

Review - South Sudan: From Revolution to Independence

Written by Scopas S. Poggo

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SCOPAS S. POGGO, DEC 3 2012

South Sudan: From Revolution to Independence

By: Matthew LeRiche and Matthew Arnold

London: C. Hurst & Co., 2012

Matthew LeRiche and Matthew Arnold, authors of *South Sudan: From Revolution to Independence* have endeavoured to investigate the origins of Sudan's two civil wars, as well as the various conflicts that existed between rebel groups in South Sudan during 1955-2012. They have also examined the evolution of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) from a small guerrilla force to a more conventional force that was determined to contain the well-organized, highly mechanized, and numerically superior Sudan Armed Forces (S.A.F.). In the same context, these authors have presented a detailed discussion of the transformation of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) from its foundation with rudimentary political structures and apparatus to a legitimate, broad-based, socialist, and ultimately, a democratically-oriented political movement. The book presents new information on

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the internal military and political dynamics within the SPLA and SPLM. The role played by key personalities in the SPLA/SPLM, such as Dr. John Garang de Mabior, Salva Kiir Mayardit, Dr. Lam Akol, Aja Win, Dr. Riak Machar Teny, Pagan Amum, Oayi Deng, etc., is crucial to understanding the founding and consolidation of the SPLA/SPLM that paved the way for the subsequent secession of South Sudan from the Republic of the Sudan.

LeRiche and Arnold have provided a critical analysis of the internationalization of Sudan's second civil war, as its neighbours and other foreign powers became entangled in her domestic affairs. They provided a comprehensive discussion of the relations (friendly or hostile) between the South and the North during the period of peace negotiations that led to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Additionally, they have comprehensively discussed the Six-Year Interim period of South Sudan's Self-Government, the emergence of the New Republic of South Sudan, and the Post-Independence era of the nascent state. These authors have consulted a variety of primary and secondary sources. They have also elicited information from interviews with several South Sudanese military and political leaders. This wealth of information is original and has helped to shed light on several themes pertinent to the study. This book is an important contribution to the historiography on Sudan's second civil war, as well as the literature on inter-ethnic, intra-regional, and inter-regional conflicts.

This book would be a valuable resource to graduate students, scholars, academics, historians, foreign country analysts or policy makers, religious organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, and members of the civil society interested in Sudan's two civil wars. This book allows these individuals and organizations to familiarize themselves with the root causes of Sudan's second civil war, the nature of belligerent forces in Sudan's wars and conflicts, the role of diplomacy in peace negotiations, and the factors that pave the way for an independent nation and its sovereign status. LeRiche and Arnold are eloquent in their writing—their book is an easy read!

The authors of this book should have focused their attention on the origins of the second civil war and the subsequent developments that resulted in the independence of South Sudan. There was no need for them to provide a discussion on historical events prior to 1972 as a volume of rich literature on these historical events already exists. For example, several authors have provided exhaustive discussions and analysis of the arrival of the Turco-Egyptians and the British in the Sudan, and their subsequent rule in the country in the period 1821-1856, and the outbreak of Sudan's First Civil War (1955-1972). They include, Scopas S. Poggo, *The First Sudanese Civil War: Africans, Arabs, and Israelis in the Southern Sudan, 1955-1972*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009; Joseph Lagu, *Sudan: Odyssey Through a State: from Ruin to Hope*. Omdurman: MOB Center for Sudan Studies, 2006; Douglas H. Johnson, *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003; Abel Alier, *Southern Sudan: Too Many Agreements Dishonoured*. 2nd ed. Khartoum: A. Alier, 2003; Dunstan M. Wai, *The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan, 1955-1972*. New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1981; Oliver B. Albino, *The Sudan: A Southern Viewpoint*. London: Oxford University Press, 1970; and, Joseph Oduho and William Deng, *The Problem of the Southern Sudan*. London: Oxford University Press, 1963.

The authors have presented the first civil war as a largely Equatorian—dominated conflict. It is true that the members of the Equatoria Corp, who planned and executed the Torit Mutiny on August 18, 1955, were primarily from ethnic groups in Eastern Equatoria. However, from 1965 to 1972, rebels from various ethnic groups in Bahr al Ghazal and Upper Nile provinces joined the Anya-Nya resistance movement. The leadership of the political wing of the Anya-Nya resistance movements (SACDNU, SANU, SSPG, NPG, SSLM) comprised of Latuko. Such Latuko included Father Saturnino Lohure and Joseph Oduho; a Pojulu, Aggrey Jaden Lado; a Madi, Joseph Lagu; and Dinka such as William Nhial Deng, Gordon Muortat-Mayen, Dr. Lawrence Wol Wol, and Enoch Mading de Garang. From 1970 to 1972, the Anya-Nya Movement adopted a policy of decentralization. This essentially meant that rebel forces carried out guerilla operations against the Sudan Armed Forces in their respective provinces: Equatoria, Bahr al Ghazal, and Upper Nile.

The authors have clearly articulated that the foundation for the SPLA/SPLM was laid by Dinka, Nuer and Shilluk military leaders, and that for the first decade of the liberation war the bulk of the rebel army was from the Dinka and Nuer. However, it is important to note that large numbers of men from Equatoria province began to join the rebel movement before the end of that decade. LeRiche and Arnold have also portrayed the Dinka and Nuer officers and men as the only ethnic groups that largely waged the war in the South against the Sudan Armed Forces, and

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ultimately led the country to independence. Thus, the authors have frequently made references to Dinka and Nuer commanders such as John Garang de Mabior, Salva Kiir, Oyai Deng, Quol Manyang Juk, Riak Machar, Kerubino Kwany Bol, William Nyong Bang, and others. However, it is surprising that the authors have not mentioned Lt. General James Wanni Igga, a Bari commander from Equatoria. He was one of the pioneers in the SPLA and later became the Secretary-General of the SPLM, a position that he held until Dr. John Garang reconciled with Dr. Riak Machar in 2002. Other senior Equatorian commanders included two Bari, Major General Thomas Cirillo and Major General Jadalla; a Latuko, Major General Obuto Momur; and a Kuku, the late Major General Scopas Loboro. These officers, together with their Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, Zande, and Moru comrades waged the liberation war against the ASF and the Government of Sudan until the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

One of the serious drawbacks of this book is that it lacks a bibliography, despite its collection of primary and secondary materials, such as interviews. "Endnotes" are not a substitute for a full-fledged book like this one! The bibliography could have been organized under the headings: "Interviews," "Secondary Sources," "Published Primary Sources," and "Archival Material."

LeRiche and Arnold have also provided a first-hand detailed account of economic development in South Sudan at independence. However, they should have provided background knowledge on the economic history of South Sudan in the period 1943-2005. Benaiah Yongo-Bure's book, *Economic Development of Southern Sudan*, (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2007) would have been an excellent reference source for these authors.

Despite these drawbacks, LeRiche's and Arnold's book is a significant contribution to the study of wars and conflicts in the Sudan in particular, and Africa at large.

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