SUDAN STUDIES

Official Newsletter of the
SUDAN STUDIES SOCIETY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM
Number 21 April 1998

ISSN – [0952-049X]

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Registered Charity No. 328272

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SUDAN STUDIES: Number 21 (April 1998)

THE MISAPPROPRIATION OF NUBIA

By William Y. Adams

Many readers of this journal will probably be aware that I have spent much of my working career trying to rescue the history of Nubia. The first and most urgent need was to rescue it from the engulfing sands of time, before it should be even more finally engulfed by the waters of Lake Nubia. In that effort, I and a host of other archaeologists were partly if not wholly successful. A great many sites were lost forever, with little or no proper investigation, but at the same time more excavation was carried out in the threatened area than would probably have been done in a thousand years, had there been no threat of inundation.

Importantly, and in contrast to all previous salvage efforts in Nubia, we made a conscious effort to investigate sites not only of every period from the Stone Age to the Islamic, but also sites relating to all the different kinds of human activities. Not merely graves (the primary focus of all the previous salvage campaigns) but villages, workshops, quarries, churches and temples, and rock picture sites were equally grist for our mill. The result was a much fuller and more rounded picture of everyday life in Nubia, from earliest times to the present, than we have for any other part of Africa except Egypt itself. From a purely archaeological standpoint it could be argued that our picture is more complete even than it is for Egypt, where information about everyday life has come largely from tomb paintings rather than from actual excavations.[1]

Our achievement is, unhappily, not very well known outside the small and all-too-parochial community of Nubiologists. Our books have inevitably been written mostly for our own community, and those few works that have been written for the general public have consistently emphasized the monumental and spectacular, just as do nearly all museum displays. Nubian civilization surely had its monumental side, but it was only a small part of the total picture that we were able to recover.

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1 For a description of the organization of the campaign see William Y. Adams in Charles Bonnet, ed., ***Études Nubiennes***, vol. I (Geneva, 1992), pp. 3-28.

Simultaneously with the archaeological effort, I also began a more subtle campaign to try and rescue Nubian history from the smothering embrace of Egyptology. This of course had to be done slowly and tactfully, because many of the leading participants in the great Nubian Rescue Campaign - my colleagues in the field and my friends in camp - were and are Egyptologists. Their contribution, especially in the pioneering phase of Nubian studies, was enormous, and one must single out in particular the work of the great George A. Reisner, who put Nubia on the archaeological map as surely as Evans put Crete on the archaeological map.[2] Racist though he undoubtedly was, he is nevertheless the giant on whose shoulders we all stand.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Egyptologists had simply appropriated Nubian studies as an integral part of their discipline, just as - and for the same reason that - the ancient Egyptians had once appropriated Nubia as an integral part of their country. The result was inevitably a colonialist perspective: Nubian civilization was seen only as a provincial and backward variant of Egyptian civilization. Even more unfortunately, the Egyptologists' interest in Nubia ceased at just the same point in history when the Egyptians' own interest in the country ceased, which is to say in the medieval and Islamic periods. There were one or two honorable exceptions - F. Ll. Griffith of Oxford comes especially to mind - but by and large the abundant and sometimes spectacular remains of medieval Nubia were scandalously neglected by archaeologists before the middle of this century.

From my archaeologists's perspective, there were several other things wrong with the Egyptological view of Nubia. It was generally elitist (as museum-sponsored excavation nearly always is), dismissing the activities and the remains of the ordinary man and woman as unimportant. Indeed, an Egyptologist friend once accused me of taking a "worm's eye view of Nubia." It was also, in its early days, racist, refusing to credit the "Negroid" Nubians with the same capacity for creativity as had the "Caucasoid" Egyptians. The late, unlamented Grafton Elliot Smith went farthest in this direction, insisting that every major advance in Nubian cultural development must be credited to a fresh infusion of "non-Negroid" blood in the population.[3] (I have, happily, to report that this racist

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[2] For his contribution see especially id. in ***Sudan Archaeological Research Society Newsletter***, no. 11 (1996), pp. 4-6.

[3] See ***Archaeological Survey of Nubia***, Bulletin no. 3 (1909), pp. 21-27.

perspective had largely vanished by the time I began my work in the 1960s.) The Egyptologists were still committed to an outmoded explanatory paradigm, in which all major cultural changes were attributed to the incoming of new peoples rather than to internal developments. Nubian cultural history thus became an "olio" of separate acts performed by different actors.[4] Finally, I have to add that most Egyptologists, trained as they were almost wholly in philology, were wretchedly sloppy excavators, as they themselves cheerfully acknowledged.

Looking at the Nubian scene from the perspective of an American-trained prehistorian, I saw more continuity than change from age to age, and more differences between Nubia and Egypt than most of my colleagues recognized. I therefore sought to develop, in place of the "layer-cake" vision of the Egyptologists, a picture of Nubian prehistory and history as a continuous story, encompassing the development of a single people from ancient times to the present, and having an autonomous dynamic of its own. Invading peoples were not ignored, but they were not generally seen as prime movers in the process of cultural development. This perspective I first set forth rather cautiously in a series of articles in the ***Journal of Egyptian Archaeology***,[5] and then much more fully in my book ***Nubia, Corridor to Africa***.[6]

The effort to liberate Nubian history from Egyptology, like the effort to liberate it from the desert sands, has been partly but not wholly successful. Certainly the picture of autonomous and largely continuous cultural development has become generally accepted, and indeed ***Nubia, Corridor to Africa*** is often cited today as the "Bible" of Nubian studies, although in fact it is in serious need of revision. It has also been wholeheartedly embraced by the Nubian people themselves, and has been translated into Arabic by the Nubian Studies and Documentation Centre in Cairo.[7] In many

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4 For general discussion of this issue see William Y. Adams, Dennis P. Van Gerven, and Richard Levy, "The Retreat from Migrationism." ***Annual Review of Anthropology***, vol. 7 (1977), pp. 483-532.

5 Vol. 50 (1964), pp. 102-120; vol. 51 (1965), pp. 160-178; vol. 52 (1966), pp. 147-162.

6 London: Allen Lane, 1977.

7 See especially ***Irki (Newsletter of the Nubian Studies and Documentation Centre)***, no. 1 (1996), pp. 25-30.

Continental European countries today there are separate chairs and departments of Nubian studies, and the International Society for Nubian Studies has ceased to be dominated, as it once was, by Egyptologists. At the same time Nubian Studies in Great Britain, the United States, and Canada remain firmly lodged within university - and museum - departments of Egyptology. It is only within the last decade that the British Museum, the Boston Fine Arts Museum, and the University Museum of Pennsylvania have separated their superb Nubian collections from their Egyptian collections, and have displayed them in separate galleries.

Having helped to liberate Nubian history from one kind of racism, however, I now find it threatened by another kind: Black Nationalism. Let me say at once that I fully appreciate the interest that African Americans, and others of African descent, are now taking in the history of Nubia, which they can legitimately claim as the first "black" civilization. There are many African American organizations, particularly in the Boston area, that are making a sincere and dedicated effort to understand that history without distorting it, and to make it known through a variety of educational enterprises. Indeed, my wife and I have been working closely as consultants with these groups for several years, and we sincerely admire their dedication to finding and telling the unvarnished truth.

But there are a good many Afrocentrists, inspired by the polemics of Diop[8] and Van Sertema[9], who are seeking not to understand Nubian history but to rewrite it, in the interests of what they call Black Pride. Nowadays, I can pretty well count on being confronted and challenged by these people whenever I give a public lecture in any major metropolitan area. I well remember a respondent in a Minneapolis audience who said "You must have studied a long time, to get so many things wrong." When I pointed out that my view was endorsed by the Nubians themselves, he declared that the modern Nubians must be too hybridized to properly understand their own history. In his view, as I understand it, African Americans are today more entitled to call themselves

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8 Cheikh Anta Diop, ***The African Origin of Civilization: Myth of Reality?*** (Chicago, 1974); ***Civilization or Barbarism: an Authentic Anthropology*** (Chicago, 1991).

9 Ivan Van Sertema, ***They Came Before Columbus*** (New York, 1976); ***The African Presence in Early America*** (New Brunswick, 1992).

Nubian than are the actual, ethnic Nubians, because they have a more true understanding of Nubian history.

The Afrocentrists' version of Nubian history may be said to involve four basic propositions:

1. The ancient Nubians were self-consciously Black and African, and proud of it.
2. The civilization of Nubia is older than that of Egypt, and is the wellspring of Egyptian civilization.[10]
3. Egyptian civilization in turn is the wellspring of all later Western civilization.
4. The Nubian origins of our civilization have been deliberately suppressed, and the evidence sometimes actually destroyed, by racist historians and archaeologists.

Let us look briefly at each of these propositions. The first is approximately half correct: the Nubians were certainly self-consciously Black, and always represented themselves as such in paintings and carvings. They were not, of course, self-consciously African, because neither they nor anyone else in their time had any conception of continents as we understand them today. Their world was one contiguous land mass comprising the adjoining portions of Africa, Arabia, Southwest Asia, and Southeastern Europe. They were certainly proud, at least in the time of the Kushite Empire, but their pride, vis-à-vis the Egyptians, rested on a sense of ritual and not of racial superiority. There is nothing in the record to suggest that having African features meant any more to them - or to their Egyptian neighbours - than does the possession of black or blonde hair mean to us today.

The notion that Nubian civilization is older than that of Egypt rests on no better authority than that of Homer, and is totally unsupported by archaeology. The recent claim of Bruce Williams to have found evidence of a hieroglyphic-using chiefdom in Lower Nubia older than anything in Egypt[11] rests on a very dubious foundation, as I have shown in an article of mine[12]. There may indeed have

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[10] I will not deal here with the most extreme form of Afrocentrism, which asserts that the ancient Egyptians themselves were Black, and proud of it.

[11] Bruce Williams, "The Lost Pharoahs of Nubia," in ***Archaeology***, vol. 33 (1980), pp. 12-21.

[12] "Doubts about the Lost Pharoahs," in ***Journal of Near Eastern Studies***, vol. 44 (1985), pp. 185-192.

been a short-lived Nubian chiefdom, a good deal earlier than we had previously suspected, but it made no contribution to the subsequent development of civilization either in Nubia or in Egypt.

The idea that Egypt was the main wellspring of later Western civilization again rests on the testimony of ancient Greek writers, who were solemnly assured that this was so by the Egyptian priests themselves. But while there may be some truth to this claim in the realms of art and architecture, there is certainly none in the realms of intellectual and political life. Indeed the philosophers and historians of Hellas prided themselves on having thrown off the kind of theocratic monarchy that was basic to Egyptian civilization. And in the realm of Greek science, far more can be traced, by way of the Persians, to the civilization of Mesopotamia than to that of Egypt.

The Afrocentrists (as well as some Egyptologists) are perhaps most stubbornly myopic in their refusal to recognize that Egypt is not in any case the world's oldest civilization. Modern dating methods have left no doubt at all that the literate, temple-building cities of Mesopotamia are older by several centuries than anything comparable in Egypt - at least, anything that has been discovered so far.

The claim of racist bias on the part of historians and archaeologists is of course justified as far as it goes, and was a source of my own dissatisfaction with early interpretations of Nubian history. Under-appreciated it certainly has been, but not ignored or suppressed as the extremists would have it. One has only to recall how the archaeologists rushed in virtually en masse, the moment that work in the Sudan had been made safe by the Anglo-Egyptian reconquest of 1898.[13] In subsequent years a great many distinguished scholars, racist or not, devoted much of their scholarly careers to the study of Nubian antiquities and of Nubian history.

To me, the most objectionable feature of the Afrocentrists' perspective is its adamant insistence on "firstness," as though the civilization of Nubia could have no other claim on our interest. My reaction is: "So what if it was or wasn't first?" We do not measure the value of any other civilization by that yardstick. We single out a particular age for admiration - Athens in the time of Pericles or Rome under the Antonines or China in the Han Dynasty - not on the basis of any assumed priority,

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[13] See William Y. Adams, ***Nubia, Corridor to Africa*** (London, 1977), pp. 71-76.

but simply on the strength of its cultural achievements. The fact that the civilization of Nubia was demonstrably not the world's oldest should neither add nor detract a whit from our appreciation of it.

The Afrocentrists are not, I have to admit, out of step with their times. On the contrary, they are simply reflecting the overly and at times destructively competitive spirit of twentieth century civilization. The constantly reiterated goal in nearly all enterprise is to be the best; if not the best, then the biggest; if not the biggest, then the first. The absurd, not to say ludicrous, lengths to which moderns will go to get an entry in the Guinness Book of Records is surely testimony enough on that score. I conclude, then, that the Afrocentrists' appropriation of Nubia is driven much more by competitive spirit than it is by any genuine cultural appreciation.

The major victim of this misplaced enterprise is the history of medieval Nubia. For years I have been trying to insist, mostly to deaf ears, that the civilization of the medieval Christian kingdoms was every bit as high as was that of Kush, and far more deserving of our admiration in terms of its institutions. Its achievements in monumental architecture, as preserved in the Qasr Ibrim Cathedral[14], are on a par with the Kushite temples; the achievements in mural arts, as preserved in the Faras frescoes,[15] far exceed those of the Kushites in their originality and complexity; the achievements in pottery decoration, at the height of the Christian period,[16] were every bit as great as those of the Meroitic potters.

If we turn from the material accomplishments to the institutional bases of medieval civilization, we find even more to admire. When all is said and done, the rulers of Kush were men of their times, which is to say conquerors and imperialists. We measure them by their success in conquering and subjugating alien peoples, and in building self-glorifying monuments, in which respects they are neither more nor less admirable than, say, Cecil Rhodes. When we turn to medieval Nubia on the

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[14] See, e.g. Ugo Monneret de Villard, ***La Nubia Medioevale***, vol. I (1935), pp. 117-120 and pls. LVI-LVIII.

[15] See especially Kazimierz Michalowski and Georg Gerster, ***Faras, die Kathedrale aus dem Wüstensand*** (Zurich and Cologne, 1967).

[16] See William Y. Adams, ***Ceramic Industries of Medieval Nubia***, pp. 309-354 and 485-514. ***Memoirs of the UNESCO Archaeological Survey of Sudanese Nubia***, vol. 1 (1986).

other hand we find two nation-states, in the full modern sense of the word, with complex governing bureaucracies that were not mere royal patronage systems. They were ruled by institutions of law, and they managed to live at peace with one another and with their Arab neighbours for more than six hundred years. And if we acknowledge the royal tomb as one of the supreme expressions of the Kushite civilization,[17] we should perhaps acknowledge also that one of the supreme achievements of medieval Nubian civilization was to get rid of it - for the first time in more than three thousand years. The art and architecture of medieval Nubia are all devoted to the celebration of a heavenly king, not an earthly one.

Elimination of the the royal tomb is but one of several evidences of the secularization of political life. Most importantly, the medieval Nubian kingdoms were among the first in the world (if we must insist on firsts) to achieve a complete separation of church and state, which I consider to be one of the most important steps on the road of human progress. The complex political bureaucracy, described for us by Ibn Selim el-Aswani[18] and in documents from Qasr Ibrim,[19] was appointed by and responsible to the king at Dongola. The almost equally complex clerical hierarchy was appointed by and responsible to the Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria.[20] And this was at a time when all of the neighbouring Arab lands were under the theocratic rule of the Caliphates, and when in the Byzantine Empire the Emperor was head of both church and state.

I have been accused at times of a bias toward medieval Nubian civilization because of its Christian religion, but this is not the case: I am not and have never been a practising Christian. Like most anthropologists I am a thoroughgoing relativist, according equal measures of tolerance and intolerance toward all faiths. I admire medieval Nubia precisely because I am a secularist; because, thanks to the separation of church and state, no one in Nubia had to be a practising Christian. For

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17 See, for example, Dows Dunham, ***The Royal Cemeteries of Kush***, vols. I-V (Boston, 1950-1963).

18 Translated in J.L. Burckhardt, ***Travels in Nubia*** (London, 1819), pp. 493-503).

19 See William Y. Adams, ***Qasr Ibrim: the Late Medieval Period***, pp. 225-236. ***Egypt Exploration Society, Excavation Memoir*** 59, 1996. See also Gerald M. Browne, ***Old Nubian Texts from Qasr Ibrim III. Egypt Exploration Society, Texts from Excavations,*** Memoir 12 (1991).

20 Adams, op. cit. (n. 19), pp. 227-230.

those who wished to be so, however, the religious life was far more accessible than for any earlier Nubians, for there were churches even in the humblest villages. At the same time the guarantee of freedom for the followers of Islam was one of many provisions written into law in medieval Nubia.[21]

Yet my appreciation for medieval Nubian civilization seems to be shared by few, outside the community of Nubiologists. Even my friends and collaborators in the African American community have not embraced it with any great degree of enthusiasm, as they have the Kushite Empire. It was dramatic in its artistic achievements and admirable in its political and social institutions - but it was not the first. End of story, it seems.

[21] As specified in the ***Baqt*** treaty; see Burckhardt, op. cit. (n. 18), pp. 511-512.

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Research Project
ANGELO CAPATO:
A GREEK TRADER IN THE SUDAN

By G.P. Makris & Endre Stiansen

Angelo Capato (Angelos Helia Kapatos) arrived in the Sudan in 1883. By the time he died in 1937, aged eighty-three years old, he had been a sailor, an agent, a canteen keeper, a government contractor, a gum trader, an ivory trader, a farmer, a land speculator and an investor; in addition he played an important role in the establishment and development of the Greek community at Khartoum. Capato's career demonstrates how a Greek trader (carrying a British passport) of no private means exploited economic opportunities to build his own business and become a pillar of the society. Moreover, his life history provides an interesting perspective both on social and economic changes in the Sudan during the first part of the Condominium period, as well as the formation of a strong foreign community.

In our work we will examine Capato's life within two interrelated themes. First, we look at Capato in the context of the drawn-out military campaign which led to the establishment of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, and the subsequent development of the Sudanese economy. Secondly, we examine Capato's career within the context of the establishment and development of the Greek community in the Sudan, the only European settler community of considerable size and economic power.

The project, which eventually will lead to the publication of a jointly authored monograph, draws on several sources including Capato's memoirs. This manuscript provides invaluable information with regards to his family background, commercial career and social life. Other sources are public and private records kept in Khartoum (the National Records Office, the Greek Community), Athens (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the private archives of Greeks from the Sudan), London (the Public Record Office) and Durham (the Sudan Archive), and interviews with members of the Greek community in the Sudan, whether still living there or overseas. Naturally we will also relate our work to the academic literature on the social, political and economic history of the Sudan. The varied nature of material we are working

with presents interesting challenges to our training in anthropology (Makris) and history (Stiansen).

Below we present brief descriptions of the mentioned research themes, and at the very end of this presentation we give examples of the kind of information we hope to be able to obtain from the readers of this newsletter.

Capato the businessman

Capato began his Sudan career at Sawakin (Suakin) in 1883 when he arrived as agent for John Ross & Co., a merchant house based at Alexandria. With the British occupation of Egypt, and the Mahdist rebellion in the Sudan, this was a time of heightened military activity in the Red Sea, and Capato did brisk business supplying provisions to British army and navy units. The fall of Khartoum [1885] triggered an attempt to isolate the new regime at Khartoum, which meant that the military presence around Sawakin took on a more permanent nature. Capato responded by setting up a network of canteens - run by Greeks - designed to serve the needs of the military posts in the interior. The potential for profitable trade was great indeed, since government contracts could be worth up to £100,000.

When the army under Kitchener's command began moving up the Nile, Capato followed, specialising in providing food and other products to the British officers. Again, this could be a lucrative trade, but risks were high, as he found out when the majority of foreign soldiers were pulled out after the Battle of Omdurman, leaving him with large stores of 'luxury products' that proved impossible to sell to Egyptian and Sudanese subalterns.

After the defeat of the Khalifa's forces [1899], the establishment of the new order provided great opportunities for ambitious men. While Capato continued supplying the British with highly-priced imports, in the years immediately after the reconquest his business interests branched out to include the collection of ivory in the southern Sudan and gum Arabic in Kordofan. Interestingly, in the memoirs he claims that after having first been refused, around 1900, the government granted him, against a promise to supply the expeditionary force with necessary provisions, the monopoly (for two or three years?) of the ivory trade in Equatoria;

apparently the deal was personally approved by Lord Cromer. To his enterprises in Bahr al-Ghazal and Equatoria, as well as in Kordofan, Capato recruited a large number of Greeks. The most famous of his protégés was his nephew Gerasimos Contomichalos who became the most successful foreign merchant in the Sudan.

The diversification of his business interests brought great profits, but only for some years. By displaying a remarkable propensity for high risks, Capato put himself in an extremely exposed position, and when disasters struck he was unable to recover. A string of bad luck began when a storm sank a large number of his boats (some sailing northwards carrying gum, others going south with salt and general merchandise) between Shellal and Wadi Halfa. Nothing was insured and the combined loss totalled £46,200. Just after this misfortune, a fire at Port Sudan caused losses of £33,000 or more; then fire (probably arson) in his Khartoum stores caused £55,800 in damage, and, finally, a fire in his storehouse in Gondokoro destroyed goods worth £47,000. In the latter case, as they had been in a profit-sharing arrangement, an agent lost almost as much as Capato. According to his own assessment, Capato's total losses in 1906 amounted to £170,000, and with the addition of loans previously contracted at the end of the year he was £185,000 in debt.

Sensing disaster, Capato's creditors started calling in their dues, and the Union Bank of Trieste withdrew a standing credit of £2,000 which he had used to finance new consignments of merchandise. By 1910 interest on debts had increased from £16,200 to £27,000 a year, and it became an impossible burden since income from his remaining businesses only produced a profit of £16,000. Moreover, as he did not hold title to many of the agricultural estates he had purchased, he could not sell land to improve liquidity or use them as security against new loans. Furthermore, he seems to have had difficulty recovering the £34,000 he himself held in outstanding credits. Finally, Capato's reserve fund of £15,000 was wiped out when he gave in to pressure from colleagues on the board of the Sudan Lands and Building Co. to make an unsecured loan of £15,000 to a Greek who ran away with the money and became a prosperous businessman in Ethiopia.

Several attempts were made to come to an agreement with the creditors, but eventually it proved impossible to work out a solution acceptable to all. In the memoirs, Capato tries to

demonstrate how it would have been possible to save his business, and names several people whom he felt were actively trying to destroy him. In 1912 Capato declared himself bankrupt, after he had suffered further losses. Due to the good will and credit from Contomichalos and an Englishman, in 1914 Capato was able to make a come-back as a small-time trader, but his canteen floundered in 1928. At this time Contomichalos made him a monthly allowance of £55. Capato writes that he would only receive this amount until the arrival of better days, but added laconically that "better days never came."

Capato had several characteristics which served him well as a trader, first at Sawakin and later at Khartoum. Undoubtedly his greatest asset was his talent for long and hard work, but the memoirs also demonstrate an unusual ability to come up with workable solutions to problems that needed quick answers. His willingness to take risks is also remarkable (to say the least), but while this served him well in the first part of his career it became his greatest liability. There can be no doubt that Capato - in the long run - would have fared better as a businessman if he had been more cautious and showed more attention to cash-flow.

Capato and the Greek community

Unfortunately, our knowledge of the Greek presence in the Sudan during the Turko-Egyptian and Mahdist periods is limited, even though important new historical sources are coming to light. Scattered references in the so-called travel-literature and dispatches from the European consulates document the presence of a number of Greek traders in the mid-nineteenth century, and official documents in Athens show that Greece established a vice-consulate (third category) in Khartoum in 1871. Accounts in Greek newspapers published in the Sudan after the re-conquest state that fifty-four Greeks were present in the country before the Mahdiyya, but this is an underestimate. It seems clear, however, that only seven Greeks survived the fall of Khartoum in 1885. Not least because of Capato's memoirs, we have quite a lot of information about the Greeks who came to Sawakin during the 1880s and '90s and followed Kitchener's army to Khartoum. In fact, it can be argued that this association between the army and the traders defined the Greek presence in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan: the Greeks specialised in serving the needs of, first the army, and later the Condominium

government. In 1902 when the Greek Community was officially established there were about 150 Greeks in Khartoum Province. In 1929 there were 1,455 and in 1936, 1,687.

An important aspect of our work will be to examine the dynamics of the transformation of the Greek presence in the Sudan, from the time when it was nothing more than an assortment of traders, to the period when the Greeks constituted a distinct community with a common sense of identity strengthened by institutions which are still in place. More precisely we will try to show how a small number of Greek merchants climbed up the social ladder and became founders of a 'high class' who held decisive influence over a 'middle class' or what could perhaps more aptly be called the 'salariat'. When differentiating between the classes within the Greek community we do not employ the term class in a strict economic or political sense; rather, our understanding is closer to what Max Weber has called 'status groups'. On this point, it is important to note that the Greeks in the Sudan never saw themselves as the *crème de la crème* of society, and never achieved the same exalted position, socially or financially, as the big Greek families in Egypt. In Khartoum and the other urban centres where most lived, there were no splendid villas or society dances, nor did thousands upon thousands of acres of prime agricultural land belong to one single family. With the exception of Gerasimos Contomichalos, all members of the Greek 'high class' were well-off merchants and shopkeepers, but no more than that.

The Greek pioneers in the Sudan had two important assets. First of all, by provisioning the troops they were indispensable to the army, and, secondly, as Europeans, with some knowledge of British customs and preferences, they had a comparative advantage over their Lebanese, Syrian and Egyptian competitors. From the point of view of the British-dominated government the Greeks, whether individually or as a group, were the ideal expatriates as they were completely innocent of political ambitions. Moreover, it took considerable time before the government in Athens took an interest in events in the Sudan, which meant that Greek nationals were obliged to work through the condominium channels whenever conflicts of interest arose. This contrasted starkly with the situation in Egypt where there was a Greek embassy and, of course, the all-powerful Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate played an important role.

The previous section gave an overview of one merchant's experience in the Sudan; but how typical was Capato? Clearly he shared many of the characteristics of the early members of the Greek community, and it is possible to suggest that the careers of Greek traders followed a broad pattern. As soon as a Greek was more or less established as a trader or shopkeeper in Khartoum, his first priority was to bring to the country younger Greeks, preferably members of his family, from Greece proper (i.e. the mainland or the islands) or from Egypt. This recruitment profile ensured the employment of trustworthy men to fill important positions such as managers of store-houses or branches of the firm. These young men usually stayed with the firm for a few years in order to gain a working knowledge of Arabic, familiarise themselves with the new environment and learn their jobs from the inside. Having completed their 'apprenticeship,' many decided to try their luck on their own by setting up a small canteen in a different part of the country. It is interesting to note that when going independent, most start-ups were assisted by their former boss who often acted as the sole wholesaler to the new shop and even sold trade commodities on credit.

Obviously the growth of the modern sector led to the establishment of new and diversified businesses. Within two decades the Greeks not only operated a wide network of canteens, but also operated offices, coffee-houses, restaurants, hotels and doctors surgeries; in addition they ran a small community bureaucracy which included the Greek school and the two Greek Clubs. Many of the newcomers in the 1920s and 1930s did not become self-employed but found secretarial and lower managerial positions in the already established Greek businesses. This accentuated the class differentiation between the old-time traders and shopkeepers - the self-defined 'high class' - and the rest of the settlers.

Capato belonged to the 'high class' of Greek settlers, but after the collapse of his business ventures he did not have the means to play a leading role in the society. In a certain sense, he continued to influence the development of the Greek community through his nephew, Gerasimos Contomichalos. By contrasting the two men, it is possible to see how the community had changed from 1900 to 1920. While Capato was an energetic dare-devil who thrived on chaos, Contomichalos came to the Sudan as a well-educated young man who distinguished himself by working hard and methodically. Starting out as a manager in his

uncle's business, he set up his own company and within a short period became a financial and social magnate, with offices throughout the Sudan and in Cairo and London as well; it would have come as no surprise to anyone that he had the good fortune to marry a beautiful and extremely rich Greek lady from Egypt. Always mindful of developments in the political arena, Contomichalos cultivated his relations with the Government and the Palace, at least until 1936, while at the same time supporting community leaders with nationalist aspirations. Like Capato, he served as president of the Greek community for long periods of time, but had much more impact than the former - founding churches, schools and other community buildings and offering large sums of money to assist in the establishment of smaller communities in the provinces. If Capato represented the colourful and adventurous past of the Greek presence in the Sudan, Contomichalos personified the accomplishments of the mature community.

Today, things are radically different and there are very few Greeks left in the Sudan (less than 200 - virtually all of whom live in Khartoum). However, in our volume we will not deal with the decline of the Greek presence from the late 1960's or early 1970's, decades after the deaths of Capato and Contomichalos.

* * * * * * * * *

As will be clear from the above, we have already collected a lot of information about Angelo Capato and the development of the Greek community in the Sudan. At the same time, we feel there are *lacunae* that need to be filled, and would therefore very much like to hear from members of the SSUK on the issues discussed below.

a. Capato's memoirs

From internal evidence, it seems clear that the manuscript was completed around 1930; it is typed in English on legal size paper and is 134 pages long. E.G. Sarsfield-Hall brought the memoirs to England upon his retirement as Governor of Khartoum in 1936, and it was donated to the Sudan Archive in Durham by his daughter in 1983. The accession number is 682/14/x. Unfortunately this is pretty much all we know.

Important unresolved questions include whether or not the memoirs were originally written (or dictated) in English. There are a number of hand-written corrections in the typescript, and other factors also indicate that the Durham copy is an edited version of an original manuscript. Moreover, the nature of some of the many spelling errors suggest that the writer (or typist) was not a native speaker of English. It also seems likely that the person who did the corrections did not have direct contact with Capato, or other Greeks, but had a good knowledge of the contemporary business scene in Khartoum, as oft-suggested changes to proper names are followed by question marks. Naturally it would also be interesting to discover the connection between Sarsfield-Hall and Capato, and whether the manuscript was acquired in Khartoum or Alexandria.

b. Capato and other Greek merchants

Capato was only one of many Greek merchants pursuing commercial careers in the Sudan. Through family (Dr. Makris is married into a Greek family still living in Khartoum) and friends we have collected a considerable amount of material on individual Greeks and the Greek community but, obviously, more information is always welcome. In particular, we would like to know more about how the Greeks came to be so important in different sectors of the economy of the Sudan. On this subject one interesting aspect of Capato's memoirs is that he explains how early in the Condominium period he acquired large estates in the Gezira and around Khartoum. In this he appears to have been rather untypical, but perhaps it was not the case.

c. The Greeks and the British

It is obvious that Capato was very proud of his close connection with the British establishment, both before and after re-conquest. In fact it is conspicuous that the memoirs describe in great detail his relations with named British officials, while local Sudanese are hardly mentioned in the text. Clearly, as a merchant Capato could ill afford not to cultivate strong ties with the governing authorities, and from the manuscript we get an interesting perspective on the nature of the relations between the Greeks and the British. We learn, for

instance, that in 1907, when Mustafa Kamil's campaign against the British in Egypt was at its height, Lord Cromer asked Wingate to organise military training for Greeks in Khartoum so that they could help quell a feared rebellion; as leader of the Greek community, Capato obliged the British by opening a Greek Rifle Club which could serve as the venue for covert military exercises. Whatever the nature of this episode, it says something about how Capato - and probably many other Greeks - saw themselves as stalwarts of the 'colonial' order. We would like to complement Capato's view with that of the British civil servants and other expatriates, both with regard to how they looked upon individuals and the community, within the context of the Condominium. In our readings of sources such as biographies and official dispatches, we have not found much about this, so any information would be welcome.

Finally, we ask that readers with information to share contact us at either of these addresses:

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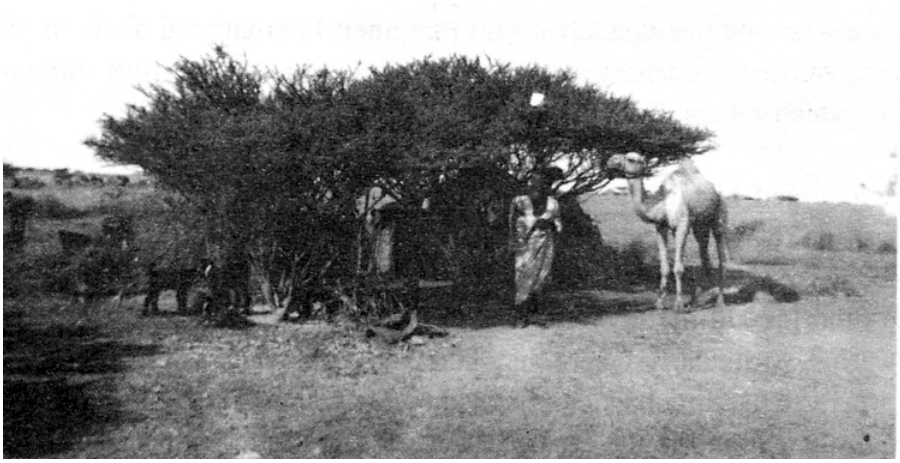
Locust Hunting

By A. R. Staniforth

I was summoned for anti-locust duty on the 10th September 1945, going first to Wad Medani. Here R.C. Maxwell-Darling, the Government Entomologist, had a large wall map on which were clumps of coloured flags showing where swarms had been reported in the Northern Province. He briefed me on the job to be done, but before going on to describe my anti-locust interlude I must say something about this ancient enemy of man - the eighth plague.



These nomads told us where the locust hoppers were

The way this plague arises is still not completely understood but the story, greatly simplified, goes like this. Locusts are, as it were, schizophrenic. For years they exist as comparatively harmless grasshoppers, in what is known as their solitary phase. Some of the locusts that afflict North Africa live out this phase among the head waters of the Niger, others in Arabia. Then, probably because of particularly favourable breeding circumstances, they multiply, perhaps find that their food supply runs short, and feel the need for "lebensraum". They change from the solitary to the gregarious phase and are seized with an urge to band together and to seek fresh pastures. They form swarms, comparatively small at this stage, and fly away, often so high that they cannot be seen. Instinct and loss of their body fat reserves tells

them when and where to descend so that the females can lay their eggs. This they do in sandy soil in pods of about 100 eggs in areas where seasonal rains are due. Moisture causes the eggs to hatch, as well, of course, as ensuring that vegetation grows, upon which the emerging locusts can feed.

At first, the young locusts are quite tiny and black, but as they advance like armies and consume the available herbage, these hoppers grow larger and shed their skins. After moulting five times, they emerge about forty-five days after hatching, with shiny, diaphanous wings and, after a few trial flights, they flock together to form larger swarms and fly away in search of new feeding grounds. Swarms can be vast and blot out the sun, and one has been recorded that spread over 2000 square miles.

Anyone who saw the wonderful film that Shell International made in 1960 will remember the opening sequence in which a light plane flies through a swarm which rattles like gunfire on the fuselage.

Over recorded history it has been notoriously difficult to combat flying swarms. The best opportunity to attack a locust invasion has been immediately after the eggs hatch, when they are anchored to the ground. The authorities in the northern Sudan had been recording the movement of swarms, particularly where they laid eggs, and this was the information that Maxwell-Darling had summarised on his wall map. Most of the flags were in the country to the east and west of Shendi, a district headquarters on the Nile. I arrived at Shendi on September 14th, to take over from my old friend, Ken Lea-Wilson.

Shendi was an undistinguished little town beside the Nile, but it had been a centre of activity in the area for centuries. It was notorious as an entrepôt in the slave trade: in his book, ***The Blue Nile***, Alan Moorehead writes that "About five thousand slaves passed through the Shendi market every year and they were drawn from every tribe along the Nile".

I picked up my tent, water supply and provisions and my driver and rather unreliable truck and made for a place called Bir il Nagaa. There were still some pools of water on the ground and these we had to skirt. At Bir il Nagaa I found two privates from the Royal Corps of

Signals, on loan for the campaign, already installed with the wireless which kept us in touch with Shendi and its central store of bait, oil, petrol and money. The two privates were obviously enjoying their secondment. They had both discarded their uniform and were arrayed in arab gellabiya and emma (turban) and they were looking after a young, orphaned gazelle.

They have army rations and I have already swapped some of the fruit I brought out for Australian tinned sausage and marmalade. They also have some white flour.

Interpreter and scout (on the left) with the two army signallers and their adopted gazelle. The signallers were quick to discard army uniform in favour of arab jellabiya and emma.

For me, too, this was a pleasant interlude. The nights were cool and there was a breeze during the day. In full view from my tent there were relics of a former civilisation. Among these were the remains of large "hafeers" - artificial lakes made by scooping out hollows in impervious soil and building embankments to impound the run-off from seasonal rains. There was one building in the ancient Egyptian style, with deeply cut reliefs. Another, more remarkable building, had rounded arches in the Graeco-Roman style and this seems to mark

the southernmost extension of Mediterranean culture into the "dark continent", and separated from the civilisation of Upper Egypt by 200 miles of desert and a Nile strewn with rapids. Archaeologists consider that it must date from the third century A.D. There are also remains of tombs in the neighbourhood, and neatly squared blocks of stone still lie in the nearby quarry at the foot of the hill, waiting to be used. About ten miles away are the Mussawarat il Safra - the remains of buildings of a yellowish stone - much more extensive than the Bir il Nagaa temples. What caused the death of the kingdom of Merowe which lasted several centuries? Was it overcome by invaders, like the Incas of Peru? Another explanation could be a change in climate such as that which, in a different direction, extinguished the Norse settlements in Greenland.

Could cultivation and prosperity return to this part of the Sudan? Although rainfall is not dependable and evaporation rates from hafeers would be high, its agricultural possibilities should perhaps not be ignored. The Egyptians face a huge increase of population in their already overcrowded delta and riverain cultivated land and are having to consider extending agriculture to arid areas, with back-up water supplies pumped from deep reserves of ground water. The ancient kingdom of Merowe is believed to have been peopled by refugees from upper Egypt, and perhaps modern Sudan could accommodate industrious colonists from their overcrowded northern neighbour. However, since that unusually rainy season of 1945, there has been the prolonged Sahelian drought of the 1960's - a severe discouragement to any thought of increasing population in semi-arid north Africa.

On the dangers of desertification, J. D. Tothill, editor of ***Agriculture in the Sudan***, (1948), took a sanguine view and quoted the Soil Conservation Committee's "conclusion that there has been no change in the basic climate since the beginning of Egyptian dynastic times; and that where erosion is taking place it is caused by man and his domestic animals and that if taken in time it can be controlled": Whether he would take the same view now, after the recent Sahelian droughts, must be in question.

A.J. Arkell, writing in ***Agriculture in the Sudan***, says, "...it is probable that most of these

hafeers date from the great periods of the Meroitic Kingdom, when there were plenty of prisoners of war available for the construction of public works...". He then suggests that "...a phase of decreasing rainfall that is thought by some authorities to have begun in the Mediterranean area about AD 200..." may have led to the abandoning of the hafeers.

However, I was not at Bir il Nagaa to wander round the local ruins and speculate on the rise and fall of ancient civilisations. My job was to control the baiting gangs which were scattered over a wide area and often in inaccessible places. I had to keep in touch with the scouts who tracked down the moving swarms, and organise supplies of water, rations, bait, sim-sim oil and, not least, the money to pay the gangs. The oil was important because the bait - a mixture of Paris Green (an arsenic compound) and bran - was all hand-spread and we had to ensure that the spreaders kept their hands and forearms well oiled, and then well washed, as they could otherwise contract bad sores or contaminate their food. The bait had to be spread just in front of the advancing bands of hoppers and it was highly effective. Needless to say there are equally effective, but safer, insecticides available today, and better ways of spreading them.

I was in charge of groups in the country to the east of the Nile. At this same time, Robin Hodgkin, on temporary duty from the Education Department, was similarly occupied with baiting gangs in country to the west of the river. The total area of potential locust infestation that had to be covered was vast, with hundreds of spreaders employed. These operations are described by Maxwell-Darling in an article in ***Sudan Notes and Records***, [Volume 34, 1953, pp. 5-16]

The country was not good for lorry travel.

In some places the "roads" are awful, with water, boulders, great tussocks of grass, drifts of deep sand and ruts cut by young streams in them. We got into a particularly bad place, my driver driving, and an extra heavy jolt snapped off the cast iron bracket of the dynamo. So we came back, sent the dynamo to Shendi by the returning ration lorry and prepared to sit here till the fresh part comes out.

The rough, bumpy travel was uncomfortable, but I found the camping life a pleasant change after Umm Gerr. I wrote:

If you pick a little hill, you get every breeze and the weather is far more bearable than by the river. I have all the kit I need - chair, table, bath, bed, groundsheet and lamp, and my food is far better than at Umm Gerr. When you want milk, you send a chap out with a bowl and he gets it from the nearest flock of sheep (long fat-tailed ones). There has been a fine moon lately and sleeping out has been delightful... The country has been interesting, too, and the hill country, where most of the locusts are, is very green - an old plateau with hard rock on top which has been broken through by wadis leaving wide, wandering flat valleys with the cliffs of the plateau all round.

I would normally start my rounds early in the morning because the hoppers seemed to march and feed before the greater heat of the afternoon, and most of the spreading work of the gangs was done in the mornings. I would go in the lorry, accompanied by a guide who knew where the gangs should be working. The lorry would get us so far, but I often had to go by camel to the more inaccessible feeding areas. This was the only time during my service in the Sudan that I rode camels and I can't say that I ever fell in love with the beasts. Their breath, as everyone knows, is not sweet. And I did not get used to the way that, after getting astride the kneeling camel, one is hoisted to a great height when it stands up. But there was a good view of the countryside from that elevated perch. (General Gordon, too, on first acquaintance, had not enjoyed camel riding, but later wrote, "I am now accustomed to the camel. It is a wonderful creature and so comfortable, with its silent, cushion-like tread".)

The gangs were paid according to the amount of bait they spread - a system that had its drawbacks. Ken Lea-Wilson told me that he had discovered that one of the gangs had simply buried some bags of bait, and he was able to warn me to look out for this sort of deceit, as well as for grossly wasteful spreading of bait.

Ancient Egyptian style ruin at Bir Nagaa

Ruin in the Graeco-Roman style at Bir Nagaa

When our scouts could find no more hoppers, we paid off the gangs and returned any remaining bait to the Shendi store. We bought a lamb from a local Arab and the two radio operators, their interpreter and the guide, my cook and driver and I had an end-of-term feast. It was a small-scale example of *karama*. The signallers I knew only as Geoff and Dutch. I never knew their proper names and only that they came from Derbyshire and Lancashire. It must have been a wonderful interlude for them and I wonder what they went back to in "civvy street" and whether they have told their grandchildren of the time they went locust hunting in the Sudan.

[This article and the note on the Abu Hubl Scheme in the previous issue are taken from the author's forthcoming book - ***Sudan Service - A Look Back at "Empire"*** - to be published by the Radcliffe Press.]

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR LILIAN PASSMORE SANDERSON, 12 APRIL 1997

Address by Neville Sanderson, Junior

The last time I stood up to address such a large gathering of people, was in July last year, just a week or so before my mother's illness had been diagnosed. I was giving a best man's speech at a large wedding in London. I was very nervous in the preparations, but, typically, it was my mother who put me at my ease. Relentless in her encouragement, she did not even need to hear my speech. Her confidence was infectious - "Go on Nev, you'll show 'em!" - and it really did work; her positive spirit and smiling face were all I really needed.

It is a testimony to how many people she touched that so many of us are here today and some have come great distances.

My mother, Lilian, as I'm sure you are all aware, crammed a great deal into her 71 years of life. There are so many things I could comment about, but time unfortunately allows me only to pick out a few, shall we say, 'highlights' of her life. I would like to share with you some of my strongest memories of my mother as well as to remind us all of her considerable achievements.

I am sure that Lilian would have considered her proudest moment in her working life to have been the banning of female circumcision in this country. After a long, persistent campaign, in which she was helped by Baroness Sear and Lord Kennett, she lived to see this barbarous practice criminalised. If any of you are unfamiliar with female circumcision, you could consult my mother's book *Against The Mutilation of Women*, although I do not recommend it as light, bedtime reading! I highlight this example also because it reflects most obviously the very strong humanitarian concern that Lilian always had - not only was there a concern, there was a steely determination to act to improve matters and an extraordinary energy to ensure that she was successful. Her humanitarianism had a broad range too, from concern about a bridge partner's ailments to the suffering of small girls in Africa.

As well as being a humanitarian, my mother was also a campaigner for equal rights for women. It was her interest in improved education for women in particular which took her to

Africa in the first place: she learnt of the lack of female secondary education from two Sudanese girls in her international class at Wycombe Abbey School. After two years teaching in Alexandria, she travelled to the Sudan and taught there from 1953 to 1962. Again, she was successful. Before the age of 30, she became headmistress of the Girls' Intermediate School in Omdurman.

These two main achievements are made even more impressive when we consider my mother's background. Born into a conventional Devonshire farming family, she emerged as a distinctly unconventional and individual character. Her unconventionality was a trait which was never to leave her. Not for her the farmer's life or wife! Having done her bit milking cows as a teenager, something she disliked very much, she went to Exeter University and took a degree in Latin, French and History. Lilian was driven by academic achievement and we three children, Margaret, Bess and I, were to discover later just how determined she was to ensure that we were all as educated as humanly possible between the ages of 0 and 21. Bessie recalls how, when holidaying in Teignmouth, Devon, she was not allowed to go to the beach before she had done two hours of Mathematics. Lilian did not settle merely for a first degree, she gained a PhD for a thesis on *Education in the Southern Sudan 1898 - 1948* and this provided much of the factual material for a book written in conjunction with my father, *Education, Religion and Politics in the Southern Sudan, 1899 -1964*. In her spare time, as it were, she also learnt to speak, read and write Arabic fluently, easily passing the Higher Standard Arabic Test of the Sudan government, which was normally only taken by men. Her knowledge of Arabic must have been very useful to her when we visited Alexandria in the 1980s. Having made contact with Mamduh he, remembering his fondness for Lilian, arranged for us to be chauffeur driven on a tour of the city and then entertained in the luxurious surroundings of a private beach reserved for prominent politicians and distinguished statesmen. It was very valuable to hear Mamduh's recollections of Lilian, since it gave me a clear idea of the energy and vitality my mother had as a young woman. Only really getting to know her in her mid 40s, it was remarkable to hear how much she had achieved long before I or my sisters were even born.

My mother, as I have mentioned, was an extraordinary personality. She was also (not, I'm

sure, always intentionally) hugely entertaining. There were certain aspects of her character which were so strongly entrenched that she could behave in an extremely eccentric, and sometimes embarrassing, manner. But then, embarrassment was a concept unknown to my mother. To say that Lilian was impatient is perhaps a little unfair, but she certainly liked, in her words, "to get things done" and to get them done extremely quickly. I remember, during a visit to Paris, she almost brought the whole of the Arc de Triomphe traffic system to a standstill by insisting on crossing the roundabout by foot. Miraculously, we both survived this alarming experience of dodging about five lanes of fast moving cars. To have used the pedestrian subway would have wasted too much time. Perhaps even more dangerous than this episode, was the time a few years ago when Lilian was faced with the dilemma of needing/ wanting to speed up the 'slow cooker'. Quite why my mother ever bought any object with the word ***slow*** in its title has always been a mystery to me. Anyway, Bessie and I were sitting in the living room when we both detected a very strange smell which was becoming stronger and stronger. Our first reaction was to search the fridge for some dubious left-overs, which my mother was so reluctant ever to throw away, but there was nothing out of the ordinary - just a few strange looking greeny/brown liquids in various receptacles and about 60 small apples, but that's another story. Then, suddenly, we both saw it: the slow cooker was on fire in the oven! This was going to be some casserole. Suffice to say that this was one meal which Lilian could not resurrect.

Saving money, or rather, spending it very selectively, was another of my mother's major concerns. She was a great patron of Oxfam, not just, I am sure, because she believed in helping good causes. Dressed in the dowdiest of second hand clothes for much of the day in the house, much to my father's dismay, she would then transform herself into a beauty queen just as she was to leave the house to play bridge, without my father. Mum would save money using Dulux paint to touch up the Volkswagen, she would avoid having to buy fresh, new packets of crisps by "crisping up" (her words again) old crisps in the aforementioned oven. All this money saved would then be put to very good effect, as the next day Lily would not blink twice about writing out a cheque for the whole amount for a new top of the range Volvo.

Lily also seemed to have her own unique language and expression. She was convinced of the existence of something called "battery oil" and every time we were about to go by car for any distance, she would repeatedly ask my father whether the car had enough "battery oil". "Yes, dear," my father would reply in a bemused way, "plenty of battery oil...". She had a great penchant for mixing metaphors, the oddest of which was probably her description of someone she didn't particularly like as someone who "had a chip on his block".

My mother was great fun to be with, lively, interesting, interested and challenging. She was single minded, sometimes a little too single minded, incredibly determined and courageous too, particularly in the final few weeks of her life. I would like to end by quoting a little of Joyce Fairbrother's recent letter to my father. Joyce was Lilian's former headmistress at the English Girl's College, Alexandria:

> *"I remember with admiration Lilian's quiet, purposeful years in Alexandria and marvel at how she used that base for an international career where her humanitarian interests and resoluteness found ample scope. She leaves the world, and particularly some of its most underprivileged inhabitants, greatly in her debt. How richly she would have deserved a passport to world citizenship, had such an honour been available."*

SUDAN STUDIES: Number 21 (April 1998)

THE SUDANESE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT AND THE ISLAMIST MILITARY REGIME

By B. Yahia

"It was clear from the Sudanese government's report that none of the rights contained in the UN covenant on civil and political rights were operative in the Sudan..."

- UN Committee report on human rights

Of the forty-three years of independence since 1956, Sudan has laboured for more than thirty years under the void arrogance of military dictatorships - all forms, colours and degrees of ferocity. None - at the end of it - has fulfilled any of the aspirations of the Sudanese people! Throughout its recent history, Sudan has been suffering the implications of two refractory issues: socio-economic development and civil war in the South. All successive governments, civilian and military, have displayed visionary ineptness, crippling disdain and lack of political will-power - each on his own - in redressing these dilemmas. It is a recurring experience, that the Civil war in the Sudan becomes aggravated, wide-spread and more intractable during military rule. Standards of living and education, consequently, continued to plummet and the civil war is kept ablaze under varying pretexts. With the takeover of the present military, fundamentalist regime, the national economy has reached the point of virtual collapse. Poverty has gripped ever wider sections of the urban and rural populations. Public utilities services like health, education, electricity and water supply, transport and housing are outside the reach of an overwhelming majority of town-dwellers.

It has become a tradition of military regimes to abandon democracy, dissolve political parties, disband the elected national assembly, suspend civil and trade-union rights and eventually impose their monopoly on political activity and the mass media. Their main enemy and target is the broad sectors of the working people and their associations - the workers, civil servants, peasants and professionals - who usually bear the brunt of these regimes and again pay the heaviest price in toppling them. Similarly, the workers, peasants, professionals, technicians and public employees find themselves today engaged, on the frontlines, in a fierce stand-off with the harsh regime of the National Islamic Front (NIF) for the restoration of democracy and public liberties, and - above all - for a just and peaceful resolution to the civil

war. It is mandatory to state here that the overall disposition of the political perspective has changed radically since the former military regime and the opposition alliance's tactics and even strategies have shifted. The fundamentalist government is desperately exerting itself to widen its popular support by building new alliances with splinter, political and military groups both in the North and the South. A move that may buy them some valuable time.

Right from the beginning, the NIF has issued and enforced its laws and decrees of unlimited powers under the state of emergency and a prolonged curfew. The fundamentalist authority has wielded absolute control on the police, army, security, judiciary, civil service and the commercial and banking institutions. All civil, public, trade-union and political organizations were immediately dissolved, their properties expropriated, leaders either detained, hounded, proscribed, tortured, sacked or physically eliminated.

The gravity of the human and trade-union rights violations was fully exposed by Amnesty International, the UN, and the International Labour Office (ILO) together with other relevant Sudanese and International organizations. In a number of cases, the fundamentalist government has been found guilty of sacrificing basic rights and the ILO has repeatedly intervened demanding the release of trade-unionists, abolition of torture, banning slavery practices, bonded labour and child work abuse. The NIF regime has introduced laws banning strikes and all public protests - participants may face death penalties. Dr. M. Hussein, vice-president of Sudan Doctors Union (SDU), was sentenced to death by a military tribunal in the wake of a doctors' strike action in November 1989 - later lifted under mounting national and international pressure by medical associations and trade-unions solidarity. Likewise, trade-unionists are kept under constant surveillance by an aggressive and fanaticized security, and often denied the right to private work to earn a living. It has been a core policy to persistently subject trade-union activists to economic and psychological stresses in a desperate attempt to either intimidate or eradicate them.

Nevertheless, the broad sectors of the Sudanese Trade-Union Movement (STUM) - drawing from its vast, cumulative experience with previous military rules - are waging a fight back with a high sense of responsibility and tactfulness.

The leadership of the STUM has deemed it equally vital to operate outside the country, as well, so that the voice of the trade-unions on crucial issues is made audible. This has not only enhanced international solidarity, escalated conscious strife against the religious mysticism of the theocratic state, but positively contributed to the role of trade-unionists in reshaping the

political, economical and social future of the Sudan. The STUM, together with other political and military fronts, has been instrumental in working out the strategic plans and statutes of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) - a wide-base opposition platform of political parties, trade-unions, military fronts and non-affiliates or independent personalities. The trade-unionists, within the NDA, have stressed their basic agenda of civil, human and trade-union rights. These rights should not be compromisable under any pretext - be it religious, sectarian, cultural, parochial, tribal or otherwise - in the unified, truly democratic, secular Sudan of the future.

In order to fulfil its obligations, within the international arena, the STUM has set up its bureaus which are currently operational in the UK. These bureaus are complementary to the legitimate and democratically-elected unions during the third democratic period from 1985 to 1989. Beside their general trade-union duties, these bureaus act as indispensable fund-raising vehicles alleviating the toil of trade-unionists at home.

Sudan Studies[22] is published twice yearly by the Sudan Studies Society – UK (SSSUK).

Views expressed in notes, articles and reviews published in **Sudan Studies** are not those necessarily held by the Sudan Studies Society – UK, or the Editor. They are published to promote discussion and further scholarship in Sudanist studies.

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Notes for Contributors

The Sudan Studies Society welcomes notes and articles of any length. The normal maximum is 5,000 words including footnotes (longer articles can be accommodated usually in more than one issue). Ideally, articles should be typed in double spacing on A4 paper in Times 14pt.

Manuscripts are not normally returned to authors though original material such as photographs will be returned. The Society retains the right to edit articles for reasons of space and editorial consistency only, e.g. UK spelling. **Sudan Studies** aims to follow the editorial style of African Affairs, Journal of the Royal African Society.

It is helpful to have, very briefly (2-3 lines), any relevant details about the author - post held, time recently spent in Sudan, etc. and the history of the article or paper submitted, e.g. if prepared for presentation at a conference or seminar, please give the date, location and title of the meeting.

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[22] Single issues and available back numbers can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary at the rate of £8 per copy.