

■ that they had been fair and free. The observers included the Organization of African Unity, the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Conference, and the Arab League.

IV. Is Sudan a threat to the United States?

After hearing the British line, that Sudan considers the United States to be the "White Satan," the greatest shock delivered to the members of the American delegation was certainly the realization that the entire Sudanese intelligentsia, and the Sudanese people as a whole, are very pro-American. The current, bad relations between the U.S. government and Sudan are viewed as an aberration by the Sudanese, who think of their country as close to America culturally as well as historically. As Ahmed Abd Al Rahman Mohamed, secretary general of the Council for International People's Friendship, pointed out, the United States had been on good terms with previous governments. "I was interior minister in 1983," he said, "in Nimieri's military regime, which was far worse than our situation now. But at the time, Sudan was the number-one friend of the U.S." Now, he continued, when one would expect Washington to seek stability in Sudan, and thereby, in the entire strategically important region, the opposite is the case.

One common feature in the Sudanese and American experience, which many people pointed out to the delegation, is that both were colonies of the British Empire. Unlike many other former British colonies in Africa, Sudan has developed deep ties with the United States, especially through the thousands of Sudanese who have studied in the United States. Dr. Turabi, president of the National Assembly, who has graduate degrees from England and France, is a relative exception to the rule, as most other leading members of the government, legislative bodies, and professionals, studied in America. Yet even Dr. Turabi, in his lengthy conversation with the delegation, was outspoken about his positive impression of the United States, a country which he knows well, having visited almost all 50 states.

During a farewell dinner, cordially offered by the Sudanese-American Friendship Society, members of the association turned out to be former diplomats at their embassy in Washington; lawyers who had studied international law at Harvard, as well as engineers who graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; a woman engaged in public health, who as a former parliamentarian, had visited the United States 30 times, and remembered certain political figures such as Sen. Charles Percy (R-Ill.), who had shown interest in Sudan; a diplomat who lived in the United States for 12 years, who viewed the current tensions between Khartoum and Washington as transitory; and so on and so forth. As one member stressed, Sudan's educated layers have contributed historically to building up administration, medicine, and other social sectors in many countries in the area, from the Gulf

countries to other African neighbors, as well as the United States itself. Across the board, the attitude expressed by these and scores of other Sudanese whom the delegation met with, was one of eagerness in improving relations with the United States. The mere existence of a Sudanese-American Friendship Society, as former Representative Mann noted, demonstrates the desire to improve contact and communication between the two peoples.

On several occasions, members of the American delegation asked their hosts what "message" they would like to have sent back to the United States, to Congress, and to the American people in general. The answer invariably included the notion, that Sudan did not constitute a threat to U.S. interests in the region or elsewhere, and that it sought only to establish relations on a basis of mutual respect between the two countries. One leading member of the Friendship Society said they expected the United States to treat Sudan with "fairness." Another leading political figure stressed the need to have a "fair deal," and demanded that the United States make judgments about the political and social reality of the country on the basis of first-hand knowledge, not on the basis of "reports" issued by diplomatic missions elsewhere.

The fact that the Schiller Institute organized a delegation of elected officials to visit the country, the first since the grave allegations have been circulated, was taken by all as a sign of good will, on the part of some Americans. The question remains open: Will the U.S. administration follow up?

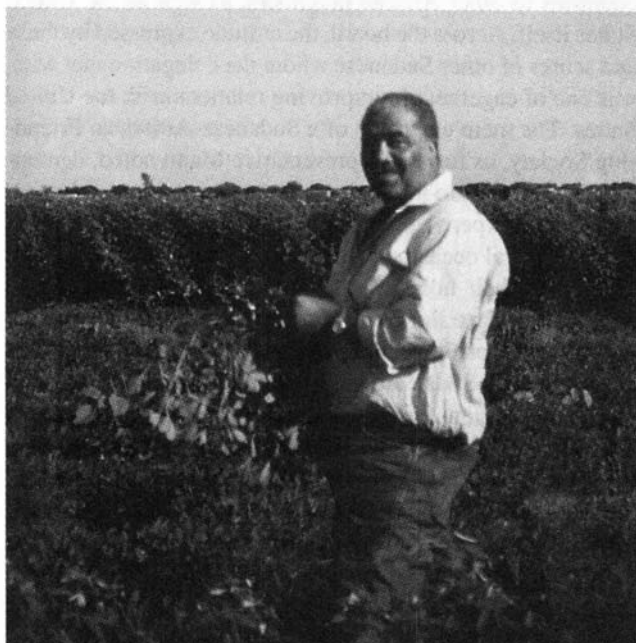
The Gezira Scheme

Sudan's struggle for food self-sufficiency

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

One of the leading reasons why Sudan has been singled out for destruction by the British, is that it has the potential to feed not only its own population, of 28 million, but the entire African continent and beyond. According to reports produced by strategic think-tanks such as the Center for Strategic and International Studies at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., Sudan could be the breadbasket for Africa and the Middle East. *EIR* has documented at length, how the unparalleled agricultural potential of Sudan could be realized, through application of modern methods of mechanized agriculture, on a vast scale, including water management projects (see *EIR*, Jan. 1, 1993, "The Rebirth of Africa," and June 9, 1995, *Special Report*).

Because the intention of international policymaking insti-



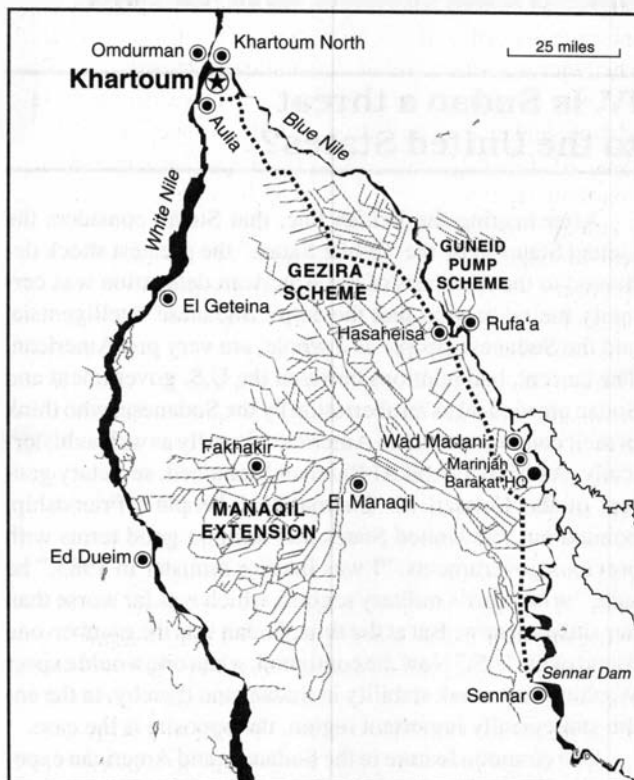
Arkansas Speaker Pro Tem Ben McGee holds up ground nuts at the Gezira Scheme, an area which accounts for 60% of Sudan's agricultural production.

tutions, such as the United Nations Development Program, Lester Brown's Washington, D.C.-based Worldwatch Institute, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and others, is not to feed Africa, but to starve it, this potential has been being systematically blocked. The decision on the part of the current Sudanese government, to make food self-sufficiency its first priority, was seen by the IMF-World Bank crowd as a *casus belli*. Sudan is being subjected to sanctions, in an effort to kill its productive potential.

The delegation of U.S. elected officials, which visited Sudan under the auspices of the Schiller Institute in September, had the rare opportunity to see what Sudan's agricultural potential looks like firsthand. On Sept. 18, they visited the Gezira Scheme, located south of Khartoum along the west bank of the Blue Nile, stretching, in the south, almost to the east bank of the White Nile. They were received by the governor of Gezira state in his office, before visiting the farm area itself.

The governor, who expressed his desire that the American delegation's visit would contribute to improving relations between the two countries, explained the importance of the Gezira Scheme for the state's economy. Gezira state, which covers an area of 36,000 square kilometers and has a population of 3.76 million, is second only to Khartoum state, whose population is about 5 million. Roughly 90% of the state's economy is represented by the Scheme, where 80-90% of the state's population are employed. The state is proud of its social services, financing for which takes up two-thirds of the budget. There are 36 hospitals, two or three of them teaching hospitals, and 400 health centers, clinics, and local health

The Gezira Scheme



units. The governor said that the Gezira Scheme is self-sufficient, in that it does not depend on federal government funds for its functioning. The Scheme includes food processing, cigarette manufacture, and edible oil production, in addition to basic agricultural products. These include cotton, wheat, sorghum, sunflower, peanuts, and sesame.

An extensive operation

In discussion with members of the U.S. delegation, several members of the board of the Gezira Scheme presented the project. First established in 1911 as a private farm of 2,000 feddans (a feddan is slightly larger than an acre), it soon grew in size and, after the completion of the Sennar Dam in 1925, started functioning on the basis of gravity irrigation. The area was increased to 2.1 million feddans between 1957 and 1962, and now has a total area of 2.2 million feddans. The relatively flat land area, with inclinations from north to south and east to west, greatly facilitated the gravity irrigation system.

Originally, under British colonial rule, the area produced raw cotton for export to the textile factories in the United Kingdom. After independence, production was diversified. Out of the total land under irrigation, 1.5 million feddans per year are cultivated, on a crop rotation basis. Out of these, 350,000 feddans are for cotton; 400,000 for wheat, and the same for sorghum; 240,000 for ground nuts; 50,000 for vege-

tables; 10,000 for fodder, and the same for sunflowers; and 400,000 lie fallow. The immense area stretches 300 kilometers south to north and 100 km east to west, an area estimated to be twice that of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

There is also a significant amount of livestock on the Scheme. Sudan as a whole has 1.7 million sheep, 1.6 million goats, 700,000 cattle, and 200,000 camels (for which Sudan is particularly famous). One-third of the animal stock on the Gezira Scheme, about 300,000 in total, was purchased from local nomadic and semi-nomadic herds of the Kenana, a subtype of the short-horned Zebu, known for their quality milk and beef. The purchased cattle and sheep were distributed to farmers who had no livestock. This was done in order to make full use of the annual crop residues of about 3,130,361 tons. The residues are mixed with fodder produced through crop rotation farming methods.

The organizational structure

The huge complex is under one centralized management. The board of directors is made up of a chairman and 20 members, half of whom are tenants and the others represent different organizations. The Scheme is divided into 18 administrative units, each of which is subdivided into further blocks, making 109 in total. This corresponds to 1,055 villages, in which the 112,000 families of the tenant farmers live. The tenants pay for use of land and water, and are provided with agricultural services, inputs at cost, technical and administrative supervision. The tenants pay 4% of the gross returns of cotton, which are allocated as follows: 2% for social development, 1% for local government councils, and 1% for the tenants' reserve fund. The net proceeds go to the tenants.

Among the services provided centrally are fertilizers, about 100,000 tons of which are imported per season; insecticides, herbicides, jute sacks, spare parts for vehicles, telecommunications, and an internal light-railway network. The Gezira Light Railways has 1,300 km of rail lines all over the Scheme, and transports inputs to the field, and outputs to the ginneries and warehousing facilities. Spraying of pesticides is done with 35-40 aircraft and 200-250 tractors, from the private sector.

As the board members stressed, with further construction of dams, more water for irrigation will be made available, as well as energy. Plans are afoot to increase the production of Gezira Scheme by 6-10% per year, to expand the area to one and a half times its current size, over time. The Gezira Scheme now produces 60% of total Sudanese agricultural production. Efforts are under way to settle the large nomad population of herdsmen, particularly in the west and south, by digging wells to provide for stable water supplies, and setting up housing settlements, with social services including education.

For the members of the U.S. delegation visiting Sudan, seeing Gezira was especially important, because it demonstrates the fact that, given the means, Sudan can produce all the food it requires.

No slavery found in Nuba Mountains

by Lawrence Freeman

A delegation of elected officials from the United States, organized by the Schiller Institute, visited the Nuba Mountains, during a week-long stay in Sudan. Benjamin Swan and Thomas Jackson, members of the Massachusetts and Alabama state legislatures, respectively, accompanied by this author, traveled there on Friday, Sept. 20. The importance of this two-day excursion to southern Sudan cannot be overstated. Western media outlets, especially in the United States and Great Britain, along with Amnesty International and Baroness Caroline Cox's Christian Solidarity International, have written extensively on the Nuba Mountains, alleging that the so-called northern Muslims, supported by the Khartoum government, have massacred tens of thousands of tribal people there. While press outlets around the world have been filled with these stories of alleged "ethnic cleansing," the Schiller Institute delegation was shocked to learn that no one from any of these agencies has actually visited the area in the recent period, including Amnesty International, which has been the most outrageous in its lies against the government concerning this region. Thus, this visit by Swan and Jackson, coordinated by the Schiller Institute, was the first by such a high-level delegation from the United States to visit this remote area, to meet personally with people and examine the situation firsthand.

A rugged journey

The journey started when we assembled in the lobby of the Hilton Hotel in Khartoum at 5 a.m. on Friday, to begin our more than 1,000-kilometer trip south into the interior of Sudan. A relatively new Toyota Land Cruiser was rented the night before, to carry us over the rough terrain, in what turned out to be 11 hours of driving each way. After provisions of food and water were loaded into a second, less-equipped Land Cruiser, along with several aides, we headed out of Khartoum in the dark at 5:30 a.m.

The two vehicles traveled from Khartoum state into Northern Kordofan state on a relatively decent road for six hours, not counting a break for food and a slight delay caused by misjudging the fuel supply of the second vehicle. The land was flat, with little vegetation except for some small bushes, which manage to survive the extreme heat and lack of water. The changeless scenery was occasionally broken