and a beautiful mind and human being. He is my guiding light and my soul inspiration.



## SSA Executive Director Richard Lobban retires from Rhode Island College

After 35 years of service, Richard Lobban, SSA co-founder and current Executive Director, has retired from Rhode Island College. During his tenure at RIC two conferences were hosted—the 8th annual and the 25th anniversary conferences—and the Executive Director's office was housed for a number of years. The SSA Bulletin is also produced at Rhode Island College.

For all those who know Richard, they will understand that he is moving from one active chapter of his life to another, with continuing active work with Sudan and Africa. He continues his work with political asylum cases, as well as teaching African studies to diplomats and officers at the Naval War College.

## NGO Focus *Book Donations?*

Sudan-American  
Foundation for Education  
(SAFE) and Friends of  
African Village Libraries  
(FAVL).

**Please consider donating books to organizations such as SAFE or FAVL.**

For more information about SAFE, please visit: <http://www.sudan.com/safe> or contact Executive Director Dr. Lee G. Burchinal, at [burchinal@erols.com](mailto:burchinal@erols.com)

For more information about FAVL, please visit: <http://www.favl.org> or send an e-mail: [info@favl.org](mailto:info@favl.org)

*\* FAVL's West Africa Director is SSA Secretary Michael Kevane.*

## Conference Art Exhibit:

*Sudan's Wars, Peace  
and Wars*



By  
Khalid Kodi

Boston College /  
Massachusetts College of  
Art and Design

## Highlights of the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

Florida State University, Tallahassee,  
May 16-18, 2008

by SSA Bulletin editor Carolyn  
Fluehr-Lobban

Under the theme of “Sudan’s Wars and Peace Agreements,” three days of papers were scheduled—Friday 16 through Sunday May 18—with 12 panels and 40 papers offered and listed on the program. Unfortunately, 12 of the accepted presenters did not attend the conference nor did they submit papers for others to read. This situation prompted the SSA Board to unanimously agree that in future papers proposed will only be accepted for presentation at the conference after SSA membership has been confirmed and pre-registration fees have been paid.

There was widespread agreement that the conference was one of the best in recent memory. There was a larger than usual number of international attendees from Sudan (welcome Drs. Mey Eltayeb and Ahmed al-Amin al-Bashir) as well as participants from Germany (Margret Otto and Ulrike Schultz), France (Maria Gabrielson), Austria (Thomas Schmidinger), Sweden (Bjorn Jernudd), the United Kingdom (Hazel Poster from “Kids for Kids,” Cherry Leonardi and Douglas Johnson), and Canada (including Suehila Elkateb from the Sudan Task Force of Foreign Affairs and International Trade office and filmmaker Datejie Green). Many new faces from the US were also present as well as the longtime supporters and leaders of the SSA.



L to R: Margret Otto (Berlin), Mey Eltayeb (Khartoum), C. Fluehr-Lobban, Darius Kenyi, Baqie Badawi Muhammad

Another highlight was the return of Jemera Rone of Human Rights Watch, a longtime friend of the SSA and preeminent fighter for Sudanese human rights. Happily Jemera has recovered fully from a serious car accident.



Jemera Rone, Human Rights Watch

Artistic highlights included this year’s conference art exhibit by Khalid Kodi of Boston College and the Massachusetts College of Art and Design entitled “Sudan’s Wars, Peace, and Wars.” Also, a film in progress produced and directed by Datejie Green of Toronto entitled “Acts of Love: the Struggle for Sudan” that included footage from the last days of John Garang. Both artistic events had a powerful effect



*Khalid Kodi with detail of his exhibit upon the conference attendees.*

The Banquet and Luncheon lectures were also very well-received and prompted much discussion after their delivery. Alex de Waal's Banquet talk "Whose Agreement? Whose Peace?" appears in this issue of the Bulletin, and Suleiman Baldo's luncheon speech



*SSA Executive Director Richard Lobban, introducing Alex deWaal at SSA Conference*

"Justice and Reconciliation in Sudan's Peace Agreements" will appear in a future issue or in a volume of papers from the conference that has been solicited.

### **Conference Papers to be Published**

Cambridge University Press approached the conference organizers with a proposal to publish selected papers from the conference with the same title and the conference theme "Sudan's Wars and Peace Agreements." Stephanie Beswick (the program organizer), Jay Spaulding, Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban and Richard Lobban have agreed to work on this project. Many paper presenters with topics related to the conference theme will be contacted soon regarding this proposed volume of conference papers.

### **2009 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Boston; Eighth International Conference in South Africa**

The SSA leadership and Board announced that after much deliberation the 2009 International Conference will be held in Pretoria, South Africa, hosted by the University of South Africa. Three proposed sites for the 2009 International Conference were considered: besides the University of South Africa, Boston University's Program of African Studies offered a conference site in Boston; and the newly formed Sudan Studies Society in Khartoum, Sudan offered to host the 2009 international conference. These proposals were discussed for a year before a final decision was made at the Tallahassee conference that was announced at the Business meeting. Although the Sudan venue was considered favorable as a means to re-establish contacts with our colleagues in Sudan, concerns were raised about security and academic freedom. The South African proposal facilitates financial support travel of colleagues from Sudan, while the Boston venue is problematical for Sudanese travel to the US. Further, the University of South Africa has offered considerable assistance in bringing Sudanese from Sudan to the conference. The International Conference of Sudan Studies will be co-organized by the SSA,

the Sudan Studies Society of the UK, and the Sudan Studies Society of the Sudan. The conference theme and dates for the South African conference are still being discussed and will be announced soon.



Suleiman Baldo, 2008 SSA Conference

It was decided that the 28<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the SSA would be held at Boston University, at the end of May of 2009, and that the conference theme would be “The Dynamics of Languages and Cultures in Sudan.” The conference organizers will be Richard Lobban, Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban and Mohamed Elgadi.

Finally, the SSA wishes to express its immense gratitude to Peter Garretson, local arrangements chair whose hospitality and grace under some difficult circumstances will always be remembered. On the first day of the conference president-elect and program organizer Stephanie Beswick suffered a massive stroke. We learned that she was in critical condition on Saturday morning. Yet despite this grave news, Peter helped us all to bond together to make the conference both historic and unforgettable. Stephanie is steadily improving and leaves Gainesville Rehab Hospital on June 30 to return home to Muncie, Indiana.

Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban reminded the Board and officers of the working relationship with the Sudan-American Foundation for Education for sending books to Sudan. Specific organizations and NGOs can be donated book recipients. Contact Lee Burchinal at: [burchinal@erols.com](mailto:burchinal@erols.com)

Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban recommended that the SSA website be enhanced as more of an information source for those searching the web for information about Sudan. At a recent Harvard University Nieman Foundation conference, many mainstream journalists requested that a source for basic, but more complex and comprehensive information is needed. Mohamed Elgadi mentioned that various links recommended by the SSA could also be added. This was unanimously approved.

The last item of business was the nomination of Jay Spaulding and Baqie Badawi Muhammad as new Board members to be placed before the Business meeting on May 17. These two nominations were approved. The need for a member on the board to represent the youth was brought up again. It was agreed that the constitution be amended to create a position for youth representation on the board.

### **Stephanie Beswick Improving**

Conference organizer and president-elect Stephanie Beswick suffered a stroke on the first day of the conference and was hospitalized until the end of June in Florida. She has improved and returned to her home in Muncie Indiana, and has sent the following message to the Bulletin:

Dear SSA members,  
I am very grateful for all the well wishes from all around the world!! Especially the encouraging messages from Jemera Rone, Malik Balla, and Sondra Hale. I am walking with a cane and am told my speech is not too badly affected. I look forward to seeing you all at the next SSA meeting.

I would like to thank Richard and Carolyn Lobban for all their encouraging e-mails and telephone messages.



Alex de Waal at SSA Conference

## **Sudan: Whose Agreement? Whose Peace?**

(banquet talk delivered at the SSA  
Conference, Tallahassee, May 17, 2008)

Alex de Waal  
Social Science Research Council

The late Khalid al Kid once, only half-jokingly, proposed writing a comic history of Sudan's coup attempts. He made the proposal having consumed just two pints of beer, which he said was half the level of inebriation customarily considered the sine qua non for mounting a reputable coup. Among the episodes he wanted to include were the would-be putchists who tried to storm Khartoum by train, a plot thwarted by a signalman who diverted them into a siding; the Communists who unsportingly chose the hottest hour of the day in the hottest month; and the Islamists who broke the rules by seizing power while sober. His serious point was that there was no correlation between effort expended and result. The Sudanese seat of government was always so wobbly—a two legged stool perhaps—that a well-placed nudge was usually enough to make it topple over.

A similar history might be written of Sudan's peace agreements. Not least because a stiff drink might have been what was needed for Abdel Wahid al Nur, chairman of the Sudan Liberation Movement, to summon up sufficient courage to sign the Darfur Peace Agreement in Abuja two years ago, rather than sticking to what he knew best, the comforts of opposition. By comfort I mean less the material wellbeing of exile in Nairobi and subsequently Paris than the certitude that whoever sits on the sidelines in Sudan and predicts disaster is making a pretty safe bet.

Making peace is as much about the intangibles of personality and moment as it is about the detailed substance of what is on the papers signed with so much ceremony. The chemistry between the protagonists, the accidents of the heat of the moment, the incidentals of who managed to phone whom at the last moment, can all swing the deal one way or the other. Where the institutions are wobbly the contingencies matter more.

And in peace talks there is also not much of a correlation between effort and outcome. The Addis Ababa Agreement was negotiated in just twelve days of face-to-face negotiations between Nimeiri's government and the Anyanya. The host for the peace talks, Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Selassie, intervened just once in the negotiations, to persuade the Anyanya rebels to accept a unified national army. There were no sanctions, no indictments for war crimes and no peacekeepers. Mulana Abel Alier has written an insider's account of those talks and we know in detail what was discussed and how. For example, more than half the talks were focused on the status and personal safety of the Anyanya guerrillas.

By contrast it took almost three years of continuous negotiation to bring Sudan's second north-south war to an end, despite the involvement of large teams of facilitators and resource persons from an array of international organizations and foreign governments. We are still awaiting an insider's account of what transpired during those long months in Machakos, Karen



*Northern Sudanese man speaking at SPLM rally in the north, 2007*

and Naivasha. But we do know that the personal rapport between the late Dr John Garang and Vice President Ali Osman Taha was what turned the peace talks from an exercise in procrastination and posturing into a serious effort that created the CPA. Nonetheless, mutual distrust was the abiding theme of the negotiations.

The two sides had different and contrasting philosophies of negotiation. The government team was anxious to maximize its room for manoeuvre in the implementation phase, expecting that it would be able to push back some of the SPLM's gains after the deal was signed. The best and most important example of this is Ghazi Salah al Din's insistence that the word 'separation' be replaced by 'secession' in the Machakos Protocol. He explained to me that separation is an outcome, a definitive act, whereas secession is a process. In his sharp lawyerly mind, a referendum on self determination that results in a vote for secession doesn't mean immediate independence for the South, but the beginning of a process—protracted

most likely—of negotiating state divorce.

The SPLM's approach was to narrow down any room for ambiguity, by questioning every detail in the text. It heeded the advice of Abel Alier that there had been 'too many agreements dishonoured' and did not want a repeat of the 1970s when Nimeiri rewrote the Addis Ababa accords with complete impunity. As a result the CPA is a phenomenally long and complex document. In an ideal world, the different protocols would have been referred to a team of lawyers and other specialists to get them all aligned before the signature, but the international partners were in such a rush to get the deal concluded at last that they pushed ahead. As we have subsequently discovered, much ambiguity lurks within. Abyei is the clearest case in point.

The SPLM's other strategy was to bring in the internationals as umpires whenever possible. When the talks began, the mediator's emphasis was that this had to be a Sudanese agreement, drawn up, implemented and monitored by

the Sudanese. This point was stressed by both General Lazarus Sumbeiywo and the U.S. Special Envoy, Senator Jack Danforth. But as the months turned into years, every time there was an impasse in the negotiations, the internationals intervened—and on many occasions the outcome was that they took on a monitoring role themselves. At the time when it was mandated in 2005, UNMIS was the world's largest and most complex peacekeeping mission was set up. Far-reaching powers were ceded to organs such as the Assessment and Evaluation Commission, including for example budgetary oversight. We need to be very cautious about this big international role. We should beware the guest who becomes a burden and the solution that becomes a problem.

There's a danger is such over-specification and international oversight. An agreement must be sufficiently flexible to accommodate changing realities. And it is unwise to rely on foreign governments or multilateral institutions. They can be both perfidious and strict according to their own criteria. Those who signed the CPA in Nairobi on 9 January 2005 as 'guarantors' did not draw attention to the fact that their guarantee is diplomatic only. There are no foreign governments ready to dispatch soldiers to fight for the integrity of the CPA or in favour of a Southern war of independence. And the U.S. State Department for example puts much stock in the opinions of its lawyers, and the SPLM would be well-advised to seek a legal opinion on the U.S. government's understanding of the word 'secession.'

It remains to be seen which will prevail—the strict understanding of the CPA text or the politics of expediency. This month of May 2008 may be the most important in Sudanese politics since the death of Dr John Garang. The attempted putsch by JEM and the SPLM Convention, in which the political vision of the Movement is being hotly debated even now, will without doubt alter the political trajectory of Sudan. I suspect that the other key variable is the state of the economy. When the economy booms and the regime's budgets ex-

pand, the wheels of patrimonialism are well greased and the coalition between the National Congress Party and the security chiefs can keep the machine in motion. When there's a financial crunch at the centre, we know by bitter experience, that political crisis usually follows.

On this theme of the politics of the marketplace, it was fascinating to watch the late Dr Majzoub al Khalifa at work at the Darfur peace talks and at his office in the palace in Khartoum. He held various senior positions in government and party but his true strength lay in his mastery of the political marketplace. Literally. His approach to the Darfur peace talks was to assess the price of every single delegate—including those of his own party and the foreigners—and make the offer. All the issues of principle and substance were off limits, dismissed with a wave of his hand. He was utterly impervious to any insult, smiling away in his somewhat reptilian manner when the delegates of the movements, such as Jamali Hassan of JEM, killed just a few days ago, accused him of Janjawiidism. I wondered if his thick skin could be attributed to his training as a dermatologist. A few years earlier, stalemated by Dr Majzoub's intransigence and obsession with detail—such as his infamous determination to segregate Khartoum's public transport according to gender—Hassan al Turabi exclaimed, 'even his speciality is superficial!' Majzoub was I am sure as vexatious to his colleagues in government as he was fearsome to his adversaries across the negotiating table. Perhaps this frustration explains that the official government tribute to him following his death in a motor accident last July contains a translation of a few paragraphs I wrote about him in which I described him as 'king crocodile.'

Dr Salim Ahmed Salim, the African Union's chief mediator in Abuja, said that Majzoub resembled a car salesman who would try to sell you a vehicle one spare part at a time. And in quibbling over every detail, Majzoub missed the opportunity to make a real deal that could have brought peace to Darfur—or to be precise, the beginning of a process that would have brought



*Northern Sudanese woman speaking at SPLM rally , 2007*

Darfurians into the national democratization process and allowed for peace to be established locality by locality across Darfur. This is a key point: the agreement is just the beginning.

For Majzoub—and I suspect many of his colleagues—making peace is not about settling the substance of the grievances that led his countrymen to revolt. It is not about resolving inequality and achieving justice. It is just about finding the right price for loyalty in a political marketplace. It's commonly called 'divide and rule' but that's only because they can't afford—or don't want to pay the price—of buying everyone's allegiance, so it's easier to buy up some and use them to repress the others. For them, the irritation of the involvement of neighbouring countries is less the military menace they may pose than the fact that their cash bids up the price of loyalty. Their ideal agreement is one like the October 2006 Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement in which they first buy off the rebels' sponsor—in this case Eritrea—and the rest is retail politics.

Similarly, their frustration with international mediators is that their involvement allows rebel leaders to demand a higher price. It also allows the opposition to play for time—to apply the old Darfurian skill of *tajility*. *Tajility* is an Anglo-Sudanese term revived by Martin Daly. It comes from *tajil*, delay, and refers to the skill of prevarication, forestalling and keeping things indeterminate. It was coined by British residents in western Darfur, awed by the skill displayed by the Sultan of the Gimir who over half a century managed to navigate the politics of the frontier, playing off the Egyptians, the Mahdists, the sultans of Wadai and Darfur, and the British and the French, retaining control of his bailiwick all along. Abdel Wahid al Nur is also a master of this. I used to think he was just indecisive and erratic but his recurrent refusal to sign his name to any agreement is, I suspect, a manifestation of this particular skill. At the moment he is playing for time in the hope that Sarkozy and the next U.S. president will send NATO troops to Darfur. Abdel Wahid and his ilk will engage with the

UN and AU mediators not because they want to make an agreement with Khartoum, but because they don't want to come to any such agreement, and the mediation gives them a cover for more *tajjil*. It is enough to make one sympathize with Majzoub or Nafie Ali Nafie—almost.

In my last meeting with Majzoub before his death, he feigned ignorance about the Darfurian Arabs who were flirting with insurrection. In fact they were his biggest worry. He didn't want the internationals meeting these people and making them more expensive. A classic case of auctioning loyalties followed a few months later. In October, the most powerful Arab militia leader, Mohamed Hamdan Hemeti—a man labeled as a Janjawiid second only in importance to Musa Hilal—received a huge consignment of arms and cash from the security services to fight against the rebels. What did he do? He defected. He signed a memorandum of understanding with the SLA and decamped to Jebel Marra. The army came after him. They killed his brother. For his part, Hemeti shot down two helicopters. He sent his emissaries to Chad, to Libya and to Juba. But none were buying and in February Hemeti made a new deal with Khartoum—senior positions in the army for him and his lieutenants, 5,000 of his men on the military payroll, cash, etc. He reportedly said he expected the government to deliver on 40% of the deal but that was enough for him—for now. Hemeti's is a clear case because there was one seller and one buyer, but it's a pattern recognizable across the board.

The cash bargain was actually the key negotiation of the last days in the Darfur peace process in Abuja. Each of the three rebel leaders—Abdel Wahid, Minni Minawi and Khalil Ibrahim—wanted money for themselves and their followers. Abdel Wahid wanted a compensation fund that he would control. Minni wanted his fighters in the army and opportunities for himself. Khalil wanted salaries for his soldiers—though as the one true revolutionary among them, it's not clear that he could have

been bought with anything less than a major stake in government in Khartoum. At that time he might have settled for the vice presidency. Today I doubt he would settle for that—he wants to be a buyer of loyalty, not a seller.

The only people who actually feel any ownership for the 87 page Darfur Peace Agreement are the representatives of eleven foreign governments and four inter-state organizations who witnessed and guaranteed the document—and who, I might add, intervened to determine most of its important provisions.

Rarely in the annals of human conflict can so many peace agreements have been signed, by so many different governments and rebel groups, with so few of them honored. In conclusion I want to ask, why is this, and why do so many cases of peace in Sudan resemble a continuation of war? Why is it that Sudan seems to have a political geometry that seems incapable of squeezing all its political leaders and their respective followers into a single, all-encompassing peace agreement?

The answer I believe lies in a combination of traits that makes Sudan uniquely turbulent and which give rise to a pattern of governance that is unchanged in many essentials over 150 years. The centre—the metropolitan provinces, the developed areas that Abdel Rahim Hamdi suggested could shrug off the rest of Sudan and survive on their own—are relatively prosperous with strong institutions. But there's no single centre of power and politics resembles constantly shifting alliances. The peripheries—the military provinces, the closed districts, the 'African' majority, and the areas of militarized tribalism—have the demographic weight and military prowess, but lack resources and organization. The centre rules through money. The security officer is a merchant first and a soldier second.

In his brief sojourn in Khartoum in the early 1980s, the late Dr John Garang served as an economist in the Military Economic Bureau—the very nerve centre of Sudan's military-commercial complex, where the retail politics of government survival was transacted. I believe



*SPLM party rally, North Sudan, 2007*

that his vision of a New Sudan was founded on an insight into this economic reality. When Sudan's provincial leaders come to enjoy access to resources commensurate with those from the centre, and have the financial and institutional means to match, then this auction of loyalties will not depend solely on the bids of Khartoum versus those of foreign patrons, and the economic foundations will be laid for sustainable peace. Twenty five years and one day after the formation of the SPLM, that economic transformation has not come any closer. But the ruling elites of Khartoum would be well advised to heed the perils of failing to attend to the grievances that arise from failing to attend to this challenge.

Whose agreements are the CPA (the mother agreement), the DPA and the ESPA. And whose peace has followed?

The peace agreements formally resemble agreements between states. The negotiating chambers have the same characteristics, with government and rebel delegations facing each

other across the table. But we need to scrutinize this format a little more closely. The parties only come to the table when each has achieved sufficient internal cohesion that it is capable of deciding and delivering. This is especially true of the rebels—the Anyanya were capable of negotiating a deal only late in their insurrection, and the SPLA had to emerge from its period of internal strife before it could sit down with the government. The Darfur rebels are thus far unable to do this, with the exception of JEM, which may not want to do so. We should not forget the need for cohesiveness on the government side too. The CPA was possible because of the transient cohesion of the government of Sudan behind Ali Osman Taha, while the DPA was handicapped by the rivalries among the leading members of the regime.

Peace processes are possible at those moments when Sudan's conflicts most resemble a conventional war. These moments do not always last long, and they co-exist with other underlying dynamics, specifically the politics of pa-

tronage at the frontier. This is the politics of purchasing loyalty. In times of peace, the elite blocs at the centre—the political parties in earlier times, the groupings within the ruling party during authoritarian regimes—are most interested in votes. During times of conflict, they are most interested in militia. This is not intrinsically the politics of divide and rule. There should in principle be sufficient resources to go around, for everyone to be bought into the system. But that's rarely the case, because the first and most substantial demands on patronage resources come from competitors at the centre itself. The contending power blocs within the centre are thirsty. And so, the cheaper option usually prevails in the peripheries—buying the loyalty of those who are most accessible, and using them to suppress the others.

As the price of loyalty goes up, the more arms pour into the peripheries, from Khartoum and from its contending patrons across its borders.

The hope of the CPA was that with oil and aid and a peace dividend—a reduction of spending on weapons and militia—there would be enough to go around and also enough to establish basic services, including law and order, and to begin development. Central to this was the hope of financial normalization. This has two elements, the external and the internal. Externally, it means establishing good relations with the Washington institutions—the IMF, the World Bank and above all the U.S. government. This should allow membership of the WTO, debt relief, and expanded assistance. Internally it should mean unifying the national budget in one institution—the ministry of finance, which at the moment is merely cashier—and making Sudan's finances centralized, transparent and rational. This is rolling back the dispersal and privatization of regime finance, reversing these processes that have been underway for three decades.

Alongside this, the hope of the CPA was a unification of Sudan's armed groups. A rare moment of this rationalization occurred when the 'other armed groups' in Southern Su-

dan were given the option of joining the SPLA or joining SAF. No such rationalization has occurred in the north. We still have a proliferation of security institutions, some of which are as militarily capable as the armed forces themselves. We saw this dramatically in the battle of Omdurman on 10 May in which SAF did not play a significant role. Unifying the state's armed and security forces is a *sine qua non* for the fulfillment of the promise of the CPA. This would in fact represent a strengthening of the core institutions of the state, shedding the parastatal security agencies that are loyal not to the constitution but to power blocs within the regime and their interests.

Elections are the third part of this triad. Elections make the votes of citizens the basic currency of politics. At the moment, it appears that the elections will proceed in 2009 and in most parts of Sudan they will be sufficiently peaceful and fair to legitimize the outcome. But the deeper conditions for making electoral democracy a tool of lasting peace are not yet there. The press is much freer than in the recent past but it is still subject to harassment. Civil society organizations are multiplying but they are weak. The spirit of voluntarism that was once so characteristic of Sudan has been diluted—CSOs are becoming interested in money and often won't function without it. And while Southerners have been holding a South-South dialogue for a decade, in the aftermath of the internecine strife of the early and mid 1990s, and the Darfurians are beginning their Darfur-Darfur dialogue, there is as yet no Sudan-Sudan dialogue. Without a national dialogue on national identity and collective destiny, there is the danger that the electoral process will not cement a national consensus on the rules of a new, civil political game.

In the absence of these three conditions, the CPA is a comprehensive patronage agreement. To (mis)quote John Ryle, it is akin to replacing one oil-based security kleptocracy in Khartoum with two oil-based security kleptocracies, based in Khartoum and Juba respectively.

And in retrospect, perhaps the key weakness of the Darfur mediation team was that we were insufficiently cynical and hard nosed. The mediators insisted that the DPA was a mechanism for bringing Darfurians into the spirit of the CPA—democratization. But we failed to recognize that the true master of retail politics in Sudan was not Dr Majzoub but his mentor, Ali al Haj—formerly the right-handman of Hassan al Turabi, reputedly the financier of JEM, and a Darfurian himself. Perhaps if we had focused on establishing and paying the price required to the leaders of the Darfurian groups we might have swung the deal at the end of the day. We would have created a third centre of kleptocracy in al Fasher, this one funded by transfers from Khartoum and aid.

Is this the best we can hope for? A purchased peace, a patrimonial carve-up in which the key rebels and potential rebels are bought off with a share of the goodies from the centre?

Let's not run down the significance of peace, even if it is just a comprehensive patronage agreement. War is a terribly bad way of pursuing political objectives, and peace agreements are severely limited as instruments of political change and democratization. By their very nature, peace agreements reflect the interests of those who fought and fighters are rarely democrats. It would be unrealistic to expect otherwise. But once there is confidence in peace, then civil politics can well up.

We have had too many years of revolutions, of exclusivist projects. With peace comes the prospect of a mashru' al madani—a project of civility, of civil politics, of inclusiveness. Sudan possesses strong traditions of civic activism which are still alive and ready for revival.

A peace agreement is a beginning—a huge beginning but nonetheless just a beginning. The next step—not an end, but another big step—is the elections in 2009. There is no neat ending. Peace is unfinished business.



## Conference Art Exhibit:

### *Sudan's Wars, Peace and Wars*



By

Khalid Kodi

Boston College /  
Massachusetts College of  
Art and Design

## Featured Articles

*Editor's Note: This article was submitted to the SSA Bulletin in 2007, and continues our effort to bring to our readers current research and scholarship by our colleagues in the Sudan. We invite comment to this article, as well as other articles and reviews published in the Bulletin. Cfl.*

### **On the Relevance of Linguistics Education to the Communicative Needs of the Sudanese Community**

**By: Al-Sadig Yahya Abdalla**  
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*(written while on secondment to  
Al-Majma'ah Community College,  
King Saud University, KSA)  
2005*

**ABSTRACT** *This paper attempts to draw the attention of the linguistic researchers to the role that applications of linguistics can play in people's lives in Sudan. It particularly concentrates on the relevance of linguistic research to the immediate communication needs of the Sudanese people. It draws on the assumption that the linguistic complexity inherent in the Sudanese Arabic varieties puts a great deal of Sudanese people at disadvantage, particularly in public institutions that relate to people's lives, e.g. educational, medical and legal services. These institutions, the arguments goes, employ SSA which can turn out to be hard to grasp to many speakers some Sudanese Arabic dialects and to the monolingual speakers of indigenous Sudanese languages.*

#### **1. Introduction**

Sudan is a multi-ethnic and, therefore, a multilingual country. Linguistic research indicates that over a hundred languages are used across the country alongside certain forms of

Arabic as a lingua franca – although it is also a fact that Sudanese people with different ethnic, regional and even social backgrounds tend to speak Arabic varieties that can sometimes cause communication problems due to acute linguistic differences inherent in them.

For historical and religious reasons, Arabic has become the country's official language particularly in the northern regions, which are classified as Islamic in religion (for more see Miller and Abu Manga 1992). Thus, since the Islamic religion has been revealed and (mainly) spread through Arabic, Arabic has become the official language of all the independent Islamic states that were founded in this part of the country a long time before their incorporation into the present Sudan. This linguistic fact was true even for the Islamic states that were established by non-Arabian ethnicities, e.g. the Fur and maalet Sultanates in western Sudan.

Historical documents indicate that official correspondences were carried out in classical (standard) Arabic in these states. However, this carries no implication for the form of the Arabic varieties used in everyday communication. It is possible to argue that these varieties were and still are hard to understand for the speakers of other varieties in different parts of the country. Linguists report that the (regional and social) dialects of a given language form a kind of dialect continuum, whereby a chain of similarity connects all the dialects included in the continuum, with those on the continuum extremes being linguistically dissimilar (Trudgill 1974). The differences among the Sudanese Arabic dialects hardly qualify them to be relevant to this linguistic continuum at least where the dialects at the continuum extremes are concerned. For example, central Sudan is the closest region to Kordofan region, but reports and observations show that some Kordofani Baggara dialects are barely intelligible to the users of the same language in the central Sudan. An extreme example to show that this is so can be illustrated by the linguistic situation in the national capital: speakers of different ethnic backgrounds hardly communicate successfully unless a kind of compromise is

reached, i.e. it is observable that enquirers should adopt certain forms of the other dialects to have their message communicated.

In most cases, those who do not speak Arabic natively make the compromise. Miller and Abu Manga (1992) maintain that “the variety of Arabic used by the migrants (who are mainly non-native speakers of Arabic) will not only reflect their degree of Arabization but also their willingness to approximate the standard norms ...”. In the Sudanese context the norms are set by those who speak Arabic natively.

As its title suggests, this paper is an attempt to evaluate the relevance of the Sudanese linguistics education to the immediate communication needs of the Sudanese speech community, so to speak. These communication needs are made relevant by the inter-ethnic interface taking place in public official and non-official contexts. Needless to say, it is the official context that calls for urgent efforts on the part of the Sudanese linguists to address the possible communication breakdowns – particularly when communication take place in situations that relate to people’s natural rights, e.g. educational, medical, and legal situations.

## 2. Linguistics education in Sudan

Linguistics seems to be among the least popular academic subjects in Sudan owing to the lack of awareness of the role it can play in people’s lives among policy makers. It is, therefore, unfortunate that linguistics suffers from a number of drawbacks in Sudan. First, and most importantly, there are only two higher education institutions that are wholly devoted to the study of linguistics: the Department of Linguistics and the Department of Sudanese and African Languages of the University of Khartoum – despite the country’s acute multilingualism. Second, courses pertaining to linguistics are often incorporated into the syllabi of foreign languages. This does not allow for sufficient coverage of linguistic information as the bulk of time goes to the specific language rules and literature. Third, the majority of the linguistics courses seem to follow from Bloomfieldian and Chomskyan linguistic traditions, whose prime

source of information is English structure with minor consideration of other world languages. Admittedly, this kind of training could not answer questions about the language problem in Sudan.

It is quite conceivable that the Khartoum University Linguistics Departments mentioned above has contributed positively to raise language awareness among a number of candidates seeking this kind of training. However, the question that has to be posed in this connection is: to what extent have these Departments addressed the language problem in Sudan on the level of language use? And more specifically, has the study of Sudanese linguistics addressed the communication needs of the Sudanese community?

Despite the leading role that these Departments have played in spreading linguistic education and research in Sudan, each seems to suffer from certain crippling academic problems. As to the Department of Linguistics, a great number of its courses centre upon theoretical linguistics, which has nothing to with the Sudanese language problem, and, therefore, are irrelevant to the communication needs of the Sudanese communities. Additionally, the linguistics syllabus bears great resemblance to the English language syllabus, especially in courses pertaining to phonology, syntax and semantics. These were often taught by the same professors from one of the two Departments.

The fact that the Sudanese academic community is still unaware of the business of linguistics seems to have negatively influenced enrollment in this Department. Over the years not many candidates have been enrolled in it. As a result it has been one of the understaffed Departments in the Faculty of Arts. All these factors can be argued to weaken the linguistic training in the country, and therefore provide for the continuation of the neglect of the Sudanese language problem.

As for the Department of Sudanese and African languages, it seems to be primarily concerned with linguistics. However, there are some academic problems that detract from the

effort made by the Department staff to improve the Sudanese linguistic studies.

First, this Department has been set to offer postgraduate courses and conduct postgraduate research on Sudanese and African languages. Admittedly, the number of courses required for the award of the relevant degree is restricted by the time prescribed by the Postgraduate College regulations. It is unlikely that the complexity of the Sudanese language situation can be handled in two semesters for the postgraduate diploma and in the two semesters for the Masters degree.

Second, given the fact there is only one Department in the country to provide undergraduate linguistic training, this makes it extremely difficult for the Department of Sudanese and African languages to provide sufficient programs with satisfactory coverage of pure linguistics and Sudanese and African linguistics, bearing in mind the time factor on this postgraduate level.

Third, the Department staff have noticed that the present name of the degrees renders them less marketable, and have, therefore, proposed to change it to postgraduate degrees in linguistics to attract more candidates, which is hoped to have succeeded.

It goes without saying that the Sudanese linguistics education could have been more improved if very simple steps had been taken. One such step is to integrate the linguistics education in the University of Khartoum. I think that both Departments have to be incorporated into one academic body within the framework of the Faculty of Arts as this would allow it to provide undergraduate and postgraduate linguistic training. Luckily, it is the Department of Sudanese and African languages that is currently providing postgraduate training to the majority of the Linguistics Department staff.

Until the time comes when these departments are unified, some steps have to be taken to integrate their syllabi so that more candidates can be prepared to undertake postgraduate research on Sudanese linguistics provided that major modifications are introduced into

the Linguistics Department syllabus to include more courses on Sudanese linguistics.

#### **4. Sudanese communication needs**

It has been shown in (2) above that the Sudanese linguistics education seems to centre upon the levels of linguistic analysis as well as sociolinguistics. This paper draws on the claim that no attempt has so far been made to apply linguistics to the immediate communication needs of the Sudanese community at public service Departments concerning such fields as education, health, or courts of law, etc.

Given the fact that a certain level of proficiency in Arabic is needed in order for the individual to function properly as a member of the Sudanese speech community at large, and given the fact that Sudanese Arabic varieties can sometimes be hardly intelligible when judged by what has come to be known as Sudanese Standard Arabic (henceforth SSA), certain institutionalized procedures would be needed to facilitate communication between members of the Sudanese community in general, and between public service officials and the citizens requiring the service in particular. Such a need would become urgent when it has to do with, for example, the people's educational, medical and legal rights.

Below is an explanation of how linguistics can relate to three selected aspects of human life on both global and local levels: education, health care and law.

##### **3.1. Linguistics and education**

Oaks (1998:353) points out that recent developments in the study of sociolinguistics and discourse analysis have significantly benefited classroom discourse. Speaking about the American multi-racial community, Oaks proposes that the relevance of linguistics to education is urgently needed as the American educational system is struggling to "accommodate the many different cultures and backgrounds" of the students within its framework. Minorities have gone so far as to guarantee legal enforcement of their children's educational rights, which were underscored by teachers simply because they used English varieties that were different from teachers'. Oaks reports that in 1979 a judge in a De-

troit court ruled that the school system in Ann Arbor, Michigan “needed more accommodating in its treatment of children who speak black English” (p. 360). This judgment was reached in response to parents’ complaints that their children were

“prematurely labeled as deficient intellectually because of inaccurate views by the teachers toward children’ dialect” (ibid).

On the national level, the use of Arabic as the medium of instruction can have negative consequences for the school achievement of those who do not speak Arabic natively. That Sudan is an Arab country is a political issue, but apart from politics this does not detract from the fact that a great number of Sudanese ethnic groups are monolingual speakers of Sudanese indigenous languages. This is a fact that has to be accommodated to the educational system. Unless these linguistic facts are considered and incorporated in the educational system, it will remain biased in favor of those who speak Arabic natively.

I was involved in lengthy discussions at Al-Fashir University on whether or not students should be penalized for expressing masculine concepts in feminine terms and vice-versa – a linguistic feature characterizing the Arabic variety spoken by the majority of people in Northern Darfur State. Specifically, lecturers in such disciplines as geography, chemistry, botany, etc. were furious at these deviant language forms that appear in the students’ essays and lab reports.

The alternative point of view was that lecturers should not exclusively base their assessment of the students’ performance on language structure, which is, of course, beyond the lecturers’ expertise. It is true that university students should show improved linguistic competence, albeit they were not there to get degrees in Arabic. Moreover, since the students had shown competence in presenting the information required by the assignments, they should not be under-rated for matters that had not been part of their training.

A similar case in the literature is

Bernestein’s distinction between elaborated code and restricted code which are reported in Trudgill (1973). Other things being equal, the elaborated code is used by middle class members and is employed in educational settings. By contrast, the restricted code is used by informal settings by the working class members in the English society. Thus, since the working class children have no access to the elaborated code, they are not expected to rise to the expectations of their teachers and would, therefore, suffer educationally. However, teachers are recommended not to base their evaluation of the pupil’s performance on the use or nonuse of the elaborated code. Unfortunately, no such official recommendation has been made in the case of Al-Fashir University, and the issue lies wholly with teachers’ subjective judgment.

### 3.2. Linguistics and health services

Linguistics can effectively benefit medical contexts in Sudan. It can resolve communication problems that might happen at health care centers between the medical staff and their patients. As mentioned above (2) there are Sudanese groups that either monolingually speak indigenous Sudanese languages or speak Arabic varieties that can cause communication breakdowns with speakers of other varieties of the same language. Thus, since the medical staff have not received any linguistic training, it is likely that they have communication problems with those patients who are unfamiliar with SSA.

Of course, the medical staff could not be blamed for their lack of awareness of this aspect of the Sudanese language problem – though self-education and readings in linguistics can help them achieve more successful negotiation of the medical cases before them. In fact, the medical language, whether Arabic or English, tends to be unintelligible even to the educated speakers of Arabic as a first language. This, no doubt, aggravates the communication problems in the medical contexts particularly if the medical staff have insisted on using SSA when talking to their patients. The fact that this problem has not been addressed by medical and

linguistic research in Sudan does not mean that the problem does not exist.

Oaks (1998) proposes that application of linguistics relate to “the study of communication strategies among caregivers and their patients”. He argues that

“breakdowns in communication can have serious consequences in the medical profession because it is through language that...a doctor acquires much of the necessary information he or she may need in making the proper diagnosis and treatment.” Therefore, such linguistic theories as discourse analysis, ethnography of communication and cross-cultural communication can help found solid grounds for successful communication between doctors and patients.

Diaz-Duque (1998) studied the communication barriers in the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in the United States. Among the people requiring medical services were monolingual Spanish speakers. Diaz-Duque reports that these Hispanic communities were culturally isolated. Because some doctors were bilingual, some patients were referred to them as this was one way to facilitate communication. However, since communication problems involved other hospital staff with no knowledge of Spanish including the hospital switchboard. Scheduling, registration and insurance clerks, receptions, nurses, technicians, social workers and pharmacists”, interpreters and translators were employed by the Social Department in the hospital. Thus, “a language bank” was established including 70 freelance interpreters in 25 languages (p. 89).

Diaz-Duque made a number of observations concerning the work of the interpreters. First, the “patient may withdraw from communication process if given the impression that their speech is socially inferior to that of the interpreter or health care provider”. Second, communication might break down if the interpreter has used “a more formal register than that of the patient” (p. 91)

She recommended that, for such services to be effective, “interpreters must be sensitive to sociolinguistic and sociological differences

between patients and health care providers”. She also recommended that interpreters must be faithful to the patient register and language variety” (p. 93).

The study illustrates the fact that linguistics can be as important as the very medical service that patients seek at hospitals. For if the medical decision has not been properly negotiated between the medical staff and their patients, the health problems of the patients would worsen. The absence of such linguistic service in the Sudanese hospitals could be argued to have created miscommunications. It is true that such communication failures could not be accessed in the hospital’s records but systematic research among the medical staff and patients could help decide whether or not such communication problems have existed.

### 3.3 Linguistics and law

Register analysis shows that the legal text is a most complex written genre. Linguistically speaking, this textual complexity is associated with use of long, (rarely) punctuated sentences, which are grammatically complex. The complexity inherent in the legal texts makes it difficult, if not impossible, even for educated elite outside the law profession to grasp (for more on legal register analysis see Crystal and Davy 1966). According to Crystal and Davy (1966), the reason given for this tendency in structuring the legal text is to avoid ambiguity. However, the linguistic data incorporated in it can sometimes be misleading and may result in violating the rights of those involved in the legal case,

For instance, Labov (1998) reports a legal dispute between a steel company and its black workers. The company was about to pay the workers so that the case was to be settled provided that the workers withdrew their case. However, legal advisors felt that the company’s letter to settle the case was biased in favour of accepting the payment and was against pursuing of the case. Being knowledgeable about dialectology, Professor William Labov was asked to examine the company’s letter “for comprehensibility and objectivity”. Labov and his associates concluded that “where the document was com-

prehensible, it was not objective, and where it was objective, it was not comprehensible”, resulting from the intentional distribution of biased linguistic elements. The letter was written in such a way that it expresses the writer’s “own way of looking at things” so that the “steel workers should take the money and run”. Labov’s linguistic testimony was convincing to the court of law, and helped it reach a sentence in favor of the steel workers.

The legal case reported above shows the central role linguistic evidence can play in arriving at a judgment. The court of law resorted to professor Labov because it felt that there might be some linguistic ambiguity hidden somewhere in the company’s letter. No doubt, the court of law could not have made its judgment (to its own satisfaction) without Labov’s linguistic expertise.

The company’s letter was a legal document drafted by the company’s attorneys. Linguistics played a role in exposing the company’s hidden intentions. Other things being equal, Labov’s study was one about how linguistic style could sometimes be composed in such a biased way as to violate the rights of individuals or groups. As members of a black community and, therefore, speakers of black English vernaculars, the steel workers could not have deciphered what they had been given to sign if the court of law had not resorted to Labov’s linguistic expertise.

Linguistics can also be employed to incriminate defendants in courts of law. Eagleson (1998) reports a police case in an Australian husband in Sydney. He killed his wife and told the police that she had ran away with another man, leaving behind a six-page farewell letter to the children. Lest the police doubt the authorship of the letter- which was finally proved to be composed by him- the husband typed the letter on their home typewriter.

The police requested the linguistic expertise of Eagleson and his associates to investigate into whether or not the letter had been written by the deceased wife. Eagleson and his associates compared the farewell letter with other writings of the husband and the wife with re-

spect to the spelling, grammar, morphology, syntax and punctuation. They concluded that “there were many significant differences between the language of the farewell letter and the language of the wife’s document” (p. 37). By contrast, the linguists were able to identify “many strong similarities between the language of the farewell letter and the language of the texts composed by the husband” (p. 38). Thus, when faced by these linguistic facts, the husband professed that he had committed the crime and had composed the farewell letter to evade accusation and punishment.

Having reported the relevance of linguistics to the legal business, two claims need to be made about such relationships in the Sudanese context. First, on average, the Sudanese legal transactions are negotiated in classical Arabic (at least when referring to legal texts) or in SSA. In both cases, the Arabic legal language tends to be unintelligible even to those whose mother tongue is Arabic, let alone the ones who use it as a second language. While it is true that judges and solicitors can advise the citizen on the right thing to do, such advice remains on the legal information level. Thus, since members of the legal institutions have not received proper linguistic training, there would be a number of (legal) linguistic issues that they may take for granted but could have been handled differently by linguists.

Second, both law and linguistics syllabi do not show any relationship between these fields. This indicates further that no such relationship could have existed outside the academic arena. If this claim is correct, then it is unlikely that Sudanese law institutions would resort to the Sudanese professional linguist for advice on (legal) linguistic issues.

#### **4. Conclusion and recommendations**

Some linguists have recently moved from the study of such subjects as phonology, syntax, semantics, sociolinguistics, etc. to the applications of these linguistic branches and others to the immediate life needs of people. Oaks’ book (1998) comprises works resulting from application of linguistics to all aspects of human life.

These works have proved that linguistic communication lies at the centre of all human activities, and that the language evidence can always facilitate resolution of many problems pertaining to these activities.

This paper has argued that, being multi-ethnic and multi-lingual, Sudan can be a possible example of a country with a variety of communication problems owing to two factors. First, a number of Sudanese people monolingually speak Sudanese languages. Second, a great number of Sudanese ethnic groups speak Arabic varieties that are unfamiliar to those speaking SSA – a Sudanese Arabic variety that is largely associated with institutions offering public services. The paper has further argued that dialectal interface in these public arenas can result in miscommunication that likely puts service enquirers at disadvantage, particularly if they fail to compromise with SSA.

Given the fact that Sudanese linguistics education does not seem to have addressed the communication needs of the Sudanese people, the paper recommends the following:

1. It is high time that the Sudanese linguistics education was integrated on under- and undergraduate levels.
2. Major modifications need to be introduced the Sudanese linguistic syllabus so that more effort goes to the study of Sudanese linguistics.
3. Special programmes need to be developed to increase language awareness among staff of public institutions to facilitate communication with audience of various regional, social, and linguistic backgrounds.
4. Public service institutions should employ linguistic specialists and interpreters to help those service seekers who do not understand SSA.
5. The Sudanese language problem could hardly be satisfactorily addressed by the present academic institutions. Therefore, it is high time that independent linguistic institutions were established to

centre exclusively on the study of Sudanese linguistics.

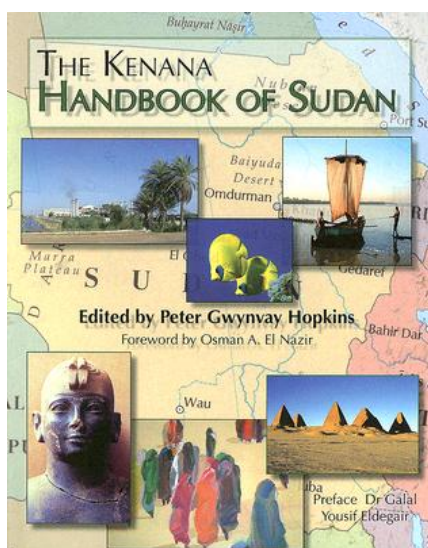
6. It is high time that linguistic research is conducted in all public services departments to diagnose the nature of the communication problems that might occur between the government officials and the public.

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## Reviews



Peter Gwynvay Hopkins, ed.,  
***The Kenana Handbook of Sudan.***  
 London: Kegan Paul, 2007.

This fascinating and attractive volume compresses the Sudan between two covers for the benefit of “businessmen, politicians, scholars, students, travelers or ordinary people” (p. xiv)—probably in that order. It contains 58 presentations in ten units, composed by knowledgeable authorities both Sudanese and foreign. The practical intent is visible in a concluding unit (X, 56-58) that includes pictures of incumbent leaders, an English-Arabic glossary of useful words and phrases, and a register of addresses for helpful individuals and corporate services. The book addresses a particular historical moment, evident in a penultimate unit (IX, 53-55) devoted to detailed discussion of the Sudan Interim National Constitution, the Sudan Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and the surrounding political context. The tone is optimistic, though a cautionary essay (VIII, 52) entitled “The Enigmatic Sudan” correctly points out the formidable obstacles that must yet be overcome.

At the heart of the volume (VIII, 35-52) are

discussions that address “The Economy, Industry and Doing Business in Sudan.” Major themes include the recent transition from state management toward a market economy, the ways and means of doing business as a foreigner including both professional issues such as banking and credit and the practicalities of daily life and interpersonal relations, and the impressive range of prospects for future investment. More focused studies address diverse aspects of the sugar and petroleum industries and the conduct of commercial agriculture, particularly cotton and gum. If the manifest advance of globalization merits any critique, that must be sought elsewhere.

The first seven units provide historical background and cultural context for newcomers to the Sudanese scene, and like that scene itself these contributions are both stimulating and extremely diverse. The discussion of prehistory (I, 1-2) includes both a comprehensive overview and a spirited treatment of recent discoveries along “The Yellow Nile,” the Wadi Howar of North Kordofan. Archaeology (II, 3-5) offers an introduction enriched by David N. Edward’s expertise in paleo-environments, an overview of the classical tradition of interpretation, and an essay on the ceramic remains of an early medieval transit corridor across the eastern desert between the Nile and the Red Sea.

History (III, 6-12) is bracketed by treatments of earlier and recent times by Yusuf Fadl Hasan and Mansour Khalid. Fergus Nicholl and John Alexander address the early modern age from diverse imperial perspectives, while Kaori O’Connor and Jane Hogan introduce a wealth of visual evidence in the form of engravings and photographs. A second historical unit entitled “Pilgrims and Traders” (IV, 13-15) combines essays on the town of Suakin (Michael Mallinson and Jean-Pierre Greenlaw) with discussion of its role in the Islamic pilgrimage (Charles Le Quesne). These two units are the weakest in the volume, recapitulating musty academic assumptions of the 1950s.

More stimulating are the essays devoted to the contemporary Environment, Flora and Fauna (V, 16-20). Leonard Berry offers a geographer's overview, while Gerald E. Wickens shares his unparalleled expertise in regard to vegetation. Will Knocker offers a fascinating pair of pioneer essays on the South, one general and the other devoted to "The Fate of Large Mammals." Balgis Osman Elasha gives a lucid and useful outline of the government's environmental policies.

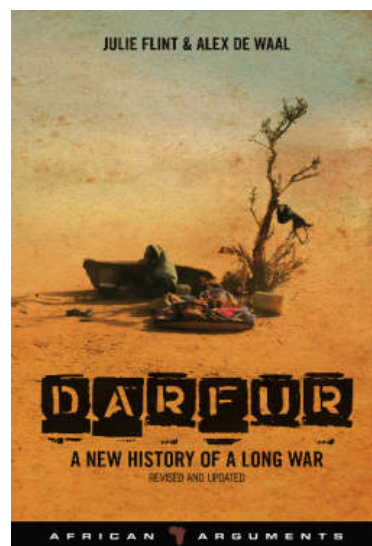
An omnibus unit entitled "Experiencing Sudan" (VI, 21-28) combines Richard Lobban's appreciative introduction to the "Three Towns" of the capital complex, a delightful discussion of Sudanese cuisine (including recipes) by Kaori O'Conner, and a very informative introduction to Red Sea diving by Inge Lennmark. Les Jickling recounts experiences descending the Blue Nile by kayak. Werner Daum presents his interpretation of Dinka religious beliefs, Al-Tayib Z. Al-Abdin offers a brief historical survey misleadingly entitled "Religious Coexistence in Sudan," and Hassan Makki Moh Ahmed a perfunctory comment on Sudanese Islam.

"The Arts and Literature of Sudan" (VII, 29-34) opens with a compassionate philosophical approach to national identity by Frances Deng. A high point of the volume is an extended and beautifully illustrated introduction to "Modern Art in Sudan" by Werner Daum and Rashid Diab, supplemented by a selection of works by Sayed Osman A. Waqiallah. Constance Berkeley addresses "The Contours of Sudanese Literature," and Peter Gwynvay Hopkins offers appreciative selections in translation from Tayeb Salih's *Bandarshah*. Khalid al-Mubarak gives a brief overview of some aspects of culture.

It is not possible in the context of a short review to do full justice to all the contributions, beyond the observation that they are stimulating and diverse, each possessed of merit and insight. For many readers the numerous and lavish illustrations will surely be the most

memorable and valuable aspect of the volume, not least the sixty-page photoessay "Images of Sudan" (VI, 28).

*Reviewed by Jay Spaulding, Kean University*



Julie Flint & Alex de Waal  
**DARFUR: A SHORT HISTORY OF  
 A LONG WAR**

Zed Books, London, 2006

*Mahgoub El-Tigani Mahmoud*  
*Tennessee State University, Nashville*

Flint & de Waal's short history of a protracted war in Darfur provides a different approach from many other works that touched upon the Darfur's crisis with well-researched geo-political, socio-economic, or ethno-regional perspectives. In this review, an outline of the authors' approach is briefly highlighted with a few concluding remarks on the relevancy of the data and analysis to factors unwisely ignored by both national and international negotiators, despite the global striving to end the crisis.

**Unique Interviews**

An interesting technique in the book's style is

the observational face-to-face interviewing of major chiefs, as well as members of several Darfurian groups. The authors send an appealing message via this anthropological approach to all parties concerned for the appalling conditions of the region: namely, the conflict resolution is never solely based on modes of urban competition or the agencies that emphasize modern partisan interests via various systems of bureaucratic negotiation between the central government, external mediation, and the nationalist or regionalist groups.

### Traditional Chiefs in a Modernity Dispute

Darfur is organically inter-related with socio-ethnic ties via a huge network of societal obligations. This fact underscores a striking difference between Governor Sese's peace conference (1989) that paved the way to a strategic agreement identifying "the collapse of local government and policing as a major problem and [calling] for the disarming of Fur self-defense groups and Arab *janjaweed*" under the democratically elected government (p.56), and the succeeding large-scale offensive by government troops and chaotic militias.

The interviews uncover the influential roles of Darfur Bedouins – a major population that should be economically developed and democratically oriented for a better handling of the crisis by promoting the closest collaboration possible with the main constituencies of Sudan nationalist parties in good understanding with the Bedouins, rather than the "government... *janjaweed*, air force and military intelligence (p. 101) [that] destroyed everything that made life possible (p. 111)... *janjaweed* commanders and security officers profited from a new war economy of loot and extortion, growing rich on the misery of others – Arabs and non-Arabs [emphasis mine]" (p. 114).

### Key Actors Ignored

"Despite the savagery of the past two years, many Darfurians still dream of putting their homeland back together, re-establishing ethnic harmony and reconstituting a social order that has been willfully destroyed" (p. xiv). One question is: how much of the region's complex inter-related spiritual, ideological, economic, and politico-administrative relations must be accounted for in the striving by the central government, national opposition parties, and rebel groups to bring about a comprehensive applicable agenda?

Flint & de Waal emphasize the roles played in the crisis by the indigenous Fur, Masalit villagers, and Zaghawa Bedouins besides a multiplicity of Arab-descent groups. The authors' intriguing concern with the traditional potentialities and competencies offered important information on the rebel groups the SLA and the JEM's "disillusioned Islamist intellectuals".

The analysis, however, is not clearly related to the key Umma *Ansar* and tribal chiefs (*Nazir* Madibo, for example, and his high-esteemed relations with the South and North leaderships), the Democratic Unionists whose influence cut across Darfur and neighboring countries, and the other opposition parties, including "a handful of professionals who dared to take on leadership" (p. 95) - all of whom participate actively in the region, irrespective of the exclusionary policies of the government.

A noticeable shortcoming of the book is the authors' incomplete evaluation of the Umma, besides an unwarranted silence about the DUP and the liberal movement by the North professional associations and left-wingers that developed urban activism in Darfur. With this shortcoming, Flint & de Waal add a new fixation to the persistent negligence of the Sudanese politi-

cal arena, which characterized the 2000s think-tanks that regrettably helped to impose the unilateral arrangements of the Naivasha, Abuja, and Asmara agreements between a ruling junta and the warring regions at expense of the nation.

### Concluding Remarks

Perhaps the strongest point of this book is that it sensitizes readers to the centuries' ignored side of the traditional population of Darfur in both escalation and settlement of the crisis. Failing to assess the positive interactions and continuous exchanges of the opposition parties and civil society groups with the region as an integrated part of the country (including the post-Nimeiri pre-NIF years), however, is a missing chapter in the author's historical document.

The book presents the Darfur chiefs as a vital socio-political resource that has been recklessly invaded and abused by the governments of Sudan and Libya, including disrupting partisan interests of nationalist parties. Based on this assertion, an appealing advisement is for national politics to transcend the conflict unto a lasting peace and sustainable democratic development by paying deserved attention to the Bedouins' social structures and political functions.

This finding should be elevated for policy-making with full recognition of the political constituencies that maintain spiritual, ideological, socio-economic, and politico-administrative bondages with the people of Darfur. Characterizing the Sudan's crisis, in general, and the Darfur crisis, in particular, this same finding further calls on all parties concerned to convene an All-Sudanese Constitutional Conference to secure the country's peace.



Fiona Terry  
***Condemned to Repeat?: The Paradox of Humanitarian Action***  
 Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002

*Randall Fegley*  
*Pennsylvania State University*

Much has been published in the last three decades questioning the simple assumptions of the effects of charity, in particular relief aid. Ms. Terry's book falls very much into this category. Drawing on a tremendous wealth of information, she analyzes four situations in which relief activities yielded negative results, sometimes disastrously. Her case studies include Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan; Nicaraguan and Salvadoran refugee camps in Honduras; Cambodian refugee camps in Thailand; and Rwandan refugee camps in the Congo (then Zaire). Clearly, her description of these situations is well documented and includes impressive numbers of facts, figures and sources. It provides historical background to humanitarian assistance programs and much insightful analysis of their results. In each of her case studies, operations in refugee camps were perverted by the activities of either government or rebel groups with atrocious agendas. The text includes important sidebars which introduce elements of other cases, including Bosnia, Somalia, and Biafra, into the analysis.

However, the strengths of Fiona Terry's book are her personal connection to the subject

matter and her contemplation of its issues. In 1994 she was the head of operations for the French section of Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) in Tanzania which had been inundated with Rwandan refugees. As in other cases in her book, refugee-warrior groups emerged. As it quickly became apparent, she and her staff, as well as many other humanitarian organizations, were giving aid and comfort to the perpetrators of the genocide in Rwanda. Hence, they took the controversial decision to withdraw MSF assistance from the camps.

“The moral quandary we faced and the intense, emotional, and sometimes acrimonious debates that surrounded our decision left an indelible mark on my conscience. It pushed all of us in MSF to reflect deeply upon what humanitarian action represents, and at what point it loses its sense and becomes a technical function in the service of evil. It evoked a basic question: Can we, in the name of moral principles, cease to aid a population in need?” (p. 2)

Later in a more specific question she asks, “[s]hould we respect conventional medical ethics treating anyone who needed it regardless of their history, or should we recognize our wider responsibility for what was happening in the camps?” (p. 3) Seldom have such disturbing issues been raised in public discourse. Such discussions yield uncomfortable complexities and untidy answers that are not good for politics, for donations, or for two-minute television segments. Speaking with the credibility of one who has seen the face of evil, Ms. Terry forces us to ask ourselves whether we intend our charitable giving to effectively solve problems or to merely soothe our own consciences. In her commentary on the activities of “refugee-warriors” she dispels the myth of the refugee as only a victim. Her sixth and final chapter, “Humanitarian Action in a Second Best World”, examines the relationship between aid

and conflict, the institutional constraints, knowledge and attitudes of aid agencies, the culture of justification and institutional preservation which surrounds the agencies, and the implications and consequences of agency culture. She concludes that

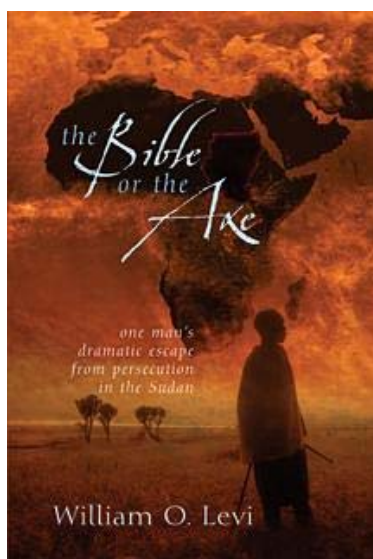
“[h]umanitarian action is more than a technical exercise aimed at nourishing or healing a population defined as ‘in need’; it is a moral endeavor based on solidarity with other members of humanity. . . . humanitarian action is imbued with inherent paradoxes that inevitably lead to some negative consequences, but that these are exacerbated by the behavior and culture of aid organizations. . . rather than aiming for a first best world, we must aim for a second best world and adjust to that accordingly.” (pp. 244-5)

This isn’t a book about sad faces, swollen bellies and feeding stations, but rather a testament to the importance of pondering the moral and ethical issues that often take a back seat in times of emergency.

Despite only fleeting mentions of Sudan, Terry’s book is a valuable compendium of both analysis and advice for those working, studying or otherwise concerned with the problems of the South and Darfur. As such, it is a useful companion to works such as Barrow and Jennings’ *The Charitable Impulse: NGOs and Development in North and Northeast Africa*; Maren’s *The Road to Hell: The Ravaging Effects of Foreign Aid and International Charity*; and de Waal’s *Famine Crimes: Politics and the Disaster Relief Industry in Africa*.

*Condemned to Repeat* is well written, persuasive, and thoughtful. It is, however, focused on what Ms. Terry clearly knows best. Hence, in both introducing and concluding her findings, she focuses only on situations that may lead one to believe that humanitarian action is limited to what goes on in refugee camps. This

is hardly a criticism of Ms. Terry, given her background and expertise, but vigilance must be maintained to ensure the responsibility and effectiveness of all humanitarian action, including that beyond the desperate, often mistake-prone conditions of wartime refugee camps. This book is valuable on many levels and is recommended for both public and academic libraries and as a textbook for courses in international and global studies. Above all, this is a book for anyone motivated towards a career in humanitarian work.



Levi, William O.  
***The Bible or the Axe***  
 Chicago: Moody Publisher, 2005

*Randall Fegley, Ph.D.*  
*Pennsylvania State University*

William Ochan Levi looks at Southern Sudan and its history from a very unusual perspective. A Messianic Jew from Eastern Equatoria, he grew up in Uganda where his parents fled in 1965, a year after he was born. His family returned to their ancestral village of Corom, Sudan, following the 1972 Addis Ababa Accords. In the first half of this biographical account, he describes life in Southern Sudan in

the brief period between conflicts. In particular he details conditions in Nimule, Juba, and Kapoeta, as well as Corom. In a highly personal manner he documents the deterioration of north-south relations, including the role of religion in education, northern control of aid and investment and the divisive potential of Southern Sudan's oil reserves, the extent of which was unknown at that point.

Levi was influenced throughout his childhood by his maternal grandfather Vuni. The defining moment of his experience (and the reason for his book's title) occurred with his baptism on the banks of the Kulo-Jobi River in December 1977. Following the ceremony, his grandfather confronted him.

"Grandpa looked into my eyes and I sensed that he was studying my face very carefully. He was searching for something in my expression, but I wasn't sure what that something could be.

'William Ochan Levi,' he said, 'your enemy will come.'

I quietly nodded. Without a word grandpa produced an axe and placed it on a broad root of the great tree. Next to it, he placed a Bible. Then he turned and focused his gaze on me once again.

'When your enemy comes to destroy you, which weapon will you choose?'" (pp. 94-5)

As Sudan became increasingly wracked by war, intolerance and inhumanity, Levi's account continues with descriptions of a ghost house, GOS patrols, and the anxieties of ordinary Equatorians. His approach to the cataclysmic events of his time is profoundly shaped by a conscious choice to engage in spiritual rather than military struggle. Unwilling to join either the SPLA or GOS forces, both of whom are distrusted by many Equatorians, he decides to escape. Unlike other Equatorian refugees who fled to Kenya or Uganda, Levi fled to Egypt via Khartoum. His family sold crops to purchase his one-way plane ticket. His glimpse through the

windows of the airplane was to be the last he would have of his father, Ajjugo, who would be killed when “jihad extremists” destroyed Corom on October 21, 1987.

His experiences in the early days of his exile have the quality of being so bizarre as to be credible by their idiosyncrasies. Following a short stay in Cairo’s seedy Hotel Baghdad, he was able to get work in a supermarket and stay in the apartment of some Southern Sudanese attending Cairo University. Spurred by his new roommates’ proclivity for alcohol and prostitutes, he moves to improve his prospects for earning money and getting an American visa. His new employer, Madame Seiko, a Japanese lady married to an Egyptian Muslim, needed equipment manuals translated from English at her dairy farm outside of the city. Given the pastoral emphasis of his homeland, Levi was particularly pleased to work with cattle. However, some of the farmhands were not as willing to accept a non-Muslim in their midst as Madame Seiko. Following attempts to force his conversion to Islam, he was beaten.

Once again decided to move, this time to Alexandria, where his interactions with both Christians and Muslims proved happier. He visited Ankara, Turkey, on a tourist visa. There religious persecution was replaced by racism. In desperation, he sought refuge at an American military base. The officers there referred him to a French priest who helped him resettled in Lyon, France, where he learned French as his fifth language. After two years, he finally obtained a visa to resettle in the United States where he got a GED and later attended college and became involved with Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship. He also connected with Southern Sudanese Christians in the diaspora. Finally he settled in rural Massachusetts with his American wife Hannah and three children. Since 1996 Levi has worked fulltime for Operation Nehemiah Missions, a Christian NGO whose goals include spiritual, educational, agricultural and medical development in Southern Sudan.

Faced with dilemmas that go far beyond

what we face in the West, Levi periodically re-engages his theme of choosing spiritual over more worldly confrontation. He eschews the violence of all sides. His account of the Egyptian prostitutes is sympathetic rather than judgmental. Despite feeling the sting of both religious persecution and racism, he avoids seeking revenge. He greets high-pressure attempts to convert him with good-natured jibes. He clearly struggles with the question, “What does it mean for me to love my enemies?” He spends much time discussing the instability of refugee life and the temptation to seek revenge for mass trauma. However, his work lacks significant treatment of issues of survivor guilt and the similar shame that refugees often feel after fleeing.

In relating Sudanese history prior to and around the time of his birth, Levi reveals factual inaccuracies in the details of some events. For example, he speaks of Sudan being given independence ten years prior to his birth (1954?). He ignores the politics of Anglo-Egyptian relations. In some areas where he is accurate, such as the expulsion of Western missionaries by the Abboud regime, dates and other details would be useful. In an 11-page addendum, Levi provides a basic overview of Christianity in Sudan. One topic which remains unexplored, but clearly part of Levi’s background, is the influence of Judaism on religious beliefs and practices in the southern half of the Nile valley. Among a very few works on Sudan, M.M. Ninan’s *A Comparative Study of the Kuku Culture and the Hebrew Culture* (University of Juba, 1986), examines similarities between Judaism and the Christian cultures that have emerged among the Kuku, Kakwa and Latuko. While Jewish influences in Ethiopia and Egypt are well known, more study is needed on Sudan and Uganda.

*The Bible or the Axe* is not an academic work. Its publisher, a well-known Christian press, clearly expects to convince its readers of the validity of its religious agenda rather than merely inform them of conditions in Sudan. As such, one could say the book is biased in religious ways that academics often find uncom-

fortable. In places, it has preachy tones. However, academia should be wary of dismissing such works, despite their limitations. In the 1980s Western academics dismissed as crackpots businessmen and missionaries who were reporting rampant addictions and other social dysfunctions in the former Soviet Union. Scholars were blindsided by the demise of the USSR, often because they had dismissed evidence from sources that were “biased” in ways that made them particularly uneasy. Religious faith in Sudan is expressed publicly and openly, whether Muslim or Christian. Had Levi tried to be “objective,” his account would hardly be believable. While only half of the book’s content takes place in Sudan, he effectively portrays the mentality of many, probably most, Equatorians. Whether the Government of Sudan or intellectuals in the West agree with Levi’s piety is not as important as the degree to which his account contributes to an understanding of critical times. Recommended for religious collections and scholars specializing in contemporary Equatoria.



## Khatmiyya Mosque



Khartoum North

*photo: cfl*



*Featured reader artwork*

Mixed media collage: *Darfur*.

By: Amber Higbee

Psychology Student, Rhode Island College

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### Request for Artwork

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*Dancers, at SPLM Rally in north Sudan, 2007*



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