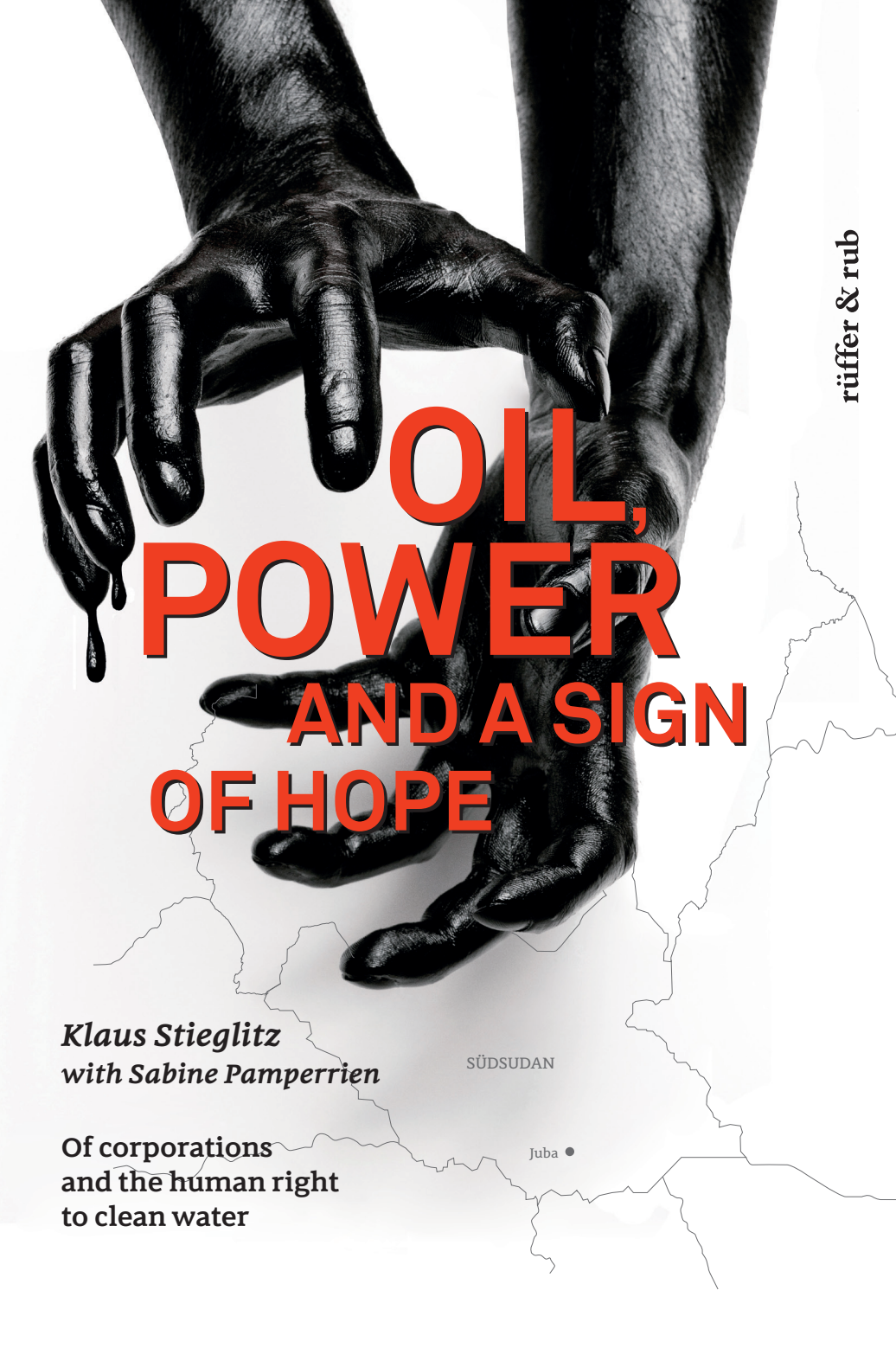

OIL, POWER AND A SIGN OF HOPE

Klaus Stieglitz
with Sabine Pamperrien

Of corporations
and the human right
to clean water

rüffer & rub

Oil, power and a Sign of Hope

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human right to clean water

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with Sabine Pamperrien

Translated by
Terry Swartzberg

This book is dedicated to
the people in South Sudan whose great suffering is due to the activities of the oil industry, and, in the final analysis, to our hunger for energy.

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PROLOGUE

Powerless people

July, 2012. Sarnico, a town in northern Italy. Throngs of paparazzi. George Clooney is shooting a commercial for a luxury version of Mercedes-Benz's E-class of cars. The commercial covers the star's determined attempts to get a close-up on the car. This entails him initially grabbing an aquaplane, which then follows a silver-colored model of the car as it winds its way down the spectacular road hugging the banks of the Lago d'Iseo. Clooney's next step is to grab a speedboat, which flies him up close to the object of his desire. Great chase scene. The commercial's message: the new model of Mercedes causes this womanizer to mobilize all of the well-known determination and charm that he normally displays when wooing an exquisitely attractive woman.

Clooney relaxes during the breaks between shooting by enjoying a bit of joshing with his fans, and by bringing food to the members of the crew. He lets himself be photographed while doing such. The world's media snap up the photos.

Clooney makes an announcement during the day of shooting. He is going to auction off his 2008 Tesla Signature 100 Roadster, which has only 1,700 miles on its clock. And he is going to donate the proceeds to a project of assistance in Sudan.

August, 2012: $US 99,000. That's the amount raised by the auctioning of Clooney's four years old car. The funds go to the

Satellite Sentinel Project, which Clooney helped found and which operates in Sudan.

*

It was sometime around 60 A.D. that the Emperor Nero decided to split off two of his centurions and their centuries (companies) from his legions stationed in Rome's province of Egypt, and to send them south. The mission's purpose was to scout the unknown lands stretching down to the sources of the White Nile, and to claim them for Rome, which would thus gain new, sub-Saharan lands. Nero was greedy for the gold supposed to be lying around for the picking in these lands, which comprised the ancient kingdom of Meroe. It was located in what is today's Sudan. In the interests of maximizing his cost-benefits ratio, Nero gave his scouting party a clearly-defined mission: find out whether or not these unknown lands had any resources at all worthy of exploitation.

Overcoming and surviving unimaginably-challenging obstacles, the Roman legionnaires managed to reach Lake Victoria, the source of the White Nile. One of these obstacles was so challenging that it put an end to any visions of lasting conquest of the region: the "Sudd". This gigantic, contiguous expanse of wetlands—nearly 6 million hectares in size—is located in Southern Sudan, and is one of the largest of its kind in the world. The Sudd is comprised of the White Nile's countless arms and of the land between them. These streams are too shallow to be navigated by ships. The rest of the region is covered by such aquatic plants as papyrus and other reeds. These preclude any attempts at wading through it.

Seneca, the Roman historian, bequeathed us a telling description of the Sudd wetlands. It constitutes the first firmly-

The Sudd is one of the largest wetlands in the world. Slight rises serve inhabitants as a place of settlement. The photographs are of swamps in the southern reaches of the state of Unity.

documented mentioning of the region. “Sudd” stems from the Arabic “Sadet”, which means “barrier” or “dam”.

*

In May, 1847, Johannes von Müller, a researching botanist from southwestern Germany, embarked upon an expedition in Africa. He was accompanied by his secretary and trusty helper Alfred Brehm, who was the son of an ornithologist. The expedition started in Egypt. Its plan was to traverse the entire continent of Africa, and to research its fauna in the process. In January, 1848, von Müller and Brehm arrived in Sudan, which was un-der the control of the Ottoman Empire in those days. The Ottoman had expanded their sway over the Sudan from their base in Egypt ten years previously. Brehm made a copious amount of notes about and sketches of the people encountered in his travels. Brehm was especially moved and distressed by the slave trade, which was widespread in the Sudan of those days. Especially distressing to him was the exacting and unscrupulous treatment of the slaves by the Europeans living in the Sudan. During Brehm’s sojourn in the Sudan, he was witness to the arrival of slaves from a march that had started in the south of the region. The state of the dark-skinned humans, who were member of the Dinka ethnic group, especially bothered Brehm: “It was a ghastly sight, one that no words suffice to describe. It remained in my soul for weeks—as the epitome of horror. It took place on January 12, 1848.”[1] As Brehm noted: “This fate of being regarded as objects of sale applies to all the ethnic groups of Abyssinia, including the Galla, Shewa, Makate, Amhara, [...], the Shilluk, Dinka, Takhallaui, Darfuri, Sheibuni, Kik and Nuer.”[2]

In his notes, Brehm described the cycle of violence and counter-violence prevailing in Africa. According to Brehm the

former stemmed from the whites, who employed slavery as one of their means of ruthlessly oppressing the people of Sub-Saharan Africa. This oppression produced a widespread hostility towards whites—an attitude that Brehm found completely understandable—among the Africans. This hostility prevented von Müller and Brehm from proceeding upon their travels in Southern Sudan. As he noted resignedly: "The hunting for slaves bars the way for researchers seeking to explore the central lands of Africa."[3]

*

Daniele Comboni was a Catholic priest. In 1857, he embarked upon his first trip to Africa. He was accompanied by five other missionaries. Their trip brought them to Southern Sudan, where he experienced first hand the misery and the enslavement of Africans. These experiences led him to found a mission. Comboni's main objective was to put an end to slavery. His approach to missionary work sounds like it could have been formulated today: "Enabling Africa to rescue Africa."[4] Overcoming strong objections from within the ranks of his own church, Comboni recruited women and laypersons to participate in missionary work.[5] The greatest difference between Comboni's approach and those of previous missions was that he granted Africans full respect by viewing them as equals, ones well capable of being responsible for the managing of their affairs. One of Comboni's main principles was that the Europeans could well support and teach their counterparts—but should not patronize striving to form Africans according to European model.[6]

Comboni's missionary work proved to be a huge success. The ethnic groups living in Southern Sudan are cultures highly open to the Christians' visions of divinity. The effects have

proved lasting. Southern Sudan is still the realm of nature-based religions and of Christianity—in contrast to northern Sudan, in which Islam predominantly prevails.

*

June 11, 1955, 4 pm. The start of the famous 24 Hours of Le Mans. The weather is hot and humid. A thunderstorm is in the offing — as shown by the dark clouds crowding the horizon. The sun is still, however, shining over the race course.

More than 200,000 spectators are lining the 13 kilometers of the race course, which is, on non-race days, comprised of normal-use roads. Case-in-point: the long straightaway. It is part of the road connecting Le Mans and Tours. The fastest cars reach speeds of nearly 300 kilometers an hour on the straightaway. Not surprisingly, this is the most popular place from which to watch the race. These "Populaires" are cheap. That's because fans have to stand. The "Populaires" are located in front of the more expensive bleachers. The former offer, however, the best views of the starting positions and the pits. The crowd in the Populaires gets to hear the yelling of the race managers and the mechanics, and gets to sample the odor of fuels and of abraded clutches and brakes. The crowd is comprised of thousands of people, all thronging the race course, from which they are separated only by a nearly one meter-high fence made of bales of hay and of planks. The crowd is enjoying itself. The race is being covered on-site by the world's media, many of which are reporting live from Le Mans. Among the media are film teams, which are shooting full-color, Cinemascope news flashes for the weekly reports shown in cinemas.

174 minutes after the race has commenced, several race cars zoom into the narrow stretch in front of the bleachers. The crowd cranes to get a good view. This is because the race's lead-

ers are in the pack. Among the leaders: the UK's Mike Hawthorn, who is driving a Jaguar, and the drivers of both of the Mercedes "Silver Arrows". These three are in a neck-on-neck battle for victory. The cars' manufacturers —Jaguar and Mercedes—are contending for both the World Cup's drivers' and manufacturer's championships. Mercedes is under pressure. It has to notch a victory in Le Mans if it plans on retaining its opportunity to win the title.[7] At first glance, this battle is about prestige and about gaining incentives that convince potential buyers to purchase the manufacturers' vehicles. These incentives constitute powerful, not-to-be-under-estimated advertising. A victory in Le Mans showcases the technical superiority of the manufacturer's products—in an era in which the automobile industry is embarking upon its boom.

This battle is also about something more, something deeper. World War II concluded a scant ten years previously. This battle is thus between the UK and Germany.[8] Mike Hawthorn's nationalism is well-known. During the days preceding the race, Hawthorn repeatedly proclaims that he will never allow himself to be beaten by a German. The flanks of his Jaguar D-Type are emblazoned with the national emblems of the British army. There are those who still remember that the Mercedes Silver Arrows were vehicles for the Nazis' propaganda in the pre-World War II era.[9] The Nazis were the main sponsors of the Sliver Arrows[10], providing millions of marks to the racing department of the Stuttgart-based manufacturer of automobiles.[11] The Nazis viewed car racing as a "kind of mental armament, one preparing the people to wage war".[12] Headed by Albert Neumann, the Mercedes team had been highly successful in the pre-World War II era. Once the war was over, the team—featuring the same personnel—set forth its successes. The only difference: it had "converted to democracy", as Guido

Knopp, a historian working for Germany's "ZDF" national broadcaster, described it in a work published several decades subsequently.[13]

Mercedes' managing board has given its racing team unmistakable marching orders. The team is to win both titles in Formula 1—the driver's and the manufacturer's championships. Mercedes has backed these plans with generous funds and other resources. The company has founded a dedicated racing department, and has hired what has come to be more than 200 persons to staff it. This staff consults with a further 300 specialists—who work for other departments at Mercedes.

It has taken the Mercedes team a mere four years to transform models from the prewar era into high-performance race cars. Nineteen fifty four was the newly-revamped Silver Arrow's first Grand Prix season. The team's first race comes in the middle of the season. It is the Grand Prix of France, which is held on July 4, 1954 in Reims. It turns out to be a historic day for the Silver Arrows—and for Germany's national football team. In a match played in Bern, Switzerland, the team wins the world championship. At Reims, the Mercedes team gains both titles. Thanks to these victories, July 4, 1954 becomes for many Germans a turning point in the history of the newly-constituted Federal Republic of Germany. It marks the end of the era of disgrace and obscurity, and the beginning of a new dignity and identity.[14] An English newspaper calls July 4, 1954 "Der Tag for Germans".[15]

Mercedes' record of success in the sports car races also commences in 1954. Mercedes broadcasts a commercial in 1954 and 1955. Under the name "Pioneers of Progress", the film is shown in the UK and in the USA. A highlight of the film is the raising of the German flag (which is comprised of the colors of black, red and gold) in honor of Mercedes' great victory in

France. The flag symbolizes the ties binding all of Mercedes' staff members working on and for the racing team. The flag also expresses their aspirations.[16]

Britain's press would continue until the 1980s to cultivate World War II-caused anti-German sentiments. These mean that Mike Hawthorn was by no means the only person who viewed the duel on the race track as being a continuation of the war, only this time on another venue.[17] The spectators at Le Mans on this June 11, 1955 have been observing how Mike Hawthorn is implementing this policy of "no surrender" ever since the start of the race. The young Briton has already twice disregarded the signs issued by his team that it is time for him to come to his pits to fill up. Hawthorn is obviously determined to keep his lead at all costs.

Never has this race been so hotly contested so early on. Juan Manuel Fangio is hot on Hawthorn's heels. To get there, the legendary Argentinian race driver has played an incredible game of catch-up. To overcome his awful start, Fangio has floored his Mercedes Benz, and, risking life and limb in the process, has managed to erase Hawthorn's lead of two rounds. While competing with each other, Hawthorn and Fangio have achieved average speeds of 200 kilometers an hour. These have left the rest of the pack far behind, with the two leaders already having lapped a number of the other drivers. Driving at such top speeds is absolutely nonsensical so early—a mere two and a half hours after the starting gun—in a race that lasts for 24 hours.

Hawthorn and Fangio are facing a straightaway in which, once more, slower race cars are ahead of them. Driven by Lance Macklin, a Briton, an Austin Healey is proceeding along on the right of the track at a speed of 190 kilometers an hour. About to pass Macklin is another Silver Arrow, this one driven by Pierre

Levegh. Although already lapped by Hawthorn and Fangio, Levegh also plans to overtake the slower Austin Healey.

The recruiting of Levegh to its team represents a PR coup on the part of Mercedes. Levegh is an amateur driver who is highly popular in France. His joining the highly-successful team from Germany is designed to be a symbol of the reconciliation between the two countries. Mercedes is thus sending a team featuring a Frenchman—in addition to such stars as Fangio and Stirling Moss—to compete in the most important car race in France.[18] Mercedes has other reasons for recruiting Levegh, whose daytime job is being a jeweler based in Paris. The nearly 50 year old has repeatedly and successfully competed at Le Mans. In the 1952 staging of the 24 Hours of Le Mans, Levegh was the only driver to stay at the wheel for the race's entire 24 hours. Up until the very end of the race, Levegh had a commanding lead. A mere 15 minutes prior to the end of the race, his gears failed, robbing him of a certain victory in the process. This tragedy left him the moral victor, and made him the much-loved "hero of Le Mans".

Levegh is also flooring his car in the moments prior to the accident. Maintaining the high speeds of Hawthorn's Jaguar, the race's leader, Levegh's Mercedes tears along the very left of the track. Macklin sticks to the right. In a stretch immediately in front of the pit lane, Hawthorn's Jaguar passes—taking the middle of the track—his fellow-countryman's Austin Healey. Hawthorn then zooms to the right. At this point, he is in front of the Austin Healey. But instead of continuing to speed away from the car, Hawthorn brakes sharply, so as to leave the track on the right, and to head for a pit stop. His sudden and unexpected braking unleashes a horrifying chain reaction. His Jaguar is the only car that has disk brakes. The Austin Healey has drum brakes—and thus a much longer braking path. Macklin

is forced to abruptly swerve to the left to avoid a collision with Hawthorn. This puts him in the path of Levegh's Silver Arrow, which is approaching him at a speed of 240 kilometers an hour. Levegh's car nicks the left rear fender of the Austin-Healey. Acting as if it had been launched from a rocket pad, the Mercedes veers to the left, bounces against a concrete wall, from which it is spun against the barricade separating the race tracks from the spectators. Levegh is jettisoned from his car and dies at the site of the accident. His car is smashed to pieces and starts to burn. Its axles, wheels, brakes and sections of its chassis are catapulted into the crowds thronging the track. The spectators standing in this area are mowed down by the debris flying in their midst. Heads, arms, entire torsos are cut off in the process. It is a scene of absolute horror.

The collision with the Silver Arrow causes Macklin's Austin-Healey to skid. Its plunges into the pits, running over three people in the process, only to then be sent flying across the track, running into the barricade protecting the bleachers. It comes to a stop there. Macklin is able to free himself from his wrecked car.

The accident lasts no more than four seconds. Its consequences are catastrophic. The accident remains the worst ever experienced in automobile racing. The only reason why TV viewers in Germany and France are spared a live transmission of the dreadful catastrophe was the broadcasters' schedules of programming. These schedules cause the TV channels to interrupt during the late afternoon their live coverage of the race, so as to show other programs.[19] Notwithstanding this, the horrible details of the accident are filmed. Working for a French TV network, two cameramen are using a 16 millimeter cine camera to shoot shorts for inclusion in later reports. The cameramen have stationed themselves in front of the pits,[20] so as to

shoot scenes conveying the race's atmosphere. Then the accident takes place. Immediately upon the crash of Levegh's Silver Arrow, the cameramen point their cameras to the scene of the accident. The images that they record are so horrifying that the only thing ever to be shown of them are several excerpts.

The accident kills 84 people. One hundred more suffered injuries. Hundreds, perhaps even thousands, are left traumatized. Notwithstanding all this, the thousands of spectators located at other areas of the racetrack hardly—if at all—notice the accident. Accidents are in any case part of automobile racing's daily fare. The fact that the drivers are continuously putting themselves in danger by driving at their vehicles' technical limits and by undertaking daring maneuvers produces racing's especially strong appeal to the spectators. They love the kick arising from the rush of speed. They seem to revel in racing's "flair", which includes the pillars of smoke spiraling up from vehicles on fire, and of the sight of dead drivers. Immediately after the accident at Le Mans, two laps of low speeds are imposed upon the drivers at the race. The race itself is not called off. After a brief period, it is, rather, permitted to proceed as normal. Most of the people attending it learn of the magnitude of the catastrophe only from the following day's newspapers.

Juan Manuel Fangio escapes the inferno unscathed. He subsequently reports that Pierre Levegh had warned him—via a hand signal—of the dangers ahead. The Frenchman has thus saved his life. This adds yet another chapter in automobile racing's long history derring-do, camaraderie and other legendary deeds.

The accident gives rise to another legend. For decades, conventional wisdom linked it to the end of the era of Silver Arrows. To be noted is that all other teams at Le Mans in 1955

did not stop racing at it afterwards. Mercedes did in fact decide during the night of June 12, 1955 to withdraw its team. A few days after the catastrophic accident, Fritz Könecke, Mercedes' boss, announced that Mercedes would no longer take part in automobile racing. The message emanating from this decision is capable of being understood to be that the "price to be paid for the achieving of sporting successes and of the prestige associated with it is not worth the price, which was paid in human lives". Mercedes thus abruptly left the sport that it had come to dominate during its short return to it. Its racing team had in fact already rapidly met the ambitious goals set for it by the company's executive board. Mercedes' decision did not at all diminish the aura emanating since the pre-WW II era from the Silver Arrows. The aura maintained itself throughout the years of Mercedes' refraining from participating in racing. Since the withdrawal of 1955, racing fans have bemoaned the lack of "their" Silver Arrows. Their attitude has almost been to treat the results of each subsequent race as being incomplete, since, of course, no Silver Arrow was there to compete in them.

The fact is that Mercedes' decision to withdraw from automobile racing was caused by business reasons. This decision was actually made prior to the commencement of the 1955 racing season. Racing consumed the funds needed to develop standard vehicles.[21]

Mercedes had provided all of the funds needed to finance its race team. There were no sponsors in those days. They arrived on the scene in 1968, in which the ban on placing advertisements on race cars was abolished.[22]

*

One month after the accident at Le Mans, an uprising breaks out in Southern Sudan's garrison city of Torit. Forming part of

the UK's Sudan Defence Force, which is charged with maintaining Britain's colonial dominance of the country, the Equatorial Corps is stationed in this small city, which is located near the Sudan's border with Uganda. The Corps includes soldiers from Southern Sudan. On August 18, 1955, they rise in mutiny. They refuse to let themselves be replaced by soldiers from northern Sudan. The uprising is fueled by fears of the oppression expected to be experienced by Southern Sudan upon the granting of independence on January 1, 1956 to the regions of Southern Sudan and Northern Sudan by the British-Egyptian Condominium controlling the areas.

Since the creation of the British-Egyptian Condominium and its extension to comprise the Sudan, northern Sudan was run by a British-Egyptian administration. Southern Sudan was managed as a British colony.[23] In 1922, the Egyptians were compelled to withdraw from Sudan. This caused the British to introduce a form of indirect rule in northern Sudan.[24] British administrators supervised the operations of native and locally-based responsible parties.[25] This move was caused by the Britons' wish to cut costs of administration.[26] The British attributed the move, however, to their wish for "modernization".[27] The British regarded Southern Sudan as not being ready for such a "modernization". They thus set up a dedicated administration in the region.[28] By doing such, they pursue a policy designed to isolate Southern Sudan.[29] It resulted in the cementing of the partition of Sudan into two cultural, ethnic and linguistic regions.[30]

The cultivation of and trading in cotton gave northern Sudan a modicum of prosperity. Under the guidance of the British, the region and its education and health care systems were developed, as was its infrastructure. The region's population, which is predominantly Arab, was inculcated in the precepts

of participation in politics and its ramification upon public life. This caused nationalism to arise in northern Sudan in the post-World War I era.[31] As was the case in those Arab regions that allied themselves during World War I with the UK, France and the USA as a way of putting an end to the 500-year domination of the Ottoman Empire, northern Sudan experienced a mushrooming of Muslim sects. Akin to the Arab regions, nationalism's goal in Sudan was also the achieving of independence. Northern Sudan's nationalists' vision for the future state: it was to retain its Islamic nature.[32] In World War II, the Sudan Defence Force prevented Italy's Fascist armies from conquering the region. It was only after the war that negotiations on independence were launched.[33] A conference was staged in 1947 in Juba, a city in Southern Sudan. At it, the British and North Sudanese negotiators presented the Southern Sudanese with a fait accompli. They had resolved that northern and Southern Sudan were to be joined into one country.[34]

Southern Sudan was underdeveloped and backward, in every definition of the terms. This was due to the colonial administration's failure to do anything to develop the region's economy, education system or infrastructure. This was in sharp contrast to the UK's actions in northern Sudan. The Southern Sudanese were quite aware of this situation. They felt themselves—quite correctly so—to be ostracized and oppressed. Southern Sudan's rejection of the jerry-built national structure being imposed upon them grew with each day that independence approached.

Major protests broke out in Southern Sudan in 1955. Being protested were northern Sudan's dominance and the neglect of the interests of the south resulting from it. Southern Sudan's population began to assert its rights to such. The above-described mutiny in Torit led to the initial, violent expression

of the frustration that had built up over the decades. This outbreak of violence caused the death of hundreds of northern Sudanese in Torit.[35] The day on which the mutiny in Torit began is now known as "Torit Revolution Day". It has been celebrated as a national holiday since South Sudan gained its independence in 2011. The rebels of Torit are now regarded as national heroes.[36] The outbreak of violence in 1955 has become the stuff of legend-building.

The Southern Sudanese were not very well organized. This lack enabled the northern Sudanese to rapidly quell the rebellion. They imposed death sentences upon 250 Southern Sudanese, most of them Christians and intellectuals.[37] The North's massive repression caused Southern Sudanese to flee in large numbers to neighboring countries. These refugees soon founded resistance groups. They began waging war with their opponents from the North. This civil war began prior to Sudan's gaining of independence. It ended only in 1972, the year in which Southern Sudan was granted partial administrative autonomy. This civil war was to be followed by another. The wave of forced emigration from Southern Sudan was also only the first of many.

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In 1974, Chevron, the American oil corporation, acquired the rights to prospect for oil in Sudan, and to exploit any findings of such. The company's prospecting was successful. Test drilling conducted in 1978 in Southern Sudan paid off. The finding of oil gave Sudan, one of the world's poorest countries, the prospect of being lifted out of poverty. While not as large as those of Saudi Arabia or Iraq, Sudan's oil reserves are comparable in size with those of such oil producers as Brunei or Colombia.[38] Had it been prudently managed, the oil could proved a bene-

fit for the country.[39] As will be shown, Sudan's oil has been anything but that for the country. The oil has enriched a small elite. For the rest of the country, the finding of oil has not improved life. Quite the opposite. It has proven a curse. The oil has given rise to warfare, despoliation, depopulation and environmental destruction.

*

A war is launched in 1983. It is against a part of the country's own population. It is being waged by the regime in Khartoum. Cloaking its aggression in the dogma of radical Islam, the regime starts asserting its hegemony over the non-Islamic and non-Arab parts of the population. The resulting war of cultures is to be viewed from today's vantage point as being a forerunner of the today's phenomenon of Islam being used an instrument of the violence-based, state-organized assertion of control. For many years, the world takes scant notice of the Sudan's regime brutal oppression, whose underlying and true motive is the gaining and maintaining of dominance over resources—and specifically over the oil.[40] The ensuing conflict causes a complete collapse of all order in Sudan, be it state or traditions-imposed. Sudan is a home to a multiplicity of ethnic groups. As such, it has always been subject to tensions among them, with resources repeatedly proving a source of such strife. This strife had, however, been kept under control until the recent past by mechanisms of conflict resolution adhered to by both nomadic Arabs and non-nomadic Africans engaged in trading with each other.[41] During the resulting conflict, all parties perpetrate despicable acts of barbaric violence upon the civilian population.

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At the beginning of the 1980s, Daimler-Benz's managers start thinking about the company's returning to automobile racing.[42] This idea gains support. Daimler-Benz has a problem — a bad image. Its cars are viewed as not having an adequate level of quality.[43] The managers view automobile racing as being a "hot button" for purchasers of cars, who tend to transfer the image arising from race cars—high levels of performance, dynamism, advanced technologies and internationalism—to standard vehicles. Daimler wants and needs to profit from this transferring.[44] In 1988, the corporation resolves to return to car racing. Its initial fields of re-entry are touring cars and sport prototypes.[45] This re-entry produces mixed results. Daimler's management is by no means unanimously convinced of the efficacy of the investments made in this area.[46] Also planned by the company is a return to Formula 1. But efforts to do such run into a number of bumps.[47] The return does have its impact upon standard models: silver is the favorite color of the Mercedes purchased.[48]

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While all this was going on, the exploitation of the oil found in the Sudan was being pursued. The regime in Khartoum and Chevron concluded agreements foreseeing the marketing of oil from the country by 1984. The attack by rebels on Chevron facilities—resulting in the death of several of the company's staff members—caused the postponing of such plans.[49] Many in Southern Sudan viewed Chevron as being an ally of the Khartoum-based repressive regime. It, in turn, distrusted Chevron, and didn't accept its reasons for halting the exploitation.[50] The regime's assumption was that Chevron welcomed the rebels' attack, as it gave them an excuse not to have to live up to its commitments in a time of falling oil prices.[51] The re-

gime's assumption was that the Americans actually intended to wait until the exploitation of oil in Sudan returned to making business sense.[52] Once Chevron ran out of reasons to delay production and upon Khartoum's increasing of the pressure to live up to agreements, the US oil giant ceased all activities in the country. This was expedited by the lack of support forthcoming from the USA for the company's activities in Sudan.[53]

Chevron's withdrawal from the country causes the regime in Khartoum to divide the concession. Created are several "blocks"—areas of oil exploitation and production. The licenses to develop these are awarded on individual bases. The regime in Khartoum's experience with Chevron leads to its striving to attract smaller-sized oil companies to the country.[54] The idea is that such companies are more interested in forging personal relationships, and that, through these, the government can exert more control over them.[55] Khartoum's plans meet with enthusiastic response. Oil companies from Canada and Europe are joined by those from Asia—including the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) and Malaysia's Petronas (Petroliam Nasional Berhad)—in striving to enter what they view as being Sudan's promising oil industry. The Canadians rapidly shelve such plans. One key reason is the public pressure ensuing from the link between doing business in Sudan and being involved in the violation of human rights there.[56] The regime in Khartoum has proven itself willing to do anything to remove obstacles that would prevent foreign companies from making investments in the country. The regime has employed violence to drive the population from regions in which oil fields are to be exploited.

Documented in detail has been what happened in "Block 5A". This area of concession is located in Unity state. It contains the Thar Jath[57] oil fields. To provide unimpeded access to them

and to thus expedite their exploitation, thousands of persons were killed and tens of thousands forced to flee. A large-scale investigation subsequently confirmed the suspicion such non-Sudanese oil companies as Sweden's Lundin Oil, the Malaysian government's Petronas and Austria's OMV were not only prepared to accept these forced flights, but that, in fact, it was these investors that actively pressured the regime in Khartoum to pursue them.[58] One fact is apparent. Such oil companies immediately benefited from the "scorched earth" policy implemented by the regime in Khartoum against Southern Sudan, a policy yielding so many refugees.[59] The especially close relationship between Khartoum and this Malaysian company is also no doubt due to both countries' being Islamic.[60] Petronas' involvement in Sudan comprises its participation in consortia that are exploiting oil fields. The Malaysian company also maintains gas stations in the country. It is, further, the main supplier of the kerosene used by the country's civil and military aviation sectors[61]. Petronas has also built a refinery in the country. This investment has come to a billion dollars.[62] Petronas is an ambitious company. To realize these ambitions, it has selected Sudan to be its venue of operation outside Malaysia.[63]

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The decades of conflict cause the deaths of some 50% of the people in Sudan as a whole, and the flight of four million refugees since 1983.[64] The countryside has been ravaged. This applies to fertile regions whose cultivation would have the potential to feed the entire nation. The millions of refugees are housed—often under miserable conditions—in camps. The refugees are dependent upon the assistance provided by international organizations.

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The Comboni friars have been operating missions in Sudan for all of the last 150 years. This longevity makes the friars important sources of contacts and counsel to and major partners of the relief organizations setting up shop in the Sudan. The founders of the Comboni congregation developed a depiction of humanity that still informs their work today. This "mission statement" also guides the assistance supplied by organizations in the country that are not religious in nature. One of the organizations providing assistance and helping protect human rights in Sudan is "Sign of Hope". This interdenominational NGO is headquartered in Konstanz, a city located in southwestern Germany. The thrusts of its work are the protection of human rights and the provision of assistance.

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At the beginning of June 1994, Reimund Reubelt, staff member of Sign of Hope, traveled to Southern Sudan, which was being racked by a civil war in those days. He arrived in a small airplane. It was full of assistance supplies that Reimund had procured in Kenya. The airplane's pilot was nervous. This was because he didn't know—the rebels or the government's forces—who controlled the airstrip at which they were going to land. He said: "If people start running at us, that's a bad sign. We will have to immediately take off again." The tall and haggard people waiting at the airfield approached the airplane in a slow and dignified pace.

The event, which took place more than 20 years ago, marked the beginning of Sign of Hope's work in the country, in which more than 75% of the people cannot read or write, and in which more than half live below the poverty level. Since that time, Sign of Hope has organized and carried out on a regular basis transports of humanitarian goods to the dangerous,

crisis-ridden region. One first step was the forging of working relationships with on-site clerical partners.

Klaus Stieglitz is also a staff member at Sign of Hope. He can still clearly recall the details of a meeting with an elderly gentleman during one of Stieglitz' frequent visits to Southern Sudan. This took place a couple of years after Reubelt's visit. Reimund Reubelt's colleague Stieglitz says: "The man was dressed in clothing that looked worse for wear. He had bright white hair. He was old, and a former teacher. He recounted tales out of his life, and we listened attentively. After a while, he asked us where we came from. He said that he knew Germany well from radio broadcasts. For many years, he had listened to the short wave broadcasts of the BBC to keep abreast of what was going on in the world. Something that had made him especially sad was the building of the wall throughout Germany in 1961. This was because it would separate the people living there. He prayed since that event every day for the fall of the wall, even though he had never seen it. This came to pass in 1989. Although living in one of the most remote corners of what is today South Sudan, this man was able to show us that the injustice symbolized by this wall had moved him. And that he had done whatever he could to stand up for his fellow human beings in Europe. He had prayed. At this moment, we felt ourselves to be loved deeply by this man. It was a moment that, once more, conveyed the import of our personal credo to us: We help people. We work with them, and we protect their rights."

Over the following decades, our rendering of humanitarian assistance in Southern Sudan was joined by the conducting of development projects and of missions to protect human rights. This joint thrust—when carried out in crisis regions—generates tension: This is because helping people assert their rights automatically means raising your voice against the pow-

ers that be. As is the case in other countries run by potentates, it is precisely those in power that get to decide whether or not you will be allowed to speak with the people. Notwithstanding this, Sign of Hope places importance on supplying people with food, water, medicine and education (through the building of schools)—and on attacking the roots of their problems—the lack of respect of their human rights. Klaus Stieglitz and Reimund Reubelt share the conviction that "our wish to form on-site true partnerships of respect with the disadvantaged requires our ensuring their getting their rights. What's at stake: protecting human dignity."

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In 2006, Sign of Hope was accorded consultative status by the United Nation's Economic and Social Council. This fostered Sign of Hope's work to publicize violations of human rights in Southern Sudan.

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At the end of 2007, problems with drinking water were brought to the attention of Sign of Hope. The German organization was told of the contamination being found in the water available for drinking in certain regions of Southern Sudan. The initial tests made of the water confirmed the assumption that this contamination stemmed from the extraction of oil. Sign of Hope commissioned the conducting of a comprehensive, scientific study.

It found that this connection in fact existed. This book tells the story of Sign of Hope's attempts to get the oil companies to adhere to internationally-applicable standards. The story tells the chronology of the organization's push to enable the 180,000 affected residents to assert their human right to have

clean water to drink. Another thrust of this push is the attempt to conserve one of the world's largest wetlands and its unique biodiversity. This book will also depict the mechanisms employed by a newly-founded state to rule. These mechanisms have turned the country's oil reserves into a curse for its population. This chronology also reveals, by way of contrast, something gratifying. There are buttons for outsiders to push. And pushing them can in fact affect the decisions reached by the liable parties—if the pushing is undertaken on a lasting and thoroughgoing basis.