
South Sudan One Year On: From the World's Newest State to Another African Story

MAIRI JOHN BLACKINGS, PHD

University of Strathclyde

A Paper Presented at St Antony's College,
Oxford University,
Sudanese Programme,
June 23rd, 2012.



Abstract

There is an African saying that once a child has washed his or her hands, s/he can eat with elders. This paper examines whether, a year on, the world's newest nation, South Sudan, not withstanding the numerous challenges of nation building, has come of age. That is, has South Sudan since attaining independence, taken active steps towards strengthening her democratic institutions and credentials, and has she embraced wholly the notion of the supremacy of the rule of law, or has she, to put it mildly, become another sad African story? The African story, which is also, a postcolonial one, is the narrative of centralised and erratic decision making mechanisms; the negation of social and political pluralism, where the harassment, intimidation and vilification of the opposition parties, civil society and journalists are daily rituals; the clinging on to power, whether deserved or not, at all costs; the concentration of state power, where parties are allowed, within either the upper echelons of the ruling party or exclusively in the hands of a single individual, usually the leader; the blurring of the distinction between the party and the state, and the subordination of the state to the party of the leader; gross violations of human rights; the use of the national army as a private militia to prop up the regime, and as an instrument of repression; the creation of structures which allow individuals, especially the leadership and its cohorts to punitively abuse and misuse their office to reap personal gains without being accountable to anyone.

One way of examining a nation's democratic credentials is by looking at the nature of both the official and the unofficial discourses emanating from the leadership and its cadre. My focus, is therefore, on how the official and semi-official discourses from the leadership in South Sudan and its cadre, can shed light on the design and performance of the government. I intend to argue in this paper that the failure of the ruling party in South Sudan, the SPLM/A, to transform itself successfully from a guerilla movement, where the army had absolute control and dominion over the party, the administration of the 'liberated' areas and the judiciary, is at the centre of most of the governance problems facing South Sudan today. The modus operandi of running a guerilla movement, which might have served the SPLM/A well in the bush, I suggest, is unfortunately ill-suited for running a twenty-first century modern state, where the barking out of commands, no matter how loudly, is unlikely to yield the desired effect. The failure to separate the state from the party and the attendant failure to institute checks and balances within the various organs of the state lie at the centre of the general air of malaise suffocating and squeezing life out of the nascent nation state of South Sudan, a year on, I contend.

CONTENTS

1	Introduction	4
1.1	“Let the People be the Judge”	4
1.2	Post-Independence Challenges	5
2	The State of Nation Progress Report through Local and International Lenses	6
2.1	Assessment by South Sudanese	6
2.1.1	National Poll on South Sudanese Expectations	6
2.1.2	The Verdict from the Pulpit	6
2.2	Assessment by the International Community	7
2.2.1	The US State Department Human Rights Report 2012	8
2.2.2	South Sudan 4th Failed State?	8
2.2.3	The Human Rights Watch Report 2012	9
2.2.4	The Reporters Without Border Report 2012	9
3	The State, the Party and Sovereignty	10
3.1	The Use, Abuse and Misuse of Sovereign Symbols	11
3.1.1	Flag, Attention, Baton in Kenya	11
3.1.2	Flag, Aim, Shoot in Juba	11
3.2	Sub-nationalism in the Official and Sub-official Discourses	12
3.2.1	Liberation: The Bush Vs Town Dichotomy	12
3.2.2	The “We liberated You” Doctrine	13
3.2.3	The Choice of Independence Day Implications	14
3.2.4	Partial Repayment in Exchange for Anonymity and Amnesty for Corrupt Officials	14
3.3	Sub-nationalism and Sovereign Symbols	15
3.3.1	The National Flag	15
3.3.2	The National Currency	16
3.3.3	The National Army	17
3.4	The Judiciary and the Exercise of Executive Power	17
4	Attempting to Rationalise the African Story	18
4.1	African Leaders as Sole Winners in Post-independence Africa	18
4.2	Independence: An Opportunity to Get all that ‘Colonialism’ Denied Them	19
4.3	Liberators Clearer About What they Want to End than the Way Forward	19
5	Concluding Reflections	20

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 "Let the People be the Judge"

Recently asked whether John Garang would, should he come back to life today, be happy with the state of affairs in the newly independent South Sudan, the response of a senior member of the ruling party of South Sudan, the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM), was unequivocal: "Let the people be the judge."¹ This response, by any yardstick, falls short of a ringing endorsement of the performance of the ruling party by one of its senior members. More importantly, it suggests that, we cannot and probably should not, rely wholly on the self assessment rendition of the SPLM on its own "state of the nation" address.

The prerogative, for objective assessment and reporting, the honourable member seems to suggest, must lie with the "people" and not with the party. I hope this personal reflection, on the state of the nation, a year on, falls within that category of the "people" being "the judge." And more importantly, I pray and hope that when the judgement of the "people" reveals to the emperor the naked truth, that he is naked, the emperor would adorn himself with a new set of attire, and not respond by letting loose on the "people" the baying wolves desperate for some glory and blood, nor respond by sending the "people" to the gallows, for daring to speak the truth, even when so solicited by the honourable member!

Yet, the response also has a disturbing and chilling element to it, that of self-censorship. It seems that even the powerful and the well-heeled, unlike the proverbial child in Christian Andersen's story,² are unwilling to, if not unable to, puncture the pretensions of the emperor's courtiers, who though individually and in private are aware of and do confess to a gen-

eral malaise, but collectively and in public, do paint a picture of bliss. This culture of self-censorship, whether voluntary or imposed, is a worrying development, for the sake of the health, viability and stability of the new nation. Unless we can and do accept and encourage criticism, no matter how unpalatable we find it to be, we cannot expect to be able to mend our ways, and make adjustments where we have strayed from the well-beaten path of democracy.

The Republic of South Sudan became the world's newest nation on July 9th, 2011, following a referendum in which 98% of the registered voters opted for secession from the Republic of the Sudan. The referendum itself, was one of the requirements of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed between two parties: the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), representing largely South Sudan, and the National Congress Party, on behalf of the government of the Republic of the Sudan. The CPA brought to an end Sudan's second civil war which flared up in 1983 pitting the largely black Christian South against the predominantly Moslem and Arabized North.

The aim of this paper is to examine the extent to which, a year on, South Sudan, notwithstanding the huge challenges of post-conflict reconstruction, has weathered the teething problems associated with governance and the building of a new postwar nation. In this paper, I will be analysing the systems of thoughts, ideas, images and symbols employed by the leadership of South Sudan and its cadre to gain insight into its *modus operandi*, focusing on the effectiveness and the effect on the governed.

Admittedly and understandably, there may be protestations that one year is too short a period to effectively gauge the performance of a government. My response to this is simple. First, it is almost customary, if not fashionable

¹BBC Africa Debate "South Sudan - Has independence met expectations?" broadcast live 29th June 2012, from Juba.

²"The Emperor's New Clothes" is a Danish fairy tale published 1837 by Christian Andersen.

for governments to be assessed on their first 100 days in office. If 100 days is acceptable, what about a whole year? Secondly, if one year is too short, it is unlikely that, we would ever find an ideal moment, acceptable to and likely to please everyone. Thirdly, we are not looking for grandiose road or building projects, tempting as that may be. What we are looking for, are evidence of good governance, accountability and the observation of the rule of law: ingredients we consider to be essential for laying the foundation stones of a democratic nation.

1.2 Post-Independence Challenges

It is important that we start by acknowledging and assessing the challenges South Sudan faces as it strives to lay the foundation stone for a strong, viable and democratic nation state. The challenges are immense, numerous and complex. The over fifty years of civil strife has left behind a nation divided, a people traumatised and a country in need of reconciliation and restoring of trust between the various communities; a physical infrastructure that does not exist or is in need of total overhaul.

The new nation state is sinking fast under the weight of small arms in the hands of some of its citizens – both civilian and military – who use it indiscriminately to settle old scores, cattle rustling and broad daylight robbery. The nascent nation state is being asphyxiated by the entrenched stranglehold of corruption and nepotism. The people of South Sudan are, as a result, crying out for an urgent non-partisan disarmament of civilians by an army that is non-partisan and does not take the side of one group over the other, of one party over the other, or of one nationality over the other.

A government that will have the vision to diverge the economy from over-reliance on oil, to include agriculture, animal resources and forestry, would be an added item in the long, so far unchecked, shopping list of the long

suffering people of South Sudan.

The unresolved CPA issues like border demarcation, nationality and citizenship, the protocols relating to Abyei, Blue Nile and Nuba Mountains, are lethal weapons in the hands of anyone desperate to play mischief or score cheap political points, especially in moments of internal difficulties. In fact, the numerous skirmishes between the Sudan and South Sudan, did erupt into an open warfare in April 2012, resulting in the army of South Sudan, the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA), briefly occupying the oil rich region of Heglig, also known as Panthou, before withdrawing or being flushed out, depending on whose side of the story you wish to believe.

South Sudan, which relies totally on oil revenue (98%), has not made things easy for herself by switching off the oil taps without thoroughly thinking through or offering alternative source of revenue, nor consulting with the people of South Sudan on such an important decision. There are talks of two new pipe lines being constructed, one to Lamu in Kenya the other to Djibouti, through Ethiopia, to replace the one that runs through Sudan. This project referred to as the *Lamu Port and Lamu Southern Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor* (LAPSSET) or in short, the *The Lamu Corridor*, is estimated to cost over \$23 billion³.

What is not transparent, so far, is how much the governments of Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti are going to charge per barrel, and whether there are other taxes and hidden costs, that the people of South Sudan should know about, before the deals are signed and construction commences. The argument that Sudan has been "stealing our oil," which has, in turn, been used to justify the turning off, of the oil taps, has been made loudly and consistently by the political leadership. What has not been done to the same gusto is the initiating of debates in parliament, the press and

³"Lamu port project launched for South Sudan and Ethiopia" BBC, March 2nd, 2012.

public on how the Lamu Corridor compares in economic rather than political terms with the Khartoum pipeline. That is, how much, everything taken into account, will South Sudan save per barrel following the construction of the Lamu Corridor. Equally important is the debate, should Lamu Corridor be the preferred choice, on which of the three options is our best bet; pipeline, railway or roads. It is against this background of external and internal factors that we seek to explore the progress South Sudan has made over the last one year, as a sovereign independent state.

II. THE STATE OF NATION PROGRESS REPORT THROUGH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL LENSES

We start by briefly looking at the progress report issued on the health of democracy, governance and human rights in South Sudan since gaining her independence, a year ago. This will offer us a framework and background against which to gauge the performance of the government. These are by local and international groups.

2.1 Assessment by South Sudanese

We start with the local, by reflecting on the findings of a national poll and a pastoral letter by two Primates of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan and the Catholic Church.

2.1.1 National Poll on South Sudanese Expectations

The first ever poll conducted nationwide in South Sudan by the International Republican Institute (IRI), sampled 2,225 adults aged 18 and over from all the 10 South Sudanese states. The poll suggests that the majority of South Sudanese (82%) felt that the country was heading in the right direction. This poll, conducted

September 6th–27th, 2011, covered issues ranging from democracy and governance to government priorities, voting behaviours and attitudes toward democracy. The study was administered through face-to-face interviews, in the language of the respondent's choice. These languages were: Dinka, Nuer, Juba or Classical Arabic or English. The poll found out that 67% of respondents reported being very satisfied or satisfied with the performance of the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement. More importantly, 59% felt that their overall security situation had improved.

This, no doubt, was a ringing endorsement of the SPLM and its leadership, two months after crossing with the populace to the promised land. It would, however, be interesting to see, if a year later, the statistics would hold up or fluctuate, and crucially in which direction: upwards or downwards.

2.1.2 The Verdict from the Pulpit

In a joint pastoral letter entitled "Advisory Message to the Citizens of South Sudan During the First Independence Celebrations" the two primates of South Sudan: His Grace Archbishop Paulino Lukudu Loro, Catholic Metropolitan Archbishop of Juba, and The Most Reverend Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul, Archbishop and Primate of Episcopal Church of the Sudan and Bishop of ECS Diocese of Juba, could not have been more clearer on where the government has fallen short. The fourth paragraph of their pastoral letter dated 9th July 2012, deplores how:

As we celebrate this first year of Independence, nevertheless we must note with sadness many of the problems which have occurred within the new nation. It has been reported that a huge sum of money has been stolen by high ranking officials. We wonder how much

more is yet to be uncovered in subsequent audit reports. Corruption has become endemic within certain classes. This is unacceptable.

The two Primates also expressed their concern about the increasing level of communal violence in South Sudan and an equally disturbing creeping in of Xenophobia:

Ethnic discontent is a constant danger, both between communities at the grassroots and also in perceptions of the ethnic make-up of government institutions. There are reports of growing resentment against citizens of our neighbouring countries which supported us during our liberation struggle. Knowing how much we still need the support of the East African Community as a trading partner, we call for the cultivation of better relations with our neighbours, guided by the call of Christ to “love your neighbour as yourself.”

The other area of concern was in the delivery of services, the composition of the Permanent Constitution production team, and the behaviour of the security organs:

The delivery of basic infrastructure and services such as roads, health, education and water has not met the high expectations of our people. The review process for the production of a new Permanent Constitution has not been as inclusive as expected, and the Church has not been adequately represented. The security organs should be the friends and servants of the people, but some within these organs have gone against this principle.

The need to provide protection to citizens, their property and lives, one of the cardinal duties of the state was referred to:

While we thank God for the the relative peace in Western Equatoria and Western Bahr el Ghazal in the face of the Lord’s Resistance Army which has operated in those parts of the country, we call on all citizens to be vigilant and not to give room to destructive forces on our land.

It can be seen that corruption, xenophobia, the harassment of nationals by the security forces, the unrepresentative nature of the committee on the review of the Permanent Constitution are high up in the minds of the clergy. For these two senior clergy to put pen to paper on these issues means that they deserve to be addressed, as a matter of urgency.

The composition of the constitution body should reflect all shades of opinions: religious, political, civil society, professionals, and others. It should not be partisan. A lot of resources, time and energy was spent on the Draft Constitution, which was not necessary, as the CPA constitution had inbuilt mechanisms to cater for the separation of South Sudan. The only thing it achieved was to give the president powers to relieve, among others, governors who are elected by the people! This in itself, seems to be a retrogressive rather than a progressive step.

2.2 Assessment by the International Community

The two sets of assessments differ fundamentally. The poll assessment from the South Sudanese was soon after the independence before the euphoria has died down and was in form of face to face interviews. In a setting where the culture of free expression is not well cultivated, people tend to state what the powers-that-be wishes to hear, rather than what they really

feel like saying. Public adorations have to be taken with a pinch of salt. We have all seen how today's adulation can turn to tomorrow's vilification, once the regime folds. Veneration is a survival strategy that the populace has learnt to adapt, under repressive regimes.

The assessment by the international community, we will be looking at include the US, State Department's Human Rights Report 2012, the Failed States' Index 2012, the Human Right's Watch, and the Reporters Without Borders Report. These reports were compiled at least nine months after South Sudan got her independence. The difference in time, should allow for a more sombre and reflected look at the situation on the ground. It is also possible to argue that, at this point, new factors like the oil tap shut down might have cropped into the equation to influence judgements.

2.2.1 The US State Department Human Rights Report 2012

According to the US, State Department's, Country Human Rights Reports 2012, on South Sudan:

The most serious human rights problems in the country included extrajudicial killings, torture, rape, and other inhumane treatment of civilians as a result of conflict between the SPLA and SAF, RMG attacks on SAF and SPLA security forces, government counter-attacks, clashes between security forces and civilians, interethnic and inter-communal conflict, and civilian clashes related to cattle rustling.

This conflict, according the US State Department, resulted in approximately 250,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) during the year. The other human rights abuses they listed included:

Politically motivated abductions by ethnic groups; harsh prison conditions; arbitrary arrest and detention, including prolonged pre-trial detention; and an inefficient and corrupt judiciary. The government restricted freedoms of privacy, speech, press, assembly, and association. Displaced persons were abused and harassed. Official corruption was pervasive.

The government is further accused of:

Restricting the movement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and NGO workers were attacked and harassed. Violence and discrimination against women were widespread. Violence against children included child abuse, child abduction, and harmful traditional practices such as "girl compensation." Police recruited child soldiers prior to independence in July, and RMGs recruited child soldiers throughout the year. Trafficking in persons; discrimination and violence against ethnic minorities and homosexuals; governmental incitement of tribal violence; and child labor, including forced labor, were problems.

"The government seldom," we are reminded, "took steps to punish officials who committed abuses, and impunity was a major problem."

2.2.2 South Sudan 4th Failed State?

In a report published, June 19th, 2012, the Republic of Sudan, was named as the third on the list of the world's failed states, after the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Somalia respectively. The report was contained in the latest edition of the Failed States Index (FSI).

The Republic of South Sudan, which attained independence less than a year ago would have been ranked 'approximately fourth' behind Sudan, according to Fund For Peace (FFP), due to 'its "fragile" infrastructure, severe poverty, weak government, fraught relations with Sudan and heavy reliance on oil revenues.'

South Sudan, is therefore, already regarded as a failed state in some analysis.

2.2.3 The Human Rights Watch Report 2012

In a 105 page report entitled 'Prison Is Not for Me: Arbitrary Detention in South Sudan,' released on June 21st, 2012 the Human Rights Watch, characterised the South Sudan judicial system as being characterised by "flawed processes, unlawful detentions, and dire conditions," which they argue "reflect the urgent need to improve the new nation's fledgling justice system." The report catalogues patterns of wrongful deprivation of liberty, harsh and unacceptable prison conditions in which detainees live. The research conducted in 12 of the Country's 79 prisons was carried out during a 10-month period before and after South Sudan's independence, on July 9, 2011.

According to the report, a "third of South Sudan's prison population of approximately 6,000" consist of people who have not been "convicted of any offence" or in some cases even charged with one, but are detained, often for long periods, "waiting for police, prosecutors, and judges to process their cases." Judges, we are told, often pass "long sentences and even condemn to death people who, without legal assistance, were unable to understand the nature of charges against them or to call and prepare witnesses in their defence," Human Rights Watch found.

More disturbingly, the prisoners have reported that "prison officers routinely beat them with sticks, canes, or whips for disciplinary infractions." There are reports of some inmates

being "permanently chained in heavy shackles", which violates domestic and international standards for the use of restraints." The issue of "prohibited cruel, inhuman, and degrading punishment", are ripe, according to the report. "In all the prisons," Human Rights Watch conclude, "children are detained alongside adults and are not offered rehabilitation programs or sufficient educational opportunities," a practice which runs contrary to the South Sudan's Child Act, the report maintains.

The level of progress a nation has made, is best measured by the way she treats her most vulnerable and powerless people: children, women, the disabled, the incarcerated, and the sick. South Sudan seems to have fared rather badly in this respect.

2.2.4 The Reporters Without Border Report 2012

A report entitled "South Sudan: World's youngest country yet to embark on road to civil liberties," was released on 3rd July, 2012, by the Reporters Without Borders. The report focused primarily on the state of freedom of information in South Sudan. They ranked South Sudan 111th out of 179 countries on press freedom index. The report, compiled in Juba from 9th to 15th May, 2012, states that "independence has brought no significant improvement in media freedom in South Sudan." It also highlights a growing and disturbing tendency of journalists to censor themselves, and stresses the need for laws regulating the media to be enacted.

On a slightly positive note, the report notes "South Sudan is not currently prey to concerted and systematic harassment of its media." The report, however, notes that "there has been a disturbing accumulation of incidents and isolated acts of repression or intimidation that end up undermining the climate in which journalists and media operate."

It is important, in my view, that we study these reports carefully and see what lessons

we can learn from them. Where there are areas of concern we should strive to address them, and make sure that when the next round of reports come out, we are not where we are or even worse. The worst we can do, as a nation, is to dismiss them outright as not being "objective" or as being "bias." Neither is it enough to be issuing excuses that "we're a new nation starting from scratch."

In fact, as a new nation, we should be starting with a new and cleaner slate, unpolluted by past experiences, and not the other way round! Being a new nation should be an advantage and not a handicap. We have all the experiences of other nations around us to learn from. We should know what works and what does not, from the experience of others. We should, therefore, not be re-inventing the wheel. One question the people of South Sudan are probably dying to have an answer to is, as a new nation, how come we have been able to copy all the vices but none of the virtues of our neighbours?

III. THE STATE, THE PARTY AND SOVEREIGNTY

The history of political parties in Africa shows that their origins can be traced outside of electoral and parliamentary traditions. Their emergence from a "non-democratic setting," as Salih (2003:2) has rightly observed, has to a large extent come to inform "their practice during independence." Thus, while it may be argued that the genesis of Western political parties could be traced to the need for the extension of universal suffrage and democracy, African political parties, grew out of the need of members "to group themselves according to what they share in common, so as to act in concert" (Salih, 2003:2). This was mainly to enable them mount opposition to colonialism, and at times, to counter other ethnic groups. The result has often been the emergence of "numerous eth-

nically based parties" in opposition to "other ethnic parties" (Salih, 2003:2).

On attaining independence, these political parties, in the views of Salih (2002:2), can be argued to have abandoned the goal of "national unity, the very goal that gave birth to their political ambitions, and fell back to sub-nationalists politics." The fruits of sub-nationalisms has, in Africa, been "civil wars of liberation from what some in the marginalised and ethnic-minority political elite conceive as a form of internal colonialism exacted by the 'ruling ethnicity' " (Salih 2003:2).

A clear distinction between the state and the government, in the sense that the state is broader, larger and more permanent than the party, is essential in running modern government. I want to suggest that within the narrative of the African story, where political parties have not been banned, the ruling party and its insignia are often elevated above the state. The state, in effect, becomes a subset of the party, rather than the party being subservient to the state. And herein, lies the root causes of most of our woes: the absence of clear boundaries.

In this section, I intend to briefly look at two things. First, the extent to which, the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM), which is the ruling party in South Sudan has transcended the slippery trap of "sub-nationalistic politics." Secondly, I seek to examine the extent to which, the ruling party, SPLM, has not just managed to keep a distinction between the party and the state, but whether, the supremacy of the state over the party has been maintained.

My focus will be in the use to which the ruling party uses sovereign symbols like the national flag, the national currency, and the national army, the SPLA, to forge an inclusive identity. I will also be looking at excerpts from speeches delivered by the leadership, in view of establishing whether they transcend or subscribe to "sub-nationalist politics."

3.1 The Use, Abuse and Misuse of Sovereign Symbols

We start by looking at the use, abuse and misuse of the national flag, a symbol of sovereignty, by the state apparatus, the army and the police. We will look at two examples. One from Kenya and the other one from South Sudan to better understand the concept and how the African story manifests itself.

3.1.1 Flag, Attention, Baton in Kenya

An incident reported in a Kenyan newspaper, *The Standard*, of February 8th 1990, vividly illustrates the difficulty of the governed in interpreting “the various signals which constitute the official discourse.” The incident involves a couple and the police, representatives and enforcers of the official discourse, which is about the national flag in this case:

A woman from Busia was recently exposed to an agonising experience as she helplessly watched the police beat her husband with their batons. As she wept and pleaded with the police to spare her husband, the police ordered the couple to take off their shoes. According to the police, the man was punished for failing to stand to attention while the national flag was being lowered. The incident took place last Thursday at a road block on the Kisumu-Busia road. The couple explained they did not know that it was necessary to stand to attention. The woman and her husband were sitting on the side of the road waiting for transport to take them back to Busia.

The couple’s explanation that they did not know it was necessary to stand to attention

highlights the twin difficulty of the populace in decoding the official discourse and in how to respond to it. The equally confusing signals the police in turn transmit by beating the husband only does not help to make the confusion any clearer; whether only men are to salute the national flag or everyone.

3.1.2 Flag, Aim, Shoot in Juba

Our next example is a tragic incident that occurred in Juba on 12th May 2012. This incident too helps illustrate the dilemma faced by the populace in decoding official discourse, again centering around a national flag, at the hands of the army, this time:

A Kenyan teacher in South Sudan was on Saturday 12th May 2012 evening shot dead by police in Juba as she was being driven back to a school owned by former President John Garang’s wife. 24-year-old Mulekye Musangi, a teacher at John Garang International School was shot in the head and later roughed up by police because the driver did not stop when the flag at the late President’s mausoleum was being lowered. Former President John Garang’s son Majok Garang⁴ who accompanied the body to Nairobi yesterday afternoon could not withhold tears at the Lee Funeral Home where the body is being preserved.
- Daily Star (Kenya)

There are a few things about this tragic incident, worth reflecting upon. First, there is no sign put up to say all traffic has to stop when the flag is being lowered, nor do they institute a road block at that time.⁵ The populace is expected to magically know and stop. These

⁴I understand that there is no son of Garang by this name. Possibly an error on the part of the journalist.

⁵Some sources suggest that a whistle is blown.

two tragic incidences point to the painful reality that what the enforcers of official discourse and the leadership they represent perceive as a threat to their power is often the incidental and innocent activities of the individuals. The sending of conflicting signals, often results in generating conflict between the leadership and the populace, as the latter is put in an impossible position and expected to still decode the official narrative, accurately. The price of failure is often too high, and may even cause you your life.

There are some who will argue that these are isolated cases and not government policies or that the police do kill in developed and democratic countries like the United Kingdom, the USA and Canada, as well. Yes, the police do kill in all countries. So do members of families kill each other in all countries. Does that make it okay then for our police or army to kill? Each case has to be seen within its own local context. Not easy to make a generalisation, except to point out that, any killing, no matter who by, is wrong and must not be condoned. What we are referring to here, however, are murders committed in the name of defending a national symbol: the flag. Such soldiers, would, we assume, have been given clear instructions on protocols of behaviour when the flag is being lowered or hoisted. Our problem is that these protocols are not made known to the ordinary citizen. Is it too much to ask for a clear sign-posting?

3.2 Sub-nationalism in the Official and Sub-official Discourses

In this section we look at two excerpts to determine the extent to which the official and semi-official discourse of the regime subscribe to or transcends the culture of "sub-nationalistic politics," essential for laying the building foundations of a solid nation state.

3.2.1 Liberation: The Bush Vs Town Dichotomy

We start by a speech widely circulated on the net and attributed to John Garang, often quoted mostly to impress upon doubters Garang's supposed separatists credentials. Whether the speech does furnish that or not, is not the subject of the present discourse, which is about how far the speech shows the party transcending "sub-nationalist" tendencies.

I and those who joined me in the bush and fought for more than twenty years, have brought to you CPA in a golden plate. Our mission is accomplished. It is now your turn, especially those who did not have a chance to experience bush life. When time comes to vote at referendum, it is your golden choice to determine your fate. Would you like to vote to be second class citizens in your own country? It is absolutely your choice.

– Rumbek, May 15, 2005

There are a number of things in this speech which make it a classical case of a sub-nationalist speech. While exaggerating the role of the party, it downplays the role of others completely in a number of ways. First, the speech suggests that there is a "we" who "fought" and a "you" who did not fight for the freedom of his or her people. Secondly, it suggests that the fighting for freedom was done by a "we" who was in the bushes of South Sudan, and by implication suffering, while the "you" was in town, enjoying life. Thirdly, it more worryingly suggests that the act of liberation is a "mission" that can be and has been "accomplished" by the silencing of the guns or a by the scribbling of a few marks on a piece of paper. The act of liberation is a process. It takes time and generations to "accomplish," if at all it is possible to.

There are some, who see behind the derogative way in which our fellow citizens, who took refuge in the north, and suffered immensely for the same cause, are referred to as *nuswan jallaba* meaning "pimps of Arabs," this town versus bush dichotomy. These individuals are being victimised and discriminated in the job market today, and are being made to feel as second class citizens in the only place they know and call home, simply for having crossed north, rather than elsewhere. The treatment of these individuals, makes a mockery of our claim to have four for equality and human dignity. The aim of our leaders should be to build bridges.

Another unfortunate dimension to this is the negation of all other forms of resistance, except that which has been accomplished through the barrel of the gun. The role of the Diaspora in raising public awareness in their host countries cannot just be labelled less significant than that of the AK47 wielding comrades, because they "did not have a chance to experience bush life."

The contribution of the Diaspora through the letters they wrote to their MPs and Senators; the marches they organised and participated in; the bills they paid for the wounded armed kin's medical treatment; the school fees they have been paying for the children of their brothers fighting in the bush, or those that have fallen; all these are valuable contributions to the war effort, that should not be slighted. Unless, the leadership takes the lead role and starts to acknowledge that, it was not only the AK47, or the individuals in the bushes who delivered the CPA, the nascent state would be built on a false, shaky and unrepresentative foundation.

The contribution of each and every individual, group, nationality, region be acknowledged, and none more than the other. In post conflict Nigeria, as a reconciliation gesture, they adopted the slogan, "No Victor. No Vanquished." It allowed them to weather, at least, the teething problems of reconciliation. The government needs to take a lead role in this.

3.2.2 The "We liberated You" Doctrine

Let's for the moment turn our attention to an equally disturbing semi-official narrative, which has almost gained the notoriety of being the creed of the SPLM/A party. This is the doctrine of "we liberated you" which has become a by-word for excusing all sorts of activities ranging from entitlements – deserved or not – to misdemeanours ranging from extorting bribes at road blocks to justification for being at the helm of power. Must we, the people, not be the ones to acknowledge your role and reward you accordingly, and as we deem fit? Surely, we are not that ungrateful, or are we? Must the price of our indebtedness to you, our liberators, be servitude to you, for ever? At the end of the day, can we still, call ourselves free men and women, of this new nation, or have we simply replaced the colour of the boot on our neck? Can you see the fallacy of your argument, if pushed to its logical conclusion?

We can only speculate on who the "we" is. Let's settle for the "we" being SPLM/A, and the "you" being South Sudanese, who are non-SPLM/A members. If this assumption is true, then this doctrine too is another example of the party falling back on "sub-nationalistic politics." There are a number of problems with taking the "we" to be the SPLM/A. First, it risks eclipsing the role played by others. This may be: other non SPLM/A combatants; South Sudanese who subscribe to other political parties or South Sudanese who are non party members; non-south Sudanese who have lobbied their MPs, senators and Churches. This is not to deny the lead role SPLM/A played in the independence struggle.

Secondly, the SPLM/A fought not on the ticket of separatism, but of a New Sudan. Others would say this was a strategy. May be. But When some within the SPLM/A boasts that the first bullets they fired in the bush was against separatists, and you are shown the graves of avowed separatists felled by the bullets of New

Sudan, we are hard pressed to buy into that.

Thirdly, the CPA partners both signed up to work towards “making unity attractive.” This was a task for both the SPLM and the NCP, and not just one side. How SPLM was going to deliver that, is yet to be explained. I want to suggest that when the people of the South voted overwhelmingly in a referendum to opt for separation, both the NCP and the SPLM have failed to deliver. Probably, if anything, what the SPLM/A delivered on a “golden plate” is, if you wish, the CPA, but not freedom. The two are different things. The people of South Sudan, were not liberated by any other party, to the total exclusion of others. Fourthly, there was no outright military victory by any side. Neither the NCP nor the SPLA won on the battlefield. There was strictly speaking a stalemate. In sporting analogy, a draw. So how can we attribute the liberation act to SPLM/A alone?

True liberators do not fight for paybacks. Neither do they demand it. It is for purely altruistic reasons and principles that they join liberation movements, expecting no personal favours in return. On the contrary, they put their lives on line for others. They give up their today so that others may have a better tomorrow. Only mercenaries fight and expect to be rewarded. Not liberators.

3.2.3 The Choice of Independence Day Implications

The choice of July, 9th may be a clear indication of how we arrived where we are: an independent nation. There are a number of dates we could have chosen as our independence day. First, we could have chosen August 18th, the day of the Torit mutiny. This was when the first bullets were fired in Torit by Southern soldiers of the Equatoria Corps. This gave birth to the Anyanya who reached an agreement, the Addis Ababa Agreement with General Nimeiri’s government in 1972. This day, however, was

not chosen as the independence day.

The second date that could have been chosen was May 16th, marking the Bor mutiny. This led to the formation of the SPLM/A, who signed the CPA, under the auspices of IGAAD. That the SPLM did not choose this date as the independence day may be a good indicator within certain circles of the party that the credit is not solely theirs. The third choice could have been the dates between January 9th -15th, the Referendum Day. This was when 98% of the population voted to chart their own destiny. Must their superiority not have been acknowledged by choosing this date as independence day? Well, it was not to be.

Finally, the ruling party in Juba settled for July 9th, when the CPA, brokered by the international community officially ceases to exist. Is this a recognition of the role played by the International community in the liberation of South Sudan? May be. May be not. May be the choice of July 9th is a recognition that there is no a “we” who liberated a “you.” That in liberation there is no a “we” who liberates a “you.” Liberation is an individual act. It is a collective effort. In this case, the list includes helping hands from, but not limited to, the SPLM/A, the other South Sudanese, members of the IGAAD, the Troika, the international community, the American Christian Right, and many others.

3.2.4 Partial Repayment in Exchange for Anonymity and Amnesty for Corrupt Officials

In a letter dated 3rd May, 2012, addressed to 75 serving and former top government officials, the President of South Sudan, Salva Kirr, wrote:

We fought for freedom, justice and equality. Many of our friends died to achieve these objectives. Yet once we got to power, we forgot what we

fought for and began to enrich ourselves at the expense of our people.

The question for us, no doubt is, who is the “we” that fought for the “freedom, justice and equality” of South Sudanese, and is now enriching itself “at the expense” of South Sudanese. It is difficult to resist the temptation of concluding that the “we” refers to the SPLM/A. While it is true that the bulk of the corrupt individuals pledge allegiance to the ruling party, there is no doubt that these thieves are to be found in most, if not all the parties that have participated in the government, so far.

The use of the first person plural “we” raises lots of questions. One of which is, if the president can be included among those who have fought for the freedom of South Sudanese, how can we, by the same token, exclude him from the people who have misappropriated public funds? Unless of course, we want to say the President was using *pluralis majestatis*.

Equally disturbing about the letter is the guarantee of amnesty and anonymity to the concerned officials on return of, not the whole stolen amount, but just “part” of the looted money. This seems to be an act of rewarding the corrupt, on the side of the president, by writing off such ill-gotten wealth. Possibly, the bulk of the corrupt officials are from the ruling party, and any punishment, will wipe off a good portion, if not the entire leadership echelon of SPLM. Is this then calculated to save the party, at the expense of the nation? Which is greater: the party or the nation? Whose interest should be paramount at such moments?

The combating of corruption through the creation of anti-corruption commissions is the least effective way. A more robust approach would be the strengthening of institutions like the police, the judiciary, the legislative, the media and ensuring their independency, especially from interference by the executive. Whether an anti-corruption commission has prosecutorial powers or not will make little

difference if accounts books are not closed. More importantly as John Gitongo, the Kenyan anti-corruption czar, maintains, the key to tackling corruption is political commitment from the leadership. Where the leadership is determined, it can be rooted out, fast and effectively.

If the government’s austerity measures, is to be effective some hard decisions need to be taken. For example, the government is too large, unwieldy and is draining the meagre resources of the country. The national cabinet could benefit from the abolition of deputy ministerial positions and the slashing of ministerial position by two-thirds, at least. Anything more than 17 is too unwieldy. The need for the current unelected upper house is questionable. We could do without it. The nation, with its current population, cannot afford ten states. Three would be in place, if there is need. The expansion of counties must be tied to population, not dished out as political favours.

3.3 Sub-nationalism and Sovereign Symbols

In this section we look at the extent to which sub-nationalistic politics has infiltrated or has been kept out of sovereign symbols: the flag, the currency and the army.

3.3.1 The National Flag

There is no doubt that in the minds of most South Sudanese, the raising of the flag of South Sudan on July 9th, was the happiest moment of their lives. The flag raising was a moment of great pride. A flag is the most visible sign of nationhood. Now that the dust has settled, it may be appropriate to look at the history of this symbol of nationhood and reflect on how representative it is.

The national flag of South Sudan originally belonged to the ruling party, the SPLM and its military wing, the SPLA. This flag has been imposed upon the nation, without any meaning-

ful consultation as the national flag. In adapting a flag belonging to a party, as a sovereign symbol of the new state, the party runs the risk of accusations of making itself synonymous with the state. In pledging allegiance to this flag, the perception, rightly or wrongly, is that you are as well as pledging loyalty to the party. Another likely charge is of attempting to present a rather skewed image of the history of South Sudan as a nation. The impression given, by the imposition of the flag, is that South Sudan, as a nation, started with the founding of the SPLM in 1983. Nothing, however can be farther from the truth than such a perception. Yet, perceptions are important in such issues.

In nations emerging from fractious wars, magnanimity in victory is a virtue worth embracing. The problem is compounded by the unwritten demand for members of the party, especially those who hail from "wrong" quarters or have crossed over from other parties, to continuously and ritually prove their loyalty by appearing in public with the flag of the party on one breast pocket and the picture of John Garang on the other. This use to which the flag has been put, suggests more than anything else, that this is really a party flag rather than a national one.

During the elections, a senior member of the party, made a fiery speech asking "Independent" candidates to refrain from wrapping themselves up in the party flag. We are told, the red colour in the flag symbolises, "martyrs." There has not been any definition of martyrdom that I have seen. Does it involve everyone who fell, regardless of which side of the great divide they were on? Or to qualify, do you need to be on a particular side? This is one of the debates that the people of South Sudan need to engage with. A national flag, in my view, should be something everyone identifies with. Put simply, non-partisan. A choice of another flag, should the nation feel the need for, would in no way diminish the role played by SPLM/A in the liberation of South Sudan.

In fact, it would cement the parties historical role and win it a few more admirers.

3.3.2 The National Currency

All the denominations of the national currency, which is the South Sudanese Pound, are adorned with the photograph of the party founder, John Garang. If the aim is to acknowledge the role played by Garang, which no one can begrudge him, and which he deserves, surely the role of others from past movements need to be noted too. Otherwise, there is every reason to believe that the party, is engaged in 'sub-nationalist politics' and is seriously rewriting a skewed history of South Sudan, in its favour.

There were other freedom fighters who have paid the ultimate price too. Is it too much to ask them to share the podium with Garang? There are people like Buth Diu, Fr Saturnino, Ali Gbatala, Benedito Mou, Chief Pacifico Lolik, Clement Mboro, who all deserve to be honoured, no less. There must also be a grace period, after the death of a person before their heads can adorn the national currency, I suggest. Twenty to thirty years, if not more, would be an ideal length of time for revisiting history and rewarding the deserving.

There is nothing unusual, I must add, with having heads on national currencies, as long as it reflects the local history impartially. In the United Kingdom, I am told, it is the head of the Queen. The truth be told, she reigns but does not rule. That is, she is not the head of the government or a political party. She is just the head of state: non-partisan. I am not sure what the reaction would be like if, David Cameron, was for example, to have his photo or suggest Margaret Thatcher's picture, both of whom belong to the Conservative Party. On the United States dollar, for example, you have assortment of statesmen from various political parties, and inventors.

3.3.3 The National Army

The army is one of the symbols of national sovereignty. Is there still any reason to refer to the army of an independent South Sudan, as SPLA? Is it the army of the ruling party or of the state of South Sudan? Who is the army supposed to be protecting: the party or the state? What the nation needs is a professional non-partisan army whose task it is to protect, not the powers that be, or a political party, but the territorial integrity of the nation.

Closely linked to this is the issue of politics and khaki. In democratic societies, should you wish to dabble in politics, as a man or woman of khaki, you need to be defrocked first. During the last election, it was clear that, to run for public office, you have to remove your khaki. I hope we still have that on the statute books.

3.4 The Judiciary and the Exercise of Executive Power

The blurring of the distinction between the role of the judiciary and the exercising of executive power is often an indication of the erosion of the independence of the judiciary and a drift towards trampling of individual rights. Let's illustrate this with the unfortunate experience of a journalist in South Sudan. According to the *Sudan Tribune*:

On Wednesday 2 November, Ngor Aguo Garang, a journalist at *Sudan Tribune*, was taken into custody by South Sudan's security services following the publication of an opinion piece criticising South Sudan's president Salva Kiir in *The Destiny*, a newspaper which Ngor edits in Juba. In the article, published in *The Destiny's* first edition on 26 October, its author Gengdit Ayok, who is also the newspaper's deputy editor

in chief, said that that Kiir should not have allowed his daughter to marry someone from outside South Sudan, claiming it was unpatriotic.

Let's start by saying and accepting the premise that, like any other citizen, the president's daughter has the right to marry a person of her choice, alien or national. Let's also, from the onset, acknowledge that this is not a state affair. It is strictly an issue between the two families: the president's and the groom's. In short, a private matter, which the journalist in question, let's agree, had no right to thrush into public domain, in the manner he did.

What is of interest to us here is the response of the state machinery following the publication. It is not clear why the state security should have been involved in what is, if anything, a clear case of civil suit, to be handled by the legal teams of the president on one hand and the journalist in question and his newspaper, on the other hand. The involvement of the state security organs raises serious issues about establishing clear boundaries between the personal and the public, state affairs and family affairs, adherence to the rule of law and trampling individual's constitutional rights. There is no evidence at all, as far as one can establish, that the security of the state was at risk, as a result of the publication, to warrant the involvement of the state security organs.

More interestingly is the emerging sequence of events following the arrest and release of the journalist. On release, it has emerged that, the journalist was invited along with elders from his community for a lunch at the Presidency⁶ If this option, of a peaceful and, I dare suggest, traditional problem resolving mechanism was available, why was it not invoked as the first port of call? Is it to send a lesson to others on, among others, who is in control? This is an example of how, in post-colony, the distinction between the judicial and

⁶It is understood that the family of the journalist and the president have known each other for a long time.

the executive is often blurred.

The mixed messages – of the involvement of the security and the invitation to a meal – does not help clear up things, especially the movement from the inhospitable to the hospitable, whose only role is to keep the populace on its feet, guessing. The difficulties in decoding the signals sent by the state power can be gleaned from Robert Serumaga’s testimony to Soyinka on the dilemma of the populace in Uganda under Amin. The conversation is reported by Soyinka in the introduction to his play, *A Play of Giants* (pg, px).

“At the start,” Serumaga, said: “You more or less knew what to do and what to avoid if you wanted to stay alive. You knew when to speak, when to shut up and what to say or not to say. Now there are no longer any rules. What saved you yesterday turns out to be your death-warrant today. I have no friends, no colleagues left. They are all dead, or escaped. But mostly dead.” (pg, px)

The testimony is a clear example of what Mbebe (1992:5) refers to as the “chaotically pluralistic” nature of the message that despotic regimes transmit. The creation of a single permanently stable system out of all the signs, images symbols that the regime transmits is the problem which confronts the populace and it is what gives rise to the conflict between them and the leadership.

Today, it is almost a death warrant to be in possession of and using a basic item like camera around the airport, Juba Bridge or in the streets of any of the towns. There are no signposts to warn you against, for example, taking photographs at the airport. The only warning you get is, a slap if you are lucky. Your camera may be confiscated or thrashed. Should you protest, then you are in for proper beating up. The logic is difficult to understand. It surely

cannot be on security grounds, can it, especially in Google era, when I can sit in London and zoom on to Juba from my laptop? Do I need to be physically in Juba to collect such an intelligence, really? Our security system need to grow up and embrace modern way of doing things. In a country like Britain, even if you are being arrested for a heinous crime, deference is shown to you. Is that too much to ask, of our security system? Do they need to use physical force?

The other underbelly of using state security forces is that they are often not uniformed, faceless and and to all purpose and intention, one could say masked. They do not identify themselves. They simply order you to accompany them. They do not tell you where to. Nor do they tell your next of kin where you are being taken to. You end up in the dreaded ghost houses, which are nothing short of torture chambers. They do not come with search warrants nor arrest warrants. Once they have taken you, there is no way to trace where you have been taken to. You will be lucky to get out of there alive. This environment allows the state to feign ignorance should they kill you and blame it on ‘wrong’ elements.

IV. ATTEMPTING TO RATIONALISE THE AFRICAN STORY

There are a number of theories which attempt to account for the phenomenon I refer to as the African Story. I will briefly look at two of them. Before that, it may be important to digress slightly and look at the winners and losers in post-independence Africa.

4.1 African Leaders as Sole Winners in Post-independence Africa

The populace remained largely either unaffected or their plight even worsened in some cases. Ade Ajayi (1982:6), for example, notes that:

The most fundamental aspect of post-independence Africa has been the elusiveness of development. In many ways the quality of life is even worse than on the eve of independence. In particular, many African countries now find it difficult to provide for their population sufficient food and energy resources for the basic necessities of life. Most of the new states have yet to evolve stable political structures. The uneven development between different regions of the same country and between cities and rural areas of the same region persists. The inequities of income distribution that characterised colonial rule. The State of African Leadership have tended to widen. As a result, there have been civil wars, and there is generally less security for life and property.

This is not, however, to suggest that independence was a bad thing. Nor that people do regret it. But rather that the quality of leadership is essential, if the dividends of independence is to be enjoyed by all, and not just the privileged few, who the accident of history has placed at the helm.

4.2 Independence: An Opportunity to Get all that 'Colonialism' Denied Them

The first is a class theory espoused by writers like Lazarus (1990), who holds the 'middle class' for the current malaise. Lazarus (1990:11) holds the intellectuals and politicians, who both hail from the same upper echelons of society, as being responsible for the present state of affairs in Africa. "Under colonial rule," Lazarus (1990:11) explains:

"The national middle class had

inevitably felt its freedom of movement and action restricted. Its boundless ambition had been capped. Independence, therefore was experienced by this class as changing everything for the better. Everything that colonialism had barred to this class, independence seemed to unchain. Everything that colonialism had outlawed and kept out of reach, independence brought within the bounds of legality and placed within easy grasp. Independence made perfectly possible everything that colonialism had rendered impossible."

In short, independence let loose the national bourgeoisie to behave as it would, like any bourgeoisie. Political independence has in the hands of the elite become an opportunity to mortgage whole nations. The result is that political independence has failed as an act of national liberation. Any casual glance at the way in which the leadership in Juba is behaving, tends to lend credence to this theory. The lavish lifestyles, the cars they drive in, the salary and allowances they have allotted themselves, all point to scrambling for what they perceived as their rights which 'colonialism' had denied them. Some even go as far as equating the number of cars on the roads of Juba as development.

4.3 Liberators Clearer About What they Want to End than the Way Forward

One of the main reasons for the African story is lack of vision on the part of the so-called liberators. The fault, Ajayi (1982:6) believes, rests with the nationalists who were:

Much clearer about what they wanted to end than about what they wanted to put in its place. They

wanted to throw off the imperialist yoke, and end discrimination and the exploitation of man by man; they wanted freedom, and respect for the dignity of the black man. Beyond that, however, they had little conception of the kind of society they were striving to build outside of vague concepts of Europeanisation and modernisation.

The same may be said of South Sudan. We were probably better at articulating what we did not want: Arab domination. But were less clear of what we wanted to replace it with beyond vague and ambiguous labels like "New Sudan." We have yet to articulate clearly what it means to be a South Sudanese; what South Sudanese nationalism is. We have come to define South Sudanese nationalism negatively, with north-bashing. Those of use who bark anti-north sentiments loudest, are deemed the most nationalistic. Anyone who does not join in the pantomime, is labelled as being in the pockets of the north. We cannot keep on whipping up anti-north fervour forever, especially on those occasions when things are far from good, as a cry to rally the troops, or as a shield to hide behind.

V. CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, one of the few African statesmen with the moral authority to speak on any issue African best sums up the mood in South Sudan. In a press conference in Juba, his verdict was : "A year ago we joined the rest of the world in celebrating the birth of the new nation of South Sudan. Today in Juba, my mood is rather more somber."⁷ This mood, I must add, must be the feeling of most, if not all South Sudanese.

A casual look, similarly, at the US State Department Country Report, the Reporters With-

out Borders report, the Human Rights Watch report, the joint pastoral epistle of the South Sudanese primates, all suggest that one year on, the world's newest nation, South Sudan, has not lived up to the expectation of neither its own people nor that of the international community. Yet, the expectations of the people of South Sudan, contrary to what one would expect, was neither unrealistic nor unmanageable. Apart from the overriding desire of wanting to be free from northern domination, the only other wish of the people of South Sudan, after years of suffering the indignity of strife, was to live in peace and dignity. It is on these crucial hurdle that they feel their government has let them down. This is not to suggest that they did not wish to see the provision of services like education and health or the improvement of the infrastructure. They did, but they also knew that these other demands would take time. They were prepared to be patient.

The dignity promised them, during the war is still to be delivered, a year later on. The city that they were promised, would be delivered to every village, to save them from travelling to the towns and creating slums, has long been overtaken by talk of the government planning to build itself a multibillion new capital in Ramciel. The people have to wait longer for their own villages to become cities. So much for the unfulfilled promises.

In the meantime, the people of South Sudan have ben reduced to another sad African story, dependent on relief while their leaders drive in expensive four wheel vehicles and have all, without any significant exception, become multi-millionaires over night. This, I have argued, is partly due to the failure of the ruling party in South Sudan, the SPLM/A, to transform itself successfully from a guerilla movement /army, where the army had total control and dominion over the party, the administration of the 'liberated' areas and the judiciary.

⁷"Archbishop Tutu tells Kiir to step up anti-corruption crusade," Sudan Tribune, 6th July 2012

This practice, unfortunately, when carried over into the running of the modern nation state, has clogged the government machinery, sending it spiralling into a near halt. The failure to separate the party from the state and the attendant failure to institute checks and balances within the various organs of the state lie at the centre of the general air of malaise suffocating and crippling the new nation state of South Sudan, I have tried to argue.

Living standards are slipping fast, and inflation is running as high as 80% and more in some place; the nascent nation is groaning and sinking under the weight of corruption, cronyism, and the politicising and filling of the civil service with party cadres with little regard to ability or qualification. Communal violence is fast eroding state authority, especially in states like Jonglei. The use of state machinery to manipulate elections, intimidate the opposition and silence them to the point of non-existence, and the deploying of state intelligence and the army to partisan purposes do not bode well for democracy.

Where a people have just emerged from a divisive war, fences need to be mended, trust rebuilt, confidence instilled. Unless all South Sudanese from all walks of life, political parties, religious groups feel that they are stakeholders in the new nation, it will erode their confidence in the government. It is in this respect that, we say, the biggest achievement of the government in Juba, is possibly the accommodation, though some would say neutralisation, of what is referred to in the literature as Other Armed Groups (OAG). The government's record in this area was encouraging, if not commendable, until of course, one comes across the tragic and mysterious circumstance under which, the renegade General George Athor⁸ was killed. His death must surely have eroded confidence of other dissidents in the ability of the government of South Sudan to

continue absorbing dissidents peacefully.

Corruption is ripe in South Sudan, The world's newest nation, South Sudan, has a lot to offer to the world on how one can publicly own up to the misappropriation and embezzlement of public funds in excess of \$4.5 billion, and still be firmly in the saddle, unfazed, unruffled and least remorseful; and still enjoy the adulation of the electorate while patting the self on the back for a job well done, with no firing of culprits, no heads rolling and no initiation of court proceedings.

Reference

- Ajayi, Ade.** 1982. *Expectations of Independence*. Daedalus.
- Blackings, Mairi.** 2012. *The Big Men of Africa. Anomaly of African Leadership in Wole Soyinka's Plays*. CASAS, South Africa.
- Chazan, Naomi, Robert Mortimer, et al.** 1988. *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa*. Macmillan, London.
- De La Boetie, Etienne.** 2008. *The Politics of Obedience: The Discourse of Voluntary servitude*. Auburn, Alabama.
- Lokudu, Archbishop Paulino, and Archbishop Daniel Deng.** 2012. "Advisory Message to the Citizens of South Sudan During the First Independence Celebrations." Unpublished joint pastoral letter. July 9th 2012.
- Mbembe, Achilles.** 1992. "Provisional Notes on Postcolony". *The African Post*, 1.1
- Salih, M. A. Mohamed.** 2003. "The Evolution of African Political Parties." in Salih, M.A. Mohamed. *African Political Parties*. Pluto Press, London.

⁸Government of Sudan sources claim he was killed on December 19th 2011 while trying to re-enter South Sudan in a clash with border guards. His supporters believed he was killed inside Uganda.

Soyinka, Wole. 1984. *A Play of Giants*. Methuen, London.

Wrong, Michelle. 2009. *It's Our Turn to Eat: The Story of a Kenyan Whistle Blower*. Fourth Estate, London.

<http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2011%20December%2005%20Survey%20of%20South%20Sudan%20Public%20Opinion%20September%206-27%202011.pdf>. retrieved 24th June, 2012.

<http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/06/21/south-sudan-arbitrary-detentions-dire-prison-conditions>. retrieved 24th June, 2012

<http://en.rsf.org/soudan-du-sud-report-world-s-youngest-country-03-07-2012,42933.html>. Retrieved July 3rd, 2012.

About the author

The author is a Postdoctoral Fellow. His publications include: *A Grammar of Ma'di* Mouton 2003; *Narrating Our Future: The Practices, Rituals and Customs of the Ma'di of Uganda and South Sudan* CASAS 2011; *The Big Men of Africa: Anomy of African Leadership in Wole Soyinka's Plays* CASAS 2012; *Ma'di Dictionary* Lincom 2000; *Acholi Dictionary* Lincom 2010.