South Sudan is the world’s youngest independent country. Established in 2011 after two wars, South Sudan has since reverted to a state of devastating civil strife. This book is the first general history of the new country, from the arrival of Turco-Egyptian explorers in the upper Nile, the turbulence of the Mahdist revolutionary period, the chaos of the “Scramble for Africa,” during which the South was prey to European and African adventurers and empire builders, to the Anglo-Egyptian colonial era. Special attention is paid to the period since Sudanese independence in 1956, when Southern disaffection grew into outright war, from the 1960s to 1972 and from 1983 until the Comprehensive Peace of 2005, and to the transition to South Sudan’s independence. The book concludes with coverage of events since then, which, since December 2013, have assumed the character of civil war, and with insights into what the future might hold.

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A HISTORY OF SOUTH SUDAN

From Slavery to Independence

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Preface

A History of South Sudan addresses several audiences and a wide variety of issues. We have chosen a conventional chronological approach, but a number of themes recur. Above all, we aim to illuminate two questions in the history of this new country: How did South Sudan become a political and administrative entity? And why did it separate from Sudan? Answering these questions requires a new look at standard versions, for the historiography of South Sudan reflects entrenched and often diametrically opposed political views. Some nationalists’ mission to create a South Sudanese national identity has led to the invention of a “natural” and timeless political and cultural unit. But we know remarkably little about what most people even today think it means to be South Sudanese. Although this book is not a “history of an idea,” we examine some processes and events that contributed to shaping one. When South Sudanese voted, in January 2011, the proffered alternative to separation from Sudan was confederation and considerable autonomy: South Sudan would be recognized as a political and administrative unit within Sudan. Yet the vote went overwhelmingly for independence. How deep, and with what particular ramifications, was the sentiment for separation?

After all, the history of South Sudan over the past two centuries is of steadily increasing interaction between its peoples and the outside world. And since the mid-twentieth century, South Sudanese have migrated (or fled) in millions to Sudan, to neighboring countries, and beyond. Today, there are South Sudanese communities in most corners of the world. Some have impacted the places to which they have moved; many have returned to South Sudan with new allies and ideas. Thus, patterns of interaction have varied considerably over time and from place to place. So also have South Sudanese responses, their motives, and the opportunities for exchange and transformation that interaction opened up. This book aims to present at least broad outlines of how these opportunities came about and to what uses South Sudanese put them in pursuit of their own goals.
The term “South Sudan” has also become associated with war and human suffering. As yet another large-scale conflict unfolds, it is important to emphasize that this is not senseless violence or the result of incompetent politicians’ miscalculations, but the outcome of historical processes restricted and shaped by external and institutional conditions. The history of South Sudan is, in part, not only a product of violence, systems of oppression, and patterns of resistance but also a story of resilience and of the harnessing and mastering of the geographical, climatic, economic, and social contexts in which the people of this new country have found themselves.

In a brief and sweeping book like this, abbreviation and omissions are inevitable. Our goal is to present a fair and balanced account of the interplay between the broader structural forces of history and the chief agents of politics and warfare, that is, governments, political parties, armed groups, community leaders, and businessmen, which drove South Sudan toward independence. By this, we hope to correct (and indeed to analyze) the tendency in foreign source materials to depict outsiders as agents of change (however defined or characterized) and South Sudanese as passive (or irrational, or subversive) receptors.

Beyond what we can learn from oral tradition and archeology, South Sudan’s precolonial history remains obscure. In consequence, the book is divided into two main eras: that of colonization and colonialism, and the period from 1956 to 2011 when South Sudan was part of the independent Sudan. The years since South Sudan’s independence are briefly discussed in Chapter 10. The bibliographical essay at the end gives a rudimentary introduction to the historiography of South Sudan and lists references to pioneering works which offer in-depth analysis and information concerning aspects of this country’s history. But much still remains to be done, and if this book can inspire or provoke such endeavors we will consider our mission accomplished.
Chronology

1839
First Egyptian expedition to the upper Nile.

1881–98
Mahdist revolution ends Turco-Egyptian rule in northern Sudan (1885) and overwhelms remaining outposts in south.

1899
Establishment of Anglo-Egyptian Condominium.

1930
End of “Nuer settlement” and armed South Sudanese resistance.

January 1930
“Southern Policy” adumbrated.

1946
“Southern Policy” officially revoked.

June 1947
First Juba Conference: South Sudanese to send representatives to National Legislative Assembly.

July 1947
Striking workers in Juba demand pay equal to Northerners’.

February 1953
Anglo-Egyptian Agreement stipulates end of colonial rule within three years.

November 1953
First national election.

October 1954
“Sudanization” outcome announced; Southerners win six posts of district commissioner and assistant district commissioner.

October 1954
Second Juba conference: chiefs, civil servants, and politicians demand federalism.

July 1955
Nzara protest violently suppressed.

August 18, 1955
Torit Mutiny sparks weeks-long “Southern Disturbances”; subsequently put down by SDF.
Chronology

January 1956
Republic of Sudan established.

1957
Nationalization of missionary schools.

February 1958
Second national election.

November 1958
Coup overthrows Sudanese government, beginning six years of military rule.

February 1960
Southern schools closed after student protests; grievances include replacement of Sunday with Friday as day of rest.

Early 1962
Sudan African Closed Districts National Union established in exile.

October 1962
Southern students strike; thousands flee to neighboring countries.

November 1962
“Regulations for Missionary Societies” restrict foreign missionaries; expulsions ensue.

July/August 1963
Anyà-Nya founded in Kampala.

September 1963
Attacks in the Upper Nile and Equatoria spark civil war.

January 1964
Anyà-Nya attack Wau; war engulfs southern provinces.

February 1964
All foreign missionaries expelled.

November 1964
Military regime falls; Southerners join Transitional Government; Southern Front emerges in Khartoum.

March 1965
Round Table Conference on South held in Khartoum.

April 1965
National elections return traditional parties to power.

July 1965
Government soldiers carry out massacres in Juba and Wau.

May 1969
Coup overthrows government; Col. Jaafar Nimeiri emerges as leader, rules until 1985.

February 1972
Signing of Addis Ababa peace accord.

October 1973
First election to Southern Regional Assembly; Abel Alier becomes president of HEC.

1974–7
December 1977–February 1978
Second election to Regional Assembly; Joseph Lagu becomes HEC president.
1979
First significant discoveries of oil announced.
1980
February 1980
Nimeiri dissolves Regional Assembly.
June 1980
Third election to Regional Assembly; Abel Alier returns as HEC president.
November 1980
Khartoum redraws provincial boundaries; oil fields removed from Southern region.
October 1981
President Nimeiri dissolves Regional Assembly, appoints Gismalla Abdalla Rassas to govern South pending elections.
April 1982
Fourth election to Regional Assembly; Joseph Tembura becomes HEC president.
May 16, 1983
Army moves to suppress mutiny at Bor; 105th Battalion escapes to Ethiopia, followed by 104th battalion from Akobo.
June 1983
Khartoum abolishes Regional Assembly, divides South into three “regions.”
July 1983
Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army founded in Ethiopia.
September 1983
Nimeiri regime promulgates Sharia law for Sudan, including the South.
April 1985
Army ousts Nimeiri after mass demonstrations; Transitional Military Council takes power.
March 1986
SPLM/A and National Alliance for National Salvation signs the Koka Dam Declaration.
April 1986
National elections return civilian government in Khartoum.
June 30, 1989
Coup overthrows government; Revolutionary Command Council established, with strong Islamist influence, under General Omar Hassan al-Bashir.
May–June 1991
SPLM/A evacuates Ethiopia after fall of Derg regime.
Chronology

August 28, 1991
Nasir Declaration by Riek Machar, Lam Akol, and Gordon Kong splits SPLM/A; factional fighting ensues.

January 1992
Khartoum regime and Nasir faction sign Frankfurt Agreement conceding referendum on special status for South.

May 1992
Abuja peace talks between Sudanese government and SPLM/A factions; latter demand self-determination for South.

September 1993
Beginning of IGAD attempt to mediate between Sudanese government and SPLM/A.

July 1994
Joint Declaration of Principles, rejected by Sudanese government, reaffirms SPLM/A commitment to Southern self-determination and secularism.

April 2–13, 1994
First SPLM/A National Convention at Chukudum.

June 1995
NDA endorses Southern self-determination and concessions over border regions.

September 1995
Sudanese government implicated in attempted assassination of Egyptian President Mubarak.

December 1996
Chinese and Indonesian state oil companies form consortium with Sudan.

April 1997
In Khartoum Peace Agreement with Southern militias, Sudanese government accepts referendum over South Sudan’s future status.

January 1998
High point of SPLM/A counter-offensive with capture of Wau; severe famine in Bahr al-Ghazal.

March 1999
Wunlit peace agreement signals start of grassroots reconciliations of warring factions in South.

July 1999
NDA and Sudanese government endorse Joint Egyptian–Libyan initiative rejecting self-determination for South.

August 1999
Export of Sudanese oil commences.
November 1999
In the USA, Sudan Peace Act allows direct assistance to SPLM/A.

January 2000
President Bashir wins power struggle with Islamists, whose leader Hassan al-Turabi establishes Popular Congress Party.

September 6, 2001
John Danforth appointed US special envoy for Sudan.

January 2002
Riek Machar reunites with SPLM/A.

March 2002
Sudan and Uganda sign appeasement agreement; Ugandan forces invited to combat Lord’s Resistance Army in Sudan.

July 20, 2002
In Machakos Protocol, SPLM/A concedes Sharia law in northern Sudan; South to exercise self-determination after six-and-a-half years.

October 2002
Government and SPLM/A reach agreement on cessation of hostilities.

April 2003
Low-intensity conflict in Darfur escalates into civil war.

July 2003
IGAD peace talks break down.

September 2003
Vice-President Ali Osman Taha and SPLM/A Chairman John Garang start direct talks on security arrangements and reach an agreement.

January 2004
Taha and Garang reach agreement over wealth-sharing.

May 2004
Agreement reached on power-sharing and contested areas of Abyei, Nuba Mountains, and the Blue Nile.

January 9, 2005
Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in Nairobi.

July 30, 2005
John Garang dies in helicopter crash. In August, Salva Kiir becomes vice-president of Sudan and SPLM/A chairman.

January 2006
Juba Declaration signed; militias of Paulino Matip and other commanders to be absorbed into SPLA.

October 2007
SPLM withdraws in protest from Government of National Unity; rejoins in December.
### Chronology

**May 2008**
Factional disputes disrupt SPLM’s second National Convention; fighting erupts at Abyei.

**March 2009**
International Criminal Court issues arrest warrant for President Bashir over crimes against humanity in Darfur.

**December 2009**
After demonstration and arrests of leading SPLM members, Referendum Law passed by National Parliament in Khartoum.

**April 2010**
Bashir wins presidential election; Salva Kiir elected president of Southern Sudan. Some state elections violently contested.

**July 2010**
Commencement of negotiations between NCP and SPLM over post-referendum arrangements under auspices of African Union High Level Panel.

**January 9–15, 2011**
Southern referendum over independence or regional autonomy results in almost 99% vote for secession.

**May 2011**
Sudanese government forces occupy Abyei following refusal to hold Abyei referendum.

**June 2011**
New rebellion in South Kordofan/Nuba Mountains following contested gubernatorial elections.

**July 9, 2011**
Republic of South Sudan declared.

**September 2011**
Reignited civil war in the Blue Nile.

**January 2012**
South Sudan stops oil production after Sudan confiscates an oil shipment.

**March–April 2012**
Skirmishes between Sudan and South Sudan in the border states of South Kordofan and Unity.

**September 2012**
Agreement between Sudan and South Sudan on bilateral relations and payment for South Sudan’s use of oil pipeline and port facilities.

**July 2013**
President Salva Kiir dismisses cabinet and Vice-President Riek Machar.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 2013</td>
<td>SPLM leadership crisis quickly escalates into civil war.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2014</td>
<td>SPLM factions reach Cessation of Hostilities agreement, which is subsequently ignored.</td>
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Abbreviations and Arabic terms

ANC  African National Congress
AU  African Union
CAR  Central African Republic
CMS  Church Missionary Society
CPA  Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DC  District Commissioner
DUP/NUP  Democratic/National Unionist Party
EE  Egyptian Pounds
EPLF  Eritrean People’s Liberation Front
hakuma  Ar.: government
HEC  High Executive Council
IGAD(D)  Intergovernmental Authority on [Drought and] Development (in 1996, “Drought” was eliminated from its name, hence IGAD)
Jallaba/jallabiya  Ar.: peddlers/gown worn by northern Sudanese
JIU  Joint Integrated Units
KAR  King’s African Rifles
Khalwa  Ar.: rudimentary village school
NCP  National Congress Party
NDA  National Democratic Alliance
NGO  Nongovernmental organization
NIF  National Islamic Front
NLC  National Liberation Council
OAU  Organization of African Unity
OLS  Operation Lifeline Sudan
RAF  Royal Air Force
SACDNU  Southern African Closed Districts National Union (1962–3)
SAF  Sudan Armed Forces
List of abbreviations and Arabic terms  xvii

SANU  Sudan African National Union (1963–)
SDF  Sudan Defence Force
SOA  Sudan Open Archive
SPLA  Sudan People’s Liberation Army
SPLM  Sudan People’s Liberation Movement
SPLM/A Nasir  SPLM/A faction during the 1990s
SSLM  South Sudan Liberation Movement (c. 1970–2)
sudd  Ar.: “barrier”: vast flooded area in South Sudan
TPLF  Tigray People’s Liberation Front
UNMIS/SS  UN Mission in Sudan (from July 2011: UN Mission in South Sudan)
zariba  Ar.: “enclosure,” palisaded camp erected by slave traders in South Sudan
Maps